

Wheelersburg Baptist Church

Life Application Sunday School Class

The Attributes of God Series

Session 2 – "The Uniqueness of God"

June 16, 2002

Last week, we looked at what the Scripture teaches about the means of knowing God. We saw that in order for us to know God, He must reveal Himself to us. We also saw that for us to desire to seek Him and understand Him we need a change of heart. If left to ourselves, we would never choose to seek God. Not that we would necessarily be an atheist. But without the work of the Spirit of God to regenerate our hearts and impart a new nature, we concoct a false god in our minds and call it the true God. We invent a god that we can tolerate, and one that we can take or leave on our own terms. In our unregenerate state, we run and hide from the true God, because God is light, and He exposes our guilt and sin. But we can be thankful and grateful that the true God is a saving God that He seeks and saves the lost. Before the foundation of the world He chose a people from among all mankind for Himself, and then in history He sent His Son to redeem that people. And to this very day through the preaching of the gospel, the Spirit of God is effectually calling that chosen people to God to be holy and blameless and to be filled with the glory of God for His praise, honor, and glory. And as His chosen people, we are called and commanded to worship Him in spirit and in truth. To worship acceptably, we must know Him as He reveals Himself to be. So with that stated, we begin by looking at the uniqueness of God.

God is unique. He is one of a kind. Another word we could use is solitary, or self-existent. This attribute of God expresses His superiority, separation and distinction from all else. This attribute highlights His supremacy over all, and His self-sufficiency. God needs nothing outside Himself. He is perfectly complete, and creation adds nothing to Him. As creatures, we have a beginning, we constantly change, we are limited, incomplete, and always stand in need to survive and continue to exist. We cannot naturally comprehend an eternal, spiritual, unchanging being that stands outside of time and space; One who is complete, whole and in need of nothing. Though this is beyond our full comprehension, we need to contemplate, meditate, and receive the instruction of God's revelation on this matter. Let's listen to and read some verses that expound God's uniqueness:

How does God compare to others? With this question in mind, let's listen to the words of Moses after the children of Israel had been delivered from Egypt:

Exodus 15:11

11: Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

Moses asks the question, among all these idols and gods of Egypt, which one is like this God that just delivered His people supernaturally from the hand of the most powerful man on the earth at that time? How

is like this God that hardened the heart of this pagan ruler so that He might show forth His greatness and might in the judgment of the wicked Egyptians and the deliverance of His people? Who is this One who has shown forth His superior might, His utter supremacy over men of the earth, who's might acts and wonders warrant praise and reverence and trembling before such might and power? There is none like this God.

Listen to the words of Hannah, as she offered her son Samuel back to the Lord for His service:

1 Samuel 1:24-2:2

24 After he was weaned, she took the boy with her, young as he was, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh. ²⁵ When they had slaughtered the bull, they brought the boy to Eli, ²⁶ and she said to him, "As surely as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. ²⁷ I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him. ²⁸ So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD." And he worshiped the LORD there.

2 *Then Hannah prayed and said: "My heart rejoices in the LORD; in the LORD my horn is lifted high. My mouth boasts over my enemies, for I delight in your deliverance. ² "There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.*

How is it that this mother could leave this child that she had waited so long for, that she had mourned and cried to the Lord for? It was because Hannah knew the true and living God. She knew there was none holy as the Lord. She knew that her son was given for and destined for the service of the Lord, and what higher and blessed calling could there be. Hannah worshipped acceptably, because she knew the true God; that He stands alone in His holiness and strength.

Now let's contemplate and discuss the words of the prophet Isaiah:

Is 40:18-31

18 To whom, then, will you compare God? What image will you compare him to? ¹⁹ As for an idol, a craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and fashions silver chains for it. ²⁰ A man too poor to present such an offering selects wood that will not rot. He looks for a skilled craftsman to set up an idol that will not topple.

Idols are the works of man's hands. Men cherish and worship the little gods they create. Our treasured possessions, our guarded time to ourselves, our houses, and cars, and lawns, and jobs, and hobbies, and pleasures – And how do all of these compare with the true and living God?

²¹ Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded? ²² He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in.

