

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

FEBRUARY 2020

FEBRUARY

1st	Day 32	The Incommunicable Attributes of God: God is Omniscient	Psalms 147:5
2nd	Day 33	The Incommunicable Attributes of God: God is Omniscient	Matthew 6:8
3rd	Day 34	The Incommunicable Attributes of God: God is Omniscient	Jeremiah 17:10
4th	Day 35	The Incommunicable Attributes of God: God is Omniscient	Psalms 139 & Psalm 18:20-22
5th	Day 36	The Incommunicable Attributes of God: God is Omnipotent	Daniel 4:35
6th	Day 37	The Incommunicable Attributes of God: God is Omnipotent	Hebrews 6:18
7th	Day 38	The Incommunicable Attributes of God: The Will of God	Rev. 4:11 & Hebrews 1:1-3
8th	Day 39	The Incommunicable Attributes of God: The Will of God	Proverbs 21:1 & Acts 17:26
9th	Day 40	The Incommunicable Attributes of God: The Will of God	1 Peter 3:8-17
10th	Day 41	The Incommunicable Attributes of God: The Will of God	Philippians 2:12-13
11th	Day 42	The Incommunicable Attributes of God: God is Perfect	Psalms 18:30
12th	Day 43	The Incommunicable Attributes of God: God is One	Deuteronomy 6:4
13th	Day 44	The Incommunicable Attributes of God: God is Unique	Deuteronomy 4:15-40
14th	Day 45	God's Communicable Attributes: God's Wisdom	Romans 11:25-33
15th	Day 46	Communicable Attributes of God: God is the Source of Wisdom	Proverbs 2:6
16th	Day 47	The Communicable Attributes of God: God's Love	John 3:35 & John 17:24
17th	Day 48	The Communicable Attributes of God: God's Love	Psalms 31:3 & Ezekiel 20:44
18th	Day 49	The Communicable Attributes of God: God's Love	John 15:13 & 1 John 3:16
19th	Day 50	The Communicable Attributes of God: God's Grace	Nehemiah 9:16-18
20th	Day 51	The Communicable Attributes of God: God's Grace	Ephesians 2:4-9
21st	Day 52	The Communicable Attributes of God: God is Longsuffering	Joel 2:13
22nd	Day 53	The Incommunicable Attributes of God: God is Holy	1 Peter 1:13-16
23rd	Day 54	The Communicable Attributes of God: God is Just	Nehemiah 9:26-30
24th	Day 55	The Communicable Attributes of God: God is Just	2 Chronicles 6:14-15
25th	Day 56	God's Glory: His Essence	Revelation 15:8
26th	Day 57	God's Glory in Christ	John 1:14
27th	Day 58	God's Glory in the Church	2 Corinthians 3:18
28th	Day 59	The Trinity: One God, Three Persons	Matthew 3:16-17
29th	Day 60	-- Please take today to meditate on the truths you have learned this month --	

Day 32 – February 1

The Incommunicable Attributes of God: God is Omniscient

Psalm 147:5

One of the hallmarks of spiritual growth is an increase in understanding. In fact, our prayer for you as you read these devotions is that you would become more versed, and therefore grounded, in the truths of our faith. While the hope is that you would grow in your knowledge, the stark reality is that you cannot, and will not know all things. This leads us to one major reason for God's exaltation over mankind. Whereas you and I may know some things about a select few topics, God knows all things about every subject!

Psalm 147:5 is one of many passages that comment on God's omniscience. Omniscience is a big word that means "all knowing". When we say that God is omniscient, we mean that He knows absolutely all things. Think about this for a moment, there has never been a moment when God learned anything; He is absolutely totally aware and well-versed in every subject in the universe. Over your lifetime there have undoubtedly been many times that you were shocked or caught off guard. Perhaps you were dismayed by a tragedy that befell you or a loved one or maybe you were horrified to learn of a supposed friend's betrayal or possibly you thought you knew how things would work out professionally only to learn that your grand plans would never come to fruition. Whatever the case, men are always learning and therefore consistently reminded of our limited understanding. The next time that you are surprised, take a moment to reflect on the truth that God has never been caught off guard. What a mighty God we serve!

The psalmist marvels in awe-struck praise at God's understanding as he exclaims that God's knowledge is "beyond measure". The point here is that God's knowledge is all encompassing. Indeed, there is simply no way to come to grips with or attempt to quantify all that our God knows. God's omniscience has many ramifications for our lives, over the next few days we will reflect on some of the realities that come into focus when a person truly believes and comes to terms with the truth that God knows absolutely all things.

Putting This Together

For our purposes today let us reflect on one obvious ramification for believers in light of God's omniscience, namely that we as finite human beings are absolutely wise to trust all that God has said and all that He commands. Put negatively, it is foolish to believe that our limited wisdom and insight somehow trumps what God has revealed to us for our well being and understanding. In order for the believer to live in light of God's omniscience, we must learn to submit humbly to His precepts as a declaration of the reality that He is all-knowing and we are not! Sometimes instructions, exhortations or prophecies seem far-fetched or simple minded to us. In those moments in which we are tempted to follow our own path, let us remember that God's knowledge is beyond measure and allow that truth be the catalyst for our submission and obedience.

Day 33 – February 2

The Incommunicable Attributes of God: God is Omniscient

Matthew 6:8

Over the next several days we will walk through various truths that result from our knowledge that God knows all things. Our prayer is that these certainties will serve to strengthen you and give you peace as God's omniscience is applied to various subjects in life.

The main truth for today is simple: God's omniscience results in His absolute and total knowledge of all that you need. We see this stated clearly by Christ in Matthew 6:8. In this text, Jesus is preparing to deliver to the disciples what we now call the "Lord's Prayer". However, before He instructs them in prayer, Christ takes a moment to entreat the disciples not to pray like the verbose Gentiles. Jesus' teaching is that the amount of words in prayer do not equate to the level of power or effectiveness of prayer.

Prayer is not a means of us communicating information to God for His benefit, it is a way we acknowledge our humble dependence upon Him. Stated another way, God does not need to be educated as to your needs or wants but He is glorified when we humbly cry out to Him for provision. Christ is seeking to remind the disciples (and us!) that God knows all that they need before they even ask Him. Obviously, this is excellent news! God's omniscience includes an intimate knowledge of all of our needs.

Brother and sister, do not ever wonder whether or not God has forgotten about you! The great news is that God literally cannot forget anything, as his forgetfulness would render Him no longer omniscient, and therefore no longer God. There is not a moment or situation in life that God has not foreseen. So, when you pray, do so understanding that you don't have to educate a really busy God who may have just let your life slip past Him, instead pray in full faith that God already knows what you need before you ask!

Putting This Together:

There is one outworking of this truth that needs to be addressed. God's knowing your need and your asking for that need to be met in a specific way does not equate with God answering your prayer in the manner in which you see fit all the time. Sometimes we get frustrated or even depressed because we continue to ask for something that never comes to fruition. Remember in those moments that God's plan is good and it results in our good if we love Him and are called to His purposes! It is easy to be discouraged in the moments when God's reply is "wait" but hold onto the truth that God knows and that He is all powerful so that nothing is outside of His ability. In fact, His "all-powerfulness", or omnipotence, is the subject of a very imminent future devotion!

Day 34 – February 3

The Incommunicable Attributes of God: God is Omniscient

Jeremiah 17:10

Whereas yesterday's devotion should have brought us comfort, today's text might just make us a little uneasy. Over the years, I've heard many people express thanksgiving that others cannot know what they are thinking! I'm sure all of us have had instances where we were able to keep our true thoughts or emotions to ourselves. Furthermore, mankind has proven quite adept at hiding true motivations from the sight and perception of others. Think about how many folks are fooled by con-artists and even former friends and family who are able to conceal their real incentive and feelings in order to take advantage of a person or situation. Even more personally, how often do you catch yourself thinking, or even meditating, on subjects that are displeasing and even offensive to God and others?

