

The Infinite God

by A.W. Tozer

To know God, we must go beyond human reason and understanding and experience him personally and experientially.

Duration: 38:04

Scripture: Isaiah 55:8-9, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 2:9-11, Ephesians 3:20

Topics: "Character Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having a big vision of God and thinking big about Him. He criticizes the modern church for having a low concept of God, comparing Him to a movie star. The preacher highlights the infinite and boundless grace of God, stating that even one drop of Jesus' blood is enough to atone for the sins of all humanity. He concludes by emphasizing that God's love and mercy have no limits, and that His grace is big enough for everyone.

Transcript

Now, in 147th Psalm, verse 5, great is our Lord, and of great power, and his understanding is infinite. Now, I want to do a lot of defining as I go along, and say simply, I didn't know, I know most of you, or all of you do, unless you be some children, that finite means a thing has a limit to it, so long, or so heavy, so old, or so something, and infinite means that it doesn't have any limit, that there isn't any limit to it, and infinitude just means a condition of having no limit, so once more, a big word, once we've found not to be such a big word after all, so I am to talk about the infinite, and of this, above all the messages that I have brought to you ever, make the greatest demand upon your intelligence, and upon your imagination, and your powers of reason, and the reason that this is so is that we're going to try, that is, we're going to try, I don't know whether we'll succeed, but we're going to try to come to the conclusion of a mode of being with which we are completely unfamiliar, somewhat unfamiliar, but completely unfamiliar. God dwells in a mode of being wholly beyond us, and wholly above us, and infinitely removed from us.

We think about God, we're trying to think about someone unlike anything we know. To whom am I like, or to whom will you compare me? The answer, of course, being nobody. God, nothing's like God.

God is like himself. We dwell in matter and time, and we're creatures. God is not material, he doesn't dwell in matter, and he isn't spatial, he doesn't dwell in space, and he isn't temporal, he doesn't dwell in time.

God is the creator, and not a creature. God was before any creatures were, and as I have said before, God is anything to God, and nothing can take anything away from him. This poetic notion that God created the world as a display of his glory and all that may have something in it, but creation didn't add anything to it, and I say it can't take anything away from him.

So we've got to receive into our minds something wholly different from anything we're familiar with, and something wholly beyond anything that we're familiar with. So you've got to get the idea of God into your head, and that's a pretty tough one for us dwellers in time and space. Now, one thing that we've got to keep in mind is that anything I say about God this morning isn't God.

You see, theology is what we can learn about God, but knowing God is quite else altogether. Now, anything that I'll say this morning, any intelligent sinner can understand and then go to hell, but eternal life is knowing God, not knowing about God. The difference between the theologian and a Saint is that the Saint knows God, and the theologian knows about God.

There's a difference, you see, my brother. Theology is what can be known about what little heads can lay hold of. You don't have to be a Christian to know theology.

Chances are you would be a Christian or you wouldn't have to monkey with it. But if you're studying doctrine, you can teach doctrine and study doctrine and not be a Christian. I have no doubt that lots of Bible teachers aren't truly Christians.

They only know about God. They're spatialists in the book of Romans and the Hebrews, but they don't know the God of Romans nor Ephesians and Hebrews. And you can go to Bible conferences, hear theology, or doctrine as we like to call it, same thing.

You can hear doctrine taught and understand the doctrine. And yet all this is eternal life, that they might know thee, and know thee means experience. There's a difference in experiencing.

I know about Eisenhower, but I have never experienced Eisenhower. I've never seen him, I've never heard his voice except over the radio. I have never experienced Eisenhower, and yet I know about Eisenhower.

Anything that I can say or shall say about God this morning, any sinner can get it, if he's intelligent. So don't get puffed up if you should happen to feel well, you understand about God's infinitude. That doesn't happen unless you've been born of the spirit and washed in the blood.

Because over here in the book of 1 Corinthians, we read this. It is written, I have not seen nor ear heard neither have entered in the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, but God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit. For there searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirits in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man but the spirit of God. You can know about God without, but you'll never know God except by the spirit. You, you see, we intuit God.