This is how He compares to these other trivial trinkets that we adore: I quote from Pastor Brad's sermon on the uniqueness of God:

Will you stop and *consider* for a moment? Let's *consider* the heavens and see God's majesty. Donald DeYoung helps us in his book, *Astronomy and the Bible*. If the sun could be hollowed out like a giant pumpkin, a million planet earths could easily fit inside, like marbles. On a clear, moonless night about 3,000 stars are visible to the unaided eye. But that's just the beginning! The stars we can see are all in the corner of the Milky Way galaxy. The entire galaxy numbers 100

billion stars. And beyond our galaxy, are countless other galaxies--astronomers estimate that 100 billion such galaxies are known to exist. If we wrote out the number of stars in the universe, we would have a "1" followed by 22 zeroes!

How many is that? Suppose we took all five billion people on planet earth, and divided up the stars and gave each person an equal number. Each person would receive two trillion stars! Mind-boggling? We're not done yet! The Bible says God calls all the stars by name, and He keeps count of them (Ps. 147:4)!

It's staggering to contemplate the size of the universe. Just take the Milky Way, for instance (just one of at least 100 billion galaxies). If you could get in a spacecraft and fly across the Milky Way at the speed of light, the trip would take you 100,000 years, a distance of 600,000 trillion miles! And that's just one of 100 billion galaxies!

And Isaiah says that this God spreads out this creation like a canopy. To God all of the stars and heavens are like a tent. And what of the great and mighty rulers of the world? How do they compare to God?

23 He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. 24 No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

He merely blows on them and they are gone and swept away like dust.

25 "To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One. 26 Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. 27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God"? 28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. 29 He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. 30 Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; 31 but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

As we start to even have a glimpse of the God we serve, all fear is gone. What can overcome us? What can come against us? What have we to dread? We have nothing to fear but the Almighty. He holds our destiny and life in His hand. And if we recognize and see our feebleness and weakness, then He will uphold and strengthen us for His purpose and glory to be displayed in our lives. We will run and be strong and do mighty things in His name when we realize that all power and might and strength is in Him, and not ourselves.

Now, listen to the words of the prophet Jeremiah:

Jer 10:6-16

6 No one is like you, O LORD; you are great, and your name is mighty in power. 7 Who should not revere you, O King of the nations? This is your due.

God is due our praises and reverence and fear. His is the Creator.

Among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is no one like you. 8 They are all

senseless and foolish; they are taught by worthless wooden idols. Hammered silver is brought from Tarshish and gold from Uphaz. What the craftsman and goldsmith have made is then dressed in blue and purple—all made by skilled workers.

Don't miss the lesson for us. We may not have statues that we bow down to, but what do we worship? Whatever it is, it is not worthy of such adoration and attention. When we serve and worship our selfish desires, we are senseless and foolish. Only One is worthy.

10 But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King. When he is angry, the earth trembles; the nations cannot endure his wrath. ¹¹ "Tell them this: 'These gods, who did not make the heavens and the earth, will perish from the earth and from under the heavens.'"

In the words of the Apostle John, I John 2:15-17; ¹⁵*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. ¹⁷And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

Only what God has established will stand in the end. Everything else is going to burn.

12 But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding. ¹³When he thunders, the waters in the heavens roar; he makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth. He sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses. ¹⁴ Everyone is senseless and without knowledge; every goldsmith is shamed by his idols. His images are a fraud; they have no breath in them. ¹⁵ They are worthless, the objects of mockery; when their judgment comes, they will perish. ¹⁶ He who is the Portion of Jacob is not like these, for he is the Maker of all things, including Israel, the tribe of his inheritance—the LORD Almighty is his name.

God stands separate from His creation, and that is why He is the One, and the only One, worthy of our worship and praise and fear and loyalty.

In the words of King David, after receiving the gifts to build the temple.

I Chronicles 29:10-14

10 Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. ¹¹ Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. ¹² Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.

Why does God stand alone? It is because all greatness, and power, and glory, and victory, and majesty, and everything comes from Him and therefore belongs to Him. And He also is the sovereign ruler over all of it. If you have riches and honor, it came from Him. If you have intelligence, or are gifted athletically, or musically, or artistically, it came from Him. And He has made it that way for His own pleasure and purpose. And what is the appropriate response?

13 Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. ¹⁴ But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.

