

**Introduction...**

There is something that almost all of us have in common and we don't even realize it, nor do we remember when it happened. In the few moments after we were born a nurse cleaned us up, put us on a scale and recorded our weight. We were stretched out and measured from head to foot and then all of those measurements were written down. When we entered this world, everything about us was measured our whole existence at that point was quantified.

Since that point we have learned to share in that human desire to measure our world. We love to measure things. We measure how many calories are in the food we eat, how much time it will take to get from A to B, how much gas mileage our vehicles get; we measure everything. It gives us perspective and helps us to feel a sense of comfort. If we can measure something and quantify it then we have a reference point that helps us to understand that thing. ***Measuring our world gives us a sense of control.***

There is a scene in the movie Hoosiers that bears out this point. Hoosiers is about a small town high school basketball team that is making a run for the state championship but when they arrive at the gym where the big game will be played, the team is beginning to feel overwhelmed. The gym is massive compared to the small town gyms they had been playing in all season. But the coach has a plan to help settle the boy's nerves.

The coach pulls out a tape measure and has the boys measure the court and this exercise drives home the fact that the gymnasium may be larger but the court itself has the exact measurements as the gym back in Hickory. *Jen Wilkin commented...*

The scene is brilliant because it illustrates a universal truth: being able to take the measure of something is reassuring. It imparts to us a level of comfort and a sense of control.<sup>1</sup>

**Transition...**

Well, all of that comfort and control is about to be stripped away from us and that is a good thing. For all of our want to measure our lives and our environment, we are confronted with "the God of the Bible (who is) immeasurable, unquantifiable, uncontainable, unbound, utterly without limit. We cannot take the full measure of him...We cannot confine him...We cannot control him, and we can never stack up favorably beside him."<sup>2</sup>

God cannot be measured but at the same time He measures us.

**Read Psalm 139:1-18****Sermon Focus...**

The God-ness of God is unsettling. We struggle to find words that accurately and faithfully describe Him, but that's what we are trying to do. We try to describe God in two ways: by affirmation (eg. God **is** good) and by negation (eg. God has **no** body). The first description that we are going to look at this morning comes to us by way of negation. *Mutable* is an adjective that means *to change*, but God does not change so we describe Him as **im**-mutable and the Bible is filled with passages that affirm this aspect of God's nature.

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<sup>1</sup> Wilkin, Jen. None Like Him: 10 Ways God Is Different from Us (and Why That's a Good Thing) (p. 18). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

<sup>2</sup> Wilkin, pg 18.

## I. God Never Changes (Immutability)

If you've lived long enough then you can probably think back to a phase of your life that you aren't so proud of. Maybe it was situated at some point in your teen years and had something to do with tight-rolled jeans and big bangs. Or maybe it involved wearing bell bottoms and going barefoot with flowers in your hair.

We can look back on those days now and laugh about it, but we are also thankful that the phase didn't last because we changed. We grow, we mature, we learn, we make mistakes and hopefully learn from them. Wisdom comes to us along the way and as a result of countless mistakes. Change is a natural part of our human experience, but God doesn't experience change the way we do. God is unchanging!

Here are 5 ways that God does not change:

### A. His life does not change.<sup>3</sup>

**Ps 90:2** Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, *from everlasting to everlasting you are God.* (This phrase occurs 6 times in the OT as a description of God's being)

**Mal 3:6** "For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.

**Ps 102:25** Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. <sup>26</sup>They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, <sup>27</sup>but you are the same, and your years have no end.

**B. His character does not change.** He doesn't get cranky in the mornings or *hangry* in the afternoon. He is never less kind, less honest, more patient, or more gracious. His character is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Like we saw last week, God is always;

"... merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup>keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation (**Exo 34:6-7**)."

### C. His truth does not change.

**Ps 119:89** Forever, O Lord, *your word is firmly fixed* in the heavens.

**Is 40:8** The grass withers, the flower fades, but *the word of our God will stand forever.*

As we read our Bibles throughout the years, our understanding may grow and hopefully our love for the Lord will grow with that; but the Word itself never changes. And that means that it is just as relevant and important today as it was 2000 years ago. It is the timeless and unchanging revelation of God to man.

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<sup>3</sup> The following list was adapted from J.I. Packer's chapter titled God unchanging in the book *Knowing God*.

**D. His ways do not change. (*the Gospel*)**

God's **holiness** does not change and therefore his **action toward sinful man** does not change. Man has not and does not evolve from one moral state to another. We are sinners who have, do and will rebel against our unchanging Creator who continually shows us mercy day by day. He showers humanity with common grace day after day. He owes mercy to none, but still He shows grace day by day.

The consequences of our sin are born out in this life and God sends both sorrows and joys in order to cause us to let go of our idols and cling to Him instead. He has made a way for sinful man to be reconciled to Him through faith in Jesus. There is not another way for us to be saved. God has not changed His ways.

