

Wheelersburg Baptist Church

Life Application Sunday School Class

The Attributes of God Series

Session 6 – "The Omnipresence, Omniscience, and Omnipotence of God"

July 21, 2002

Where does God live? What does God know? What can God do? These are the questions we are going to examine today. He lives everywhere, He knows everything, and He can do anything. Those are the simple answers to those questions. Now let's meditate and contemplate each of these amazing truths. First, God is omnipresent. Turn to Psalm 139:7-10. The Psalmist asks some intriguing questions:

7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? 8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. 9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, 10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

These attributes are not just dry theological truths. The Psalmist takes great comfort in the knowledge that wherever he goes, God is there; not just in a mystical sort of way, but He is there personally to guide and protect.

God asks some similar questions through the prophet in Jeremiah 23:23-24

23 "Am I only a God nearby," declares the LORD, "and not a God far away? 24 Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?" declares the LORD. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD.

God's omnipresence does not merely mean that God is evenly distributed throughout creation. The Scripture teaches that God is actively and personally present at the same moment throughout His creation. This truth produces great comfort to those who are right with Him, and great consternation to those who are at enmity with Him. No matter where we are, God is there. We cannot escape His presence, and we are in no way hidden from Him at any time. This attribute can only be true because God is Spirit. Another way to think about His omnipresence is as His infinity in reference to physical space. He completely fills heaven and earth. This is not the same as pantheism that teaches that God is everything. We have already seen clearly that God is distinct and separate from His creation.

This raises some questions. Doesn't the Scripture also teach that God dwells on a throne in heaven, and that presence was in the ark of the covenant, and later He dwelled in His temple in the nation of Israel. What about Jesus' statement, that where two or more are gathered in His name, He is there? Even King Solomon realized that God was not going to be limited to a manmade temple. Listen to his statement in 1 Kings 8:27

27 "But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!

Isaiah stated the same concept in Isaiah 66:1

Is 66: This is what the LORD says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be?"

Even in the New Testament, we get the same words in [Acts 17:24-25](#)

Acts 17:24²⁴ "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. ²⁵ And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.

Another statement by Isaiah helps us to understand what God means when He says He is present at a particular place. Turn to [Isaiah 57:15](#)

Isaiah 57: ¹⁵ For this is what the high and lofty One says— he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.

God manifests His presence and glory in a special way on His throne in heaven, and also with the contrite and humble person that is broken before Him. He makes Himself known in a greater way. As we gather in His name, He is among us, in a way that He is not with us as individuals. According to the book of James, in chapter 4, the Lord draws near to the one who draws near to Him by cleansing their hands and purifying their hearts, and turning away from evil and wickedness. It's not that God moves, or leaves one place to come to another. No, God is Spirit, and is present everywhere at all times. It is rather that He makes His presence and glory known specifically to those who seek and worship Him in Spirit and in truth. God is also with the wicked, to judge, to take note, and to grieve. But to those who have received Christ as Lord and Savior, Jesus said that the Father, Son, and Spirit of God come to make their abode in the hearts of His people. Peter says that we are His temple, or dwelling place, and being built together as lively stones for a place of His habitation. God says that He inhabits the praises of His people. It's not that God leaves one place and goes to another, but rather, He manifests Himself in a special way among those who worship and serve Him.

God's omnipresence is directly related to His omniscience. Because God is everywhere He knows everything. Here's a theological definition of God's omniscience: God's perfect and eternal knowledge of all things which are objects of man's knowledge, whether they be actual or possible, present or future. From all eternity, God has possessed all knowledge and wisdom. In this study on the attributes, we have been seeing how all of these attributes are related and connected. Think about some of the relationships of the other attribute to God's omniscience:

How is God's omniscience related to His infinity? To say that God is omniscient is to say that His knowledge is infinite.

How is God's omniscience related to His immutability? To say that God is omniscient is to say that He has always known everything perfectly, because if not, then He would have to gain knowledge, which would be a violation of His immutability. And His knowledge is complete and perfect.

How is God's omniscience related to His sovereignty? God knows everything because He has planned everything and all things are being worked after the counsel of His own will. God stands outside of time, and sees the future as the past. In His omniscience, He knows the future as completely as the past, because all has already been established and planned from the before the beginning of time. Acts 15:18 says it this way: *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.* An aspect of God's omniscience is His foreknowledge. God foreknows all events perfectly. He can only do so because of His divine purpose and decree that establishes that all that comes to pass will come to pass. This is why prophecy is sure, because it is based on God's perfect knowledge of what will come. This is why God's promises are sure, and we know that they will be fulfilled.

