

Village Guide

Current Series: Boundless

Texts: Colossians 1.24-29 (NRSV), 2 Thessalonians 2.15, 1 Corinthians 11.1-2

Core Value Focus: Mystery: Ancient faith fosters wonder and refuses to put God in a box.

Big Ideas from the Message:

- Jesus is the knowable mystery.
- Our knowledge about Jesus is experiential. (We don't come to know Jesus primarily through propositional ideas about God, but in the context of experiencing God)
- Our knowledge about Jesus is storied. (We are part of a grand story, one that ties us to 2,000 years of church history... and to the big story of the Bible which moves from creation to new creation. Our stories, our lives, shape how we engage this narrative.)
 - “How do you deliver the authentic faith and great wisdom of the past into the new cultural situation of the twenty-first century? The way into the future, I argue, is not an innovative new start for the church; rather, the road to the future runs through the past....These three matters—roots, connection, and authenticity in a changing world—will help us to maintain continuity with historic Christianity as the church moves forward.” (Robert Webber in *Ancient-Future Time*)
- Our knowledge about Jesus is relational. (We experience Jesus in the context of others, especially in the local church.)
- Our knowledge about Jesus is worshipful. (Worship through communion, scripture, preaching, music, liturgy, the sign of the cross, prayer, etc. is our way of expressing back to God the experience we have of Jesus.)
 - “Ancient worship. . . does truth. All one has to do is to study the ancient liturgies to see that liturgies clearly do truth by their order and in their substance. This is why so many young people today are now adding ancient elements to their worship. . . . This recovery of ancient practices is not the mere restoration of ritual, . . .but a deep, profound, and passionate engagement with truth—truth that forms and shapes the spiritual life into a Christlikeness that issues forth in the call to a godly and holy life and into a deep commitment to justice and to the needs of the poor.” (Robert Webber in *Ancient-Future Worship*)
- Our knowledge about Jesus is unfinished. (The mystery of God in Jesus is one that we always have room to grow deeper in. God is bigger than our mind can comprehend and our words can express. We never ‘arrive.’)

CONNECT (5 min)

- Question chosen for open group discussion or someone pre-invited to share their story.

HEAR (5 min)

- Spend some time in your group sharing what you recall from Sunday's message. Give a loose theme or subject of the sermon to jumpstart everyone's thoughts and recollections. (Example: “On Sunday, Kurt continued our series, Boundless, and talked about our value: mystery. Who was there on Sunday? Could you recap the content for us?” What struck you, and what questions did it leave you with?)
- Read Colossians 1.24-29 (in the NRSV if you have access to that translation). What did Kurt say that these passages reveal about God? About us? Do you see anything differently?

TALK (20 min)

*Note: This format is intentionally less linear in an effort to generate discussion. It is not meant to be followed left-to-right, nor do all the questions need to be asked. As a facilitator, stewarding good discussion means modeling **true listening**, which also means a conversation without an agenda. Use your discernment to see what your group needs to talk about.*

<i>Conceptual</i>	<i>Practical Implications</i>	<i>Spiritual Formation</i>
Mystery in Scripture	How God as mystery informs the way we live	How God as mystery shapes our souls
<p>What do you think of the real life implications of understanding God as a knowable mystery?</p> <p>How does understanding Jesus as both 'knowable' and as 'mystery' inform shape someone's posture toward God?</p> <p>If the Bible is a story, and church history is the extension of that story, what challenges and/or advantages does that present to us as we engage a mysterious-but-knowable God in the 21st century?</p>	<p>Many Christians want to "prove" things, like God's existence and the reliability of the Bible. How does knowing Jesus/God as "mystery" reframe how we talk about God with others?</p> <p>In worship, we emphasize God as a knowable mystery through ancient practices like Communion. What would we miss if we ceased practicing sacraments such as baptism and the Eucharist?</p> <p>If God is mysterious at some level, Kurt said that our journey with God will always be "unfinished" until God restores creation. Do you find comfort in "never having it all figured out" or is this a source of fear for you? Why or why not?</p>	<p>Take a few minutes of silence to think of what your current experience of life these past couple weeks have been like. (<i>Give a few minutes for reflection before asking the question</i>).</p> <p>Is there a moment, where looking back gives you space to notice that God was in some sense mysteriously close?</p> <p>Without creating an unhelpful dichotomy, in your faith journey so far, have you tended to emphasize the God as close (knowable) or God as transcendent (mystery)?</p> <p>If you were to pause and consider Jesus' posture towards you, what part of him (knowable or mystery) is he inviting you to explore more? Is there a spiritual practice that may help create space for this exploration? (Here, the input of others is welcome.)</p>

(Space for your own questions or notes)

LIVE (20 min)

- Is there anything specific that you feel like our discussion here tonight will impact you in this next week?
- How might we pray for each other in light of our discussion and other highs/lows in each other's lives?