Today's text reminds us that we can generally fool our peers but God intimately knows all that our heart conceals. Jeremiah reminds us in today's passage that God "searches" the heart. The word "search" is used to express God's thorough evaluation of all that resides in us. Jeremiah does not mean that God searches in an effort to discover something He previously did not know, instead he means that God takes total stock or inventory of all that is in our hearts. The term "heart" here is used in its typical Scriptural sense to denote the very center of our being. In fact, our heart is the core of our problem biblically. Over and over again we read texts that attribute our sinful, wicked behavior to our heart. The previous verse (Jeremiah 17:9) is one of the most famous in this regard as it teaches us that the human heart is desperately wicked! The fact that verse 10 immediately follows such a categoric statement makes it all the more ominous as we consider the truth that our hearts are naturally wicked and that God knows them in totality!

Putting This Together

God's omniscience serves to teach us that we will not fool Him. There are many, even in our churches, that act as if God somehow will be duped. I've encountered more than a few "believers" in life who act as if the inability for man to prove their motives constitutes their eternal innocence, but this is simply not true. Instead, as believers we must live in light of our knowledge that God knows all and that judgment is sure.

Now, if we ended here this would be a depressing devotion! The good news is that while the Bible does teach that our hearts are naturally wicked, Jeremiah and many others look forward to the day when salvation comes. Salvation is described in several places as a radical transformation of our hearts from those dead in sin to those that are alive to righteousness! God does not simply know our hearts and wait idly until the time that we stand before Him for our rightful judgment. God knew the helpless and hopeless state of man and did something about it! While we were dead in our sins, Christ died to atone for all of the thoughts, actions, beliefs and the like that reside in our hearts. In so doing, He provides a way to atone for our wickedness while giving us a new heart which is fundamentally changed. While we still struggle with sin, we are now perceptive to righteousness and capable of obedience and we no longer have to fear God's omniscience when it comes to sure judgment for our wickedness!

See also: Psalm 7:9, Proverbs 21:2, 1 Samuel 16:7

Day 35 – February 4

The Incommunicable Attributes of God: God is Omniscient

Psalm 139 & Deuteronomy 18:20-22

One important distinction to make is that God's omniscience is not limited to the present. God knows just as much about the future as He does about today or yesterday. There is no moment that has not been planned by God and there is no event that will not be allowed by Him. The two texts today display for us at least two arenas in which God's omniscience intersects with the future.

First, Psalm 139 reminds us that God's omniscience renders God intimately aware of our personal lives. The psalmist exclaims in praise as he reflects on God's total knowledge of all that he says or does. Verse 4 reminds the reader that God knows all that will be said by an individual, even before it is uttered. Verse 16 states that God has already marked out all of the days of David's life! Obviously, God's omniscience is not limited to David alone, instead these verses truly apply to all men. There is not a day of your life that God has not planned, your birth and death and every moment in between is totally known by our glorious God.

Second, Deuteronomy teaches us that the way the people of God were to distinguish between false and true prophets was based on their accurate prediction of what was to come. The reason why this served as a litmus test for the people of Israel was very simply God's omniscience. Those who spoke on behalf of God in predicting things that did not come to pass were proven to be frauds because only God accurately knows, and dictates, the future. Many in our day claim to be "prophets" but none have proven to be totally reliable. If a prophet claims to be speaking from the Lord, there should be no error in any of his forecasts.

Putting This Together

There are two truths that we can take away from this devotion today. First, God's knowledge of our personal future is what brings the believer hope and meaning in life. You see, while we may not know why something happens to us, we can certainly know that any occurrence was planned. How could one attempt to find solace in the idea that everything happens by chance and nothing or no one is in control of any event? In stark contrast to the predominant worldview of our day that nothing is ultimately sovereign or all-knowing, the Bible teaches us that all things have purpose only because all things are governed by an omniscient and purposeful God. God knows all things because His plan incorporates all things and this is good because it means that there is a reason for all things!

Second, the knowledge that God's omniscience undergirds and informs what He inspires men to write gives us confidence in His Word. Why do we trust the Bible's prophecies? Well, we trust them because they are not mere guesses, instead they are authoritative declarations of that which is yet to come, inspired by the only One who knows the future in totality. When you or I read a prediction by a supposed "expert" in various fields, we do so with the understanding that things change. No mere mortal can possibly account for every variable or unforeseen circumstance. While this is true of men, our great God speaks with absolute certainty because nothing escapes His knowledge.

Day 36 – February 5

The Incommunicable Attributes of God: God is Omnipotent

Daniel 4:35

Today we turn the page, so to speak, to a new incommunicable attribute of God, namely His omnipotence. Omnipotent is a large theological word that simply means that God is all powerful. God's power is unlimited in that He is able to do whatever He pleases.

Our text today is an affirmation of such power as the once wicked King Nebuchadnezzar ascribes praise to God at the end of a rather bizarre episode in his life. Nebuchadnezzar was a very powerful king who was nonetheless humbled by God through a season of life whereby he was essentially rendered insane. The Bible teaches us that Nebuchadnezzar made an extremely prideful statement about his power as King of Babylon only to be struck down by God in such a way that he literally was cast into the fields to graze like an ox. The Scripture tells us that at the end of this time of bizarre exile Nebuchadnezzar had his faculties restored to him resulting in immediate recognition of the Sovereignty and Power of the One True God.

The words recorded in verse 35 constitute a portion of what Nebuchadnezzar said in praising the Lord as he exalts God as one who does "according to His will" in such a way that "none can stay his hand". This is a proclamation of God's omnipotence. Folks, there is absolutely nothing that can overcome or thwart God's Sovereign power. What He has purposed in His heart He will absolutely accomplish.

Putting This Together:

The context of this passage provides an important point of application for believers today. As you read and think about Daniel 4 please commit to meditating on the one who ascribes such praise to God in verse 35. It is none other than the King of Babylon who has learned through experience that God is all powerful. This man, Nebuchadnezzar, was probably the most powerful man on the planet at the time, yet he proved to be an unworthy opponent of the Almighty God. I want to encourage you today to constantly and consistently dwell on the reality of God's omnipotence. Instead of fretting over the Democrats (or Republicans!) take a moment and relax in the truth of our Almighty God. What the world needs is not more believers on the campaign trail, what the world needs is more men and women exclaiming "behold our marvelous, all powerful God".

Day 37 – February 6

The Incommunicable Attributes of God: God is Omnipotent

Hebrews 6:18

Yesterday we learned that God is all powerful which means that God is able to accomplish all that He pleases. The distinction that states that God has the ability to do “all that He pleases” is important because it does, in a sense, limit the scope in which God’s power can be exercised. You see, God’s omnipotence works in concert with His other attributes such that none of them are in competition with or in danger of comprising all of the rest of His characteristics. In layman’s terms, this means that God is all-powerful but there are certain things He cannot, or to put it more accurately, will not attempt.

Today’s text provides one such example of God’s righteous bounds when it states that it is “impossible for God to lie”. The word impossible is a very key term in this text because it altogether eliminates the remote chance that God may compromise what He has said with subsequent actions or teaching. This means that God’s power is limited but it is limited by Himself.

You see, there is no external force that causes God to reel in His power in order to comply with exterior demands. Instead, God personally and willingly limits Himself in order to preserve His righteous character by saying that He cannot and therefore will not violate His Word.

If God were to lie, He would cease to be “holy” or set apart from His creation in one sense because He would violate His law just like mankind. So, in a real sense God cannot lie and therefore the Word that He has voluntarily given limits His power to do what would contradict what He has said.

Putting This Together

I have feared that this devotion might tend too much to the theological but I hope that this section will help you see why this thought is imperative. You see, if God’s power were not connected to and informed by His character, we would have no reason to feel secure and joyful. Could you imagine the terror that would ensue if an all-powerful God decided to use His might to terrorize those He previously promised to save? What would it be like to live in a world with a Mighty Sovereign who cannot be trusted? How would it feel to operate in an environment where the terms God has given are subject to change at a moment’s notice? The very fact that God cannot lie is the reason why we can enjoy Him without fear because His Word is His bond and therefore His power will never be used in anyway that would harm His Children.

