

The Attributes of God - Part 6

by William MacDonald

God's omniscience and omnipresence should motivate us to worship and obey Him, and should also serve as a deterrent to sin.

Duration: 38:32

Scripture: Psalm 139:7-14, Jeremiah 23:23-24, Matthew 18:20, Romans 11:33, Hebrews 4:13, Revelation 2:9

Topics: "Attributes of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the wonders of God's creation, both in the natural world and in the spiritual realm. He emphasizes the finely tuned nature of the universe and encourages gratitude for the gift of eyesight. The preacher also highlights the omnipresence of God, stating that He is everywhere at once and has a special presence when His people gather. The sermon further explores the marvels of the human body, such as the compacted DNA that holds all the genes and the incredible capacity of the human mind. The preacher concludes by referencing a verse in Matthew where Jesus affirms God's knowledge and care even for the smallest creatures like sparrows.

Transcript

Omniscient. God is all-knowing. He has perfect knowledge of everything.

There's nothing He does not know. God has never learned and can never learn because He already knows everything. He has always been omniscient and always will be.

Tozer says, God knows instantly and effortlessly all matter and all matters, all mind and every mind, all spirit and all spirits, all being and every being, all creaturehood and all creatures, every plurality and all pluralities, all law and every law, all relations, all causes, all thoughts, all mysteries, all enigmas, all feeling, all desires, every unuttered secret, all thrones and dominions, all personalities, all things visible and invisible in heaven and in earth, motion, space, time, life, death, good, evil, heaven and hell. Quite a catalog, isn't it? And God knows everything about all of these things. It's not enough to say God could know everything if He wanted to.

In fact, there's one of the books circulating among us that says that. No, it's more than that. It isn't that He could know everything if He wanted to.

It's that He does know everything. Let's look up some passages on the omniscience of God, on the fact that God is all-knowing. One of the key passages is in Psalm 139, where we were looking this morning at the birth of a baby.

Let's look at the first six verses of Psalm 139. I think your soul will thrill as mine does when we read these verses. O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me.

Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising. Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

For there's not a word in my tongue, but Thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.

It is high. I cannot attain to it. You can see very clearly that in this verse we have the glorious attribute of God, and the psalmist considers the infinite knowledge of God, and he's stricken with what we might call today sensory overload.

He can't take it in. It boggles his mind. He can't conceive of such knowledge.

It's absolutely amazing. Then, of course, in the New Testament, in Matthew 10, 29, and 30, the Lord Jesus pointed out that not a sparrow falls to the ground without your heavenly Father. Talk about knowledge.

A sparrow is a very inconspicuous bird, a very tiny bird. I don't know how many of you have ever held a sparrow in your hand, but I want to tell you something. If you took a sparrow, and if it were dead, and you took the feathers off it, there'd hardly be enough left to make soup for a sick grasshopper.

Well, actually, the Bible speaks of the sparrow as a very insignificant bird. And do you know what the Bible says? It says not one of them dies without your heavenly Father. Without his knowing it, and actually without his being there.

Think of it, the God of galaxies and supernovas in the heavens is also the God of the sparrow. And I think I quoted Dr. Ironside the other night when he said, God attends the funeral of every insignificant sparrow. And if he does that, how much more he cares for you and for me.

In Romans chapter 11, verses 33 through 36, let's look at that. It's a rhapsody. Paul is absolutely euphoric.

He's in ecstasy when he thinks of the knowledge of God. Romans chapter 11, verse 33, says, Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out.

For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor, or who has first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again. For of him, and through him, and to him are all things to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Notice the first verse. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God. And then the writer to the Hebrews reminds us in Hebrews chapter 4, verse 13, that all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Just think of it. The God in heaven, he sees us here. He's everyone.

He knows the thoughts of our heart. He knows every insect that's flying around. The whole thing is known to God.

And in 1st John 3.20, John adds in his usual concise manner, God knoweth all things. Well, it's really overpowering to think of the knowledge that God has, and I'll tell you why. Today, we have knowledge divided into various categories.

For instance, we speak about science, literature, philosophy, geography, history. And the books are just pouring out in endless processions, aren't they? And there's such an explosion of knowledge in our day that a man really has to be a specialist. I heard of a man who spent his life studying Greek, and at the end of his life, he wished he had concentrated on the definite article.

One word. Well, specialization is the name of the game. Today, a man is proficient in only a very small field.

He can never hope to cover the spectrum. But God has full knowledge of everything in heaven and earth. And he planted the secrets in the universe, and man has been discovering them ever since, just at the rate that God allows him to discover them.

