

Why God is not like us and why that's a good thing!

Session 4 – the eternally happy God

Key verses: Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:11, 29, 35; Psalm 55:19 and 102:27; Hosea 11:8-9; Galatians 3:13; 1 Timothy 6:15-16; Hebrews 2:14-18, 4:14-16, 6:13-20, 13:8; James 1:17; 1 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:2-3; Revelation 21:4, 22:3.

Talk notes:

Application

- 1) How has the way you think about God been challenged and changed for the better by this session?

- 2) Read Revelation 21:4. What does it say about suffering in the new creation?
 - Why is it essential that God cannot change or suffer in his divine nature (as opposed to Christ's human nature) if he is to keep this promise?

- 3) Look at Malachi 3:6-7. Why is God's unchanging nature such good news for his sinful people?

(N.B. Malachi was the last prophet sent to Israel, prior to John the Baptist. He was sent about 450 years before John and Jesus came. At this time, God had brought his people back to Judah from exile in Babylon. They had rebuilt Jerusalem and the temple, but they were still compromised and unfaithful in so many ways. Though we are not in exactly the same position as them, because the Holy Spirit has been poured out on all of God's people under the New Covenant, we still struggle to be faithful too)

For further reflection...

- 1) During hard times, it is easy to feel like God no longer loves us – as if he has changed. Read Hebrews 12:4-12. How does this reassure us that God still loves us in hard times?
 - How does this passage say we should respond to God's loving discipline?

 - What might that look like in your life?

- 2) At the start of this session, I mentioned how change in the world around us reveals our idols. We often realise how much we have been trusting in worldly things only when they are taken away. Where has change revealed idols in your heart recently?
 - Read Psalm 46. How does this challenge you to look to God instead of changeable, worldly things?

- 3) In this session, we saw how God is *forever* happy or blessed (1 Tim 6:15-16). In 1 John 3:2, we learn that when we see Jesus, we will be like him. This means we too will share in the full blessedness of his resurrected human nature. Try reflecting on this. Instead of the constant ups and downs of this life, life with Jesus will all be up, as he takes us ever higher and deeper! How wonderful will this be?
 - In 1 John 3:3, John gives us the application of this truth: 'All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he (Jesus) is pure.' How does this hope motivate us to strive for purity now? Where could you seek to grow in purity as a result?