

CHRISTIANITY AND WORLD RELIGIONS

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SERMON NOTES

Week 2 August 21, 2022

“Buddhism”

John 14:7-10; Matthew 6:31-33;

Romans 8:18, 28



I. Introduction

- A. We can be better neighbors and love other people by _____ them better.
- B. _____ was inspired by the life and teachings of Siddhartha Gautama.
- C. Siddhartha was seeking to find an answer to human _____.

II. Buddhist Beliefs

- A. Buddhism is the only major _____ that is officially non-theistic.
- B. The four noble _____ are the basic teachings of the Buddha.
 - a. Life is characterized by suffering.
 - b. Suffering is caused by attachments.
 - c. We can overcome our attachments.
 - d. The Holy Eightfold path is the way to overcome suffering.
- C. The Buddha accepted the Hindu concept of _____.

III. Similarities and Differences

- A. There are a number of Buddhist beliefs that share _____ ground with Christianity.
 - 1) Much of what is recorded of the Buddha’s profound words would easily fit with the wisdom literature of the Bible
 - 2) Christians and Buddhists recognize that suffering is a part of life.
 - 3) Both faiths believe that you should not become attached to material things.
 - 4) Christians can admire the Buddha’s emphasis on meditative practices.
- B. There are significant _____ between Buddhism and Christianity.
 - 1) The belief about God.
 - 2) How to respond to human suffering.
 - 3) What happens after death.

Things I Would Like to Remember About This Message



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INTRODUCTION

Buddhism is one of the world's largest religions and originated 2,500 years ago in India. Buddhists believe that the human life is one of suffering, and that meditation, spiritual and physical labor, and good behavior are the ways to achieve enlightenment, or nirvana.

Monday: Matthew 6:24-34

"Suffering, Buddhists believe, is not caused by external sources but by ourselves: our clinging, our attachments. We can overcome our attachments."* Jesus, like the Buddha, saw clearly that we suffer anxiety when we fear losing what we are attached to. But, instead of calling for total detachment, Jesus said we can make God's enduring righteousness and kingdom our primary attachments. In what ways, if any, have you sensed that your commitment to Jesus has reduced the "worry quotient" in your life?

Tuesday: Psalm 23:1-6

Buddhism is the only major religion that is officially non-theistic. The Buddha simply said the question of God's existence is irrelevant for ending human suffering. Christian faith, on the other hand, completely centers on Jesus as our strong, steadfast shepherd. In what ways have you experienced Jesus leading you like a shepherd? Jesus said his "sheep" listen for His voice. How can you listen for Jesus' voice today?

Wednesday: Romans 8:18-28

The Buddha focused his teaching on finding ways to avoid and end suffering. Christians have a different view. The apostle Paul was confident that God works for our good in all things. When in your life has God's power brought something good out of what was clearly a bad thing?

Thursday: 1 Corinthians 15:3-26

Christians do not believe our life ends in absorption of our life energy back into the universe. We believe Jesus rose from the dead, and promised, "Because I live, you will live too" (John 14:19). How can Paul's confident appeal to hundreds of still-living eyewitnesses deepen your faith in the reality of Jesus' resurrection? What difference does it make to you that Jesus is alive today?

Friday: Philippians 4:6-7, Acts 5:40-42

Paul wrote Philippians 4 in prison (cf. Philippians 1:13-14). He was not only suffering physical discomfort, but mental uncertainty. In the midst of suffering, he found peace. How can you open your heart to God's peace-giving power, as the apostles had?

MOVING FORWARD

Christians and Buddhists share many truths in common. And yet at the heart of our two faiths are very different pictures of our response to human suffering and our ultimate destination. As Christians, we are called to treat people with dignity, love, respect and to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. We don't have to be afraid of other people's faiths; we can listen to their stories and we might find ourselves becoming better Christians.

Answers to the sermon notes: IA) understanding, B) Buddhism, C) suffering. IIA) religion, IIB) truths, C) reincarnation. IIIA) common, B) differences.

** Adam Hamilton, Christianity and World Religions. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005, pp. 55-56.*