

## **Answering the "My God is Bigger Than That!" Argument**

I recently noticed the following Facebook post from a young lady in my area: "What is a good church? I need God back in my life."

Many well-intentioned people immediately commented on this post with a brief description of their church, how much they enjoyed it, and how warmly she would be welcomed should she decide to visit. In response to this, a local Baptist pastor posted the following: "I'm amazed by this outpouring from so many people who love their churches so much. I'm also glad that God is big enough to be in all these churches."

This is a classic example of a line of reasoning that I'm encountering more and more these days – the "my God is bigger than that" line of reasoning. Let's stop for a moment and think about this Baptist pastor's statement. Is God obligated to approve of every group that calls itself a "church" simply because if He chooses not to approve of this church or that church, it would render Him a littler or lesser kind of God?

Here's another example of the same type of reasoning: An evangelist for a church of Christ was having a religious discussion with a Baptist preacher. The evangelist presented several lines of Scriptural evidence supporting the belief that water baptism, when scripturally administered, is for remission of sins and, therefore, essential to salvation. The Baptist preacher simply replied, "Your God only saves those who get wet in a church of Christ baptistry, but my God is big enough to save everybody who puts their faith in Him."

The implication here is this: "Only a very small God would insist that baptism is essential for salvation." "Only a very small God would insist that baptism be administered in a Scriptural manner." "Only a very small God would build one church and save people through that one church." "Only a very small God would reject people who join man-made churches which preach man-made gospels and teach man-made doctrines." "Only a very small God would disagree with me and my unscriptural religious beliefs."

Is this the best that false teachers can come up with in defense of their false religious practices- "If God doesn't do things my way, that makes Him a littler or lesser God." Shouldn't it be just the opposite? Shouldn't it be more like this – "If I don't do things God's way, that makes me a littler or lesser Christian?" Are we really so irrational to think that our religious beliefs, whether right or wrong, can make God any bigger than what He already is? Do you think God appreciates being pulled into religious discussions in this manner? The debate lies not in how big or small God really is. The debate is, as it always should be, what is the truth of the Bible and will we accept that truth?

**- by James Luedecke**

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## **Getting More Out of the Sermon**

In 1741, a man named Jonathan Edwards preached a sermon at Enfield, Conn., that has become a classic. It was called "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." It is still studied in college English classes for its literary style.

Now, what sermon did you hear just last week? Or two weeks ago? Why is it that a sermon preached over 200 years ago is better remembered than the one you listened to last Lord's day?

That may say something about the importance of listening. Experts tell us that we speak at a rate of 125 words per minute. But we can listen to 400 words per minute. It's no wonder the attention often wanders. That means we need to discipline the mind to listen to a lesson without distraction. Here are some suggestions to help you get more out of the sermon.

- 1) **OPEN MIND.** We need to be in the right frame of mind to listen. Our worship is to be "in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). We should approach a sermon with the attitude that we want to learn and profit from it. Attitude makes a big difference.
- 2) **OPEN BIBLE.** Compare what you hear with God's word (Acts 17:11). You need to form personal convictions based on what you read in the Bible. It will stick in your mind longer when you read it for yourself.
- 3) **TAKE NOTES.** This will be another "visual aid" to help you remember. You can recall more of what you see than what you just hear. Plus, you will have the notes to use for further study.

You **CAN** get more out of the sermon, but only if you try.

- by Roger Hillis

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## ***What Our Giving 'Says'***

It is clear that our giving to the Lord reflects our basic attitudes in several important ways. Consider ...

### **IF I GIVE NOTHING:**

- I'm really saying, "Let's close the doors and disband the church".
- I take a "free ride" based on what others have given.

### **WHEN I GIVE LESS THAN 10% OF MY INCOME:**

- I am doing less than was required of the poorest Jew under the Law of Moses.
- I show that I do not appreciate the "better" blessings I enjoy in Christ Jesus (Hebrew 8:6).

### **IF I'M NOT GIVING MORE THAN I DID LAST YEAR:**

- I'm saying that I am not any better off financially than I was 12 months ago - no raise, no bonus, etc. Is this true?
- Or is it a problem of priorities?

### **IF I GIVE, BUT DO SO GRUDGINGLY:**

- I miss out on the joy of giving.
- I disappoint God, for He "loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).

### **WHEN I DON'T "PURPOSE" WHAT I GIVE IN ADVANCE:**

- I'm not following God's plan (2 Cor. 9:7).  
I'm likely to take on obligations which will prevent me from giving as I should.
- I make it difficult for the church to have any long range program of work.

### **IF I DON'T GIVE PROPORTIONATELY AS I'VE PROSPERED:**

- I commit sin (1 Cor. 16:2).
- I hinder the important work of the church.
- I deprive myself of some of the satisfaction and fulfillment of being a faithful servant.

- by Greg Gwin