



“We all worship the same God, don’t we?”

I’m guessing I’m not the only one who has heard this question. (Usually it’s not asked as a question but stated as an opinion.)

The idea that all people of all faiths are worshipping the same God is so popular in our time that we really need to know how to respond when we hear it. Here are four major points that I include when I get asked the question (or get the opinion tossed my way):

1. I usually make a comment like this to start:

“I’d say it’s correct to say we are all SEEKING the same God.”

God created us to have a very close relationship with Him. We see that in the Garden of Eden. He has placed an emptiness inside of every human who has ever lived, an emptiness that can only be filled by having a trusting relationship with God. That emptiness is designed to prompt us to go searching for Him. Kind of like the empty feeling in your stomach prompts you to go searching for food that will fill you up and satisfy your need.

Unfortunately, we try to stuff all sorts of other things into that empty spot only God can fill - things that don’t really fill that spot or satisfy. Again, kind of like when we are hungry we often try to satisfy that hunger with “junk food” instead of good, healthy stuff that really satisfies. (You’ll probably not be surprised to learn that I’m eating a bunch of Cheez Its as I type this!)

2. At some point I point out the faulty logic behind the idea that we all worship the same God with a statement something like this:

“It is true that we are all seeking the same God, but we really can’t say that we’ve all found the same God. If two groups define God using TOTALLY CONTRADICTORY TERMS then it can’t be the same God.”

For example, a couple of guys sitting next to each other on an airplane start talking and in the course of their conversation discover that football is their favorite sport. They initially think they have the same favorite sport. But the more they talk, they discover that one of them defines “football” as a weird, kind-of-oblong-shaped brown ball with laces in the middle and pointed ends, while the other one’s favorite sport plays with a perfectly round ball made with a combination of black pentagon shapes and white hexagon shapes sewn together. (A soccer ball)

They quickly come to the conclusion that, although they give their favorite sport the same name - “football” - they definitely do NOT have the same favorite sport, since they have each defined “football” with totally contradictory terms.

It’s the same kind of thing with God. If two different faith groups define what they worship in totally contradictory terms, then, even though they both give this deity the name “God”, they definitely are not worshipping the same God.

Next month, I’ll touch on a couple other points that need to be made, but for now, well, those two points make for a good start!

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net