Listen to this quotation concerning God's knowledge of all things from J.J. Rousseau: *"God is intelligent, but in what manner? Man is intelligent by the act of reasoning, but the supreme intelligence lies under no necessity to reason. He requires neither premise nor consequences; nor even the simple form of a proposition. His knowledge is purely intuitive. He beholds equally what is and what will be. All truths are to Him one idea, as all places are but one point, and all times one moment.*

God does not reason, but rather knows everything perfectly and completely. So what are some implications for us of God's omnipresence and omniscience?

First, our dear God and Father knows us completely. Listen now to the first part of

Psalm 139:1-6

1 O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. 2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. 3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. 4 Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. 5 You hem me in—behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

God knows us completely. For us to really know ourselves at all, we must first know Him. This is why it is vain to think more highly than we ought of ourselves, because He knows us, including all of our weaknesses and faults. This is why our acceptance by God will never be based on our merit or own righteousness.

Second, not only does He know us completely, He also knows our thoughts, deeds, motives and desires. Listen to Hebrews 4:13

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

And:

Proverbs 15:3

3 The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

How vain and ridiculous is it for us to live with unconfessed sin. God knows more about our sin than we do. He knows what motivated it, what desire caused it, every detail of what we said or did, and everything we were thinking. The good news is that this same God promises, if we come into the light, and openly admit our faults and weaknesses and sins, He is faithful to forgive them and cleanse us from them and set us free!

A third implication of God's omniscience is that God knows that we love Him. God does not just see our outward actions, He knows our very hearts. He knows the grief and brokenness that we carry when we fall short and yield to our sinful desires. He also knows our desire to serve Him. Listen to this compelling dialog between Peter and the Lord Jesus in John 21:15-19. The resurrected Christ had just finished eating with His disciples, and then addresses Peter:

15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." 16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." 17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep.

Consider this: Jesus is speaking to Peter, the one who swore that he would never deny Christ. And as Peter spoke those words, Jesus knew what would happen, that Peter would deny Him not just once, but three

times. Now that is behind, and the glorified Christ looks at Peter with those penetrating, omniscient eyes and asks him, not once, but three times, "Do you love me?" And Peter affirms His love three times, realizing that Christ knew His heart. Then the Lord Jesus commissions him to feed the elect and beloved of the Father.

A fourth implication of God's omniscience is that God knows what we need, even before we ask. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches his disciples about prayer, and He teaches them that it is useless to think that we are informing God of anything when we pray. He taught them that it is a wrong concept to believe that God hears us based on the quantity of words that we speak. He admonishes His disciples not to be like the pagans and religious people of the day, with their empty chants and ritualistic, repetitious prayers. We do not have to be so concerned about our words, for we don't know how to pray, but realize that as we pray, His Spirit is helping us, and knows our hearts, and also knows the Father's heart completely. The Spirit enable us to have complete and full communication with the Father.

Finally this morning, we want to examine the omnipotence of God. First, a definition:

The Omnipotence of God - is that ability and strength whereby He can bring to pass whatsoever He pleases, whatsoever His infinite wisdom may direct, and whatsoever the infinite purity of His will may resolve. (Pink in Attributes of God)

Not only does God know everything, and has a perfect plan, He has the power to bring that plan completely to fruition. This God that we serve has no limitations. Jesus clearly states as recorded in Matthew 19:26 that there are no impossibilities with God. All through the Scriptures God reveals Himself as all powerful. In Genesis 17, when God appears to Abraham, He refers to Himself as El Shadday – the Almighty God.

1And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. 2And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

Again, this attribute is revealed in a context. God is making His covenant with Abraham based on a supernatural promise, and in His name reveals His power to bring that promise to pass. God's power is not just mere force. It is always expressed in direct association with His sovereign plan. His omnipotence is His ability to accomplish all He purposes to do.

Let's now consider the first part of Psalm 89: Verses 5-13

5 The heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones. 6 For who in the skies above can compare with the LORD? Who is like the LORD among the heavenly beings? 7 In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him. 8 O LORD God Almighty, who is like you? You are mighty, O LORD, and your faithfulness surrounds you.

In heaven above, among the holy angels, the most powerful of all created beings, none compares with God Himself. In might and power, there are none that even are close enough to compare.

9 You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them.

When we think of power, what comes to mind? The psalmist pictured a raging, stormy sea. Remember Jesus in the boat with His disciples. They were rowing to shore, and the storm came up, and Jesus was asleep. The wind roared and the waves crashed over the side of the boat, and it began to sink. The disciples cried out to Jesus in fear, and awoke Him. And our Sovereign Lord calmly spoke a word to the wind and sea, and the waves ceased, and all was calm.

10 You crushed Rahab like one of the slain; with your strong arm you scattered your enemies.

The name "Rahab" in this Psalm is a reference to Egypt. The Psalmist points back to the great power of God

manifested in the deliverance of Israel and the judgment of the Egyptians.

