

God Is Infinite

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Preacher: Pastor Cal Morrison

- [0 : 0 0] Okay, boys, Pathfinders is off during the summer, but if parents want to take you through the back, you can go through the back.
- So go see your parent and see if they want to take you through the back. It's entirely up to them. Now you want to. Do you want? Right, so go grab your mum.
- Go grab your mum and go through the back. He said yes. You want to go through with Jen? Joshua, you want to go through with Jen?
- Right, wait, boys, here. I'm going to give you one of these wee things. It's a wee God is Infinite band, and what you're going to do is you're going to fold them in a certain way that does the Infinity logo.
- Right, so take one of these. Oh, are you okay? Yeah, a wee Infinity loop. So you take one of them. Doesn't that look like it? It looks like it, doesn't it? That's true. And if anyone in the body of the church feels the urge or desire or feels the pity and compassion to do a children's talk after seeing that, then there are many.
- [1 : 1 7] There are many. Many that we'd happily give an opportunity for. Actually, next week I'm not going to be here. Jamie Gallacher is going to be coming, and he's a friend of the church, known to the church, and he's going to be speaking next week.
- And then the following week is going to be Bill, God willing, at the end of the month. And I'm confident that neither Jamie nor Bill will be doing a children's talk. So seriously, if you want to get involved, do it that way.
- I never trust an electronic toy to do your children's talk for you. But this morning we're going to be in Psalm 147. We're going to take a brief journey through infinity, if ever there was one.
- So Psalm 147, which is just a little bit of one from the Psalm that Alan read. We've already heard that in Psalm 145, that God's greatness is unsearchable.
- However, that is no reason not to tell of His greatness and sing of His greatness. Psalm 147, verses 3 to 5 says this.
- [2 : 3 1] It says that God heals the brokenhearted, and He binds up their wounds. He determines the number of the stars, and He gives to all of them their names.
- Great is the Lord and abundant in power. His understanding is beyond measure. Our God and Heavenly Father, we pray that by Your Spirit, You would help us, mortal men, to understand in our finite and weak understanding, something of Your infinite nature, that we might respond in praise and worship.
- Help us now, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, around 4,000 years ago, Abraham stood under the night sky, and God told him to number the stars if He could.
- Don't know when the last time you stood under the night sky and tried to count the stars. There's apparently around 6,000 stars visible to a person on a clear night.
- Your field of vision, you could probably count about 6,000 stars with your naked eye. But as we heard last week, we only see the stars from our own galaxy.

[3 : 59] Without a telescope, with our eyes, we only see the stars from our own galaxy, the Milky Way. And we only really see the stars that are relatively close to our little neighborhood in our galaxy, to our solar system.

What about all the other stars in the Milky Way? And then what about all the other galaxies in the universe? Astronomers estimate that there could be up to a septillion stars in the universe.

Do you know what a septillion is? So you've got million, you've got billion, you've got trillion, quadrillion. A septillion is one followed by 24 zeros.

That's a huge number, a huge number. That amount of anything is really, really hard to imagine. Yet in Psalm 147, verse 4, it says that God determined that number.

God determined, whatever it is, God determined the number of the stars. And not only that, but he gave to all of them their names. Can you imagine that?

[5 : 02] Now even just the 6,000 that we can see in the night sky, I wonder if you stood under and started counting them, but also started naming them. How long, how many stars could you name before you ran out of steam?

And what names would you come up with? Star 1, star 2, star 3. Bobby, Jimmy, Jamie. How long would it take before you ran out of steam?

If we think that there are a septillion stars in the universe, then if you were to name every single one of them, one per second, it would take you 31.7 quadrillion years to name all of the stars.

Now last week, I remember after the service talking to Jonathan from Hamilton, and he was saying that it just blows his mind in Genesis 1 that in the creation of all the stars in the universe, it's summed up as if it's a casual afterthought.

God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, the lesser light to rule the night, and in three words, and the stars. And yet we look, astronomers have been studying the stars for thousands of years.

[6 : 14] It would take us quadrillions of years just to name them, never mind create them. But God is not like us, and that's the point. Even the greatest measurements in the universe is nothing to God.

