

Who Is God?
Together in Truth
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On January 7, 1855 when he was only 20 years old, Charles Spurgeon opened his morning sermon with this extended quotation. He said this,

"It has been said by someone that the proper study of mankind is man. I will not oppose the idea but I believe it is equally true that the proper study of God's elect is God; the proper study of a Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy which can ever engage the attention of a child of God is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings and the existence of the great God whom he calls Father.

There is something exceedingly improving to the mind in a contemplation of the Divinity. It is a subject so vast, that all our thoughts are lost in its immensity; so deep, that our pride is drowned in its infinity. Other subjects we can compass and grapple with; in them we feel a kind of self-content, and go our way with the thought, 'Behold, I am wise.' But when we come to this master science, finding that our plumbline cannot sound its depth, and that our eagle eye cannot see its height, we turn away with the thought that vain man would be wise, but he is like a wild colt; and with solemn exclamation, 'I am but of yesterday, and know nothing.' No subject of contemplation will tend more to humble the mind, than thoughts of God.

But while the subject humbles the mind, it also expands it. He who often thinks of God, will have a larger mind than the man who simply plods around this narrow globe. The most excellent study for expanding the soul, is the science of Christ, and Him crucified, and the knowledge of the Godhead in the glorious Trinity. Nothing will so enlarge the intellect, nothing so magnify the whole soul of man, as a devout, earnest, continued investigation of the great subject of the Deity.

And, whilst humbling and expanding, the subject is eminently consolatory. Oh, there is, in contemplating Christ, a balm for every wound; in musing on the Father, there is a quiet for every grief; and in the influence of the Holy Spirit, there is a balsam for every sore. Would you lose your sorrow?

Would you drown your cares? Then go, plunge yourself in the Godhead's deepest sea; be lost in His immensity; and you shall come forth as from a couch of rest, refreshed and invigorated. I know nothing which can so comfort the soul; so calm the swelling billows of sorrow and grief; so speak peace to the winds of trial, as a devout musing upon the subject of the Godhead. It is to that subject that I invite you this morning."

It has been said that there are two starting points to knowledge, true knowledge: the first one is there is a God, the second is you are not he. There is a God and you are not he. Who is God? This is an ultimate question of infinite consequence. It is a question that is so basic and so fundamental that it's easy for us to take the answer for granted as though we know the subject so well, and yet we must realize that when we ask the question who is God, the answer to that question is more important than we are, it's more important than you, it's more important than me, the answer to the question who is God transcends time, space and human history, and what we're going to do this evening is consider this message as an introduction to God consumed in four different points.

Now I realize that in the space of a message of approximately 60 minutes give or take, you know, 30 minutes, I guess, in a message of this brevity, we recognize in advance that we cannot begin to say everything that needs to be said or that should be said. We're taking this as an introduction, as a brief survey that can only hit certain high points. If you're interested in going in further depth, we have a number of sermons on the topic and the attributes of God on our website under the title "Systematic Theology," but tonight we're simply doing a brief survey, an introduction that puts it all in one place some of the major themes about God that we need to take into account. And one of the things that we're doing with this series on ultimate questions that we've loosely titled "Together in Truth," is that we want to ask 11 different ultimate questions and answer them in brief sermons one at a time, giving us at the end at the end of this a structure that will truly give you a biblical worldview, that will give you a mindset that will let you process many other things of biblical truth as you study the Scripture in the days and months and years to come, and as a church, what we're wanting to do is in this time of separation, to come together around these great themes that God might use them by the Holy Spirit to develop in us a greater sense of a unified mind, a greater depth of understanding and a greater commitment to these truths which are the reason that Truth Community exists. We exist to proclaim these things from God's word and it's to the question who is God that I ask you to turn your attention to now here this evening.

We're going to answer the question who is God in four statements and some of these will go rather quickly. First of all, who is God, number 1: God is an eternal spirit. God is an eternal spirit. In other words, he's not like us. We are finite and we are creatures of flesh, God in his very essence is an infinite eternal spirit, so his essence is invisible and spiritual. The divine nature is not made of physical matter that we can see with our eyes or touch with our hands, it was only in the Incarnation of Christ that God was made visible in that manner, but we're looking further back, we're looking to the very essence of God as he existed in eternity past with what we're considering here this evening.

