
The Incommunicable Attributes of God**Week 2**

Review

- What are the two categories that we are putting the attributes of God into? communicable and incommunicable
- Communicable attributes are the attributes of God that are more shared with us. Attributes like love, knowledge, and justice.
- Incommunicable attributes are those attributes of God that are less shared with us. Attributes like eternity, omnipresence, or unchangeableness.
- All of creation reveals something about the character of God. God made the universe to show the excellence of His character, for His glory.

Incommunicable Attributes of God- Independence

- We can define God's independence as: God does not need us, or the rest of creation for anything, yet we, and the rest of creation, can glorify him and bring him joy. Read Acts 17:24-25.
- We have somewhat of a sense of independence in our lives, we grow up and move out on our own and raise a family, but we are not totally independent like God. We are always dependent on something that was created by God.
- God, however, is not dependent on anything in all of creation. No one has ever contributed anything to God that did not first come from him.
- Some people have suggested that God created human beings because he was lonely and needed companions. This cannot be true, though, because that would mean that God needed creation to be completely fulfilled and happy.
- If God is independent, how is he fulfilled? Read John 17:5, 24. What is Jesus saying in these passages? God as three persons is the source of fulfillment. The love, sharing of glory, and communion between the trinity is more perfect than any human relationship can ever possibly be.
- In Exodus 3 God says to Moses "I AM WHO I AM". This statement implies that God's existence and character are determined by himself alone, and are not dependent on anyone or anything else. This means that God's being has always been and will always be exactly what it is.
- God exists in a totally different way than we do. It is not just a difference of God always existing and we have a beginning. He exists in an infinitely better, stronger, and more excellent way. There is no comparison that we can imagine that shows how different

God's total existence and our existence is. He is the creator, we are the created all else can pass away in an instant, but he exists forever.

- If God is totally independent of creation, then what is its purpose? Is creation meaningless because God does not need us? Read Isaiah 43:7 The purpose of creation is to glorify God and bring glory to him. He created us to do just this.
- God does not need us for anything, yet God created us so he could delight in us that we may bring joy to him. This is the greatest significance that we can ever have, the greatest significance that can be imagined.
- God's independence goes way outside the lines of our idea of independence. We are never able to be completely independent of anything, but God can actually be independent of everything, and be completely fulfilled in himself.

The Incommunicable Attributes of God**Week 3**

Review

- What are communicable attributes? Attributes of God that are more shared with us.
- What are incommunicable attributes? Attributes of God that are less shared with us.
- How is God's independence different from our independence? If God is independent of creation, what is the purpose of creation?

Incommunicable Attributes of God- Unchangeableness

- **God's unchangeableness is defined as follows: God is unchanging in his being, perfections, purposes, and promises, yet God does act and feel emotions, and he acts and feels differently in response to different situations. This attribute is also sometimes called God's immutability.**
- **Read Psalm 102:25-27. God causes the universe and everything in it to change, but in contrast to this change he remains the same.**
- God is also unchanged in his purposes. Read Psalm 33:11; Matt. 13:35; Matt. 25:34; Eph. 1:4,11; Eph. 3:11; 1 Peter 1:20. Once God has determined that he will bring something about, his purpose is unchanging, and it will be achieved. Read Isaiah 46:9-11.
- God's promises are also unchanging. Read Numbers 23:19. Once God has promised something, he will not be unfaithful to his promises.
- The definition that we gave above specifies that God is unchanging, not in every way that we might imagine, but only in ways that we see in scripture. Scripture shows us that God is unchanging in respect to his being and his perfections (his attributes and the various aspects of his character).
- Does God sometimes change his mind? What about how God said he would destroy Nineveh, and didn't, or when Moses prayed to prevent the destruction of the people of Israel (Exodus 32:9-14). In Genesis 6:6 God says that he is sorry for making man. All of these instances show God's response to present changing situations. God feels emotions, so when the situation changes so do God's responses. Nineveh repented and heeded the warning of God, therefore he did not destroy them. The prayer of Moses created a new situation and God responded by answering that prayer. God's attitude towards mankind showed his present displeasure towards the disobedience of man.
- It is suggested by some theologians that because God is unchanging he does not have any passions or emotions. This is called impassibility. It is true that God does not have

sinful passions, but to say that God is, without passions, goes against scripture. In scripture God rejoices, is grieved, has anger, and has love. We are to follow the passions of God delighting in righteousness.

- Some theologians also do not like the unchangeableness of God because they think that it implies that nothing we do can really matter to God. In response to the idea that we must be able to change God to be significant, we must respond that this is an incorrect assumption and is not consistent with scripture. For one thing, God is the creator and ruler of the universe he is not dependent on anyone and it doesn't matter what we think is fair. And scripture is clear that our ultimate significance comes from the fact that God created us for his glory and for that reason he counts us significant.
- What is the importance of God's unchangeableness? If God could change then it would be for the better or worse. Either way would be disappointing because if he changed for the better then he was not the best he could be when we started to trust him. If he changed for the worst then what kind of God might he become? Could he become evil? What if God changed his promises, how could we trust him for anything, especially eternal life?
- If God is not unchanging then the basis for our whole faith begins to fall apart. Our faith, hope, and knowledge all ultimately depend on a person is infinitely worthy of trust because he is absolutely and eternally unchanging in his being, perfections, purposes, and promises.