We offer nothing from ourselves even in our worship and praise! It all came from Him, and He grants us the great blessing and joy of giving it back to Him! He gives to us so that He might be glorified and us blessed as we give it back to Him! What a great and gracious God we serve!

Finally, in the words of Paul, as he contemplated the great plan of salvation:

Romans 11:34-36

34 "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" 35 "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" 36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

What do we have that God needs? Absolutely nothing. Rather, all that we have was given to us by Him. All that we have to offer Him came from Him to start with. Does God need our love? No. We love Him because He first loved us. I almost can't even ask this question, for it borders on blasphemy. Does God need our approval? I shudder at the thought. Who are we to judge the Almighty and His ways and His doings. No, rather we need to fall at His feet and plead for His approval and mercy. Does God need our worship and praise? Heaven is filled with myriads of angels and beings whose sole purpose is to worship and praise God. He has no need of our adoration and approval. Rather, He grants us the great privilege of being a vessel of His glory and praise. He could just as easily be glorified in our judgment and destruction. If you desire to praise and serve God this day, be thankful, for He has granted you that heart and desire.

Does God need anything or anyone outside Himself?

Think about God in relation to creation. God is not created, He is the Creator. Consider God in eternity past. He dwelt alone and was satisfied and content in the fellowship of the triunity. As eternal spirit, He exists outside time and space, and created time and space to contain creation. God had no need for creation. He was sufficient within Himself. Creation did not add anything to God. So why did God create?

The first chapter of Ephesians is an exposition of the great plan of God. Paul states clearly in verse 11 that God works all things after the counsel of His own will, and for His own good pleasure. The same principle is stated in Romans 11:36 which says that all things are from Him, all things come through Him, and that all things are to Him.

Finally, listen to the Apostle John in Revelation 4:11 as he records the worship of heaven:

11 "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

The word "will" here means desire, or pleasure, or purpose. God created after the pleasure of His own will. He created for His own glory. He had no need to create, but rather, He created because it was His will and desire to create, for His own glory and purpose. He is a creator by nature, because He is a giving God.

So how does God's creation compare to Him?

Isa. 40:15-17

15 Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, And are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust. 16 Even Lebanon is not enough to burn, Nor its beasts enough for a burnt offering. 17 All the nations are as nothing before Him, They are regarded by Him as less than

nothing and meaningless.

1Tim 6:15-16

15 which He will bring about at the proper time—He who 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.

As the preacher stated all through Ecclesiastes, outside of fearing God and doing His will, all is empty and vain. The sole purpose of all creation is to exalt and bring glory to the Creator. When we live in light of that fact, we experience the peace, contentment, and fulfillment of doing what we were created to do. Any other pursuit in this life ends in misery, frustration, and despair. When we determine to live for the praise of His glory, and desire to see Him exalted by our life, then we experience fullness of joy.

When we understand the uniqueness and self-sufficiency of God, we will understand that God owes no man anything. He is never obligated to us.

Rom 11:34,35

34: For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor? 35: Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

Luke 17:10

10: So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

All that we give God came from God. There is nothing that exists that didn't come from Him. We have nothing to give Him that He needs. He stands completely sufficient within Himself. All that He gives to us comes not because He owes us, or that we have deserved or earned it, but because of His great love and mercy and grace. And when we look at the sacrifice of the cross in this light, it is almost too much to fathom. God gave His Son, not because He needed us, or because we would add anything to Him in our salvation – He freely gave His Son for our sakes, that we might become vessels of glory fit to display His grace and love and greatness. We are precious because we belong to Him, because He set His love upon us, because He chose to value us, and call us, and adopt us, and be not only our God, but our Father. What love is this, that this Sovereign, sufficient, powerful God can now be our Father in heaven? Only in Christ could this happen. We are the beloved in Christ. Apart from Him we are worthless. But in Him, we are joint heirs. And in response to this great love and kindness of our Savior, we give all of our worship and life, we will still say, we have done that which was our duty to do. We still deserve judgment and wrath, but He has shown us everlasting mercy instead of wrath.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What should be our response to this teaching? How should these truths affect our service; our praise; our worship; our faith; our confidence; our pride; our evangelism.
2. What are some common misconceptions about the nature of God that are contrary to this teaching? How

should we respond to those who express these wrong ideas?

3. How has this teaching series already challenged your concept of God?

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