Day 38 – February 7

The Incommunicable Attributes of God: The Will of God

Revelation 4:11 & Hebrews 1:1-3

Over the next few days we will examine God's Will. Specifically, we will look into the power that is manifest in God's expressed desire to accomplish or sustain some aspect of the universe. God's Will is unlike our will in that it always prevails. Furthermore, God's Will is unique in that it is never at war with itself. You and I fight an inner struggle daily in order to do what we know to be good or right. Paul expresses this clearly in Romans 7:15-20 as he bemoans the reality that what he desires to do he often does not do and that which he does not desire, or will, to do he often does anyway. The reason for this war within the human heart lies in our spiritual condition. Unlike God, there are fleshly remnants which remain in mankind. These vestiges of our sinful past create in us a struggle between good and evil as it were. In stark contrast, there is no such struggle with God Almighty!

Today's two texts teach us that God's Will is the singular cause of creation and the sole reason for its continued existence. Revelation 4 states categorically that God created all things by His Will. Why are we here? We exist today because God Willed us to be here! This is a very easy concept but as we will see in a moment it incredibly important ramifications.

There is however more to be said on this subject. Some folks would say that God was the ultimate cause but now He has backed out of the governing business so to speak. These men and women are called "deists". They essentially believe that God is the Creator but subsequent to His Creation He is essentially inactive in Creation. He no longer dictates what happens or even oversees life as we know it, instead God set us on a track and now it is up to us to continue moving things along. Hebrews 1 teaches us that this theory is woefully inaccurate. In that text we learn that God created through Christ and that creation is now sustained by the Word of Jesus' power. So, God both creates and sustains.

Putting This Together

Why would a concept like this matter? I can think of two prominent reasons: First, this matters because it gives us yet another reason to ascribe glory to God! God deserves our praise for a multitude of reasons but certainly His Sovereign Power and effortless ability to speak and create is matchless. Second, it gives us reason to stay calm in a world of growing hysteria. Let me be clear here, I do certainly believe that we are to steward the resources of our world and that we have been given responsibility to ensure that our world is kept, however we must not fall victim to the nonsense that continues to circulate that somehow if we don't do something the world as we know it will cease to exist. To coin a vocational phrase, folks that is way above our paygrade! Creation exists because God Willed it to be here and it will be sustained because God says it should continue to thrive. There is no reason to panic, the world will continue on until God sees fit to create another one, and if you and I know Him we will see both creations in their splendor!

Day 39 – February 8
The Incommunicable Attributes of God: The Will of God
Proverbs 21:1 & Acts 17:26

Yesterday's introduction dealt with the unique nature of God's Will, today's devotion discusses the relationship between God's Sovereign Will and our responsibility. I want to be clear that just because God is Sovereign over all things does not mean that we are not responsible for obedience. One of the dangers of examining this truth in isolation is that we can walk away with a deterministic mindset that says it does not matter what I do because God is in control. While it is true that God is ultimately all-knowing and His plan does not change, we must not negate the many texts and passages that provide detailed instruction for the believer regarding how to act or behave. So, we rest in God's Sovereignty but we also work, by His grace, to be obedient to His prescribed will. In moments that we are not faithful, God's plan uses our evil to bring about good but this does not mean that we are not accountable for our actions.

Today's two texts remind us that God is Sovereign over the government. It is imperative that you read this statement: please know we are not advocating blind allegiance nor are we saying that political involvement is totally frivolous. The point of this devotion isn't for you to stop caring altogether or working to advocate for Christian values in the public sphere. The point is to remind you that while we serve faithfully, God is ultimately accomplishing His will and therefore when our candidate does not win or a country is toppled or a policy is passed that is patently unbiblical, we need not worry!

There are two realities that we want to see today regarding God's Will and government. First, notice that God's Will is Sovereign to impact or effect all rulers. Proverbs 21:1 is one of my favorite texts because it reminds us that God is able to influence and even redirect all governing officials. No king or ruler stands impervious to the influences and plan of God! There are many examples of this given in Scripture (think Nehemiah or Joseph and Pharaoh) and it is instructive to note that God is not limited to intervening with His children alone. God is able and is active in dictating the hearts even of the most hardened ruler! Now, it is imperative that we match this up with what we said several days ago about His plan. God's plan incorporates evil but those evil deeds are not actively encouraged by God, rather God accounts for them in His omniscience and even utilizes them to bring about His purposes. Sometimes those ends are sheer judgment and sometimes they result in other outcomes.

Second, note that God's Will is Sovereign over the expansion, contraction and even fall of empires. This is the point of Acts 17:26. There is no nation that has popped up on this planet that was not known or ordained by God for its season of existence. When evil empires expand, God has ordained that they would do so and we can trust that His ultimate purposes are good! When wicked kings or presidents arise, God knew about them before they were formed in their mother's womb and He ordained their reign. Why? We will more than likely never know but trust the character and wisdom of the One who has shown time and again that He is able to take what is wicked and turn it into good (Genesis 50:20).

Putting This Together

There are two exhortations I'd like to give you today concerning this devotion. First, work to serve the Lord faithfully, but do so with assurance that God is in control. There is a weight that is lifted off of our backs when we reflect on the truth that God is Sovereign. It's not up to us to "save the nation", it is our responsibility to simply be faithful and trust God with the results. Second, concentrate more on the King of Kings than the current politician in office. Folks, I worry for some of you that you are so consumed with the state of American politics that you miss the real political hero and Commander in Chief! Do not fall victim to the 24-hour news media world, instead meditate on our great God and let His presence and plan bring you peace.

Day 40 – February 9

The Incommunicable Attributes of God: The Will of God

1 Peter 3:8-17

Let's start with a bit of a warning today: today's devotion is a bit weighty. The reason is very simple, the content we are going to cover deals with a term that many of us simply don't like, suffering. Suffering is something that is unavoidable in life but many of us are guilty of thinking that our suffering is always a result of our sin. The logic is that those who suffer must be enduring punishment levied by God because of some transgression in their life. This is the line of thinking employed by Job's "friends" as he endures unspeakable agony and, unfortunately, it is alive and well today.

My goal is to help you see that suffering not always a direct result of our sin, although all suffering came about because of sin, instead it is regularly used by God to witness to the legitimacy of our faith and the unswerving commitment we have to honor Him as our Lord.

This section of 1 Peter 3 is about suffering for the glory of God. It contains one of the most famous passages in all the Bible in reference to apologetics as Peter states that suffering for "righteousness' sake" (v. 14) provides a stage to share the truth of the hope that lies within us (v. 15). The point that Peter is making is that when we suffer for doing good, or obeying God, the world takes notice and this will often prompt them to ask why? Why is it that you are so willing to endure this hardship in the name of your faith? Why are you not downcast or depressed? Why won't you simply recant this belief you have in order to preserve your comfort or physical well-being? The answer of course is that believers are not focused on this life alone, instead we long to honor the One who saved us from eternal torment and we live in light of an eternity of joy and bliss which sustains us even in the difficult moments.

What I want you to see in this passage is that it is God's *will* that causes this to take place! God doesn't just "allow" this to happen to you, He wills that it happens to you for His glory but also for your good. You see, when we suffer for doing good, we press into the Lord and learn that He alone is sufficient and that He can sustain. Simultaneously, the Lord pries our hands off of the meaningless trinkets of comfort and momentary joy in order to focus us on Him and all that He offers as He uses us to testify to the world about Him! What a wise and purposeful God we serve!

Putting This Together

One of the great blessings of this text is that it helps us see how God gives purpose in suffering. Next time you suffer, certainly search your heart and life to see if it is the product of unconfessed sin, but if not take heart and know that God may well be using your suffering to testify of His goodness and sufficiency to a world that needs to know Him. See your trial as an opportunity for worship and evangelism and pray that God may gain the glory while He sustains you in the storm.

