**The God of Hard Things:**

**Reflection:**

Do you remember flannel-graph Jesus from your Sunday school days or maybe the cartoonish character from a children’s Bible or a coloring sheet? What about the Prosperity Gospel and its promise of an easy, comfortable life if you’ll just believe? Or maybe the politically correct, powerless God of some of the more liberal denominations that just wants everybody to be happy and get along? Can any of these representations of God survive in the Hard Things? When life suddenly turns on its head or things get hard or darkness or trouble cross your path, is your God big enough to handle it? Has your God been through ugliness, pain, doubt, fear, sorrow, death? Does He understand? Will He be your strength and solace through the Hard Things, or will he crumple up and vanish like a Styrofoam cup in a camp fire?

Jesus cried out to God in the garden, that this awful trial might pass Him by, somehow, some way, but God the Father said ‘no,’ to God the Son, and He died a horrible death in our stead, so awful His own Father could not look upon it. And what came of it? Salvation for the whole world! He knows about the Hard Things, He has lived them! He knows what it is to hear ‘no’ when your world is falling apart, but He also knew the Father had greater things in store, and trusting Him, He did what He had to do and brought life to each and every one that will believe! He understands the Hard Things, He has lived and died and suffered through it. Forget who you think God is or should be, and turn to the One who has revealed Himself to us in scripture: The God of Hard Things. “*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me* (Psalm 23:4a).”

**Let Us Pray:**

Let’s pray for wisdom to see what God is really like, Someone who can handle our worst situations and will walk with us through them, and for the faith to trust Him on the entire journey. Let us pray for our political and spiritual leaders, our communities and social organizations, the media, schools and institutions, that they too might see God for who He is rather than who they want him to be. Let us pray for courage and patience as we deal with a world determined to redefine God in their own image, that we may show them what He is truly like and not be discouraged by their own representation thereof or their own antagonism to our attempts at revealing the truth.

**Recommended Scripture**:

[Psalm 23](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=psalm+23&version=ESV)

[Luke](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+22&version=ESV) 22:39-71

[I John 4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John+4&version=ESV)

**Recommended Worship:**

[How Deep the Father’s Love for Us](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jD9-omLKwWI)

[My Savior, My God](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=96P0bwvpbk4)

[Awesome God](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJOVB6Bu7K8)