In John 4:24, Jesus explicitly said God is spirit and later on in his ministry after his resurrection, Jesus said that a spirit does not have flesh and bones, he said that in Luke 24:39. And so God is an infinite invisible spirit that has existed from before the beginning of time. In 1 Timothy 1:17, it says this,

17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

The only God and there is only one God, the only God is eternal. He is invisible. He is immortal, meaning he cannot die. That's who God is, he is an eternal spirit who has always existed. He had no beginning and he will have no end. The existence of God has always been.

Now in that same passage or in that same letter from Paul to Timothy in chapter 6 it says this in verse 15 and 16, chapter 6, verses 15 and 16 of 1 Timothy. The Apostle Paul said this as he spoke about Christ,

15 ... He is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.

And this speaking about the presence of God, speaking that he possesses immortality, he dwells in unapproachable light, he is the only Sovereign, no man has seen or can see the very essence of God. In Christ we saw the Godhead as the Christmas Carol reminds us, we saw in Christ the Godhead veiled in flesh, what we're talking about is the very essence of God. It is an invisible intangible essence, a spirit that is eternal and so this invisible spirit who is God existed before creation and he will have no end.

Now just by way of a bit of insight and understanding to the significance of that, in the 10 Commandments the second commandment prohibits the use of images in the worship of God, and if you think about it, you can see why that would necessarily be the case. I apologize in advance to those of you who are going to need to take down your pictures of Jesus from your wall, but those are not good things because what we have in the second commandment is a prohibition against the use of images in worship. And the point of that is this, is that a physical object, a physical image could never, could never possibly properly represent the essence of God, and so that's why God prohibits it. It's why in our worship center here we have a very lovely auditorium but it is very plain without pictures on the walls, without anything trying to make any kind of tangible representation of God because it cannot be done. Any physical manifestation, any physical image could only diminish the image of God, could only diminish who he really is. It could never give an accurate portrayal of what infinite eternal spirit would look like. And so we see that this is a critical point of understanding for us in the understanding of God. He is an eternal spirit.

Now with that briefly said, we come to our second point here this evening and it's this, is that this God of whom we've been speaking, this eternal spirit, God is the Creator of heaven and earth. God is the Creator of heaven and earth and you know your Bibles well enough to know what the very first verse in Scripture says, Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." So God made the heaven and earth in six 24-hour days as you see as you read in the remainder of Genesis 1, and the fact that the God of the Bible, the one true God is this eternal spirit who is the Creator of heaven and earth and who made the earth and everything it contains in six 24-hour days, that has vast implications for our worldview and for how we view the truth claims of evolutionary scientists and others of like ilk. We contest that, we dispute that, we deny what they say when they say that the origins of man and the origins of earth are found in evolution and millions or billions of years. We utterly deny that. That is not the teaching of Scripture and it is a denial and an assault on the one true God who is the Creator of heaven and earth.

Now in the New Testament, the book of Hebrews 11:3 says this, it says,

3 By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

Now we're taking this early part really quickly here, I know, but God is an eternal spirit who is the Creator of heaven and earth. Well, that has vast consequences. That little bit just has vast consequences and for you young people that are watching tonight, what we've said in these first 15 minutes of this time together is enough to completely change the trajectory of your life because it has this consequence: what we are saying here is God is the Creator of heaven and earth, it has this implication, it means that God made you. You did not make yourself. In fact, God made all things, he is the sustainer of all things, he is the director of all things, and that has vast consequences for you personally because what it means is this, it means that as your Creator, you owe God your love, your worship, and your allegiance. Your life does not belong to you because you are not the source of your own existence, rather all of your priorities and all of your affections should be given to this God who made you who is the Creator of heaven and earth. And that's what Jesus said when he summarized the first four Commandments of the 10 Commandments when he said the greatest commandment was that you would love the Lord your God with all of your heart, and with all of your soul, and with all of your strength, and with all of your mind. You see, that's what God is entitled to. He made all of you and he made everything about the realm in which you exist. That means that in return you owe him obligations of worship, love, devotion and obedience.

Now you start to get a sense, then, although we're going to save this ultimate question for a few days from now, but you start to get just a preliminary sense, a little bit of a sunrise, a bit of a dawn of understanding rising at the edge of the horizon of what a horrific thing it is that we do not give that to God; how great the sin is of the creature when it does not give that worship to God, indeed when it rebels and sins against him. We realize that our sin is of great consequence when we realize that we are sinning against an eternal spirit who created the world in which we live and then formed us in our mother's womb and

placed us in this world as well. You see, it's only right that we would give our love and obedience to the one who made us and that we would do so with utter perfection. The fact that we don't shows us how great our guilt is.