Now, intuit is another word people, it's not so difficult. Intuition is how you know you're alive. How do you know you're alive? You get up in the morning and now, I wonder if I'm alive this morning.

Then you pinch yourself and say, well, I have feeling. And then you say, well, I must be alive. You don't reason that you're alive, you know you're alive by intuition.

The birth of his life, it's intuition, it's what knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man. The spirit of the man is that in the which, which knows he's alive. And he doesn't have to have any reason about it, he knows it.

And so what is it that knows the spirit of God? I can't know you're alive except by reasoning. I look down here and I see, I didn't see, and I say to myself, well, there he sits, he's got a plaid shirt on, he's sitting there humped over, and he's alive, I know he's alive. All right, I reason that he's alive and he's never reasoned about it at all.

You don't have to reason to wonder whether you're alive. You know it, think, intuition we call it. Now, the Holy Ghost knows himself with a divine intuition, and noble God except those who have the spirit of God, which gives to us that divine intuition, so that we know reasoning about him, but we know him instinctively and intuitively.

That's why you can take some little old lady that never, she never got through the third grade, and she reads only by moving her lips and reading out loud, and yet she can stand up and praise his voice, and you can't argue her out of it, you can make fun of her, you can tell her she's ignorant, you can tell her there is no God, you can tell her gospel is human imagination, you can argue her down, and when you're finished she'll look puzzled, but she's just as likely to keep on shouting, because her God is in intuitive knowledge. She didn't get it by reasoning to it, and so you can't reason it out of her. Anything you reason in his head, a better reasoner can reason out of his head.

That's why I'm worried when we have an altar call, and people come to the altar, and he gets down there with a New Testament with red marks on it, and he begins to reason a fellow into the kingdom, and then to reason him back out. If you can reason him in, you can reason him out. But if he meets God and knows the Holy Ghost, he's not reasoned into the kingdom, he's born into it.

And so, because he wasn't reasoned, be reasoned out. Now, that wasn't all a part of this, but I thought I'd say those things before I went any further. It's infinite, and by that we know this from the scripture.

It is one thing that God has revealed about himself through reason and by revelation, and you know that God knows no limit, no bounds. That's what we're trying to say. Whatever God is, he is without limit, and he is without bound.

And all that God is, and all that he ever was or will be, for all that he ever was, he will be, and all that he ever was and will be, he now is without limit. Have you ever thought that because we are, we have to think with our minds, our heads, and because our little height, and God is infinite, therefore, we have to think backwards about God. When we reason about God, he needs to pray.

You don't reason, you worship. And that's something else. But when you're trying to think about God, think in negatives.

The old theologian said that the only way you could ever think about God right was to think negatively about God. And you will find in the scriptures themselves, as well as in theology, for instance, self-existence. What is self-existence? It means that God had no origin.

What is self-sufficiency? It means that God has no support. What is God's eternity? It means that God had no beginning, has no ending. And our friend down in New York, to the contrary, notwithstanding, that's negative reasoning.

You see, we reason to God by saying that God had no origin. We reason to his self-sufficiency by saying he has nobody to hold him up. We reason to his eternity by saying that God had no beginning.

We reason to his immutability by saying that he, God, cannot change, change not. We reason to his infinitude by saying that he has no limitations. We reason to his omniscience by saying that God cannot learn.

Now, that shocked some people to say that God can't learn. You can only learn when you're ignorant. If there's one thing in the world you don't know, you're still ignorant.

And everybody's ignorant, only there's one fellow said they're just different, they're subjects. And everybody's ignorant, and everybody can learn. You can learn.

But God already knows instantly and perfectly everything that can be known. So if you have been in God's lecture and they're briefing him every morning on what's going on, you might as well stop, because God doesn't know anything he doesn't already know. Because God knows everything that can be known, or that's knowable, from eternity to come.

And so don't bother God by telling him an awful lot of things. You'd spend more time worshiping, you'd be nearer to God, to God with our grocery list. I believe, I have a book of requests here, so I believe in requests.

I write my requests down. Please keep them with me here. I've got the little book.

I have written in my little ten-cent store book the things I want God to do, the major, and I check them. God answers prayer. Got a few unanswered ones, but the most of them are answered.

