

Nothing Beats the Original Design

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Our whole family enjoys the Disney movie “Moana.” Last night, we were enjoying an evening together as a family and listening to several of the songs from that movie. One song is called, “You’re Welcome.” The song is sung by one of the main characters who happens to be a demi-god named Maui. He explains in a fun way how he is responsible for all of the cool things in nature. Maui is a fun demi-god with cool powers and a good sense of humor. He has his own faults, one of which is the need for humility. As much as I enjoy the movie and the song, I am glad that Maui is not my God. If you could choose your God, or if you could even design your own God, what sort of God would you choose? I know, the whole idea of choosing the sort of God we want is a bit foolish. If you get to design God, then he wouldn’t really be God, just a being of your imagination. I know we don’t actually get to design our God. But thinking about Maui brought me to appreciate my God. I am convinced that the God who is, the God defined for us on the pages of the Bible, is precisely the God that I also want.

As a pastor, a good portion of my ministry is spent teaching to people the character of the God who is. But let me give you two qualities of the God of Scripture that make him so wonderful. The first is that he is absolutely sovereign. And the second is that he is deeply personal.

All of us cringe at times over God’s sovereignty. We struggle with the reality that he is in control and we are not. God does not order the world according to our whims and does not bend the rules just because we do not like them or think they are unfair. But it is his absolute sovereignty that makes him worthy of worship. I may question his goodness or his wisdom when I survey the evil in this world. But in God, I find someone who is greater than myself. I find someone to whom I must learn to submit. I must also learn to trust in his goodness above my own.

The fact that God is sovereign means that I cannot run from him. I cannot avoid him. When I experience qualities in myself that I know are not good, I know that I cannot hide them from the God who sees all. In my shame, I might want to believe that God does not see, or that he does not care, or that his judgment is not absolute. But his sovereignty forces me to deal with my sin. This may not always be comfortable, but it is exactly what I need.

At the same time, I also desperately need a God who is deeply personal. What I mean by personal is that God is knowable. God actually seeks a relationship with us that does not compromise truth. It is expressed as the Father sends the Son into the world that we too might know him rightly. We all struggle to know God. But in Jesus Christ, God is seeking a personal relationship with us. It is not a relationship that

compromises his sovereignty. It is not one that bends the rules. Jesus makes a way for us to know the one who created us. In this relationship, God confronts our failures and sins. He takes us just as he finds us, but he does not leave us there. He loves to wash our hearts clean and restore in them what has been distorted. He establishes a relationship with his people that goes down to the deepest recesses of the soul. The thought of having a demigod like Maui might sound fun for a time, but Maui does not meet the need for which my soul craves. I need a God who is absolutely good and sovereign. And I need a God who will relentlessly pursue a relationship with me based upon truth. That is who I have found in the God of the Bible.

God says of himself in Isaiah: "I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me," and then in John, Jesus declares: "And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." Don't waste your time designing your own God. Go back to the Bible and come to know that great God who is.