Also one of the implications of this that God is the Creator of heaven and earth is this, is that Scripture teaches us that God has put his imprint on his physical creation so that men and women are able to look at his creation and see a manifestation of who God is in the greatness of his power as Creator. Romans 1, Psalm 19, you look up at the stars, you see that God is infinite, that he is great, he is a God of order and a God of power, and so God has imprinted his existence into his creation in a way that's visible to all and the Bible says that for men not to worship him in response to that leaves them utterly without excuse and under the judgment and wrath of God for not honoring him. You see, my friends, what we're talking about here just in the simplicity of these two points has implications that resound throughout all of eternity and that's why it's so important for us to deal with these questions, these ultimate questions over the course of these three weeks.

Let me step back for just a moment. We answered last time the question why do we believe the Bible, we answered that and we said that based on the authority of Jesus Christ, we believe the 66 books of the Bible and everything that they teach and affirm. Well, when you study the Bible, what you find is that the Bible is a revelation of God. As we come to the Bible, we say what does the Bible teach us? Well, it teaches us preeminently about the person and the glory of God and the provision that is made for sinful men to be saved. Well, so it's important for us, then, as we follow the progression here, we understand and we accept and we bow before the authority of Scripture and Scripture then teaches us who God is, Scripture is the place where this eternal spirit has made himself known in propositional truth that we can read and understand and come to appreciate.

Well, let's go a little further, then, let's go to our third point for this evening and these will expand out and take a little more time than what we've done so far. We can say this, God is an eternal spirit, he is the Creator of heaven and earth, thirdly what we want to say is this, is that God is great. God is great and don't let the simplicity of that point cause you to overlook the magnitude of what is being said there because I know that we have so diluted the word "great" that it's become a little bit too casual in our language and in our discourse and in our daily conversations. You know, "Man, that was a great ballgame. Wasn't that a great hamburger we just had together?" And we diminish it to things that are such of a passing and transient nature. What I'm saying tonight is far different than that. When I say that God is great, I mean God is great. God is magnificent. God is awesome in his glory. God is incomprehensible in the magnitude of his infinity and his marvelous perfections of his essence. God is stunningly great, is the sense in which we are using that word here this evening, and what we need to understand and as we approach the topic a little bit more closely here this evening, is that we need to understand this and this is such a fundamental point: God's greatness is beyond our understanding, God is greater than we can possibly imagine. Our human, finite, sinful, fallen minds are not capable of grasping the full extent of his infinite majesty. We can

know him in ways that are accurate according to the way that he has revealed himself, but we cannot know him exhaustively. The nature of God is far beyond our ability to comprehend and Scripture itself teaches this in Psalm 145:3 which says this,

3 Great is the LORD, and highly to be praised, And His greatness is unsearchable.

His greatness cannot be explored to the uttermost, it cannot be exhausted. We start to study, we see some things that we understand darkly as in a mirror with our capacities that we have and with the help of the Holy Spirit who illumines our minds, but we must understand that we are limited in our ability to understand the infinite greatness of God and so we approach it in that way. There's another aspect of this that will be even more essential, if I can put it that way, on Saturday when we consider what is the Trinity, but we need to understand this: when we come to study a God who is an infinite spirit, who is eternal and whose greatness is unsearchable, my friend, we should understand this from the start, this is such an important point to make right from the beginning is that when we study the nature of God, we should expect to find things that go beyond what we're able to understand. Not that they are illogical. No, it's not like that, but things that go beyond what we are able mentally to comprehend, we should expect that from studying a God whose greatness is unsearchable.

So with that in mind, let me break down this thought that God is great into three subpoints that all start with the letter O. First of all, in his greatness God is omnipotent. God is omnipotent and what we mean by that is God is all-powerful in a particular way. God is all-powerful in the sense that he has the power to do whatever he pleases to do. There is nothing that hinders the hand of God from accomplishing everything related to his good will. In Jeremiah 32:17 it says this,

17 Ah Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You.

Then in the book of Daniel 4:35 it says this,

35 ... He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'

God accomplishes his will. Nothing can stop him.

