

Hard Questions: If my life is good, why would I need God?

Steve King – 6.19.16

Intro:

- Ask about how many fathers.

- Thank them

- Thank everyone else for making us who we are

Like Pastor Jenny mentioned, those of us who have been preaching these last couple weeks really have no one to blame but ourselves for the topics we picked. But honestly, I think it has been good. Not only for us as a congregation, but for those of us who are preparing these sermons. When you are confronted with these kinds of tough questions and have to write about them and explain your thoughts, it really makes you sit and ponder.

I will be perfectly honest though...When I first picked the question, I read it wrong. I was walking to my next class and reading the email on

my phone and saw, “Why would I need God?” Ha! I got this one! I emailed Pastor Jenny back and told her which one I wanted.

I went back to the email a few days later to re-read the question and start gathering my thoughts. And then I noticed there were a few extra words in it that I didn’t notice the first time. It ACTUALLY read, “If life is good, why would I need God?” And that is an entirely different question, isn’t it? That’s what I get for trying to read and walk at the same time!

These are both really important questions, and I actually want to talk about that first one briefly because it leads us into the second. So, do you believe in God? I honestly think most people do. On some level, I think there is a fundamental instinct or spark in us that lets us know that God is real. Now, whether we choose to pursue that premonition and learn about the nature of God, or whether we decide to walk away from it is up to us.

What this says to me, is that the issue is less about God and more about religion. Sure, I have problems with organized religion too. I don't think there is a person involved in the church who **doesn't** have some kind of disagreement with it about one issue or another.

Is it a flawed system? Of course it is, it's run by humans. Do we need it? Yes, I think we do. It provides a framework in which we can share our experiences of God and learn from each others journeys. Unfortunately, we are not always encouraged to ask the important questions that allow us to grow.

I'm currently reading a book by Rachel Held Evans called "Faith Unraveled". In it, she discusses her path from thinking that she had God all figured out to learning to ask questions. She says, "*Evolution means letting go of our false fundamentals so that God can get into those shadowy places we're not sure we want him to be. It means being okay with being wrong, okay with not having all the answers, okay with never being finished.*"

It IS good to seek answers. And that brings us to our topic of the day: If life is good, why do we need God?

Every November, we celebrate Thanksgiving in the U.S. As we go around the table and say the things we're thankful for, it's not hard to see that coming up with a huge list is not all that difficult. Granted, the things you are thankful for are going to change based on your perspective. The adults are not going to be quite as excited about the fact that the kids just scattered the big pile of leaves back all over the lawn as the kids who did the scattering.

Familiar themes we hear at that time of year are: family, friends, our homes, food to create that wonderful feast that took all day to prepare, jobs to pay the bills, the amazing landscape that we get to enjoy (especially here in the NW) and on and on... but what is the source of all these things?

Whether you believe in intelligent design or evolution on some scale, if you believe in God, you understand on some level that he has provided

these things for us. It may not be directly, but He is the one who gave us the ability and model to have a family and relationships with our friends, created the bounty we can harvest from the ground, instilled in us the curiosity to create things which gave you the opportunity to have that job, etc.

I started off today by saying something to all the fathers and all those who have made us who we are. Do you remember what that was? “Thank you”. I have an idea...when you think you don’t really need God because things are going so swimmingly, use your manners. Say “thank you”.

But here’s the deal... I have another question for you: How many people in here have had a perfect week? I’m not even talking the last month, year, or decade. Just this week? Anybody? I didn’t think so.

We struggle with things on a daily basis. Although we may have a relatively good life and are generally well adjusted, things aren't perfect.

But this general feeling of “rightness” creates a kind of complacency. It’s hard to see God when we’re happy.

In another quote by from Faith Unraveled, Rachel says, “If there’s one thing I know for sure, it’s that serious doubt — the kind that leads to despair — begins not when we start asking God questions but when, out of fear, we stop.”

It’s as if we’re holding up this shield, holding back all the little things that we want to ignore; all the things we pretend we’ve defeated. And when tragedy strikes, we can’t hold it up anymore. We get tired, our arm weakens and we don’t have the strength to go on. Finally that shield drops.

We call out to God and plead for comfort. My how fast we go running back to our Father’s arms when things get rough. Ever heard of the Prodigal Son? We’ve been doing this since the beginning.

I’ll leave you with this... Expect God. Maybe if we learned to expect to see God, we wouldn’t need try so hard to prove how strong we are.