As vast as the number of stars are, they are measurable. But God himself is beyond measure, says Psalm 147, verse 5.

He is beyond any kind of measurement. The Hebrew word in verse 4 that says, if you look at verse 4, he determines the number of stars. The Hebrew word there for number is mispar.

It's the same word at the end of verse 5, actually, beyond measure. And what it is saying is that God counts the number of the stars, but his understanding has no number.

That's what it literally says in the Hebrew. He counts the number of stars, but God's understanding has no number. The stars have a measure. God does not.

[7 : 18] He has no number. He is beyond measure. In his divine nature, God is infinite. And so, as we meditate on the attributes of God's nature, we must realize that God is infinite in relation to himself.

In his nature, God is infinite. That is to say, if you've never heard this before, every single thing that is true about God is true to an infinite degree.

Everything that's true about God is true to an infinite degree. There's no limitations to anything that is in God. No lacking in any of that, his attributes, and no need in any of his perfections.

So, last week, we meditated on the fact that God is who he is. He just simply is who he is. He never changes. And this week, we meditate on the fact that he is infinite in all of his perfections.

That is to say, God is who he is to the fullest degree all at once, all of the time. He is who he is to the fullest degree, all at once, all of the time.

[8 : 28] Now, we never experience, nor can we fathom that, simply because we are finite beings. We are bound by time. We are ever-changing from one degree to another. But it is because God is infinite that he is then eternal, unchanging, and fills all things.

Now, the aim of these short sermons on the attributes of God is not to say everything that could be said. We wouldn't have time to even do that, nor do we have the understanding to say everything that would be said.

But rather, the aim of these is to renew our minds in God's Word. We need to renew our minds by giving us a glimpse of God's utter greatness, because we cannot possibly think too highly of God.

There is no way that it is possible for us to think too highly about God, yet very often we think too little of him. And so, Anselm says that God is something than which nothing greater can be thought.

And Augustine, likewise, says, the truest beginning of piety is to think as highly of God as possible. Whether you think about him often or not, every single person in the world has a thought about God.

[9 : 49] So, we all have a theology, but what determines our theology? Is it the Word? Is it the truth? Or is it our own opinions and imagination? Can we say that our thoughts about God are always the highest possible thoughts?

Do we sometimes think about the ways in which we might change God? That might be a question that makes you feel sheepish, but I can stand here and say, absolutely, I've thought that.

I'm a sinful, fallen human being, and I've thought at various points in time how I would do something different or how God might be something different in my mind. Are there prayers that are unanswered?

Is there justice that is unserved in the world? Are there wounds that are unbound? And are there desires that are unmet? And in all of these things, it tempts us to think about God in ways that is not true about His being.

We don't think the highest possible thoughts of Him all the time. If you're alive in this world, you will experience things that cause you to question whether God is the greatest being that we could possibly imagine.

[10 : 59] Is that not true? Things happen in our lives that cause us to question whether God is the greatest possible being that we could imagine. Could we imagine something greater? Because we want things to be different.

But God's ways are not our ways. Our ways and our thoughts, they are not that of an infinite and perfect being. We are experiencing all of these things in a finite and fallen world.

We are finite in understanding, bound by time, with imperfect knowledge and changeable affections. If there is ever a moment we can imagine something greater than God, it's not that God Himself is lacking, but rather our thoughts of God are lacking.

So we need right categories. We need to be reminded by the truth to have the right categories in our mind in relation to God's being and His attributes and His works.

If we don't have the right categories of understanding who God is and why He does what He does, then we will end up thinking about aspects of God and categories that make Him like us.

[12 : 05] So we need proper categories and one of those crucial categories that help us understand that God is not like us is that God is infinite. Now, you've probably heard this before, but if you haven't, the attributes of God are often called His divine perfections.

And so whatever divine perfection we describe or think about, we must realize that it isn't merely true about God, but that it is true to an absolute infinite degree.

Whatever divine perfection we're talking about, it is true of God to an infinite degree. Otherwise, it would not be a perfection. And so God being infinite in relation to Himself means that nothing in God is limited or lacking in any way, but it is true to the greatest possible degree.