Now it's probably worth pausing for just moment and making a point of clarification here. The true God, the biblical God, his omnipotence doesn't mean that he can do absolutely anything because his will and his omnipotence is restrained by the other aspects of his character and his perfections. So for example, it is impossible for God to lie, Titus 1:2, that is something that he cannot do. As the God of truth, he cannot lie. And God does not do things that are contradictions. He doesn't make square circles. He doesn't

make rocks that are too heavy for he himself to lift. These kinds of foolish objections should be put away and understand that the nature of the omnipotence of God means that he has the ability to do whatever he pleases and he does whatever he pleases and no one can stop him.

In Isaiah 46, if you want to turn there as you're watching at home, Isaiah 46:8. I'll give you just a moment to find that in your Bible. Isaiah 46:8, it says this,

8 Remember this, and be assured; Recall it to mind, you transgressors. 9 Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure.'

Part of God's self-revelation, his self-disclosure is that he is an omnipotent God who is able to accomplish everything that his will has determined to happen, and so this means that God is of infinite power, of infinite ability, and that is the nature of God. He is great. You know, you and I can't even outlive, you know, seven or eight decades. As soon as we are born we are in the process of dying, and yet God lives forever and God has the ability to sustain his own being and to sustain all of his creation, to sustain all of the universe and all of the complex orbits of the uncountable galaxies and planets within them, God does that effortlessly and in the process God shows forth his power. He showed forth his power when he raised Jesus Christ from the dead. He will show forth his power when he destroys the devil and all wicked people in eternal judgment in hell forever. God is great and even supernatural hosts that are arrayed against him cannot thwart his will. That's how great God is. He's omnipotent.

Now secondly, God is great not only in his omnipotence, in other words, in his power, God is also great in his omniscience. He is great in his omniscience. God is omniscient by which we mean that God knows all things past, present and future, and he knows them all simultaneously. God in a way that is just baffling to the human mind, far from us to be able to understand, God has always had perfect knowledge of everything. We saw that in the passage that I just read from Isaiah 46 when he said that he declares the end from the beginning. He can speak what's going to happen in the future because he sees it equally as well as the present and in the past. God's omniscience is so great that he has never learned anything and he will never forget anything. He has never forgotten anything and he will never learn anything because he knows everything that there is to know throughout all of the universe, and even more, God knows the fullness of the excellencies of his own infinite essence.

Now let's turn to just one passage to make this point ever so briefly in Psalm 139. In Psalm 139 we see a great statement of the omniscience of God. Psalm 139, the first four verses of that familiar Psalm says this as David is honoring God and worshiping him in his praises. He says this, he says,

1 O LORD, You have searched me and known me. 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. 3 You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all.

David speaking and applying the doctrine of omniscience personally says and understands that God knows intimately all of his ways. God knows what David is going to say before the first word is on his tongue, and it's not simply the verbal aspects of David's knowledge, God knows his intimate thoughts. God knows the heart. 1 Samuel 16:7, God looks on the heart with perfect understanding of everything that is there. When we think about the omnipotence of God, then, my fellow Christian, this has a great consolation for us. It means that God knows everything about you and he knows the fullness of your sin, and yet he still sent Christ to save you. God still chose you in Christ before the beginning of time knowing that those aspects of sinful conduct, sinful thought, sinful words would mar your life, God knew it all and saved you anyway. There are no hidden secrets from God. It is all laid open and bare before him before him with whom we have to do, and the fact that God saved us, the fact that Christ still came to earth to redeem us from our sins is a point of great consolation for us in those times where we are struggling with sin, where others perhaps are misjudging us, where we have failed and there is no human comfort in that, we look to the omniscience of God and find our comfort. God knows the worst about you, my Christian friend, and he still loves you. Conversely, God knows the best about you even though men may reject you. We find, then, in the omniscience of God a great refuge for our soul. The fact that God is omniscient means that we can go to him and pour out our hearts before him, that we can lay ourselves before him knowing as believers in Christ, knowing that he will receive us and receive us in love knowing ahead of time everything that we have to say.

Now at the same time, as much as that is a comfort, we also realize that this has elements of things that humble us as well, and for that I want you to turn back to the book of Isaiah 55 with me, Isaiah 55. In Isaiah 55, we read this in verse 8. God says,

8 "... My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.

