**You’ve Got God-mail**

***Is God Trying To Tell Us Something?***

***G-Mail #1, #2, #3***

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# ver been in a “white out?” Liz and I were all set to fly home to Seattle from Chicago, leaving sub-zero wind chills. But *our* plans suddenly meant zip when a heartless storm dumped up to 16 inches of snow on us. O’Hare’s flights were scrubbed. Roads closed from Fargo eastward, blindfolded by blowing snow.

# If you stay indoors, insulated by familiar surroundings and creature comforts, and don’t venture out into the world to test your survival skills for reaching your intended goal, white outs can be deceptively beautiful. But outside, they can be fatal for you and those counting on you to help them along to their hoped-for destination.

As Springsteen wrote in his first #1 hit, “Blinded By The Light,” one can be “wrapped up like a deuce, another runner in the night.” Or as Saul, who terrorized Christ’s people early in the 1st century, discovered on his scalping crusade to Damascus, it matters *which* Light you’re blinded by.

# Currently we’re examining worldviews, i.e., philosophies that address four basic questions: (1) How did we and the universe get here? (2) What went sideways? (3) How can our ship be righted? (4) Why am I here?

We wouldn’t break ground without a blueprint, or hop a plane destination-unknown. So why skip through life with a Chaplinesque bounce, putting off dealing with these four, seminal questions? Let’s explore some answers. We’ll begin with ….

***Today’s Big Question***

Let’s say you’re God, and you have seven essentials that you want mankind to know. What would they be?

**(DISCUSSION)**

***“You’ve Got 7 God-mails”***

**(G-mail #1) “I’m here. Accept no substitutes.”**

About 1440 B.C. Moses was being assigned by God to tell Pharaoh to liberate the Jews from slavery. Lacking courage and credentials, Moses pled with God. Next came the famous “burning bush” incident, not to be confused with protests along the White House fence. **Let’s read Exodus 3:1-15 (p. 43).**

You and I have faith choices, defining how we live now and in the hereafter. Options include atheism (no God), agnosticism (not sure there’s a God), dualism (two equal, uncreated, adversarial powers – one good, one bad), and monotheism (one good, all-mighty Source, -- Exodus 20:2-3).

No one can convince you of God’s existence. Only He, at His own initiative, can reveal Himself. And He’s done that (a) by giving us the Bible (There’s more evidence of its reliability than for any other ancient document); (b) by coming to earth; and (c) by our conscience, letting us know we’re sinners who need a Savior (John 1:14, Romans 5:8, Ephesians 2:8-9, Philippians 1:29, Colossians 1:9).

In A.D. 57 Paul described mankind’s ageless struggle with worshipping “the god they wanted” or “the God who is.” **Let’s read Romans 1:16-25 (p. 836).**

**(G-mail #2) “I made everything, you included.”**

In addition to the grandeur of the Creation narrative in Genesis, God is also our Sustainer, righteous Judge and Savior. **Let’s read a powerful passage delivered by God through Isaiah, the prophet. Isaiah 45:5-12, 22-25 (p. 545).** (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 90:2, 95:5-6; Proverbs 22:2; Isaiah 51:12-13; John 1:1-3)

***God or Geico:***

***Who Saves Us More?***

**(G-mail #3) “Like it or not, I’m in charge.”**

Some wonder, “There’s so much suffering; how could there be a God? He must not be good, all-powerful, or loving. Why would He tolerate such misery?” Are we born to hurt, die and disappear?”

**QUESTION:** The world is under God’s authority, ‘though He’s temporarily ceded control to Satan (Ephesians 2:1-9). Is God moved by our pain? How would we know? Can He experience pain? As an emotional being made in God’s image, is it okay to express your rage or doubt to God about life’s killer tsunamis? If you do, do you picture God as offering you empathy, comfort or rebuke?

(DISCUSSION)

• Rather than manipulate us like Kens and Barbies, God loves us enough to give us freedom to *choose* to love Him. If He were to offer you a Teflon life, behind tinted glass in your pain-repellant Humvee, would you be a happy camper? Adam and Eve weren’t.

**•** When sin polluted our virgin planet because of human choice, God did as He’d warned: death and decay commenced for mankind, all created life, the heavens and the Earth. Our planet became temporary quarters for sin, an arena of natural consequences for those not “in Christ.” But for Christ-followers, death and decay remind us that this is not our final home (Romans 8:20).

• With almost no interference from God, He’s letting Nature play out the consequences of its own forces. Windstorms, monsoons, hail, hurricanes, tornados, forest fires, volcanoes all exact grizzly tolls. Worldwide over 29,000 children die daily from preventable malnutrition and disease. Why? And why are these plagues increasing? In Genesis ch. 1 earth and its First Couple had everything going — harmony, plenty, pleasure, perfection. What happened? **Let’s read Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-6, 17-19 (p. 2).**

• The Bible forecasts the final, total dismantling of earth and sky, then the dawn of an all-new, sin-free Creation (Jeremiah 29:11). **Let’s read Revelation 21:1-6 (p. 922).**

• Are catastrophes acts of God’s anger -- these labor pains that are coming with greater frequency, force and fatalities? Paul says they’re not God’s judgment on sinners; they’re God’s warning that He’ll be sending His Son back to scoop up those who are “in Christ” and take them to be with Him for all eternity --- reminders that God’s offer of salvation and forgiveness has an unpublished expiration date. **Let’s read Romans 8:18-23 (p. 841).**

• We sinners *are* guilty, but Christ took our punishment on Himself at the cross, so these disasters are not payback for sin (Luke 13:1-5).

Rain falls on just and unjust; all suffer together (Matthew 5:43-45). God takes no pleasure in anyone’s death (Ezekiel 18:32). And along with God, we weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15, 2 Corinthians 1:3-7, Matthew 5:4, James 2:16).

• Jesus said, “Don’t be afraid of those who can only kill your body; they can’t touch your soul. Fear only God who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28). But here’s “the good news:” because of Christ’s own win over the grave, physical death has been defanged. The grave and hell are NOT a threat to those safely and securely “in Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:51-57)!

• God does have a purpose in *everything*. Even tsunamis. And it’s to remind us that He’s God, and we aren’t.

***The Perfect Port in The Imperfect Storm***

Next month we finish God’s 7 messages to us. Now we leave with the words of three godly, gray-hairs who are more relevant than ever:

Job: "God, I'm convinced You can do anything and everything. Nothing can upset your plans. I babbled on about things far beyond me … I admit I once lived by rumors of you; now I have it all firsthand--from my own eyes and ears! I'm sorry--forgive me. I'll never do that again, I promise” (Job 42:1-6).

Jeremiah: “Let's take a good look at the way we're living and reorder our lives under GOD” (Lamentations 3:40).

Paul: “For God was in Christ at the cross, no longer counting people's sins against them. … We urge you, as though Christ himself were here pleading with you, ‘Resolve things with God!’ For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for your sin, so that you could be made right with God through Christ. … we beg you not to reject this marvelous message of God's great kindness. God is ready to help you right now. Today is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 5:19-6:2).

You’ve never joined God’s team? Today’s the day to do it since tomorrow’s not guaranteed. Just tell God right now, “Father, I know I don’t have to figure out everything in order to know that (a) I’m a sinner, (b) You forgave all my sins on the cross where You took my place, and (c) what You want from me now is to simply accept this truth by faith. I do. Enter my life as my Lord and Savior. Thank You. Please guide me in my new life ‘in Christ.’” Amen.

His Deal

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