Day 41 – February 10

The Incommunicable Attributes of God: The Will of God

Philippians 2:12-13

Yesterday we examined the truth that it is God's will for you to suffer for the benefit of others as well as for His glory. Today we will see that it is God's will for you to be sanctified. In fact, Paul writes in Philippians 2 that God's will is not passive but active in working with you for His good pleasure.

This text has provided quite the litany of opinions over the years as it seems to vacillate a bit. First, we read a clear command to believers in verse 12 which is followed by a declaration of God's activity in fulfilling the exhortation. For our purposes today we won't dive too deeply into that discussion short of saying that God commands His children to carry out that which He empowers us to obey! God's appeals to walk in holiness, to live blamelessly, to grow in the knowledge of Him and the like are all accompanied by the indwelling power of the Spirit which provides the very engine, as it were, that gives us the drive to obey His instructions.

The point of the lesson today though is God's Will. In this text we see that it is the Will of God for us to "work out our own salvation". R.C. Sproul helps us here by commenting that the salvation in view is "salvation in the fullest redemptive sense with particular stress on the sanctification of the believer." What God is saying is that those who are saved ought to work out or apply all of the power that salvation grants them in order to be conformed to the image of God. God has saved us in order that we would continue to look more and more like Him and less and less like the sinful world. His Will for salvation then is sanctification in the heart of every believer.

Putting This Together

God's Will is not for you to simply sit idly, biding your time until you are called up to glory. Instead, His Will is for you to take all that has been given you in salvation, namely the Spirit of God which regenerates our heart, enlightens our minds to see the truth of Scripture and empowers us to obey its teachings, in order that you would live a righteous life and accurately, if not perfectly, display the holiness of our great God for His glory! Said another way, God's Will for you today is to walk in the Spirit, not gratifying the desires of the flesh, in order that you would live a holy life that differentiates you from the world and calls attention to the power that lies within you! My prayer is that this is exactly why you are following along with us in Biblical Foundations!

Day 42 – February 11

The Incommunicable Attributes of God: God is Perfect

Psalm 18:30

When we speak of God's "perfection" we mean that He is totally righteous in essence and in deed. The psalmist teaches us that God's "way is perfect" which means that there is no misstep or carnality in His operations.

God's perfection intersects with us in many different facets of life. As mentioned several weeks ago, His perfection necessitates that His Word is totally pure. This is the point of the next portion of our verse which states that the Word of the Lord proves true. The fact that God has attached His name to His inspired Word requires that it be totally free from fault or mistake.

Second, God's perfection yields a totally faultless plan. There is no occurrence or event that does not ultimately work out to the perfect end of God's glory. Sometimes it is difficult to discern how a certain tragedy serves the greater, perfect plan of God, but our inability to understand or see how all of life plays out does not negate the reality that ultimately all things lead further God's perfect plan.

Finally, God's perfection accounts for our imperfection. This is one of the most fundamental and misunderstood truths regarding God's plan. When we say that God's way is perfect we do not mean that all that happens in life is perfect or righteous; instead what we mean is that God is able to use the wicked things in life to bring to fruition that which is good and in accordance with His perfect will.

God is not responsible for instigating depravity but in His wisdom, He is able to use sinful men and actions to further His perfect plan. One such example of this is found in Genesis 50:20 when Joseph tells his brothers that what they intended for evil (see the personal responsibility?) God intended for good. In this statement Joseph does not deny the existence of sin but he does assert that God used such evil designs for good purposes.

Putting This Together

The perfection of God, in concert with His omniscience and omnipotence, teach us that God will work all things out perfectly. There is no doubt that there are people and evil forces at work in the world but God is able to channel them to glorious outcomes. The chief example of this is found in the crucifixion of Christ. There is truly nothing in life more heinous than the killing of God the Son in the flesh, nevertheless God used this abomination to win the ultimate victory over death, purchasing salvation for all who would believe in Christ. Truly, what man intends for evil, God works for His perfect good.

See also: Deuteronomy 32:4, Matthew 5:48

Day 43 – February 12

The Incommunicable Attributes of God: God is One

Deuteronomy 6:4

Deuteronomy 6 is a momentous passage to say the least. In fact, verse 4 begins the traditional Jewish confession of faith called the “Shema”. The Shema was recited twice daily by devout Jews as it served to remind and ground the Old Testament people of God in the truth. Today, let us examine just one sentence in the Shema as it pertains to the “oneness” of God. The text clearly reads that God is “One”, but what does this mean? For generations some have grappled with how to reconcile this declaration of solidarity with the accompanying truth of the Trinity. How can God be both three and one at the same time? While this seems like a contradiction, it does not need to be when we examine the origin of the term translated “one” in our text.

Interestingly enough, Genesis 2:24 provides a wonderful window into this passage as it utilizes the same term in reference to marriage. The Bible teaches that a man and wife come together in matrimony, uniting as “one” flesh. Now, we understand that men and women don’t cease to be individuals. Nevertheless, there is a real sense in which their uniting together in covenant with one another transforms them from single individuals into “one” or a united couple. They no longer function as “lone rangers” and they no longer experience life with concern only for their own feelings or affairs. When one partner suffers or makes a decision both parties feel the ramifications. They hitch their wagons to one another and commit to operating with consideration for the other partner for the rest of their lives.

In the same way, when the Bible refers to God as “One” it is not negating the reality of the Trinity. As a husband and wife remain individuals so the Father remains distinct from the Son who remains distinct from the Spirit. This means that the Scripture is pointing us to the truth that God is totally unified! To put it in modern day terms, there is no divided front with the Godhead. God’s unity extends to all things. There is no disagreement with the Lord and there are no competing agendas as our Triune God is totally and fully united in all things.

Putting This Together:

Can you imagine a relationship in which there is literally no disagreement? Our God in His infinite knowledge and wisdom exists in a totally unified state with His Triune self at all times. This is a marvelous truth! It explains why we can rest in knowing that God is working on our behalf even as the Trinity’s various roles function simultaneously. In salvation, for instance, we take comfort in knowing that God the Father Sovereignly decrees our salvation, Christ effectively purchases salvation and the Holy Spirit effectively applies that saving grace to us thereby sealing us forever. Only a unified God can offer us assurance that all of the moving parts are operating in full concert with each other at all times.

Day 44 – February 13

The Incommunicable Attributes of God: God is Unique

Deuteronomy 4:15-40

Our text for today resides in a larger portion of instruction from God to the people of Israel. Moses is teaching them how they are to behave in the Promised Land. Specifically, this passage warns against forsaking worship of God by turning to idolatry. The point is rather simple, Moses exhorts the people to remember the acts of God and His mighty hand in rescuing them from Egypt and preserving them through the wilderness in order to illustrate the truth that there is one and only true God. Verse 35 is perhaps the most succinct summary of the overall theme of this portion of Scripture as the Bible seeks to remind the people that there is only one God and there are none other “like Him”.

The Word translated “like” in this text is one that refers to that which is of like kind or being. Even today we use the term “like” to denote those things which may not be identical but are similar in nature. We might say that one person looks like another or dogs have certain “like” or common characteristics which distinguish them from other creatures or species. God’s point of course is that there is no idol that resembles God’s ability or character.

This truth is highlighted in Deuteronomy 4 in a few ways. Consider the fact that only the true God: speaks (verse 34), preserves His people by bringing them out of Egypt and defeating their enemies (verses 35-36) and provides land that they did not previously possess (verse 38). Each of the enemies of Israel that were defeated over time laid claim to their own deities and false beliefs and yet each and every one of them fell in the presence of the One True God.

Today, God’s people are still tempted to abandon or ignore Him in favor of idols. Many of these idols do not resemble the carvings and false gods of previous generations but they can and do demand our worship and attention. Whenever we are tempted to turn our attention and obedience away from the True God in service of an idol we must remember that only one God is unique. These other idols might claim priority or promise fulfillment but they are nothing but fraudulent versions of the glorious God of the universe.