So while we're comforted by the fact that God knows us and still loves us, there is simultaneously a recognition of humility and fear in the presence of the omniscience of God. God knows everything and he thinks deeper and broader and better than we do in ways that go far beyond our capacity to understand or even estimate or approximate, and so that means that the omniscience of God humbles us and as God's plan for our lives is unfolding, as he is working out his will for our lives in his providence, my friend, you need to understand that God is working out his plan for your life according to a perfect knowledge that cannot fail, and while there may be times and episodes and sorrows that you don't understand and you can't possibly see how this could ever work out for good, you must understand that the measure of the purposes of God and the measure of what

will come in the future is not measured according to your limited, sinful, finite perspective. No, it's all working according to the plan of an omniscient God who knows the end from the beginning and is able to work that out according to his omnipotence. But you can start to see why Spurgeon said we plunge ourselves into the immensity of the depths of God, that he has infinite power to accomplish his will and his knowledge is perfect, and so his power and knowledge are working together to accomplish that will for us. It will all ultimately result in his glory to the praise of the glory of his wonderful grace, and my Christian friend, it will ultimately work out for your good in the end because God works according to the highest purposes for his elect. So that takes some of the pressure off of us. We don't have to understand things in advance. We don't have to know how tomorrow is going to come, it's enough for us to know that this God of the Bible who is an eternal spirit, who is the Creator of heaven and earth, who is omnipotent, this God is knowingly, wisely directing everything according to the counsel of his will, and in that we find our peace, we find our rest, and we are able to be at confident peace in the midst of our lives.

Now God is great, we've said he's omnipresent, he's omniscient, thirdly, God is omnipresent. God is omnipresent, and what we mean by this is that God is present everywhere. He is distinct from his creation, it's not that God is everything but God is everywhere. He is present throughout all of his creation. And I invite you to turn back to Psalm 139 in verse 7 with me, Psalm 139:7 as we turn to this Psalm once more. Psalm 139:7, David is meditating on the omnipresence of God when he says this,

7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. 9 If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, 10 Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me.

David speaking in superlatives, speaking with a measure of hyperbole says, "If I could go into the highest of heaven, God, I would find You there. If I entered into the realm of death, I would find You there. If I went to the bottom of the sea, I would find You there. When I walk in the forest, I find You there. When I stand on a beach by the sea, Lord, You are there." And so God is equally present no matter where we might go anywhere in the universe and it has this great consolation for us as we walk as believers in Christ through this world, the fact that God is omnipresent means that he is always with us, and it is the omnipresence of God that is at the heart of the comfort of that great familiar Psalm, Psalm 23 when David said, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil for You are with me." So David draws comfort even in danger, even in danger of death, David draws comfort from the omnipresence of God; the fact that God is always present everywhere in his creation, that broad general statement has specific application for us as we go through life and as we go through the greatest dangers that life could bring to us, we realize as we understand who God is, we understand that he is with us. That's what our Lord Jesus said in Matthew 28. It's a stunning claim to deity when he said, "Lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age. I'm with you always."

And you see, when you study these attributes of God, what it does is it brings you a genuine intimacy to God, a genuine intimacy as truth shapes your mind and as truth shapes your understanding of what reality is. As we're walking through life, we don't rise and fall on the basis of our circumstances because we're grounded and we stand on something that is far more stable and secure. As you meditate deeply on the attributes of God, you realize that it has immense implications for your whole perspective on life. The fact that God is omnipotent, always working out his will, that God is omniscient so he has a perfect knowledge that informs the operation of his will, and the fact that he is omnipresent meaning that he is with us as he is working out every aspect of his will, we start to realize that there is a ground for profound peace, for profound serenity as we walk through this life even if the billows of sorrow are cascading over our souls, even in the midst of disappointments and, you know, if you're getting a little older in life like I am and you look at life and you see that you have dreams that aren't going to come true, you look at things that have happened in relationships and you find that things aren't going to work out the way that you'd hoped, maybe you've found that you've got health problems that are chronic and for which there are no cure, or you're facing major surgery soon and you don't know what the outcome of that is going to be, to say nothing about the current national disruption that prompts an online service here tonight, what we have to do is this, we have to set aside all of those earthly distractions and come back to the foundation upon which we ultimately stand. Our God is great and he is sovereign in power, sovereign in ability, and he is with us, and that gives us all the grounds for peace that we need.

It reminds me and it's a proper place for us to turn to the New Testament for just as we work out some of the implications of this. In Philippians 4 in verse 8, let's say. Actually, let's go back to verse 6. Philippians 4:6, it says,

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Now I understand that we're used to looking at that passage about the importance of prayer, and rightly so, but we must understand and remember who it is that we are delivering our petitions to, we are delivering our petitions to God, to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the God who is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. That is far different than making a desperate cry into the night sky with no sense of the knowledge of who God is. No, when we know who God is in his revealed attributes, then prayer becomes something of a far greater import, and as we meditate on these things and as we long for that abiding peace in our soul, then we find in verse 8 this said by the Apostle Paul.

