

TWISTED

Caricatures of Christianity

Life Groups

Learning

Integration

Friendship

Everyone a witness

Website

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

www.kingsnorwich.com/twisted

Books

Tim Keller '[The Reason for God](#)' & '[Making sense of God](#)'

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

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.

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Belief in God is out of date and old fashioned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

WEEK 1: Belief in God is old fashioned & outdated.

Speaker: Toby Skipper

Overview

BIBLE OPENS WITH THESE WORDS - GENESIS 1:1 "IN THE BEGINNING GOD..." NO HESITATION, NO RESERVATION... GOD.

God before all things – Creator – Self-existent – sustainer – powerful – as read on in bible God revealed to be...

- Relational/not distant– loving – merciful – kind – compassionate – Holy – righteous – just – personal
- The God Jesus said he was the ultimate revelation of – "*if seen me seen the Father*"

But is it out of date; old fashioned **or** naïve to believe in God? Some would say time to outgrow this belief, afterall we're in the 21st Century, we have science and reason, so we don't need God.

- But, we need to be careful of 'Chronological snobbery.' Just because time has passed, technology has advanced & knowledge increased; doesn't mean we have a greater grasp on ALL of reality and truth.
- Science is wonderful, reason is essential, but both are limited on their own.

The main points

1... Evidence in physical world: information is a product of a mind. Each one of us is walking around with coded sequenced information in our bodies – DNA. Every human has approx. 3.2billion letters of DNA code!

- Bill Gates "*DNA is like a computer program, but far, far more advanced than any software we've ever created.*"
- Raises question – Where does this DNA 'coding' come from? Who created? Mindless universe or mind behind?

Romans 1:20 "*For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature¹ have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world¹ in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.*" – APPLY

- The universe, the physical world, contains evidence of its divine origin – Question is; are we willing to see it?

2... Experience of billions of people:

John Lennon "*Christianity will go. It will vanish & shrink. I needn't argue about that; I'm right & will be proved right.*"

- Johann Hari (atheist – Independent; Why is religion on the rise? - "*Jesus Christ and the Judaeo-Christian God should be a fading memory by now. They should have joined Zeus, Thor and Ra in the Cemetery for 'Dead Deities'. Humanity should be entering a post-religious era of reason and enlightenment any moment now... Instead, Christianity – along with the other major world religions – is resurgent.*"

Even with technology advancing, scientific knowledge increasing – belief in God isn't going away. China on course to become 'World's most Christian nation within 15yrs. Estimated that 10'000 everyday are becoming followers of Christ.

3... Extraordinary life of Jesus – His claims, prophesies fulfilled, character, his death, resurrection & effect on the world

Keller (Making Sense of God) "*Jesus combines high majesty with greatest humility, he joins the strongest commitment to justice with astonishing mercy and grace, and he reveals a transcendent self-sufficiency and yet entire trust and reliance upon his heavenly Father. Readers can discover for themselves his unbending convictions but complete approachability, his insistence on truth but always bathed in love, his power without insensitivity; integrity without rigidity; passion without prejudice... [Christianity gives an unsurpassed offer] a meaning that suffering cannot remove, a satisfaction not based on circumstances, a freedom that does not hurt but rather enhances love, an identity that does not crush you or exclude others, a moral compass that does not turn you into an oppressor, and a hope that can face anything, even death.*"

Questions

1. There are many caricatures of Christianity (distortions of the truth) – what are the most prevalent in our culture and how can we confront them in a helpful way? #everyoneawitness
2. The song 'How great thou art' contains these lyrics – '*O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder, Consider all, the works Thy Hands have made; I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, Thy power throughout the universe displayed.*' Look at Romans 1:20; in what ways do we see Gods invisible qualities displayed throughout the universe? What is our appropriate response?
3. Jesus doesn't 'go out of date' – he is 'the same yesterday, today and forever' (Hebrews 13:8) – how does this truth impact our everyday lives?