



# FOLLOW-THROUGH

Small Group Discussion around the Sunday Message  
Isaiah 40:10-11, “Not Safe But Good”  
December 4, 2005

## Introduction

- A non-Christian friend asks, “How can you believe in a God who sends people to hell?” How do you respond?
- Share your reaction to this excerpt from Mark Buchanan’s *Your God is Too Safe*:

*Historians tell us that the cult of Mary arose in Catholicism because the medieval portrait of God was so dark and punishing – the wrathful Father, always at the edge of a tantrum – that the common folk needed a sweet, understanding mother to turn to, to hide behind, to intervene for them, In Protestantism, I think we’ve simply substituted the safe god. But the biting irony is this: Neither the safe god nor the tyrant god are the real God. The God who truly is, who seeks you and me, who desires our holiness, is far more loving and comforting than the safe god. And the true God is far more fierce and fearsome than the bullying and petulant god of our imaginations. (p. 33)*

## Digging Deeper

1. Read Isaiah 40:10-11 as printed here.

*10 See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power,  
and his arm rules for him.  
See, his reward is with him,  
and his recompense accompanies him.*

*11 He tends his flock like a shepherd:  
He gathers the lambs in his arms  
and carries them close to his heart;  
he gently leads those that have young.*

- Summarize with a single adjective or descriptive word what vs. 10 says to you about God – one descriptive word ending the sentence, “God is \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - Secondly, look at the verbs to active words in vs. 11 – “tends... gathers... carries... leads.” Circle the one you’re most grateful for today as you consider what God is doing in your life. Share each of your responses with your group.
2. Look again at Isaiah 40:10-11 above. If vs. 10 is about the power of God and vs. 11 about the mercy of God, which have you spent more time thinking and maybe praying about, God’s power or God’s mercy?
  3. Now read this excerpt from *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, where Lucy, Susan and Peter talk with Mr. and Mrs. Beaver about Aslan:

*“Is he (Aslan) a man?” asked Lucy.*

*“Aslan a man!” said Mr. Beaver sternly. “Certainly not. I tell you he is the King of the wood and the son of the Great emperor-Beyond-the-Sea. Don’t you know who is the King of Beasts? Aslan is a lion—the Lion, the great Lion.”*

*Ooh,” said Susan, “I thought he was a man. Is he quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.”*

*“That you will, dearie,” said Mrs. Beaver. “And make no mistake, if there’s anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they’re either braver than most or else just silly.”*

*“Safe?” said Mr. Beaver. “Don’t you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? Of course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the king, I tell you!”*

4. Any idea why C. S. Lewis may have made the Christ figure in his book a lion? Check out Revelation 5:5. Also consider what other choices Lewis might have had for his “king.”
5. How do we make God too safe for our own good?
6. Read 2 Samuel 6:1-11.
  - What do you think moved God to such dramatic action against Uzzah?
  - What seems to have been Uzzah’s mistake in this celebration?
  - How are we at having a healthy “fear of God” when it comes to His holiness?
7. If having a god who is too safe means whittling God down to our own comfort level or making God very predictable, in which of these five areas are you most likely to make God too “safe?”
  - God’s holiness
  - God’s justice
  - God’s power
  - God’s will
  - God’s love
8. Share a time in your life when you played it far too safe and lost an opportunity as a result?
9. True or false? The safer we make God the less likely we are to take risks ourselves.
10. Read Psalm 119:68, Psalm 107:1, and Romans 8:28. What makes God good according to these verses?
11. What events in our lives may make us question the goodness of God?
12. Share a story from your life and times that shows the goodness of God in one of these areas:
  - God’s good timing
  - God’s good purposes
  - God’s good mercy
13. Close with a prayer of praise for our God who is “not safe but good.”