Seeking God in an Age of Choice February 24, 2019

*Genesis 17:1-14 Series: Walk into God’s Blessings*

The real question … is not what you would like God to be like, but what he is really like. - Iain Duguid

Intro: Baskin Robbins god and Tinder Bible?

1. God invites us into a covenant relationship marked by blessing.
2. God doesn’t hook up; He relates with us by covenant.

v. 2 *that I may make my covenant between me and you*

v. 4 *Behold, my covenant is with you …*

v. 7 *And I will establish my covenant between me and you …*

1. God doesn’t hook up; His blessings come through a covenant.

v. 2 *I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.*

v. 4 *Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.*

1. God’s covenant blessings redefine our lives.

v. 5 *No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.*

If Usain’s last name wasn’t Bolt, would he run as fast?

A Christian is God’s child (John 1:12), Christ’s friend (John 15:15), a saint (Eph 1:1) and a new creation (2 Cor 5:17).

* How do you think the ‘age of choice’ affects how we relate to God? How do you think it affects you?
* When do you struggle to believe that God wants to bless you?
* What difference would Abraham’s name change make?
* How does your identity in Christ affect you?

1. God invites us into a covenant relationship marked by devotion.
2. God’s covenant calls for unconditional devotion.

v. 1 *I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless.*

v. 9 *And God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant…”*

Jeremiah 24:7 *I will give them a heart to know that I am the LORD, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart.*

1. God’s covenant calls for unbridled worship.

v. 3 *Then Abram fell on his face.*

Matthew 14:33 *And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”*

Matthew 28:9 *And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him.*

1. The Baskin Robbins god loves the word “but.”

Daniele Bolelli, author of *Create Your Own Religion, A How-To Book Without Instructions*: “But” is a three-letter stroke of genius. It keeps things in perspective. It prevents me from turning too rigid and self-righteous. It reminds me that hardly anything in life is black or white.

* What does God mean by “walk before me?”
* What’s the difference between devotion to God and obedience to His rules?
* Why did Abraham fall “on his face?” How would a person express the same attitude in our culture?
* Why does Daniele Bolelli love the word “but?” What’s wrong with the word “but” in reference to how we relate to God?

1. God invites us into a covenant relationship marked by a sign.
2. Circumcision was the non-negotiable mark of the old covenant.

v. 10 *Every male among you shall be circumcised.*

v. 11 *You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.*

v. 14 *Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”*

1. Physical circumcision pointed to the circumcision of the heart.

Deuteronomy 30:6 *And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.*

1. Baptism is the non-negotiable mark of the new covenant.

Acts 2:38 *And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

* How would circumcision have helped Abraham think about the covenant God had made with him?
* How does baptism help you think about the covenant God has made with you?
* How does the ‘age of choice’ affect people’s thinking about baptism?
* How does the ‘age of choice’ affect people’s thinking about church membership?
* Where do you most need help in applying this message?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Malachi 1:1-5.

Notes