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Abyss, Mystery, and Wonder

We are not privy to all the knowledge in the world. Our brains are simply too limited. We are also not fully aware of ourselves. I, too, am not fully aware of myself. Mystics believe that humans are inherently mysterious. I once experienced a profound sense of mystery about myself that I still cannot fully comprehend.

It was just before the ordination, during the final stage of the provisional period. At the concluding meeting, numerous pastors were invited to support the future journey of the ordinands, and the friends and mentors of the ordinands were there. After the meeting, a communion was finalizing the whole session. But unfortunately, there was no musician to accompany it.

The communion started without any music. And a strange thing happened. God nudged me to go to the piano. And I stood up, went to piano. There was a song the gathering sang together. I started to accompany. And after the song finished, the music continued with unbelievably beautiful improvisation. I had no time to think about what kind of harmony I would move with my finger, and what is next. Nothing at all. It should have been fearful in front of so many people. I had no time to be fearful because my fingers moved continuously, and it was absolutely beautiful and automatic during the whole communion time. Oh...! After the music finished, I was taken by the mysterious fear of what just happened to me.

Was it myself? Who was the person who played such music? Who moved my fingers? It is still a mystery. There was me in myself far more than myself that I know of. And God knows because God created me. How about you? Did you find that you are mysterious inside your being? You do not know yourself fully.

Think about your relationship where you love someone very much, and you know the person well, and possibly for decades. A part of loving the person is more than your thoughts about them. There are more facts in their lives than your thoughts. There is a quality to their heart that you don't grab hold of. There is a kind of open spaciousness. There is a sense of mystery of someone or something that is actually extremely pleasant kind of joyfulness in the experience of relationships that we cannot express in words; such open space that is not expressed at all.

If you define a person to a bunch of categories, then that will be a violation of racism or stereotyping. Humans cannot be defined by someone's words. The words alienate the person from who they are. Every person in the world is a mystery.

Then how much more is it true of the divine? It is about the mystery, abyss, and wonder of God.

God is the creator of the cosmos. God is not a part of the cosmos. God is not a piece of furniture in the cosmos.

So, our way of knowing the things in the cosmos is going to be different from the way God knows them.



It refers to the incomprehensible vastness and unfathomable nature of the divine, which is beyond human understanding and can only be grasped through awe, faith, and personal experience rather than logic alone. This concept involves God being both infinitely distant and intimately present.

We are living in the world where experience composes our knowledge. God is in the space of wordless wonder. Once my Korean teacher told us, if you nail down God in a word, it is no more God. Even if I understand something about God, if I express it, it is no more the God in me.

So, people started to describe God by stating what God is not. They expressed that God is ineffable, incomprehensible, and beyond all human concepts. Human language inadequate to express infinite nature of God. So, God is beyond categories. It is too finite to capture the infinite divine essence. There was inevitability to describe God in negative way. It is called apophatic theology, which uses negations to point toward God's absolute transcendence and unknowability. I love that there's just way more mystery and way more than I can comprehend, and I'm very comfortable with that.

What we express God through metaphor in the worship service is always pointing beyond the metaphor toward what cannot be expressed. The liturgy, poem, and all in our worship service use this metaphorical language.

There are possibilities we can go in two directions in our religious life or even in our human life. When there is something, we feel uneasy about when we begin to feel it and become increasingly anxious about the enigma. If you love someone, you can't rest in this openness, and you tend to say, "Now tell me because you didn't explain it. You must talk this through." It is just like squeezing every drop you know. Then it chokes the relationship. It damages the relationship.

When we are uneasy and untrusting in our love of the mysterious and infinite quality of God, it damages the relationship. It means you can't allow God to be God. Your lover isn't just a set of attributes that you list. You can't say that I love you because of 10 things you love. Love gives space so that your lover can be your lover. Our God is not so static. It is not like the idols in our scripture today.

The idols are static, and they don't breathe and they don't change, and they have eyes, but they can't see. Idols are something you can nail down or touch or define or name. It is why we have the Second Commandment; "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them".

We are invited to point God through metaphor, through which we can approach to God a little closer. If we think of them as static and certain, it is no longer the pointer toward the divine, because you have become absorbed with your own thoughts. Then we are at the risk of moving into idolatry.



Worship must be directed to Him alone who is in abyss, wonder, mystery. So, God expressed God-self with no static name, "I am who I am." Constantly moving and changing name. YahWeh. It is most accurate expression of who God is. Our Psalm today says the name of God is beautiful. Then it goes on to describe attributes of God and specifically names justice and compassion. And God's name is YHWH, I am who I am.

It will let you sink your roots into something deeply nourishing. Unknowability, and un-possessability of the divine. The more you know about God, you get to know that you don't know God. It is called *divine darkness*. That is mysterious, wonderful, and amazing. God is radically transcendent and different from all created things. So, the mystic's goal is to plunge into God, and to be "lost in God" by dissolving the ego and plunging *the abyss of the soul into the abyss of God*. I believe there will be a great intimacy in the relationship with God that I cannot imagine.

What is your goal before the mysterious God? What we know for sure is that this God loves you in the most mysterious way. My goal is to receive the love, and to be loved by God fully! It is to enjoy His love. And I trust His power, and the power is LOVE. Even though I do not understand how God works, why God does what God does, it is alright, because I trust that God loves me. I can rest in turbulence of life under God's wing. It still gives me peace. I don't need to know all at all, because God knows all around my environment and the world. That is enough. And whenever needed, God will nudge me to the right direction. God will protect me from all harm. God will shape me into the likeness of God.

Now, let's think about what are some practical ways to engage with the mystery of God in everyday life? Engaging with God's mystery means releasing the need for complete control and embracing uncertainty with faith. When you feel anxiety about a situation, remind yourself that God's plans are beyond your full comprehension. Instead of trying to figure everything out, surrender the outcome to God and rest in trust. It gives you a huge rest of the soul. We cannot know all the things in the world. But God knows, and God loves us. Just be in peace guided by God's holy nudging. Whether it is raising children, or challenging situations or relationships, communing with God, surrender all the situations to God, and request wisdom. And rest in God.

Rest is the power; rest is a weapon that invites God's power into our lives.



Patience is a key element of trusting God in the unknown. Use periods of waiting not as a source of stress, but as an opportunity for spiritual strengthening. Patience is fruit of the Holy Spirit. God's timing is different from ours. Trust God's goodness and never-failing love for you. God never leave us forsake us. And rest in that!

For our souls, Contemplative practices is needed. These practices intentionally quiet the mind and open your heart to the presence of God, who is always with you, in you, and for you. One of the methods is called Centering prayer, which is a kind of breathing prayer that I am inviting you with prayer bracelet.

This method of silent prayer helps you consent to God's presence and action within you. Choose a very short sacred word to pray and to be open to God. Sit comfortably with your eyes closed and silently pray inside. Whenever you become aware of thoughts, gently return to the sacred word, letting go of the distraction. Practice for about 20 minutes. The mysterious God will wrap you with his beautiful presence.