Putting This Together:

In many ways, the material leading up to this point dealing with God’s incommunicable attributes has served to make this point already. Church family, why do we worship God? Among other things, God deserves our worship because God alone is: eternal, incomprehensible, immutable, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, perfect and therefore unique. This God deserves our affection. This God deserves our praise as He is exalted high and above all of the false, fictitious, deaf, dumb, and mute idols that mankind has erroneously chosen to glorify in His place.

Day 45 – February 14

God's Communicable Attributes: God's Wisdom

Romans 11:25-33

Today we turn the page to God's "Communicable" Attributes. Communicable attributes differ from Incommunicable attributes in that men are able to emulate, to a lesser degree, these characteristics. It is important to stress that it is only through God that these things are made available to mankind but, being made in God's image, we are able to emulate communicable attributes to a lesser degree in the world. We will see that God is the source of all communicable attributes and that He alone gives us the ability to accurately reflect Him as we learn from Him.

This passage concludes one of the most beautiful, if not challenging, texts in all of the Bible. The subject matter is the redemption of the Gentiles. To state Paul's argument in a very simplistic manner, Paul is arguing that God's Wisdom is revealed in His redemptive plan as He utilized the unfaithfulness of the Jews in order to graft in the Gentiles. This incorporation of the Gentiles takes place as His message of the Gospel spread to them because of the lack of receptivity amongst the Jews. Furthermore, God will now utilize the redemption of the Gentiles in order to spur the Jews on to salvation because of their jealousy (11:11).

The larger point for us today is that God is incredibly wise. He is wise in at least two ways according to this text. First, God's Wisdom is revealed in His plan of salvation. There is no plan more worthy of praise and wonder than the Gospel! In the Gospel God devises a way to be both the judge and the justifier. His plan accounts for the sins of Jews and Gentiles all the while allowing for mercy to be extended to them!

Second, we see God's wisdom in designing this plan of salvation to reach the world. Far from alienating the Gentiles for the sake of the Jews or vice versa, God includes all men into the redemptive strategy and uses both their sin and subsequent salvation to spur the other on to accept His gift! This stands as a fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 that through His offspring all the nations would be blessed. Obviously, Abraham could not have fathomed the way that this promise would find fulfillment but it has come to fruition in the Cross of Christ. What a faithful, marvelous and matchless God we serve.

Putting This Together

The aim of this text is that we would echo Paul's praise in verse 33. There is no greater evidence on the planet of God's wisdom and knowledge than the Gospel of Christ. The depth of the riches of this message will never be discovered in this life. The Gospel is truly an inexhaustible well of hope and joy and peace and wisdom. My prayer for all of us today is that we would praise our matchless God and that we would rest in the fact that the God who was wise enough to concoct such a marvelous redemptive strategy is wise enough for us to trust in the midst of our most difficult and trying circumstances.

Day 46 – February 15

The Communicable Attributes of God: God is the Source of Wisdom

Proverbs 2:6

One important distinction we must make is that God is not wise because He learned wisdom, God is intrinsically wise and therefore is the source of wisdom! There was no one and nothing that taught God how to be wise and this is a fundamental way that He distinguishes Himself from men. God's rightful place as the source of all wisdom necessitates the biblical conclusion that wisdom is communicable to us only to the degree that we seek and gain wisdom from God alone.

The good news for us is that God has made wisdom available to us and it is found, chiefly, in His Word. Proverbs 2:6 says that the Lord gives wisdom and that this wisdom comes from "His mouth". This is obviously an illustrative way of expressing the truth that God's Word, or that which emanates from His breath, is the source of wisdom. Those who wish to be wise will study the revelation that is given from the only One who is inherently wise.

This text has at least one very important implication, namely that those who wish to be wise must recognize their natural foolishness all the while pursuing wisdom externally. You will not seek wisdom from God if you think that you are wise already! The Bible repeatedly warns against those who mistakenly think they are naturally wise. We meet many people in our day and age who would have us believe that they possess wisdom. These men are often arrogant and haughty and they have erroneously substituted knowledge for wisdom.

Natural men can, and often do, possess abundant amounts of knowledge. This text does not deny that there are "experts" in various fields of study in the world. It also doesn't deny that you and I can gain a certain level of "street smarts" in learning how to navigate this fallen world. However, knowing about various subjects without that knowledge terminating on praise and worship of God is the apex of foolishness. Likewise, learning how to navigate and anticipate sin or even how to use the corrupt system of the world to your advantage leads to momentary sustenance, perhaps, but it eventually yields eternal destruction.

Putting This Together

In both instances mentioned above, employing knowledge without ascribing glory to God communicates foolishness. If we can study, see the complexity of life, and not yield to worship the Designer we have denied the very source of all that we claim to know. In the same way, if we attempt to manage sin or simply learn how to get by in this fallen world without ever wondering why things are so messed up and how the Creator thinks and feels about our actions, we are fools. The only way to gain wisdom, is to meet God on His own terms and learn both how He thinks and how He has designed this world to function. Therefore, the source of wisdom is God's Word because God's Word is the only place God has revealed His thoughts! Without it we may know many things but we will have no foundation upon which we find meaning.

Day 47 – February 16

The Communicable Attributes of God: God's Love

John 3:35 & John 17:24

When we speak of God's love the conversation typically goes in the direction of God's love for man. While this is a wonderful truth and worthy of our contemplation, the stark reality is that God's love is most often spoken of in term of His concern for and adoration of Himself within the Trinity. The two texts referenced above are but just a small sample of the numerous passages that declare God's adoration for Himself and/or His motivation behind His acts of salvation. A simple glance through the chronicles of the history of the nation of Israel will render multiple places where God declares He saves ultimately for His glory. In the New Testament, we read that the chief end of salvation is beholding the glory of God (John 17:3). In all of these things, God's ultimate goal is to gain glory for Himself.

As you might expect, this is a massively important and oft-neglected topic in our world today so what I'd like to do is to take two devotions to try to help us understand the ramifications of this doctrine and why it is ultimately for our good in addition to God's glory. Today, let's start with one objection to this doctrine.

You and I meet many people who are consumed with themselves and we call them arrogant. If God is consumed with Himself is He not arrogant? The answer is no for this reason, those who are arrogant necessarily bypass all of the reasons they have not to think too highly of themselves! The reason why we react so violently against haughty people is because we know they are inauthentic. They are not really who they think they are, instead they either are blind to their faults or they are attempting to conceal their deep issues. Isn't it true that arrogant people are often the most insecure? In contrast, it is impossible for God to think too highly of Himself and therefore His concern for His own glory is right. He is not arrogant because He cannot possibly esteem Himself too highly. He is literally the very best at all He does and He has no fault to attempt to conceal.

Putting This Together

The Christian faith teaches us that God is literally the source of all good things. We gain contentment, meaning, joy, fulfillment, happiness and the like only in Him. Therefore, it is acceptable and right for God to be consumed with Himself. If He were to exalt anyone or anything else He would necessarily take our eyes off of what really matters in favor of that which is passing and incapable of sustaining our joy.

Day 48 – February 17

The Communicable Attributes of God: God's Love

Psalm 31:3 & Ezekiel 20:44

Yesterday we began to unpack the reality that God loves Himself above all things. For today's text we provided two Old Testament references that would re-emphasize the truth that God saves and restores chiefly for the glory and renown of His own Name.

Today, I'd like to try to tackle a second common objection to this idea that God loves Himself above all else. Many would say that God seeking His own glory is not loving. This comes from a very real observation that those in life who seek their own well-being or fame necessarily diminish or mistreat others. Nobody wants to be on the team with the man or woman who only cares about their own recognition!

How is it then that God can seek His glory above all things and still authentically love us? The answer is that God is for Himself in such a way that His glory results in our good. Whereas a mere man can only seek his well-being or recognition in contrast to others, God's glory results in His fame and our good.