We speak of man as the discoverer, but actually it was God who put those there in the first place. And yet there's so much that man doesn't know. Man doesn't know how a bee can fly.

According to all the laws of aerodynamics, a bee cannot fly. The bee doesn't know it, it just keeps on flying. A man can travel to the moon, but he can't imitate the bees.

It's amazing, isn't it? He can transplant human hearts, but he can't cure the common cold. If you go to the doctor with a common cold, he'll probably tell you to go and get pneumonia, because he can cure that. Man can conquer outer space, but he can't conquer inner space.

He can make war, but he can't make peace. It says that in Romans 1, but the way of peace have they not known. Man knows so much, and yet he knows so little.

Isn't it true? By contrast, God has complete knowledge of everything. Somebody said this, though infinitely glorious and gloriously grand, he knows the eternal story of every grain of sand. That is true, but no exaggeration at all.

With him there are no mysteries, no insoluble problems, no puzzles. And you know what's true of the Father is true of the Lord Jesus, even when he was here on earth. I'd like to say tonight that when my Savior came to the earth, he was still omniscient, he still had all knowledge.

I know there are some puzzling verses. It says he grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. How can one who is omniscient grow in wisdom? Mark tells us that the Savior didn't know the time of his second coming.

Of that hour knoweth no man, not even the Son of Man, but the Father only. And I confess to you tonight, there's mystery in those passages. But, I tell you, I'd rather worship the Lord than solve all the mysteries.

And most of the heresies come when people try to dissect the person of Christ. There's mystery connected with the person of Christ, and no man can understand God and man in one person. Let me give you an illustration.

Can God die? No, God cannot die. God is immortal. Is Jesus God? Yes.

Did Jesus die? Yes. See, it's a paradox. It's a divine paradox.

It's too much for our brain, but it isn't too much for God's brain. I'll tell you that. Great is the mystery of godliness.

God was manifest in the flesh. And I know that although the Lord Jesus, although those verses are written of the Lord Jesus, coming into the world, he was omniscient, absolutely had perfect knowledge of everything at one time. Now, this attribute of God should have a tremendous influence on your life and on mine.

First of all, it should really cause us to worship the Lord. To think of a God who's so great, he knows all about us. All about our thoughts, all about our intents, all about the purposes of our hearts.

But you know, it should also serve as a deterrent to sin. God knows everything. You might think it's secret, it's secret sin.

Dear friends, secret sin on earth is open scandal in heaven. It is. Secret sin on earth is open scandal in heaven.

We can never fool ourselves into thinking that no one would know. God knows. And we can never sin and get away with it.

At the same time, we shouldn't think of God as a frowning ogre, ready to pounce a man the first mistake he makes. Our God is a loving, heavenly Father. And he's interested in our welfare.

And all of his laws and all of his commandments are designed for our good. Those of him, those people who think of God as unpleasable and stern have got the wrong God, because he isn't that way. But I think it's also tremendously comforting to know that God knows.

He knows what his people are going through. The Lord said to the church in Smyrna, I know thy works and tribulation and poverty. Revelation 2.9. And I want to tell you, those words, I know, have a world of comfort and sympathy in them.

Once again, some of you might be going through deep waters at the present time. God knows. He knows all about it.

And he's touched with the feeling of our infirmities. I think it's a tremendous comfort to know that God knew all about me before he saved me, and he saved me just the same. Nothing that you've ever done or are has come as any surprise to God.

And when you bowed the knee and received him as your Lord and Savior, he knew. He knew how you and I would fail him, what flops we would be in the spiritual life. And he loved us and he saved us just the same.

He knew that we'd break his heart oftentimes, and yet he threw his arms of love around us and drew us to himself. I think it's wonderful to know that God understands the worship and praise that I feel for him, but which I often can't express. Does that help to you? Don't you have times when your heart is just overflowing with gratitude to the Lord, but you can't find human language to express it? God knows.

You don't have to. He knows. He knows what's going on in your spirit, and he counts it for the worship.

Not only that, he knows what we would like to do for him, but for one reason or another, we're not able to do for him. I think of David. David wanted to build the temple, didn't he? And God said, no, David, you're not going to build the temple because you've been a man of blood, but inasmuch as it was in thine heart.

And you know what? I believe David will get rewarded for building the temple, even if he didn't build it. And there are some of you that are sacrificial in giving to the work of the Lord, and you wish you had more. You get credit for that wish.

God reckons that all. He knows all about it. We mentioned the other night the greatness of God, that he can hear prayer in all the languages of the world.