And I believe in that. But I come to God like going to a general store every morning with a list and tell God what we want, and then the next morning appears another list and thanking him for the list that he'd answered before. That's pretty childish and cheating.

It's a pretty low way to worship God. When we go into the presence of God with no request at all on our hearts, just go to tell God how lovely he is, just to tell God how wonderful he is. If we don't think he's wonderful, then we don't know him the way we ought to.

Well, infinite means that God knows no limit and no bounds. And here we've got to start eliminating all things. We talk about unlimited wealth.

Well, that's perfectly silly because there is no such thing as unlimited wealth. Rock has unlimited wealth, he just had a huge amount of it, and people looked at it and said, well, it has no limit. But that's silly, it does have limits.

And we talk about the boundless deep, and the poet talked about the tide and said that which drew from out the boundless deep. But the deep isn't boundless. The scientists know how many gallons of water there are in the ocean, and they know how much there is.

So that boundless is a word you can't use about anything down here because everything does have a bound. Infinite. We talk about an author taking infinite pains, or a musician taking infinite pains with her music.

But she doesn't take infinite pains, she just takes a lot of pains. And energy is not boundless, there's just a lot of it. You get, oh, a few hundred thousand volts of electricity, your friend standing around will say he was hit, there was boundless power in that lightning stroke.

Boundless, it can be weighed, it can be measured. Scientists can tell you how much it was. So the word infinite, or boundless, or measureless, they belong to God, and nobody else ever should use them.

If they use them, they ought to know that they're the same. For there's only one that's measureless, and that's God. You can't measure God.

Some of you sisters that have been working too hard at the table, you're pretty good size, but you can weigh at least. And some of you tall fellows, some of you tall fellows, you're awfully tall. I remember one time, where was I in uh, in St. Louis, Minnesota, I was staying, though, at the Curtis over in Minneapolis.

And I got into the elevating down, and here all I could see was hip pockets. And I said, bless my heart, watch them look up for their heads. And here they were, with the Indianapolis basketball team, there to play Minneapolis basketball.

At night, Minneapolis tucked them in their pockets. I remember, but I thought, what is this? Here were these fellows there, and I was a little boy, I'm about 5'10", you know, but I was a little boy. They were tall, but they weren't limitless.

They could measure, so standing beside them, but actually you could measure. They had a limit. They went up there a long way, but they did finally measure.

Now, measurement, you see, is a way we have of giving an account of ourselves, the way created things have of giving an account of themselves. It describes limitations and imperfections. God never gives an account of himself, anyhow.

And since God isn't matter, you can't weigh him, and since he isn't space, you can't measure him. And since God isn't energy, you have no way of computing him, so we can't. We can only describe the contingent and the relative, but God being absolute and self-existent, no way of measuring God.

So there's no use to talk about God being big. Big is a creature word, you know, and it's a relative word. If a boy catches a fish as long as your fountain pen, that's a big fish to him.

And if his father catches one a foot long, that's a big fish to him. But the men who fish in the ocean catch them ten feet, big fish to them. And that whale that swallowed Jonah, that was a big fish to Jonah.

And everything is relative. A ten feet long is a big boat to some people, but the Queen Mary, she could tuck that under her fingernail. The word that we use when we're talking about degrees of things, but since God doesn't dwell in degrees, is absolute.

Are you afraid of that word, absolute? Some people go to college just enough to be ignorant. I have a daughter-in-law like that. She's got a IQ of 100, just pushing on genius.

And she's a most perfect example of an ignorant person who knew more when she went to college than she did when she came out. Just ignorant, you know. One of my sons went to university, and when he was through, he walked around and said, Dad is an absolutist.

Well, I didn't shrink and run and hide in a closet and say, please don't call me an absolutist. Of course I'm an absolutist. God is absolute, and that God doesn't dwell in degrees, and that you can't measure God in your way.

God is absolutely God and nothing else, and that all light came from absolute light, and all power came from power, and all intelligence came out of absolute intelligence, and all ideas came out of absolute idea, so that I'm an absolutist, tall, because I'm an absolutist. I believe that God the Father Almighty is absolutely. But we use the word absolutely so foolishly.