How? We would expect anyone who truly loves to give of their very best for the joy of the other person. We give of our time, energy and resources in order to contribute to our loved ones' joy and so the obvious question is what can God give us that would result in our joy? The answer is Himself! If God were to offer us anything besides that which is all-satisfying while simultaneously being able to offer more, He would cease to be all-loving. However, because He is love, He obligates Himself to give that which is most satisfying to His children.

This is where the problem is resolved. If God gives that which is most satisfying then He can only give Himself which means that His chief end of receiving glory by glorifying Himself also results in our greatest good. As He draws attention to Himself, He magnifies or illuminates that which satisfies us completely.

Putting This Together

This means that God's love for Himself is not at odds with His love for us, it is the means whereby He expresses His love for man. He desires to draw attention and glory to Himself for His own fame of course but, secondarily, because He knows that we were created to find our satisfaction and joy in Him. Therefore, God is not selfish in the mutually exclusive way of valuing Himself against us, He is jealous for His glory because it is rightfully His and it results in our blessings as well. God's love for Himself is not at odds with us, it is for us!

Day 49 – February 18

The Communicable Attributes of God: God's Love

John 15:13 & 1 John 3:16

Now that we've dissected the ultimate aim and object of God's love, let's pivot to the very real truth that God loves mankind. The beauty of the Gospel is that we don't have to wonder if God loves us, instead He revealed His love in history on the Cross. In fact, the most famous verse in the Bible, John 3:16, tells us that God's love is what caused Him to send His Son into the world to redeem His people through dying in their place. Our two texts for the day reveal that this action is what provides the very basis for all measurement of love in all time.

1 John 3:16 makes a categoric statement regarding how we identify love, love is defined by Jesus and His death on the cross. We, as mankind, know what love is truly to the degree that we comprehend the kind of sacrifice that Christ made on the cross. This is not to say that lost men have no concept of love, what it means is that while love might resonate with them and they may identify it as such, they have no foundation by which they measure love. They may see it and savor tastes of it in others but only in Christ do we see love totally pure and manifest.

Jesus makes a similar statement regarding love in John 15 equating love with personal sacrifice. He says that the greatest manifestation of love comes from the giving of one's life for the benefit of the other. The reason why this is true is because our most valuable commodity or "possession" is our life. Everything else is expendable without being fatal but the giving of a life is the ultimate and final act of love.

It is interesting to put these last three devotions together. We could summarize what we've learned over the last three days this way: God's love is concerned first and foremost with His own glory which results in our good. His glory and our good collide chiefly in the redemptive mission of Christ. In the Gospel we learn that God's love for Himself and His children leads Him to send His Son to make a way for us to have eternal life which allows us to enjoy His glory forever. This is accomplished by atoning for the sins that separate us from God which results in paving the way for us to see and savor Him in His Righteous Majesty! Do you see How God's love for Himself leads Him to sacrifice for us?

Putting This Together

Some may wonder in this world of sin and struggle how to know that God loves them, the biblical answer is by the cross! In Christ we see the graphic portrayal of God's love for His children. Those who truly grasp and meditate upon the Gospel should not struggle with the question of God's love and commitment for them! Instead, when we see and savor the cross, we find real security in knowing that God's love is not theoretical but expressed. God really does love us, and He proved it in a moment in time on Calvary.

Day 50 – February 19

The Communicable Attributes of God: God's Grace

Nehemiah 9:16-18

Our text for today is taken from a larger passage of confession delivered by Nehemiah on behalf of the people of Israel. The book of Nehemiah is one of great triumph, but it begins in one of the darkest seasons of Jewish history. Nehemiah's mission is to work to partially restore a city that was once hustling and bustling with activity and splendor. Jerusalem was a wonder to behold as it was blessed mightily by God but in Nehemiah's day, because of the people's idolatry and unfaithfulness, Jerusalem lay desolate and unprotected from enemy attacks. The visible appearance of the city is a picture of the proverbial state of the people. They too have endured ruin at the hands of God who eventually unleashes judgment on a "stiff-necked" and unfaithful generation.

Believe it or not, our text today is not about God's judgment but His grace. You see, Nehemiah harkens back to previous years when God's people rebelled against Him in the desert. The passage remembers the unbelievable occurrence that happened under Moses' leadership when the people turned their back on the God who had just liberated them from Egyptian slavery in order to worship a "god" they had fashioned with their own hands. The people rebelled because they were impatient and skeptical even in the face of the mighty miracles and faithfulness of their God.

The point that Nehemiah is making in this text has nothing to do with the sin of the people and everything to do with the grace and mercy of God. You see, the expectation would be that God would smite these rebellious and ungrateful men and women in Nehemiah's moment in history. They deserved His anger and judgment and yet they received His mercy. In spite of the groans and the questions and the infidelity of the people, God remained faithful. He extended grace to men and women who deserved His compassion the least and in so doing displayed one of His most unbelievable and majestic attributes, namely His grace and mercy.

Putting This Together

We have already seen and studied the truth that God is unchanging. His mercy and grace made available to the people of Israel in the desert thousands of years ago was manifest in Nehemiah's day and in our time as well! He is gracious and slow to anger; He stands ready to forgive and He has even gone to great lengths to atone for our sin which is all ultimately committed against Him! Nehemiah marveled at this grace and we should as well! As we study our great and merciful God, we can sometimes feel overwhelmed by His attributes but let us remember that we can approach His throne of grace confidently because He is a loving and merciful Father. The only reason why you and I are alive to read this devotion today is His grace and that is reason enough to praise Him!

Day 51 – February 20

The Communicable Attributes of God: God's Grace

Ephesians 2:4-9

Our passage today is one of my favorite texts in all of the Bible. Paul makes it abundantly clear to the reader that his purpose in writing this portion of Scripture is to magnify the necessity and role of grace in salvation. In verse 5, we read "by grace you have been saved" and in the verses before and after Paul gives us at least two reasons why it is grace alone that allows us to enter into the Kingdom of God.

First, grace must be present for salvation because God must give us life. Paul states that we were "dead in our trespasses". I would venture to guess that all of us have been around dead people at some point in our lives. The cold hard reality is that dead people are totally incapable of acting on their behalf in any capacity whatsoever. Dead people do not respond to exhortations, dead people don't move, dead people don't speak, these realities add up to the inescapable conclusion that dead people are totally incapacitated. In the same way, you and I were dead in our sins. We were not spiritually perceptive or alive to God's exhortations, we were not able to live righteously, and we were not able to save ourselves. This is the condition that God found us in, and this is the state that God removes us from.

Second, the natural and logical conclusion we must make in light of our previous condition is that we were saved not by our own works but by God's grace alone. Think about it, if you were dead in your sins what could you do to earn salvation by works? God's grace is manifest in salvation because He does it all! He ordains our salvation, He brings life into our bodies, He opens our minds to see and savor the truth of the Gospel that we were once blind to, He writes His law on our hearts, and therefore He gains the glory for what He has done.

Putting This Together

So many people ground their salvation in what they did. You may hear people trust in their good character to commend themselves to God, or perhaps others think they were sinners but they chose to follow God of their own volition and might at some point in life, and others still seek to claim that their understanding of the gospel and subsequent choosing to follow Jesus was a result of their own hard work and logical abilities to see the truth and adhere to it accordingly. The Bible would categorically reject all of these conclusions. If you are alive in Christ today it is because God saw your spiritually dead state, breathed life into your lifeless soul, showed you the supernatural truth and wisdom of the cross and replaced your heart of stone that was bent on rebellion and destruction with a heart of flesh that is perceptive to His will and desirous of following Him!

Day 52 – February 21

The Communicable Attributes of God: God is Longsuffering

Joel 2:13

Yesterday we learned about God's grace in salvation, today we want to think about God's grace in dealing with sinners. Some of you have a testimony that begins early in your childhood. For you, the presence of God might seem as if it has been evident in your life from the beginning. For others, like myself, your road to the truth was much longer. Indeed, some of our testimonies include years and years of rebellion and hard-heartedness directed towards the Lord that we now recognize as the supreme authority. These years of gross, unrepentant sin represent another wonderful attribute of God, His longsuffering patience towards sinners.