I've known men who've mastered seven or eight languages, and I stand in awe of them. Some of us have trouble with one, and they've mastered seven or eight languages. God understands them all, and not only all the languages, but all the dialects as well.

There's nothing he doesn't know. In studying the attributes of God, there are some that we should seek to emulate. We should seek to imitate his love, mercy, and grace.

We'll never come close to attaining his knowledge, but I want to tell you, we should dedicate our minds to him. I think when Jesus said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, strength, mind. You know what I think that means? I think it means to give the very finest of your intellectual powers to the Lord.

I think it's such a prostitution to take the human mind and squander it for the world, instead of for the Lord. There was a geneticist, a man working in genetics, and he's quite famous. His name was Dr. Dobzhansky.

In recent years, he came out with some statement acknowledging the existence of God. I don't think he was born again. I mean, that's not part of the story, that he really became a believer, but at least he acknowledged the existence of God.

Here's a man who had been working with fruit flies all his life. They work with fruit flies because they generate so quickly, and they can study genetics in this way. And one of his colleagues, when she heard that Dr. Dobzhansky had acknowledged God, Dr. Hunter said, imagine leaving fruit flies for God.

Well, I'd like to say, imagine leaving God for fruit flies. I tell you, if God has given me this body, and God has given me this mind, and God has given me this intellect, I want to use the very best of it for Jesus Christ. Nothing less than that will do.

I have one final thought in connection with God's all-knowingness, and that is this. When God forgives me, he forgets my sins. This is beautiful.

How can somebody who knows everything forget? He does. He does. Far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed my transgressions from thee.

Even if we admit that he forgets them in the sense that he'll never bring them up against us again, it's still as wonderful a truth as ever. How great God is. He's greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.

And I like what that motto said. This is our God forever and ever. He will be our guide even unto death.

Another attribute of God, and we must hurry on, is the fact that God is all-present. And turn back to Psalm 139 again, because this is a wonderful psalm. I hope you'll love it as never before.

Psalm 139. God is omnipresent in the sense that he is in all places at one and the same time. God fills heaven and earth.

And Psalm 139, verses 7 through 10, tell the story. Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up to heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, that is, in Sheol, behold, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day.

The darkness and the light are both alike to thee. It's wonderful, isn't it? I can remember going on an around-the-world trip in 1969, and I had never been around the world today. I was going to take a jet and go around the world with some others.

And there was a little bit of trepidation in my heart. Not bad, just a little questioning. And, you know, somebody wrote me a letter.

And in the letter, at the bottom of the letter, they said, Psalm 139, verses 9 and 10. And I couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe it when I saw those verses.

Here you have a jet plane in that verse. If I take the wings of the morning. It's beautiful.

What it really means in the psalm is the wings of the morning. That is the rays of the rising sun shooting across the sky. Well, that's just about the speed of jet travel, isn't it? Today, if I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea.

That's what I was going to do, go right around the world. And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea. It says, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

And I'll tell you, that was better than phenobarbital for me on that trip. Okay, Jeremiah, chapter 23. Jeremiah, chapter 23, and verses 23 and 24.

Jeremiah 23, verses 23 and 24. Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him, saith the Lord? Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord? And of course, there it is, the omnipresence of God. And then, a familiar verse, Matthew 18, 24.

Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst. You say, well, he's everywhere. Well, it's true, he is everywhere at once.

But there's a special way in which the Lord is present when his people gather. And incidentally, that's why I go to the meetings of the local assembly. I go because I believe Jesus is there.

I think that's what it means to gather to the name of the Lord Jesus. You gather to him. You don't go to hear a great preacher.

You go because Jesus is there. And I want to tell you, you get a group of Christians who see that, you'll have a stable assembly. And if you have a group of people who are men followers, you'll have some spiritual butterflies.

They'll flip from place to place. And when the preacher leaves, they'll leave as well. Where two or three are gathered together, there am I in the midst of them.

God is ubiquitous. It's a big word, isn't it? And he's also inescapable. Now, when we speak of the omnipresence of God, that's not the famous pantheism.

Pantheism, for instance, would teach that God is in that tree, and you should worship the tree. That's not what we believe. We believe God is everywhere at one and the same time, and he alone should be worshiped.

An atheist once wrote on a wall, God is nowhere. And a little girl came along and put a space between the W and the H. God is now here. It's just a matter of spelling.

Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies. John Arrowsmith told of a heathen philosopher who asked, Where is God? And the Christian answered, Rather, ask, where is he not? That would be a better question. Thomas Watson wrote, God's center is everywhere.