We say she's absolutely beautifully beautiful. No, she isn't. She's just pretty, but she's certainly not absolute, because there was a time when she didn't look like that, and there'll be a time when she doesn't look like that.

And anything that wasn't, and later won't be, isn't absolute. It's just relative. And some of you dear ladies that imagine you're good looking, you're fairly good.

I haven't seen any stunning beauties on the ground, but you all look nice. But listen, sister, listen, sister, not absolutely. You're not absolutely beautiful.

You're just beautiful. The man thinks he's absolutely strong. Nothing is God.

Never use such a word about anything but God, because absolute means that it is not a part of anything, a component. It is that, and there's no way of describing it. That's God.

Brother, I have a God, I do. I don't shout around like my friend over here. I like to hear him, I admit it.

I enjoy that. That's one of my joys in going to camp meetings. He means it, he means it.

If he didn't mean it, I'd be the first one to lead him aside under a tree and give him a talking to, but he means it. I can sit utterly unruffled and having things break around me that excite some people to death, but I'm not excitable. But I get wonderfully excited about God, wonderfully excited.

And you get before the great God who made heaven and earth and all the things that are therein. Why, it's my heart. Now, we measure things, I'm trying to say.

Weight is how we account for the gravitational pull, and distance is how we account for removal in space, and length is how we account for extension. And there are other ways. A liquid is a quart, or a gallon, or whatever it is.

My good friend Ed Maxey, who's now 80, he's a missionary. He was a city-raised boy, and he married a country girl. And he was giving a sermon one time in his preaching as a young preacher.

He said something about if a cow could give 40 quarts, he said she'd be doing pretty well. And his wife said, Brother, you can say that again. She was from the country and she knew cows, but he didn't.

And while I'm at it, I might as well, since I'm making a terrific demand on your head this morning, might as well tell you this one about my good friend, red-headed friend Ed Maxey in the Ballym Valley. He was a city boy, but he went down on the farm where he found his wife. He found her to have litter, and he was, more or less, like the rest of them, waiting around for the event.

They rushed in and said, I think she's going to have her pig, she's making the nest. And Ed rushed outside and started looking in the trees. Well, you see, don't you, friends, that there are measures down here.

Cows give so much milk, there's so much spring, there's so many horsepower in your engine, so many candle power in your electric lights. It's near to Mahaffey town, and we weigh and measure things. But God is outside of all and above all of that.

Thou art infinite, O God, and none of these words or concepts touch nor describe God. Describe the imperfect only, and God is perfect. And thus we don't weigh and measure God.

God knows, and I've said, one God, one majesty. There is no God but thee, unbounded, unextended unity. God has no measure and no amount.

God is measureless, boundless, and thus infinite. Now, what does all this mean, brothers and sisters? Well, that's really what I want to talk about. What does all this mean to us? It means that whatever God is to you, absolutely without measure.

It means that if God is your Father, he's not like your earthly father with limits. It means that God is your Father, then God is infinitely your Father, and he's your Father in infinite measure and degree, although neither measure or degree apply to God. We have to use it or else have a blank space in our heads.

And so God is perfect Father. God can do what you can do. I think now as I'm older, I'm a perfect father by a long way to my children, because I sometimes use sarcasm on them to get them to obey.

It breaks down, and I heard the sermon last night, and I sat there thinking I wasn't as good a father, and if I'd have been like some of you, I'd have gone to the altar, but I have my hand. And I wasn't a perfect father for numbers of reasons. One of them was that I knew they were intelligent, so I knew that if I just came head-on, you know, one toes are bumping in another one, and that's like an irresistible, forcible object.

So I'd flank them with a bit of sarcasm. That wasn't good, because I know I hurt them. So I'm not a perfect father, and I mean perfect fathers here except Mason.

But brother and sister, let me say to you that God is the perfect father. He's the perfect father. And God never makes any mistakes, and I'm so glad God never reads any books on what the young father ought to know.

And God has no worries about psychology, and there never haunts up a teacher to teach him how to be a father. No, no, my friend, God is infinitely our father, and he's perfectly our father. And then God, in his mouth, the mercy of God, and think that it's infinite.

