

CSF Weekly Gathering - November 4



*We're glad you're here! CSF's weekly gathering is intended to be a space where students can meet together, discuss scripture, pray and build relationships. Our vision is to **Make Disciples of Jesus on Campus**. We are a Christian organization, but wherever you are on your spiritual journey - lifelong Christian, uncertain believer, part of another faith, or unsure God even exists - you are welcome to here. We seek to interact, and even disagree, with kindness and respect.*

Stay Up To Date:

Website – <https://www.csfpa.com/psu-berks>

Instagram @csfberks

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Discord and GroupMe too!

Upcoming Events:

Volunteer at Hope Rescue Mission - Saturday, November 6

Meet at 8:45 in lot G1 for a ride OR meet at 9:00 at the Hope Outlet Store. We will get a tour of the facility, work in the store and then eat lunch with the residents.

Concession Stand - November 20 - Fundraiser

Leadership:

President – Emily Clapper (ezc80)

Secretary – Ayomide Ogunleye (afo5187)

Worship Coordinator - Katie Lowery

Pastor - Dave Hershey (dave@csfpa.com)

Vice President – Danny Frederick (dpf5238)

Treasurer – Nathan Bonslaver (njb5515)

Exec-at-Large - Nivia McNeil

Advisor - Sgt. Mark Groff (mdg116)

What is God Like?

God is Self-Sacrificial Love - God Suffers for Us in Jesus

1. Does God change?

Psalms 102:25-27 and 90:1-2 and Isaiah 44:6-8

Exodus 32:1-14 (specifically 14) and Malachi 3:6-7 (And Exodus 34:6-7)

As we have discussed in the past weeks, God is. God does not become Creator, Love, Good or anything else; God is these things as God's own essence. The scriptures illustrate this same idea - God does not change. Yet, at times there are scriptures where God does appear to change his mind. What does that mean?

*Some theologians (open theism, process theology) do argue that God may change in response to what humans do. They take these passages on face value (if it says God changed, so God changed). Other theologians favor the passages that speak of God not changing. This reveals to us that **we all interpret scripture** for, at face value, scripture says different things at different times.*

Other theologians (classical theism) argue God has always been the same. God may appear to change from our perspective in time. This is a mystery that occurs as the infinite exists in the finite. Another way of putting it is that God never changes (from Love, Goodness, Forgiving) so when we change it may appear to us that God changes.

2. If God does not change, then what happened at the Incarnation?

God did not become Creator - God has always been creator

God did not become Love - God has always been love

When Jesus was born Christians believe this was the moment when God *became* human. This appears to bring some sort of change into God; if prior to this God was not united to humanity but now God is. But remember John 1 and Genesis 1: John 1 reveals to us another side of the story told in Genesis 1. The God who created in Genesis 1 is the Trinitarian God. We've read Philippians 2:5-11 which illustrated the Son as God and laying aside rights as God.

Read Colossians 1:15-20

Read 1 Peter 1:18-20

Read Revelation 1:8, 17-18 and 22:13.

Read Revelation 13:8

The Incarnation of Jesus is not a change in who God is, rather in the Incarnation God is fully revealed as who God always has been. Jesus is God and is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. On one hand, the crucifixion happens in time (around 30 CE). On the other hand, the crucifixion has always happened (in Revelation 5, Jesus remains the Lamb who was slain). God has always existed as a relationship of self-sacrificial love and this relationship is fully revealed on the cross.

"God, since he is God, does not need to do something else other than be God in response to evil and in order to overcome it. Therefore the Incarnation would have happened even if there had been no Fall. The Incarnation must belong to the nature of God as such" - John Milbank.

3. What does this have to do with us?

First, God's Love is the foundation of the cosmos. We were created by love and for love. God creates and loves the entire cosmos in Jesus. God takes on human flesh to overcome the death (which itself is a mystery). Through Jesus we enter into relationship with God and enter into rest.

Read Hebrews 4:12-16

Postscript - On Understanding Time

In the book of Exodus, the Israelites are instructed to sacrifice lambs on the night of Passover. This is the beginning of the entire sacrificial system that we read about in Leviticus. Christians believe that Jesus is the final sacrifice that ends all sacrifice. John the Baptist calls Jesus the Lamb of God in John 1:29 and Jesus is killed when the Passover Lambs are being slaughtered. Hebrews (specifically Hebrews 9) speaks of Jesus offering the once and for all sacrifice.

We cannot help but read the story chronologically which often makes us think of Jesus only entering the story near the end. Along with his, our modern, western culture views all time as the same. Premodern cultures had a division between sacred and secular time. Most time was secular time - work days, meal time, etc. Sacred time were moments that essentially lifted you out of secular time and connected you to a different time. When you took the Eucharist, you were in some way closer in time to Jesus' crucifixion. Holy Week celebrations sort of transported you back to the week of Jesus' crucifixion.

For us, we worship and pray in such a way where all this just happens in our heads. We remember these events while we live centuries later.

When we read the story through Jesus-shaped lenses, it changes how we see it. Jesus is not a character who enters the story at the end, Jesus is there from the beginning. The self-sacrificial act of Jesus on the cross and the love that flows from it is the ultimate reality and all sacrifices are a groping towards that as if in the dark. In other words, the work of Jesus comes first (and last - alpha and omega).