Sermon: **Christ is the visible likeness of the invisible God** (Colossians 1.15a)

Brian Tamaki and earthquakes sent by God to sinful Christchurch and thus Wellington/Kaikoura.

We do not like this, but is this merely opinion?

[1] Surely Christchurch, etc are not more sinful than Auckland.   
If this was from God because of sin then the whole world would have been destroyed   
(Rom 3.23 **everyone has sinned and is far away from God’s saving presence**)

[2] It is based on faulty ideas about Kingship.

God is good, but Tamaki’s ideas show a God who likes to punish sin.  
God has power. Those in power use that power to push through their ideas – seen in politicians.

[3] Jesus is King, but shows true kingship.

God is good, but it is goodness to overcome sin, not punish it.   
See Zacchaeus, woman caught in adultery.

God has power, but it is power to serve not dominate. See Jesus washing disciples’ feet.

I would never punish my boys if they make mistakes. I might warn or urge change.   
Surely God is no less. Mt 7.11: **Bad as you are, you know how to give good things to your children. How much more, then, will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him**.

*for Aotearoa / New Zealand (by Maren Tirabassi)*

*God is not in the earthquake,   
and God is not in the landslides, rockfalls, terrible rains, aftershocks, tsunamis.*

*God is in evacuators of Kaikoura, the people of courage in Christchurch   
– barely re-built from the last time.   
God is the companion of those who flee their homes facing floods in Wellington.*

*God is in the symbolic rescue of two stranded cows and a calf.   
God is a triage nurse in Wairau hospital,   
and God puts on a hard hat and climbs into a front end loader   
for the dirty, long, unlikely to be newsworthy, work on roads and homes.*

*God is also, as Elijah discovered, in that cave so long ago, singing in the voice of the tui,*

*who repeats what it hears for those who will listen to aroha.*   
Where is aroha/love in Tamaki? And therefore where is God in Tamaki? For God is love.