There's no degree to it. Man has mercy. Out in the state of Illinois, a man named Leopold, who at Loeb in 1926, I think it was, killed young Bobby Frank and was sentenced to 190 years in prison.

Leopold died in prison, and Leopold learned 26 languages and became a recognized scientist. And yet he's been 33 years in prison, and he's tried to get out on parole a number of times. And this last week he came up for executive clemency, and I left you settled.

But I think that Leopold was to receive pardon. He's sick. He won't live very long, all two years of age.

But he's a scientist, and he says he wants to spend the rest of his life helping people. So he wants to go to a hospital and be a helper. He dies.

That's very fine. But if they pardon him, it will be mercy. But mercy wasn't big enough to quit.

Justice came in and sentenced him to 199 years. What I'm trying to say is that man's mercy knows limits, but God's mercy knows no limits. So you can go around preaching the mercy of God without limits.

There is no limit in the mercy of God. You can't find the boundaries of God's limit. Everything that God is, he is without limits, so that if you could see as a sea, you could swim in it for 10 million years and never come to the shore because it doesn't have any shore.

If mercy is being like the atmosphere, you could get into an airplane traveling at the speed of light, 186,000 miles a second, and you could go on forever and never find the limit of God's mercy. The reason this interests me is that I don't want a little bit of anything. I either want enough or you can have it.

I couldn't worship a God who had to worry about his mercy. God had to call the archangels around and say, I wonder if we'll have enough mercy for meeting. We're getting a little low on it.

It hasn't rained for some time, and I just wonder if we've got enough mercy. Brother, there's all the mercy there is, and that's all you need. If God wanted to do it, God has mercy enough to pardon all fallen angels and the devil himself and everybody in hell.

God doesn't will to do it. So I don't believe it, that there will be a mention of angels and devils and all the rest and sinners. I don't believe that.

But I say there is mercy enough in God to have mercy on all beings. And if there were a million times, 10 million times more sinners than there are, it wouldn't be mercy because God's mercy is infinite and can't strain infinitude. And then think of the love of God.

This we adore, our faithful, unchangeable friend, whose love is as great as his power, and neither knows limit nor end. Think of the love of God. A mother's love is usually held up as being the most beautiful thing in the world and as near to limitless, but a mother's love can be outraged to a point where her love will die.

Or a mother can die and hurt her. But God can't die and there isn't any way of God ceasing to love. You see, God doesn't love you.

He loves you because he is loved. And for that reason, God loves his world and his universe and it's infinite. Some people think that when Christ died on the cross, God loved us more than he had before.

No, brother. Jesus' death didn't increase the love of God any, because you can't increase the love of God. How can you increase that which is limitless and boundless? You can't get any love to add to the love of God.

There isn't any way of increasing God's love. So God loves you with all there is in the universe. And that ought to make you feel good.

I don't know whether it does or not, but it should make you feel of you with an everlasting love. That's what the scripture says, an everlasting love. And so the last thing I think of this song, could we with ink the ocean fill, and were the sky of parchment made, were every will and every man ascribed by trade, to write

the love of God above would drain the ocean dry, nor could the scroll contain stretched from sky to sky.

Whoever wrote that had the idea. The love of God is absolutely infinite, any place to find the end of it. So that if you live for an eternity to come as you will and exist forever into the world, a little protesting, squawking, sticky infant, you came into the world with eternity in your God.

A little rabbit is born to live three years and die. A bird is hatched. I watched a little fellow hop around looking out my window.

You'll only be here a while and then you'll go back to the dust from whence you came. But when God, when you were born something eternal, you see God is eternal both directions. The word eternal means from the vanishing point to the vanishing, out of mind to out of mind.

That's what eternal means in the Hebrew. It means from out of mind to out of mind, both directions. You're not eternal backwards.

There was a time when you were not and then God spoke and you were. But you're eternal in this day, out of mind to the vanishing point you'll never cease to be. So though you have eternity in your heart to be, you never can outlive the love of God and you never can go beyond the love of God.