His circumference is nowhere. God's center is everywhere. His circumference is nowhere.

And George Swinnock added, God is neither shut up in nor shut out of any place. Now, although God is everywhere, he's not apparent everywhere, is he? He isn't visible everywhere. Sometimes his presence is more manifest than at others.

Sometimes, as Lowell said, behind the dim unknown standeth God amid the shadows, keeping watch above his own. But whether we discern him or not, the fact of the matter is he is there. Now, bringing it down to the Lord Jesus, it raises a question.

When Jesus was here on earth, was he omnipresent? You say, no, he was in Nazareth or Bethlehem or Capernaum or Jerusalem. Wait a minute. It's true.

It's true that he was in those places, and at the same time he was omnipresent. Bodily, he was in those places, and yet he was in all places at the same time. You say, how can that be? The mystery of the Godhead.

The Lord Jesus did not lay aside his omnipresence when he came to earth, but he localized his body. That's all he did. He took to himself the added feature of being bodily present.

For instance, he could be in one place and heal a person in another place. Try it if you think that's easy. He could be on earth and still be in the bosom of the Father.

He said, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father. When he said it, he was here on earth. Our minds have trouble reconciling these irreconcilables.

But don't worry about it. As Pascal said, the heart has its reasons, but reason knows nothing of, and so does faith. Faith has its reasons, but reason knows nothing of.

This truth of the omnipresence of God should have a very practical influence on our lives. We cannot escape God. God called Jonah to go to Nineveh to preach.

Jonah fled to Tarsus, landed up in the belly of a great fish. He met God there, and it changed his whole life. Couldn't get away from God.

I've heard of an Irishman who left Ireland to come to this country, and God was waiting for him on the dock in New York, and he got saved. Couldn't get away from God by leaving Ireland. Tried to rebel against his Christian background, but it just didn't work.

I like a poem by Francis Thompson called The Hound of Heaven. The Hound of Heaven. I might not be able to explain the poem to you, but I know what it means by personal experience.

It says, I fled him down the night and down the day. I fled him down the arches of the years. I fled him down the labyrinthine waves of my own mind.

And in the midst of tears, I hid from him. But God is a better runner than we are. And God caught up with him when Thompson became exhausted with his flight.

Great comfort to the people of God to know that no matter where they are, God is with them. People have said to me over in Europe, where was God when the concentration camps were going on? And my answer is, he was with his people in the concentration camps. He was with Kari Tenbum in the concentration camps.

And think of the glory that has come to God just through the writings of that dear woman. I was in Poland in an assembly once, and before I went, Brother Prober said to me, now there's an elder in this assembly, and he said he was in Auschwitz, but he said he doesn't like to talk about it. And so I went down to the assembly, and they told me that there had been five assemblies, five elders in that assembly at the beginning of the war.

And when the Nazis came, a religious leader in that town reported these elders to the Nazis as being communists. They weren't. They were born-again Christians.

But anyway, this religious leader reported the five elders to the Nazis as being communists, and they all went to Auschwitz, and only this one survived. So when I met him, I didn't know what to say to him. And by interpretation, I said to him, I understand you were in the concentration camp.

And he said to me, I thank God for those days in the concentration camp. He taught me lessons I'll never forget. God was with His people in the concentration camp.

They're never alone. God never leaves those He loves. I went through a period of nervous and emotional turmoil at one time.

I guess you'd call it a nervous breakdown, when it seemed that God had forsaken me. But He hadn't. He hadn't.

He was waiting for me to get my spiritual life in order. And of course, the fact that God is omnipresent should motivate me to live in holiness. God is there in the darkness of night, dear friends.

God is there when we're away from home. He sees all we do. He hears all we say.

My God is writing all the time. Whatever I do, I should ask myself, how does this appear in His presence? Because that, after all, is the great test of all human conduct. How does it appear in the presence of Christ? Good test when you sit before the TV, isn't it? Watch those Hollywood harlots parading across the screen.

Picture Jesus there. He is there. How does it appear in His presence? And then I'd like to just speak also about another attribute of God, and that is God is wise.

The wisdom of God. The wisdom of God. You say, well, isn't that the same as knowledge? No, it really isn't.

You know, a man can have a head full of wisdom and be very unwise. Wisdom is the practical application of knowledge. And when we speak of the wisdom of God, we mean that He always produces the best results by using the best possible means.

That's the wisdom of God. God always produces the best possible results by the best possible means. His wisdom is His perfect judgment and His infallible insight.