11 The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you founded the world and all that is in it. 12 You created the north and the south; Tabor and Hermon sing for joy at your name. 13 Your arm is endued with power; your hand is strong, your right hand exalted.

God's power is displayed in creation. As Creator, He is rightful owner. God has such power, that all He does is speak, and it comes to pass. Psalm 33:8-9 says it this way:

8 Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the people of the world revere him. 9 For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.

In the account of creation, God spoke, and it came to pass. This same awesome power is displayed not just in creating all things, but in the sustaining of all things. The book of Hebrews starts with these words concerning Christ in chapter 1.

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

All of the universe, all of creation, belongs to the Son of God. Christ is the creator of all, and He is also the One who sustains all through speaking a word. Apart from the moment to moment watchful care and sustenance of Christ, the world would cease to be. Colossians is another letter that expounds the omnipotence of the Son of God. Listen to verses 16 and 17 of chapter 1:

16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Not only does God create and sustain creation by His power, He has the power to show judgment and mercy. Listen to [Jeremiah 32:17-19](#)

17 "Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you. 18 You show love to thousands but bring the punishment for the fathers' sins into the laps of their children after them. O great and powerful God, whose name is the LORD Almighty, 19 great are your purposes and mighty are your deeds. Your eyes are open to all the ways of men; you reward everyone according to his conduct and as his deeds deserve.

We can be thankful as God's children that it is this same power of God that keeps us secure and safe until Jesus returns. Listen to [1 Peter 1:3-5](#)

1 Peter 1: 3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

So what is the appropriate response to the power of the One we serve? I offer three responses:

First, we must fear Him. I think one of the most sobering verses in the Bible is in [Matthew 10:28](#)

Jesus says ²⁸ *Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.*

As we start to understand the true God, and His absolute sovereign power, and His complete control over all of creation, our response will be to fear Him. God alone holds the power over our eternal destiny, so He alone is worthy of our reverence and fear. The other side of that response is that we should fear no other. Fear of man is really a form of false worship. It is giving to another what God alone deserves. The fear of man manifests when we care more what our friends think of us than what God thinks of us. Fear of man is the cause for us to shrink back from taking a visible, bold stand for the Lord Jesus Christ. Our desire to please Him should always be primary. Only He is worthy of such attention and concern, for He is the One who holds all power and authority.

Psalm 2 is another passage that emphasizes this response to God's omnipotence:

1 Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? 2 The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. 3 "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters."

Many today rebel against the restraint of submission to God and His Law. They want to live as they please without accountability. In fact, they even plot to take their stand against the Lord, and have their own way, and to undermine His authority. They at times seem to show forth a mighty opposition to the Lord, His people, and His message. But what is the divine response?

4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. 5 Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, 6 "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill."

7 I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become

your Father. 8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. 9 You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery."

God has established His King over all. Every knee will bow to Him one day. In that day the Father will turn over all the kingdoms of this world to the Son, as He returns as the absolute Sovereign over all. That day has not come, as God in his mercy extends the invitation to come and worship and submit to this Almighty King before the day of His vengeance and wrath. Listen to this expression of God's mercy, and demonstration of His longsuffering:

10 Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. 11 Serve the LORD with fear

and rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

This Almighty God, who has the power to snuff out any opposition in a moment, exercises great patience and control over His wrath and invites the rulers of this world to come and serve Him. But no one should mistake His longsuffering and mercy for indifference. There is an established day when all rebels will be judged and mocked by God, and dashed to pieces like brittle pottery. We need to bow before Him now, and take our refuge and fear in Him, for today is the day of salvation.

Secondly, praise is an appropriate response to God's power. Psalm 150 states

1 Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. 2 Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. 3 Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, 4 praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, 5 praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. 6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.

As we behold the mighty acts of God in creation, and in our personal lives, the appropriate response is exuberant praise. This includes singing, and music, and celebration. When praising God for His greatness, He is worthy of our energy, and our full attention. He is a great God, and deserving of great praise and worship. We should never be content to offer mealy mouthed half hearted singing. Especially when we come together, there ought to be a joyful expression of thanksgiving for God and what He has done.

Finally, a third response to God's power is that we must believe Him. We will end today with Ephesians 3:20-21

20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

It is amazing is that this power of God that we have been talking about is at work within us! God is able to do much more than we can even imagine. The implication is that we need to start asking for more, and believing God for more, and stop praying and relating to God as if He is small, limited and weak. We need to trust Him, and express that trust by believing that He will do great things in our midst for His glory. I encourage you to do just that. And who knows what He may do in response to our petitions to show forth His love, power, and strength in behalf of His people for His glory.