



+

*Happy New Year everyone !*

*Just a short intro this week as many groups are not meeting. Take some time to catch up and pray for each other.*

On Sunday we began a new topical series for January considering how we find it so easy to believe truths about God, but then for them to not impact or influence how we live.

We'll be spending 4 weeks considering 4 truths about God (that happily all begin with G) - but more than that we'll be thinking about an implication for each one...

1. God is great – *so we don't have to be in control*
2. God is glorious – *so we don't have to fear others*
3. God is good – *so we don't have to look elsewhere*
4. God is gracious – *so we don't have to prove ourselves*

As we thought about God's greatness from Psalm 145 - we imagined 4 hypothetical people each with a tendency towards diminishing God's greatness and maximising their own...

**Martha** (manipulates) - has a desire to get our own way by manipulating people or situations. She 'believes' God is great but can't cope with not being in control... Functionally she seeks to shape everything.

**Dominic** (dominates) - he's like Martha but rather than manipulating things, simply uses his power to dominate and cajole things...

**Olivia** (overworks) - she has to cover and account for every single eventuality, unable to delegate, unable to let things go...

**William** (worries) - his worrying is ultimately a result of him not being able to trust God's greatness. 'What-if' is a concept that William struggles with a keeps him awake at night...

All of these individuals struggle because they 'know' God is great and yet at the same time are functionally unable to trust his sovereign greatness and rule over them. They sing truths on Sunday, but by Monday they are great again, rather than Him. This is seen in different ways but at root comes down to an inability to let God be God, for him to be Creator and for us to be creatures.

We then considered the account of Jesus as he calmed the storm in Mark 4v35-41. In it we see both evidence for the identity of Jesus as divine, but also his authority over chaos to bring order. Look at the way in which he rebukes the disciples for their lack of faith (but also how they respond in fear - ultimately fearing him rather than their fears).

**Some questions to start you off...**

**Have a look at Psalm 145v1-7**

What do the verses tell you about God's Greatness? How is it seen? What is to be our response to it?

(Maybe do this in small groups if people struggle to be honest / open...?)

How do we cope when life doesn't go as planned or when God's deeds don't seem that great?

Talk about Martha, Dominic, Olivia and William - which can you associate most with? When do find yourself manipulating / dominating / overworking / worrying? About what? Why?

Where does active, wise living stray into sinful control and manipulation or worrying or overwork? (etc)

How can we help each other in this? What truths do we need to cling onto? What things do we need to forget? How can we bridge the gap from Sunday to Monday (and beyond...?)