

Sunday's sermon on "God the Father" was in a more "apologetic" style (in defense of the faith), dealing with a lot of philosophical ideas that were then echoed in scripture.

1. This sermon first dealt with the chance we take in not believing in the existence of god. As philosopher Blaise Pascale pointed out, "**IF there is no god, then it makes no difference what you believe. BUT if there is a god – then what you believe makes all the difference in the world. SO it is smarter to believe in a God that doesn't exist than to not believe in a God – who does exist.**"

The Bible also recognizes that faith has to take us further than any logical argument can ever bring us. No matter how close we get to doing so, Since God is both spirit and other, we will never be able to PROVE God's existence. So eventually, like C.S. Lewis, we have to let our heart's longings take us beyond where our knowledge can; this is called faith. As Pascale would also famously write, "*The heart has its reasons, which reason does not know.*"

Discuss this idea of how FAITH functions to take us beyond mere reasoning.

You may want to read and discuss Hebrews, chapter 11 – especially verses 1-3 & 6 – on the nature of faith.

2. Second, the sermon listed out the four "logical" arguments for the existence of some god – in whatever form. **Discuss whether you believe that these classic arguments have or do not have any legitimacy.** Noting also the Biblical support for each argument.
 - a. **Ontological:** *universal knowledge of god strongly indicates there is one*
 - *Ecclesiastes 3:11*
 - b. **Cosmological:** *everything must have a beginning "cause"*
 - *Genesis 1:1, John 1:1-14*
 - c. **Teleological:** *design indicates a designer*
 - *Psalm 19, Psalm 33, Romans 1:19*
 - d. **Moral:** *our instinct for morality points to a universal rule maker.*
 - *Romans 2:14-16*
3. The sermon next listed three concepts of how God can interact with our world.
 - a. **Pantheism** – god is in everything and everything is part of god
 - b. **Deism** – God is other than His creation and uninvolved. Having created and set all things in motion, God is now just watching it run its course.
 - c. **Theism** – while God is separate from His creation, He chose to enter into it and interact with it to bring about his desired changes. Theology refers to this as *immanence* and *transcendence*.

What religions, or versions of Christianity, or famous persons, can you think of who subscribe to one of these three concepts of God's involvement?

How might belief in these three different views effect the way you live?

Why must Christianity's conception of God be based on theism?

Romans, chapter 1, can help you understand how the "theistic" God would respond to those who reject Him.

4. **Finally, What are you saying about your relationship with God when you call Him "God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?"**