The Incommunicable Attributes of God**Week 4**

Review

- Communicable attributes are those attributes of God that are more shared with us.
- Incommunicable attributes are those attributes of God that are less shared with us.
- What is the importance of God's unchangeableness? Explain why God's unchangeableness affects the basis for our faith (If God did change).

The Incommunicable Attributes of God- Eternity

- God's eternity is defined as follows: God has no beginning, end, or succession of moments in his own being, and he sees all time equally vividly, yet God sees events in time and acts in time. The doctrine of God's eternity teaches that time does not limit God.
- God's eternity is related to God's unchangeableness. Time has no effect on God. He doesn't age, he doesn't change in physical appearance, he doesn't gain or lose knowledge. Since the passing of time does not add or detract from God's knowledge, he knows all things past, present, and future, and knows them all equally vividly.

God is timeless

- Read Psalm 90:2 and Job 36:26. God has had, and will always have, a continual present existence. Since God is not limited to time all of his existence is somehow present to God himself.
- Time is part of creation. Before the creation of the universe there was no time, or succession of minutes and hours etc. God is not limited by time, actually time is dependent on God to exist. Like the rest of creation it is under the rule of the power of God and depends on that.

God sees all time equally vividly

- Read Psalm 90:4. We have trouble remembering what happened two weeks ago. God, however, sees all of time with great clarity. He remembers and knows what will happen in all events of history. He remembers them all equally well.
- Read 2 Peter 3:8. In God's perspective any extremely long period of time is as if it just happened. And any short period of time seems to God to last forever, because it never ceases to be "present" in his consciousness.
- God's experience in time is far different from ours. He does not just sit there and wait through an endless amount of time.

- His relationship to time is that he sees all events in time equally vividly and acts in time. He stands above time and is able to see it all as his present consciousness.

God sees events in time and acts in time

- Read Galatians 4:4-5. This again affirms the fact that God doesn't sit passively and watch a duration of time go by, he is fully involved in all of time.
- Read Acts 17:30-31. This statement includes a description of a previous way in which God acted, God's present way of acting, and a future activity that he will carry out, all in time.
- God is ruler over time and uses it for his own purposes.

We will always exist in time

- Even when we are in heaven we will not be like God in being outside of time. Time will have a different effect on us, we will not age, but since we are finite creatures we will always experience successions of events.
- Scripture tells us that there will not be night and day because God is light. And there will not be minutes and so on, but it does talk about different things that will happen one after another. Ex. Revelation 4:10; Revelation 22:2; these verse tell of things that will happen in a succession. To God they happen outside of time, but we will always be under time, we are not eternal in the respect to time.
- What would be some problems if God were limited to time? If God aged, would he die, and what would prevent another God from coming along? How does this aspect of God's character give us confidence in our relationship with God?

The Incommunicable Attributes of God**Week 5**

Review

- Communicable attributes are those attributes of God that are more shared with us
- Incommunicable attributes are those attributes of God that are less shared with us
- What would be some problems if God were not eternal? If he aged? If he did not remember different events in time.

The Incommunicable Attributes of God- Omnipresence

- God's omnipresence is defined as follows: God does not have size or spatial dimensions and is present at every point of space with his whole being, yet God acts differently in different places. God is unlimited or infinite with respect to space, he created space therefore he cannot be contained by it.
- God is present in every part of space. Read Jeremiah 23:23-24. There is nowhere in the entire universe where one can flee from God's presence.
- God's whole being is present everywhere, it is not just part of God that is present. Saying that only part of him is somewhere would limit him in spatial terms.
- God cannot be contained by spatial dimensions. Read 1 Kings 8:27. This gives us great encouragement in our prayer life because we know that God is always there. It also discourages us from thinking that we have to go to some special temple to have communion with God.
- Since God is not limited by space, we need to not think of him as just being extended across the universe. If he were he would not be fully present everywhere. We should not think of him in terms of space, he exists apart from space. He exists in a being that is far greater than we can imagine.
- He also exists distinct from creation. He does not exist as the sun or trees like some people think, he is present everywhere in creation yet he is distinct from it.
- God is present in different ways in different places in creation, or he acts differently in different places. He can be present to punish, read Amos 9:1-4. He can be present to sustain, read Col. 1:16-17. Most of God's presence in the Bible is referring to God's presence to bless, read Psalm 16:11.
- Even though God is present everywhere, unbelievers do not feel his presence. They are blind to him, and the Bible says that God is far from evil, read Proverbs 15:29. This is another example of God being present everywhere yet acting differently in different

places. His presence in hell is completely different than his presence with believers on earth, but he is still fully present and fully God in both situations.

- God's presence everywhere gives us much more confidence in our relationship with God because he is always available to us through his son, Jesus. We don't have to speak through anything else, or go to some special place, he is always with us.

The Unity of the Characteristics of God

- God is not divided into parts, yet we see different attributes of God emphasized at different times.
- In closing our discussion on the Incommunicable attributes of God, we must emphasize the importance of God's unity. All of God's attributes are equally important not one is greater than another.
- All the different attributes and characteristics are not just a part of God, but they are all God himself. He is not just a collection of attributes squished together, but all of his attributes cross and intermingle to make one complete God. His whole being includes all of his attributes.
- We have to break them down into different attributes so we can partially understand them, but really they are not separate from one another. For example, God is not loving in some point of history and then just in another part, he is always entirely loving and entirely just, and so on.
- Apply these attributes of God in your prayer life, in your meditation time, in every aspect of your life. The more the spirit reveals to us the more awe, wonder, and praise we can give to our creator.