**E. God's Son does not change.**

According to **Hebrews 13:8**, Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, today and forever." He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him. He never changes and this is an incredible comfort for us **who have more in life to regret than bad fashion choices**. He never changes His mind when it comes to saving us and giving us eternal life, in fact, the purpose of God to save sinners through Christ was determined before the foundation of the world.

***Before the arena of redemption was established (space, time and universe) our triune God had already determined to save His people. Before time began, God knew you along with everything else and He loved you enough to endure the cross to make you His blood-bought, adopted child.***

***God Never Changes...***

**II. God Knows Everything (Omniscience)**

Ask any teacher at any level and they will tell you that in every classroom there exists a variety of different students. Each class comes equipped with a whiny one who never likes the subject and who always wants to do something other than what has been assigned that day. Then there's the perfect one or what some refer to as the teacher's pet; always the first to offer their help. But don't forget about the lazy one, the loud one, the clean one, the picky one, the one that always brings candy, the one who never gets their work done on time but always has an excuse.

**But what classroom would be complete without a know-it-all.** This is the one who sits in the front and has their hand in the air before the teacher is finished asking the question. The one whose entire body extends (hands, feet and fingers) in the direction of the teacher in the fear that he/she will miss the chance to answer the question. The one who will bark out the answer if the teacher forgets to tell the students to raise their hands. You know the one I'm talking about?

At some level, we all want to have the answers. We want to know all that we should know and all that we can know. We look up to really intelligent people especially those who have both knowledge and wisdom. **But the most knowledgeable among us, the smartest person in the world offers only a faint shadow of the knowledge that God possesses. God knows everything.**

When the Bible teaches us about the scope of God's knowledge it shows us that God has perfect knowledge of the past, the present and the future. Nothing is hidden from God. He knows everything that has occurred, everything that is occurring, everything that could occur and everything that will occur. God is never surprised.

God's knowledge is such that He never learns. If you and I want to try and understand a subject or a concept we have to buy a book and read, or sign up for a class and attend. God's knowledge is innate and intuitive; He needs no teacher.

The Apostle Paul began to ponder the knowledge of God, but he became overwhelmed and wrote this:

**Romans 11:33** Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable (incomprehensible) his ways! <sup>34</sup> "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?"

God knows the working of the cosmos. He knows the movements of nations. He knows and effects the thoughts of kings. Not one sparrow falls without God knowing about it. He even knows the number of hairs on your head. **This is where it gets personal.** God knows all things but He also knows you and me. He knows us and David wrote about the extent of God's knowledge of man in **Psalm 139.**

- <sup>1</sup> O Lord, you have searched me and known me!
- <sup>2</sup> You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.
- <sup>3</sup> You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.
- <sup>4</sup> Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.
- <sup>5</sup> You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.
- <sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.

God knows our thoughts, He knows our plans, He knows what we will say before we say it, He knows the totality of our lives, He knew us before we were even conceived. **He knows and is acquainted with the very depth of our sin and still Jesus died in our place to save us from that sin. God's knowledge does not make Him a know-it-all tyrant but a compassionate Redeemer.**

*Our Gracious God is Omniscient.*

### III. God is Everywhere (Omnipresence)

With the advent of modern computer technology, we have the ability to be in two places at once. We can be sitting at our computer in Dallas, TX while at the same time participating in a video chat with someone on the other side of the world. We can even bring together an entire group of people, each located in a different corner of the world but all represented on the screen in front of us like our own little version of *Wonka Vision*.

Maybe that doesn't impress you. Well, did you know that there is a location in the Southwestern US where you can simultaneously be in four states at once. If you have the physical dexterity you can place one foot in Arizona, one in Utah, one hand in Colorado and one in New Mexico all at the same time. It's called the **Four Corners Monument** and it's actually just a small brass disc on the ground, but while it is a pretty cool thing to do it is also a testament to our spatial limitations. We can only truly be in one place at a time.

**We are limited by space and time; God is not.**

**Ps 139:7** Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?

<sup>8</sup> If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!

<sup>9</sup> If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

<sup>10</sup> even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

<sup>11</sup> If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,"

<sup>12</sup> even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.

Space and time are aspects of creation that were created by God but do not bind God. He is outside of them. Also God is Spirit and does not have a body like men, which means that the laws that govern our physical bodies do not govern God. He is not hindered by anything; He has absolute freedom. In His divine immensity He can simultaneously be upholding the universe by His power, be ruling from the throne of Heaven, and be dwelling in the midst of His people.