The book of Joel provides one of the most beautiful and succinct statements on the longsuffering nature of God in the entire Bible. This prophecy takes place in a time of great calamity and judgment in Judah and Israel. There are two great themes in the book, first there is the reality of judgment. Over and over again the prophet refers to the Day of the Lord which is a term associated with God's righteous judgment on those who oppose Him and salvation to those who repent and believe. Second is a consistent call to repent in light of their impending doom.

The book has a dual meaning as it looks forward to the ultimate day of judgment when God returns all the while rooting the current suffering by famine and plagues of locusts in God's displeasure with His people. Furthermore, there is a futuristic bent in Joel's prophecy that looks past the moment to the upcoming day of God's final judgment whereby He returns and utterly destroys all those who have refused to repent and serve Him.

The passage for today records a passionate appeal from the prophet to the people of Israel and Judah to return to the Lord even after years of rebellion. Joel promises that those who return will be granted grace and mercy because God is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Putting This Together

Brother and sister, make no mistake, our God is returning to judge the living and the dead. His wrath will not be withheld forever but this ought not serve as a deterrent in your return to Him. The wonderful news about our Great and Sovereign God is that He is merciful. Just as He dealt with the sin of Judah and Israel for generations before unleashing judgment, He has patiently tolerated our sin. Furthermore, just like God entreats the people to return to find mercy and grace, He exhorts us to do likewise. Our God is One who relents over disaster! He is kind and compassionate to the penitent and He is patient towards His creation. This does not negate the ultimate reality of judgment but my prayer is that it would encourage us not to run from God in our sin and shame. Far from fleeing from God in our sin His patience and grace should encourage us to return to Him knowing that He never changes and that His mercy is an inexhaustible well for those who believe in Him.

Day 53 – February 22

The Incommunicable Attributes of God: God is Holy

1 Peter 1: 13-16

The word “holy” means to be set apart. When we say that God is holy what we mean is that He is totally set apart from all of creation. Specifically, the term generally is used in terms of righteousness. God is holy, or set apart, because He is totally sinless. His righteous character and His unflinching adherence to His own standards differentiate Him from all of mankind.

While we would absolutely agree that none of us will achieve absolute holiness or righteous perfection in this life, we also must not ignore the reality that the Bible calls believers to be holy or “set apart” from the world as followers of Christ. This is the point of our passage for the day as Peter is instructing and commanding Christians to live holy lives.

The text gives us two points of emphasis, first we learn that God is our standard of holiness. Peter uses God’s holiness as the example that we must follow. How do we know what holiness looks like? The answer is that we look to the character of God as revealed in the Scripture. This is a basic, but imperative, point to make in our world at the moment. We live in a time of “moral relativism”. That is a big word that just means that everyone feels free to set their own moral standards as they make their personal determinations of what is considered “right” and “wrong”. Believers do not have that freedom. Instead, we believe that God sets the standard and that He is to be obeyed and emulated in our day to day lives.

Second, we learn how to achieve holiness. In verse 13 Peter states that believers should “set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ”. This instruction combined with the immediately preceding command to be “sober-minded” reminds us that we should dwell on that which is coming as the motivation for holiness in the moment. You see, holiness’ ultimate reward is delayed, this stands in marked contrast with sin which almost always promises immediate gratification. To live holy lives in the present requires sacrifice and self-denial but the motivation isn’t fleeting joy, it is eternal bliss.

Putting This Together

Peter reminds us that the fuel for holy living isn’t necessarily realized in the moment. To be clear, this doesn’t mean that holiness does not bring immediate happiness. As we grow, we will find that the paths of righteousness do absolutely lead, at times, to joy in momentary results of faithfulness. However, the real motivation behind holiness is the eternal reward that is to come. Peter roots this desire to be holy in the “revelation of Jesus Christ” which refers to the moment that we will see Jesus in the future. Essentially, Peter is saying be holy today in preparation for that moment! Live in light of the truth that this world is fleeting but the path to eternal joy is through obedience to our great Savior and Lord. You will not ultimately be disappointed or unfulfilled in faith-filled holiness but you will always be left wanting more in faithless carnality.

Day 54 – February 23

The Communicable Attributes of God: God is Just

Nehemiah 9:26-30

Nehemiah 9 records a beautiful address given by the Levites to the people of Israel as they are actively repenting of their evil deeds. The passage that we have selected for today certainly reinforces the truth that we examined just a few devotions ago regarding God's longsuffering patience and mercy. We read a few times of God's willingness to relent of His judgment upon the people's repentance. Nevertheless, the reality of God's mercy and longsuffering does not negate His justice. Verse 30 serves as a beautiful summary of the larger paragraph as it informs us that God bore with the people for many years but eventually their sin led to judgment. The men and women of Israel were given into the hands of their enemies as an act of divine retribution for their disobedience.

The text reminds us of the unwavering justice of God. This is one area where we, as theologians (that's right you are a theologian!) must be careful not to overemphasize one of God's attributes to the detriment of another. You see, we can often dwell on God's grace and mercy at the expense of reflecting on the truth that He is also just. However, these attributes do not war against one another in the heart of God, instead they are totally in agreement.

If God were to overlook our sin and not threaten, and even unleash, judgment against our wickedness, He would neglect His love and mercy. After all, what could be less loving and merciful than allowing those you love to continue in sin that will ultimately destroy them? More importantly, how can God love that which is good, specifically righteous adherence to His law, while approving of that which is evil? God's justice functions alongside His mercy in that He hates and punishes sin in part because He loves us!

Putting This Together

God's justice should move us to at least two conclusions. First, God can be trusted and therefore we ought to operate in light of His warnings. Too often we act as if God's promises of mercy and salvation are to be heeded all the while ignoring His promises of justice for the evildoer. Brother and sister, if God threatens judgment He will deliver if there is no repentance! Some people like to believe that God will somehow make an exception on the day of reckoning but we must know and believe that no such exemption will be granted! Second, we should delight in God's justice because it is the only assurance we have that the wrongs of this life will be made right. Obviously, one avenue through which wrongs are atoned for is in Christ. Our prayer ought to be that those who do evil in the moment will enter into relationship with God and see their sins covered by the blood of Jesus. However, know that those who refuse the Gospel truth will not escape penalty. The sins they thought they got away with will ultimately cost them more than they realize.

See also: Hosea 10:2

Day 55 – February 24

The Communicable Attributes of God: God is Just

2 Chronicles 6:14-15

If you have a bit of time today, I would highly recommend reading this entire chapter of the 2 Chronicles. Our text records a beautiful portion of Solomon's prayer of dedication over the newly constructed temple. This temple was long anticipated as King David (Solomon's father) was desirous of building it himself. However, the Lord instructed David to wait and now the long-awaited day of its completion had come.

Solomon's prayer includes a brief exhort on the justice of God as seen in a different light. You see, God's justice does not just demand retribution for evil, it also entails reward for the faithful. Put simply, God is faithful to fulfill His promises whether they entail punishment or blessing. In this text, Solomon rejoices over the just reward of God's people in light of their obedience to Him.

Specifically, Solomon extols the faithfulness of God to fulfill His promise to David all the way back in 1 Chronicles 17:11-14. In that text, God promises to raise up one of David's sons as King (Solomon) in order that he would construct the temple. This day then symbolizes the reward of David's obedience not to attempt to construct the temple himself in faith that God is just to bless those who fear Him. David stands as an example to us of the result of faith-filled obedience as he eschewed momentary pleasure and even fame (being the King who built this majestic temple was a big deal!) in order to heed God's commands.