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if

there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

My friends, the character of God, the greatness of God is true. The character of God, the greatness of God is worthy of praise and that is to be the object of your meditation. These are the things that you are to go back to again and again, thinking over, rehearsing them in your mind, preaching them to yourself who your God is, the greatness of God so that your mindset and your worldview would be driven by the essence of who God is rather than being tossed about by the circumstances of your life. You start to see, don't you, how important it is for us to answer these kinds of ultimate questions and to have a framework in our thinking that allows us to think biblically because I assure you that the man, the woman, the youth, that thinks biblically is going to live life much differently than the one who neglects these revealed truths from God's word.

So God is great and in those three aspects that we've been looking at, his omnipotence, his omniscience, his omnipresence, you gather those up together along with many other things that we're leaving unsaid here tonight, but these attributes teach us that God is sovereign, that God is sovereign. A God of all power, all knowledge and all presence is a God who is sovereign over all of his creation and that's who the God of the Bible is.

What does it mean that he is sovereign? Well, I'll quote from one of my favorite writers, R. B. Kuiper again, and I quote and he says this, "The sovereignty of God may be defined as His absolute right to govern and dispose of His creatures according to His good pleasure. God not only has that right, He exercises it." In other words, God has the ability to do whatever he pleases, he has the ability to govern all of his creation and all of his creatures from the smallest sparrow to the kings of the earth and every point in between, God has the ability to do that and he is sovereign not only in the fact that he has the ability to do it but he actually does it. He works all things after the counsel of his will, Ephesians 1:11, so that if you think about somebody that's just mowing grass and grass clippings are flying from the lawn equipment that's being used, even in the course of those clippings as they flutter to the ground a few feet away, that is not random, that is not outside the sovereign control of God. God is sovereignly orchestrating everything that happens down to the smallest details of everything in life: the hairs on your head; the flights of birds in the air; the rise and fall of nations. This is what Scripture says God does and the power by which he does it. Now do you see why we've titled this third point God is great? God is great. God is awesome. We can't even begin to comprehend the fullness of what he does, let alone the power and the unseen force by which he does it and the fact that he does it. We're lost in the immensity and the wonder of God. That's who God is. He's great. He's great beyond the heavens.

Now let's just keep something particular in mind here in that as we've said that God is the Creator and that created, that imposes upon us an obligation, a responsibility to worship, do you see, my friends, that his greatness also drives us to worship? We realize that the vastness of who he is, he so dwarfs us in his essence and who he is that in the presence of such divine supremacy, the only thing that we can do is to fall down at his feet and worshiped him and to honor him, and to ascribe to him glory for his greatness? You

know, if I can just quote Scripture again, I want to tell you bluntly that if something in you doesn't get that, if something in you isn't drawn to worship God for his greatness, you haven't even begun to understand anything about the nature of life and your own existence. You're a fool. You're walking around in darkness and the reason that I say that is that in light of the greatness of God what comes to mind is Proverbs 1:7 which says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and if you understand something about the greatness of God, you must fear him, you must revere him, you must honor him for the magnitude of his being, and if you're not doing that, you haven't even gotten to first base in life. You're lost in sin. You're not giving God the glory he deserves for his intrinsic greatness. How could it possibly go well for you? How could your life possibly be on the right path if you do not acknowledge the greatness of the one who holds your path in his hand? You see, we just have to stop thinking in such superficial terms, being content with such a superficial approach to life. No, who is God? He is great. He is great and that greatness has a completely reorienting factor in the nature in which our mind works and that's what you need to seek from him. If you're dead in sin and you're separated from God and you say, "I've never even thought of these things before," well, my friend, this is the time for you to cry out for grace from God that he would do a work in your heart and make himself known to you personally, and that the way that he's revealed himself in Scripture would come to you with power in the knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There is no other alternative for you.