***Our God is Omnipresent.***

#### **IV. God is all Powerful (Omnipotence)**

Power, even destructive power is a fascinating thing. The eruption of a volcano is so amazing that you almost don't want to blink as you stare at the glowing power of the lava flow. Who can resist the magnificent flash of lightning on the edge of a storm? We see it light up the sky for only a brief moment but we *ooh and aah* every time we see it. Have you ever seen those old WWII era films of nuclear bomb testing? We know they are unimaginably destructive but when the mushroom cloud begins to form we can hardly take our eyes from the screen.

Just yesterday I saw a dear friend get married and this friend knows a thing or two about terrible power, he's a storm chaser. He spends a significant part of his time each year tracking, chasing, recording and looking on in wonder as storm cells produce massive tornados across our region. I have no desire to be as close to a tornado as Zachary but I understand the awe and wonder that it strikes in my heart as I look on from a safe distance.

**The power of these things fills us with awe, but all of them are mere child's play compared to the power of God.** God is omnipotent (all-powerful) which means that God is able to do anything that is consistent with His nature and purpose. As the Baptist Catechism states: Can God do all things? Yes, He can do all His Holy will.

Job declared at the end of His encounter with God:

**Job 42:2** "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

**Psalm 115:3 says that** our God is in the Heavens; He does all that He pleases.

There is no limit to God's power. The omnipotence of God reveals nothing less than the God-ness of God, there is nothing that He cannot do. **Our God is immutable, Omniscient, Omnipresent and Omnipotent.**

**What happens in your heart and mind when you ponder these attributes of God? What do these things teach us and how should we respond to these things?** Once again Jen Wilkin helps us process what these things mean.

##### **1. They describe how God is not like us.**

They are true of him and no other. His immeasurability, incomprehensibility, self-existence, self-sufficiency, eternality, immutability, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, and sovereignty should elicit from us, "Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?" (**Ex. 15:11**)

## 2. They know no limits.

Everything that is true about God's nature and character is infinitely true. He is infinitely creative, infinitely sustaining, unlimited by time. God knows no limits on his presence, knowledge, power, and authority.

## 3. They show us our limits.

When we contemplate God's limitlessness, we see our own limits more clearly. We are better able to recognize where we are attempting to play God in a relationship or circumstance.

Humbled by comparison, we *must* reorient our hearts toward submission.<sup>4</sup>

## Conclusion...

The God-ness of God is awesome and unsettling, but I think that is a good thing. It's good because it lets us know that we aren't the most important being in the universe...God is.

(**Illus...**In **Luke 8:22-25** the disciples of Jesus were ***shaken up*** in the right way. They were finally in a boat again and back in their element. Not all of them, but a great number of them are fishermen by trade which means that they are somewhat out of their element studying theology, but perfectly at home in the boat. But this casual boat ride is about to get very uncomfortable.

Now there's a bit of an ironic twist to this story because if you are out on the water in a windstorm you would want men like this at the helm. Most of these men have spent their whole life not just on the water but on this lake. If anyone is going to know what to do it's these guys, but they are wise enough to know when they are helpless. There is nothing they can do; they are powerless against this storm. This is a tense and frightening scene.

Now, we often think of nature as a force unto itself, but the Bible makes it clear that God is the force behind all of creation. The wind and sea obey His command because He made them. He speaks and nature does His bidding. One of the lessons that the disciples have to learn is that Jesus is not just a man who is subject to weariness, he is also God who commands the wind and sea, and they obey His command.

Jesus wakes up and rebukes the storm and everything stops. Jesus calms the storm and brings peace with a word. The **term rebuke here is the same word that Luke has used in other miracle stories**. In **4:35** he wrote that Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and it obeyed His command. In **Luke 4:39** he wrote that Jesus rebuked a fever and it too obeyed His command. And here in **8:24** Jesus rebuked the wind and seas and they obeyed His command. There is no hostile force in this universe that cannot be rebuked by Jesus. His authority over creation is ultimate.

Jesus got up and told the wind to stop and it stopped. He turned to the waves and told them to be calm and they got calm. It's as if the wind and the waves know the sound of His voice...and they do. The Divine Power that brought the waters into existence in **Genesis 1** called out to those waters again in **Luke 8**, and they recognized the One who is speaking to them and they obeyed. Jesus calmed the storm.

And the disciples can't help but be a little afraid because of what they've seen Jesus do, and you can't really blame them. **Fear is the normal response to God being at work visibly in your**

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.crossway.org/articles/10-things-you-should-know-about-gods-incommunicable-attributes/>

**life. But it's not the type of fear that makes us run from God it's the kind of fear that makes us run to Him. Besides, where else can we go? What good is it to run away from the One who commands the wind and the sea?**

What these men learned on that day is the same thing that I hope we learn today, that we are not omnipotent. We are not God. We do not know all things. We do not possess God's power. We do not have the ability to be in more than one place at a time. We are not God; but praise Jesus that our God is for us.