Putting This Together

God is just to fulfill all of His promises to the faithful. Do you believe that? If so, it will drastically alter the way that you live. You and I are tempted on a daily basis to live in opposition to God's instruction. The Lord promises blessing on those who obey, even if it entails momentary sacrifice. The question really becomes one of faith. Do you trust God? Is it enough for you to forsake fleeting passions and tiny rewards in faith that a greater, future reward is coming? Is God's promise that He has for us greater treasures than we can imagine enough to endure the difficult seasons and intense temptations of life? My prayer for all of us is that we would meditate on the truth that we serve a just God. Our God is faithful to punish the evildoer but He also can be trusted to bless the faithful.

Day 56 – February 25

God's Glory: His Essence

Revelation 15:8

Revelation 15 describes John's vision of the tent of witness in heaven. In this passage we read that the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God. The "glory" of the Lord is a very common theme of the Bible but its exact essence is difficult to nail down. Over the centuries, theologians have wrestled with this term in an attempt to come to some meaningful definition or fundamental component of God's glory. The best we've been able to do is to define glory as the substance or weight of all of His attributes combined.

It means that there is a gravity to the presence of the Lord that screams of the fact that He is utterly different and exponentially more glorious than anything we have ever encountered on this planet. When we speak of God's glory "filling" a place we mean that the substance and weight of our Great Creator descends upon a locality in such a way as to overwhelm all of us mere mortals by His presence.

John says that the glory of God manifest itself as "smoke" in this text. Elsewhere the refulgence (big Word that means radiance of God's glory) is described as light. Often smoke is associated with God's righteous indignation (Exodus 19; Isaiah 6:4). In this case, God's substance is manifest in His judgment over the sins of the world. In other places the glory of God is described as emanating light. In those contexts, we learn that God's presence and attributes provide the very illumination we need to see clearly and precipitate worship of Him as the supreme light of the world.

In both instances, we are aware that God is ultimate. He alone, in His glory, is qualified to judge the world and only God is able to provide us with meaning and purpose all the while demanding our highest praise as the One who is set apart.

Putting This Together

There is a weightiness to God that is unfortunately quite foreign to many folks today. Many like to think of God chiefly as their friend or cosmic butler who exists to run whatever errands we deem appropriate, but this misses the essence and substance of God entirely. God certainly sent Christ as a friend of sinners, but do not miss the agony of Christ's substitutionary death and the severity of judgment due those who neglect His sacrifice. Certainly, God answers our prayer but only according to His will. God is not subservient to us; He is Lord over us and as such is the most important and substantive figure in all of the universe over all created history. This God demands worship and this God is not to be taken lightly!

Day 57 – February 26

God's Glory in Christ

John 1:14

Some of you may be wondering how we would know anything about God's glory on earth. After all, none of us have had a close encounter like John in writing the book of Revelation. The answer is that God's glory is displayed to us chiefly in Christ. Our text for today is found in the marvelous first chapter of the book of John. This passage teaches us that Christ is divine. Furthermore, in His mercy this divine member of the Trinity took on flesh and dwelt among us! It is in His life on earth that we see the glory of God manifest according to verse 14.

How is it that we see the glory of God in Christ? The answer is that Jesus perfectly displays all of the divine attributes that comprise the weightiness or substance of God which defines His glory. We see in Jesus, for instance, all of the righteous realities of God that we've mentioned before. Christ is perfectly holy, He is powerful to overcome even the most demonic forces of the world, He is able to both teach the Old Testament with authority and speak with the very authority of God in all of His instruction.

We see evidence of Christ's weightiness, though it was veiled, in several of His encounters with men who were able to see His glory even as it was encapsulated by the flesh. Think about Peter for instance, in Luke 5:8. You will note that Peter's response to Jesus upon his recognition of Christ's power is eerily similar to Isaiah's declaration in Isaiah 6 when he comes into contact with God's glory in the temple. In both instances, these men recognize their sin as highlighted by the weight and righteousness of God.

Christ displays God's glorious mercy and patience, He shows God's wrath towards to corruption of the temple, He displays His supernatural wisdom in offering insight and interpretation of the law, He manifests His refulgence (radiance) at the mount of transfiguration, and He shows the love, mercy and justice of God at the cross.

Putting This Together

How do we see the glory of God most clearly? We see God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Christ manifests God in His divine excellence as He moved and taught among us and one day we will see Jesus in glorious splendor upon His return. In that day, what was veiled by the flesh and impossible for many to discern will be patently obvious to all of Creation. Make no mistake Church, Christ is returning in glory!

See also: 2 Corinthians 4:1-6

Day 58 – February 27

God's Glory in the Church

2 Corinthians 3:18

God manifest His glory chiefly through Christ, but vestiges of His glory are present in other aspects of His creation. In fact, one of the primary ways that the world sees the glory of God is in and through His church. God's aim in saving His people is not just their ultimate salvation, it is also His glory. He desires to see us shaped and conformed into His image so that we would be an accurate, if imperfect, representation of His divine essence to an onlooking world.

This is Paul's point in 2 Corinthians 3 as he writes verse 18. One obvious point must be made here, Paul is writing to the church which informs us of the "we" he is addressing. This statement does not constitute a universal teaching regarding all of mankind. In fact, those who are not believers are largely incapable of heeding this text. Paul hints at this reality as he teaches us how we are to be conformed to God's image saying the ones who are being transformed are those who are beholding the glory of the Lord with an "unveiled face". In verse 16 we read that only those who have turned to the Lord have the veil removed. So, those who are conformed are the ones who behold God with unveiled face and only the saved have the veiled remove from their faces! This is instruction to the church.

The larger point of this teaching is that as we behold the glory of God in the face of Christ (a truth he arrives at in just a few verses), we are conformed into his image, from one degree of glory to another, which results in an ever progressing trajectory towards holiness and thereby an increasingly accurate picture of the glory of God to the world.

Putting This Together

Christian, your life is not just about you! Instead, you have been bought with a price therefore glorify God with your bodies (1 Corinthians 6:20). You exist now for the glory of God and you grow in grace in order that you might be conformed into the image of God and therefore paint an increasingly accurate picture of all of the divine attributes or glory of God to an onlooking world. It is time for us to understand that we have a responsibility to behold the glory of God in Christ and in His Word through the Spirit so that we would glorify God individually and corporately. The result of this is that the church continues to separate itself from the world, this is what it means to be holy after all, and God gains glory all the while others are drawn to Him. May we live in such a way that the world will see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

Day 59 – February 28

The Trinity: One God, Three Persons

Matthew 3:16-17

A few weeks ago, we examined the truth that God is One. This is a clear teaching of Scripture and yet the Bible clearly articulates that God exists in three distinct persons. Over the years, this has created a great amount of debate and investigation by the church as we have striven to understand and believe this difficult doctrine of the Trinity.

I want to begin our journey today with the very basic building blocks of this doctrine. We have already studied the teaching of Deuteronomy 6 that God is One, but we also must not neglect the truth that three beings are called God. God the Father is God (of course) the Son is God (according to John 1) and the Spirit is God (as in 1 Corinthians 3:16, the same passage we studied yesterday).

Today's text is one of the clearest passages regarding the unique existence of the Triune Godhead. In our passage for the day Christ is being baptized by John the Baptist. The text records for us the divine affirmation of the Son by the voice of the Father all while the Spirit descends. The point is actually quite simple, we have God in three persons, at one time, in the same location.

Over the years, several heresies have developed regarding the Trinity. One of them is the heresy of "modalism". Modalism says that there is only one God and that He manifests Himself in three distinct ways at different times. So, God became God the Son and left heaven to exist on earth whereby God the Son ascended to heaven and now He returned as Spirit and so forth. The problem with this way of thinking is that it cannot account for passages like today's. In this text, God is present in three distinct ways at the same time!

Putting This Together

All three members of the Godhead are equally God. In the coming days we will learn that they each have distinct roles within the Trinity but that does not deny their essence as fully God. When we blaspheme the Spirit, we blaspheme God, when we believe in Jesus, we believe in God, when we use the Father's name in vain, we curse God. While there is great mystery in the Trinity, there are also truths that help us understand much regarding our Triune God and how He functions. Over the next several days we will unpack those together.