

TWISTED

Caricatures of Christianity

Life Groups

Learning

Integration

Friendship

Everyone a witness

Series description

A caricature seeks to take something and exaggerate, distort, or over simplify it. The result can be comical and slightly hideous, as well as off putting (think [Spitting Image](#)). When it comes to Christianity there are many caricatures about God, Jesus and what the bible really says; this might lead you to dismiss, be put off or simply find it comical that people would actually take the bible seriously in the 21st Century.

TWISTED is a new teaching series launching in October. Each week we'll be exploring a different caricature of Christianity; including subjects like '**The God of the Bible is blood thirsty and violent**'. Big statements! We'll be highlighting the caricatures and then seeking to set them back in the context of the Bibles bigger story of God's amazing grace.

Website

For more information about this series along with audio from the talks please visit:

www.kingsnorwich.com/twisted

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 | 23rd Oct '16

Belief in God is out of date and old fashioned

Week 2 | 30th Oct '16

God doesn't care about my suffering, otherwise he'd stop it

Week 3 | 6th Nov '16

It's up to heaven (if you're good) or down to hell (if you're bad)

Week 4 | 20th Nov '16

Gentle Jesus meek and mild

Week 5 | 27th Nov '16

I can do what I want and God will forgive me

Week 6 | 4th Dec '16

The God of the bible is bloodthirsty and violent

Books

Tim Keller '[The Reason for God](#)'

Andrew Wilson '[If God, then what?](#)'

WEEK 2: God doesn't care about my suffering, otherwise he'd stop it

Speaker: Marcus

Overview

There is a caricature of God that views him as watching our suffering with indifference. Surely if he is all powerful and all loving he would do something about it. It's really important that we have a faithful picture of God in our minds, especially as we experience suffering. If we do, rather than back away from him at such times, we can draw near and receive his strength and comfort. We will also play our part in expressing God's care to a hurting world.

The main points

1. The truth is that God cares so much for us that, in the person of Jesus, he endured the worst suffering in our place. His death on the cross means we need not be eternally separated from God but have life in him and with him forever (John 3:16).
2. Most of the time we simply do not know why God allows some specific suffering or tragedy to take place. The bible does however, reveal to us some principles that point to God's care for us even, through suffering.
 - a. God cares so much for us and others that he patiently holds back a final separation of good and evil until the full harvest as come in.
 - b. God cares so much for us that he can sovereignly work a supreme good through even the worst evil, redeeming the very meaning and purpose of suffering.
 - c. God cares so much for us that he empowers us with his Holy Spirit to care for those who are suffering.
 - d. God cares so much for us that he is present with us in our suffering, strengthening us and pouring his love into our hearts.
3. *"The Son of God, Jesus Christ, will be more highly honored in the end because he defeats Satan through longsuffering, patience, humility, servanthood, suffering, and death, rather than through raw power. And the more highly honored the Son is, the greater the joy of those who love him... Satan, and all his pain, serves in the end to magnify the power and wisdom and love and grace and mercy and patience and wrath of Jesus Christ."* John Piper

Questions

1. How does the cross shape your view of God and encourage you to trust him in suffering?
2. How can we express God's care to those around us who are suffering?
3. What is it like to "rejoice in our sufferings" (Romans 5:2-5, cf. James 1:2-4 ...).
4. What do you think about the quote from John Piper? How has suffering served to reveal Jesus more clearly to you and draw you closer to him in love and worship?