Because I the Lord fill all and heavens cannot contain me, and God being love, eternity and all space is not only filled with the love of God but flowing with the love of God. You never can overdo the love of God, although you can preach about the love of God so much that he's a God of justice and do harm to the church. Forget that.

Now God's grace is in you. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. I like that passage and I want to tell you a little story and then quit.

This little story happened in Omaha, Nebraska. I heard a man preach and to save my life I don't know what he said. That's a preaching.

You can hear a man preach and get blessed and don't remember what he said, you know. But just the fact he was talking about God gave you a big lift and you went out feeling better, even if you didn't remember what he said and most of what we say isn't worth it. But I don't remember what this man said.

But I went down to my hotel room in the Fontenelle and I got down on my knees and I was praying. I was influenced by the sermon by it. And there I was on my knees and suddenly a sense of my own sinfulness came over me and the knowledge of the sins and wrongs I've done and all the rest.

And even though I'd been saved for oh many, many years and preaching for many years, I got under conviction like a sinner before the altar. And there before the great God I was pouring out my iniquity, my awfulness to God. And then when I was through, well, God didn't reply to me exactly, but he let me begin to reason.

I thought to myself, now wait here a minute, you're a sinner or were, but you're a sinner. And therefore if every corpuscle in your body was a sin and every nerve was there on your head to sin and every cell in your body is sin and you had everything, you had a mountain sin like an ocean, you'd still have a limit. Somebody could count it.

Somebody couldn't put the boundary around it. Some surveyor could say, I'm surveying Tozer's sins. It'd take him months to do it, months.

But finally he'd get around the outside of it. He could come and say, I'm measuring Tozer's sins. And he could measure the mountain.

It would be a long measure, but he'd finally reach the top finite. And a limitless, a limited man, a finite man can only sin finitely. All my sins, even though they're worse than I think they are, have a limit to them somewhere.

But Jesus Christ, when he died to make an infinite atonement without any limit at all, where sin abounded, grace abounded. And so I knelt there and thinking before God, and I said, why God, I'm not going to let this bother me anymore because even though everywhere is sin, it still can be counted. But who can count the infinite, infinite, boundless worth of them? And something whispered to my heart, if one drop of the blood of Jesus Christ being God, one drop of Jesus is capable of making atonement for all of Adam's from Adam and Eve down to the newest.

So that's why I walk around kind of relaxed and loose because God for me, God's grace is big enough for me. You can go anywhere. Here's a brother down here.

Who's a guard over in a prison. Why that man worse triple murderer and say to him, the love of God can take you in. If you let him, the love of God, big enough and enough.

And the mercy of God, great enough, because there's no limit to it. You only killed three people, but if you'd murdered one race, it would have had a limit, but the atonement in Jesus' blood has no limit. Limitless bound.

So that's why I like to sing marvelous grace of our loving Lord. That's a reasonably good song, but they don't write very many good ones. He's close to being a good one.

And that is pretty good. Infinite matchless, marvelous grace, grace that is greater than all hours. Well, that's the end of the sermon.

And now for just a word or two of arousal on the end, just to pray every day for a big vision of God, pray every day that God will help you to think big about an unworthy low concept of God. It seems to me is the greatest weakness of the modern church. God stares, he's somebody, he's him, he's he.

He is that strange being yonder, but he's just up there, just a greatly enlarged movie star. Well, the result of all that is our Christianity is dragging in the gutter, and I'd rather flag in the gutter than drag Christianity in the gutter, wouldn't you? I never have, and in the army I used to see them put the started to touch the ground, some soldier dived to grab it. They didn't want that noble flag to be in the dirt.

Let us take our thoughts of God, our concept of God, and think of it infinitely beyond. Never let it drag in the dust. Never think a low thought about God.

Never compare God to people. Never compare archangels. God, our heavenly father is above it all, and now I think the most wonderful thing of all, this like wonderful thing of all is that a God like that, a God like that, a God before whom angels veil their faces, presence is heaven and whose absence is hell, that that infinite, absolute, omnipotent, eternal, in omniscient God should come down and walk around the city and

say, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

And that that God should say when you pray, Say, Our Father, who art hallowed be thy name. So when you pray to your Father, remember who your Father is, better.

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