Ministerial Musings

Did you hear about the university professor, eager to debunk faith in God, who asked his students: "Did God create everything?"

Several answered, "Yes!"

The professor smiled: "Well, if God created everything, then God created evil. And — according to the principle that our work defines us — if God exists, then God is evil!"

One student raised his hand, "But wait, allow me to ask you, Professor: does cold exist?"

The professor said, "What kind of question is that? Haven't you ever heard of Indiana?" (Actually, I said that. The professor said, "Of course cold exists, we've all felt it!")

The young man replied, "In fact, sir, cold does not exist. What we call 'cold' is in reality the absence of heat. Absolute zero (-460 F) is the total absence of heat; 'cold' is simply a word to describe how we feel if we don't have as much heat as we want."

The student continued, "Professor, does darkness exist?"

His professor replied, "Certainly."

"Once again you are wrong, sir: darkness does not exist, either. Darkness is in reality the absence of light. We measure how dark a space is by determining the amount of light present — no matter how small. 'Total darkness' is another way of saying no light is detectable."

Finally the young man asked, "Now tell me, sir, does evil exist?" No longer quite so sure of himself, his professor responded, "Y-e-s, I've seen it in the holocaust, in racism, in violence and crime: in all manner of horrors."
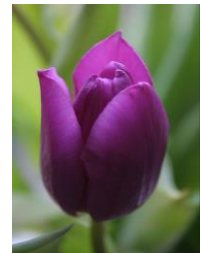
His student answered, "Evil does not exist, sir, at least not unto itself. Evil is simply the absence of God. Like 'Cold' and 'Darkness,' 'Evil' is a word we created to describe an absence, the absence of God. God did not create evil. Evil is what happens when we do not have God's love in our hearts. It's like the 'cold' of no heat, or the 'darkness' of no light."

...The professor sat down.

Some think the young man was Albert Einstein (unlikely, but not impossible). Whoever he was, he deserved an "A" in that class. However, while I agree evil has nothing of God in it, I don't think it's quite right to say evil is where God is absent. Take the cross, for example. Calvary is the ultimate example of God confronting evil. God is even hurt by it!

...But then God defeats it and pulls something wonderful from it!

In Genesis 50:20, Joseph's brothers are afraid he will punish them for selling him into slavery. He responds, "Do not fear. What you meant for evil, God has turned into good." When a friend dies too young, or I read of the latest atrocity by ISIS, or whenever evil pops its unwanted head up, I take comfort in knowing: "God had no part in you, but God WILL beat you."

Dave

March 2015