Well, let's go to our fourth and final point here this evening. We've seen that God is an eternal spirit, that God is the Creator of heaven and earth, that God is great, and in some ways, you know, you could look at any one of these and say, you could just say every one of these is my favorite point. Well, point 4 is like that, equal in its majesty. Point 4: God is good. God is good. The fact that God is great could, if you think about it, if you thought about it in isolation, it could bring you to a point of despair or just utterly craven fear where you withdraw from God and that you are nothing but afraid of what he would do to you if it was only a matter of his greatness. If God had all of these attributes of greatness and yet he was a harsh God, a vindictive God, then we would all be of all creatures most miserable to simply know him like that. But God is good. God is good and I'm only going to mention two of his attributes as subpoints here, although others will probably spill out of my mouth as we go along, but just two of his attributes to orient our thinking and we'll save further study for another time. God is good in the sense that God is love. God is love. 1 John 4:8 says it plainly just like that, God is love. The nature of God intrinsic to the essence of God, intrinsic to his perfection is that he is love.

Now what this means is that he takes interest in us and he acts to do good to us, he acts to take care of us, and in that sense Scripture says that God is good and God manifests love even to his enemies. He sends the sun and the rain on the righteous and the unrighteous alike it says in Matthew 5, and even in the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ you see an absolute manifestation of the love of God to sinners everywhere. When we talk about the Gospel of Christ, we mean that Jesus Christ came from heaven to earth, that he lived a perfect life, and that he offered that life as a sacrifice to God to satisfy the wrath of God against sinners just like you and me. God accepted that sacrifice as shown by the fact that he raised him from the dead. God has now highly exalted Christ to his right hand

in heaven from which Christ intercedes for his saints, and from that position of exalted glory the Gospel of Jesus Christ goes to all men everywhere and says that a complete satisfaction for sin has been made; that in the Lord Jesus Christ, that believing in the Lord Jesus Christ you can have salvation from your sins, you can receive the gift of eternal life, and God promises eternal life to everyone who will believe in him. Well, do you see, my friends, that that free offer of the Gospel, that unqualified offer of mercy to everyone is a manifestation of the love of God to sinners everywhere, that God is willing to save every sinner that would come to him, and that the only thing that keeps someone from salvation in response to the Gospel is not anything in the willingness of God, it's completely in the unwillingness of the sinner to go to him? But just in that proclamation of the Gospel you have a revelation of the love of God for mankind. "God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son." So God has loved us, God has loved men and he has particularly loved his people, and he even did it to the point of self-sacrifice.

Turn in your Bible to 1 John 4. I alluded to this earlier just a few minutes ago but now in 1 John 4:7 through 10 is what I want to call your attention to. 1 John 4:7 through 10. Remember, we're saying God is good. One of the aspects of his goodness is his love. 1 John 4:7,

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that [in other words here's how you can see the love of God, here's how you can measure the goodness of the love of God, here's how you can measure it] this is how the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

You see the love of God manifested in the cross of Christ. The wood of the cross is a pulpit by which the love of God is proclaimed at great cost. In great love, at great immeasurable self-sacrifice, the Lord Jesus Christ loved sinners and poured out his lifeblood in order to redeem them from their guilt, to redeem them from their bondage to Satan, and to deliver them from the eternal punishment that their sins deserved. He did this voluntarily. He did this in obedience to his Father and Christ who is God in human flesh, you see this magnificent revelation of the love of God taking place. You see how wonderful he is. You see how humble he is. You see how concerned he is for sinners like you that he would go and be obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross, to redeem you from your sins.

My friend, especially my Christian friend, those of you that are struggling, maybe questioning God, the best that I can do, I want to look you straight in the eye tonight and I want you to look me straight in the eye tonight as I speak truth to you, you need to understand that God loves you and he has established that love for all time in an undeniable way in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. You claim to be a Christian, I believe you, I accept that at face value, what I want you to understand is this, is that if you are a

Christian, God has supremely loved you, God has supremely secured your highest eternal interest in the death of Christ on the cross and Scripture says right here, you can go back and read it later, this is love. And as I like to say when this comes up in the pulpit, picture yourself 2,000 years ago standing at the foot of Jesus at the cross, looking at him battered and bruised, exposed to all of the world, crying out to God, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" understanding with a measure of subsequent new understanding, understanding that in that act Christ was in love bearing your sins in his body on the cross and that he was doing it of his own volition. My friend, in that mental picture of remembering Christ like that, don't you understand that there is no question about the love of God for you no matter what else has happened in your life, no matter what disappointments maybe you've faced and the sorrows that have come to you? The love of God is settled. It has been settled clearly for a good 2,000 years since the death of Christ on the cross and so we look back at the cross and we see the ultimate measure of the love of God that Christ revealed the majesty of the love of God in his death on the cross. He loved us just like that.