Let me read you some passages. You don't have to turn to them. Job chapter 12, verses 13 and 16.

It says, With Him is wisdom and strength. He hath counsel and understanding. With Him is strength and wisdom.

The deceived and the deceiver are His. Psalm 104, verse 24. O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

The earth is full of Thy riches. That's true, isn't it? The wisdom of the works of God. You know, you just think of the human hand and you think of all the work that we have to do with the hand.

And if you could feed that all into a computer and ask the computer, what would be the best design for a hand to do all those things? It would come out just like that. It really would. The wisdom of God.

I can remember dear brother Charlie Van Ryn working with plaster in a corner and he'd say, isn't the finger wonderful? You know, he'd just run the finger down the corner and even out the plaster in the corner. Proverbs 3, 19 and 20. The Lord by wisdom has founded the earth.

By understanding has He established the heavens. By His knowledge the depths are broken up and the clouds drop down the dew. And then again in Romans 11, verses 33.

Oh, the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out. The wisdom of God.

I was telling some of the friends the other day about the seagull. You know, if you go out the middle of the Atlantic or Pacific, there are seagulls flying around there. Thousands of miles from land.

What do they drink? Can't drink salt water, can you? We couldn't. The seagull drinks the salt, takes the salt water into its mouth and that salt water passes through a filter membrane in the seagull and a teardrop with the salt comes out of its eye and fresh water goes down into its gullet. The wisdom of God.

And do you know that the creation about us is filled with things like that? If we only had eyes to see it. I believe that's one of the things we'll do in heaven. One of the many things we'll do in eternity.

God will show us the wonders of His natural creation and the wonders of His spiritual creation as well. I was reading in National Geographic magazine was speaking about the universe we live in and how finely tuned it is. And it said that the chance of that happening by chance for a universe like this to be so finely tuned would be like taking a microscopic dart in our eyes and moment by moment weave these tiny snippets of information into a tapestry portrait of what is before us.

You ever thank God for eyesight? Do it tonight before you go to bed. Do it tonight. The DNA which is the basis of heredity.

I think I got this from the book *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*. He says the DNA which is the basis of heredity is so narrow and so compacted that all the genes in all my body cells would fit into an ice cube. Yet if the DNA were unwound and joined together end to end the strand could stretch from the earth to the sun and back more than 400 times.

That's in your human body. Let me read that to you again. It's really overpowering, isn't it? The DNA which is the basis of heredity is so narrow and so compacted that all the genes in all my body cells would fit into an ice cube.

Yet if the DNA were unwound and joined together end to end the strand could stretch from the earth to the sun and back more than 400 times. And then there's the miracle of the human mind. You ever think of what a miracle the mind is? Who has put wisdom, Job says, who has put wisdom in the inward parts? Who has given understanding to the mind? Evolution can't explain the mind of man, dear friends.

There's a miracle of the spirit by which you and I can have fellowship with God. God doesn't have fellowship with God. But in prayer you and I can leave planet Earth and go into the very throne room of the universe and have converse with the great sovereign of the universe.

I tell you, it's really wonderful. God's wisdom is seen in the spiritual creation. When in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God but it pleased God by the foolishness of the thing preached to save those that believed.

That's wisdom. That really is. Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

In his wisdom God did not choose the wise and the mighty. He chose the weak and the base and the despised and the things that are not to bring to naught the things that are that no flesh should glory in its presence. I want to tell you tonight all creation is filled with evidences of divine wisdom.

All his works express his wisdom. And the wisdom of God perfect and complete means that he can never make a mistake. Isn't that wonderful? Too loving to be unkind and too wise to make a mistake.

What confidence this gives us in the Lord. That means that there are no accidents in our lives. No tragedies in our lives.

No errors in our lives. You know, if you and I could plan our lives exactly the way he plans them. If we knew what he knows we would plan our lives exactly the same way he plans them.

No use going through life regretting things. He does all things well. The wisdom of God also means that God's guidance is the best.

We can trust his guidance. Jeremiah said, O Lord, I know that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. That's true.

We don't know what's best for us. We have to depend on his wisdom. And if we were really wise, we'd let him choose for us.

He's a truly wise counselor. We're to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. We can.

We can't be wise as God is wise. But we can be wise in human affairs. And the great path of wisdom is found in the word of God.

The more we're absorbed with the word of God, the wiser our decisions in life will be. So we've been thinking about the power of God. He's all-powerful.

The knowledge of God. He knows everything. The omnipresence of God.

He's in all places at one and the same time. What a great God we have.

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