Do you see also, my friend, how another attribute of God draws you and compels you to worship the the most holy God, loving most unholy you, God loving you while you were a sinner, while you were an enemy of God, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us it says in Romans 5? Don't you see, my friend, that that kind of love draws out another aspect of unqualified worship and devotion to him? It's not just that God has created us although that's reason enough to worship him. It's not just his greatness, although that's reason enough to worship him. We worship him because of the love that he has shown for us and the fact that he has secured our eternal salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that he did it at the cost of his own lifeblood. Wow, we consider all of that and we are just lost in wonder, worship and praise as we consider who God is and what he has done, and the fact that in his greatness he loved us and that he loved us with his greatness, we honor him, we worship him, we praise him, we ascribe glory to his name, in other words, and in response to all of these things, we trust him.

You know, if you would, turn to Psalm 108:3 for just, you could go to literally a thousand passages of Scripture, I chose this one for particular reasons that we don't need to go into this evening. But Psalm 108:3, here's the response to the fullness of the attributes of God where it says,

3 I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the peoples, And I will sing praises to You among the nations. 4 For Your lovingkindness is great above the heavens, And Your truth reaches to the skies. 5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, And Your glory above all the earth.

That's the believing response to the nature and the attributes of God. God is good, by which we mean God is love.

There's a final aspect of this that we can speak to, that God is holy, God is good in his holiness, by which we mean that God is separate from his creation, God stands alone, that's good, that's an aspect and an expression of his excellency that he is holy in the fact

that he is separate like that, and yet God is also morally perfect. God is morally perfect. In Job 34:10 and 12, Job 34:10 and 12 it says this,

10 ... Far be it from God to do wickedness, And from the Almighty to do wrong. 12 Surely, God will not act wickedly, And the Almighty will not pervert justice.

Everything that God does, everything that God thinks, all of it is perfect. It is thoroughly just and righteous and good. It is impossible for him to sin and to do evil, and what Scripture teaches us is that that aspect of God's character, that holiness of God has implications for us as believers. The Bible says in 1 Peter 1:15 and 16, God says, "Be holy in all your behavior for I Myself am holy." You see, the holiness of God calls forth a righteousness of life from us. James Montgomery Boice says this and I quote, he says, "We must learn to hate sin or else we will learn to hate God who requires a holy life from Christ's followers."

So my friend, who is God? How many times have I repeated it tonight? I don't know. He's an eternal infinite spirit. He is the Creator of heaven and earth. He's great. He's good. And that greatness of God and that goodness of God draw us to worship, and what is more, they expose us as sinners before him. We realize that by nature we are far below him. We look at his holiness and we realize that our lives have been unholy. We look at his perfect self-sacrificial love and we see that we've fallen short there as well. We understand that while he is entitled to our wholehearted worship, that we've not given that to him. We've been indifferent to his word, we've been slothful in prayer, we've been cold in worship, and we just realize that as we see the magnitude of the greatness of the glory of God revealed to us in Scripture, by contrast we see how small and sinful that you and I are, and that draws us to a conclusion, it shows us that we are sinners and it's in that context, beloved, that the words of Christ are so great and so precious. And if you are a Christian, what I'm about to read is the settling hope in light of all of these things that bring you full-circle back to a joyful worship. If you are not a Christian, these words are an invitation to you in response to the character of God to repent of your sinfulness and to come to Christ for saving faith. May the Spirit of God make it so in you. John 6:40 says this, Jesus said,

40 ... this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.

The greatness of God draws us to a conviction of our sinfulness. The Gospel of Christ comes to us with the promise that this same God will save you if you will come to Christ for salvation. What a perfect God. What a perfect Gospel. May the Spirit of God open your heart to believe in him tonight for your salvation.

Let's pray together.

O Father in heaven, how grateful we are for the Lord Jesus who is fully able to reconcile us to this holy God. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me will not hunger and he who believes in Me will never thirst. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out." O God, how we see Your greatness displayed in those words of our Savior, that You have given a people to Christ and that everyone who comes to Him will be received in love and in a promise of full, complete forgiveness and reconciliation to You. Great power to save. Great goodness to save. Father, we honor and we worship You here this evening. Bless these words as they've been spoken to the hearts of all who have heard. Father, we pray that You would seal by Your Spirit the edification that Your word has brought to us tonight, the comfort that it has brought, and we trust for many, the conviction that it has brought to lead them, Father, as a tutor, as a schoolteacher, to lead them to the Lord Jesus Christ who alone is able to redeem our souls. In His name we pray. Amen.

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