If you can think about God being merciful, well, God is merciful to the greatest possible degree. If you can think about God being just, God is just to the greatest possible degree. There's no lacking in God's justice.

You can think about God's love. God is love to the greatest possible degree there ever could be. Not the greatest possible degree we could think of, the greatest possible degree that there ever could be.

[13 : 22] So, let me illustrate with a sport. Maybe most of you won't be too familiar with a sport, but it's okay. Every springtime in America, before the American football season starts, there is a thing called the NFL Combine. I don't know if you've heard of it.

Basically, it's kind of like tryouts. So, this is how the professional NFL teams get their playouts. They first have this event called the Combine that is an invite-only event, where the college athletes are invited to take part in a wide range of physical, mental, and medical tests so that they can showcase their skills to the scouts in hopes of being picked up by a professional team. So, they go to this event where everything's measured.

How high do you jump? How fast can you run? How much can you lift? How tall are you? How much do you weigh? Your hand span and many such things that you can put a number on. Even among that, scouts talk about intangibles. Things like, what is this person's poise under pressure?

How is their decision-making skills? What is their character? What is their potential? What is their leadership? It's all about how you measure up. Everything about this Combine is taking a measuring tape to you and measuring you up to see how suitable you are and who's the best. And they get ranked and stuff like that. Now, I wonder, if there was a tryout event for the role of being God, what do you think the criteria would be?

Do we have a measurement for God? Like, in our minds, if we were the scouts sitting on the tryouts for the role of God, would we have a certain criteria by which someone must meet? You must be this strong. You must be this fast. You must be this good and moral. You must be this holy. You must be this just. You must be this loving. You see, in our world, there is a measurement for God.

[15 : 34] We want God to be this loving, but we don't want Him to be that just. No, God forbid that anyone should end up in hell, says the world. There is a measurement. There's a criteria in the world for the role of God. We want God to be all-loving, but not too just.

We want justice for other people, just not for ourselves. But even in our own minds, do we have this picture? And I don't have anything against this song, but do we have a picture that our God is a great big God?

Now, He is, but if we think in terms of big, then we've already missed the point, because big is a measurement, measurement, and God has no measurement. You know, and it's, yeah, we do this all the time, and this is why we need the Word of God to give us categories. You see, the point is, if it can be measured, then it isn't God. We've already got a chart to tell us what God is like, and it's the Bible. We've got a chart that tells us what God is like, and listen to the many ways. I'm just going to rhyme off a number of Bible verses here.

I'm not going to mention the verses, but if you want them afterwards, I'll give you them all. But let me list the way the Bible talks about God, and we'll see that in almost every way, there's no measurement. So, the Bible says, His greatness is unsearchable. His ways are untraceable. His knowledge is perfect. His years can't be counted. His wonders have no number. His immensity can't be contained. His riches are boundless. His understanding is infinite. His power and grace is immeasurable. His love is everlasting.

His mercy knows no end. There is no one like this God. He can't be measured. He is infinite. This is what theologians call that God is maximally alive. Anselm says that God is the fullest of being itself, the absolute plenitude of reality upon which all else depends. If we think about God in terms of size, He isn't actually big, because being infinite in Himself, size is not a category that applies to God. We think about time. It's not a category that belongs to God. God cannot be measured in any way. So, we must resist in our thoughts putting God into categories that don't belong to Him. Knowing that God is infinite means that when our thoughts tempt us to question whether God measures up, we might remember that measuring is a creaturely category that does not belong to the immeasurable creator. Whenever we're tempted to think whether God measures up or not, we must be reminded that measurement is a creaturely category that does not belong to the immeasurable creator. And so, back to our initial text in Psalm 147, God can heal the brokenhearted and bind up their wounds, because not only is He the creator of billions and trillions of stars, He knows every single one of them, and He gives them their name. Is He not a God who cares? He cares more about you and me than He does the stars.

[19 : 11] Not only is His power immeasurable, but His understanding is infinite. Does He not understand who we are and what our greatest need is? In His infinite knowledge, He knows everything that could ever be known.

There is nothing that He does not know about me or you, nothing He does not see, and nothing that He is not aware of. In His infinite understanding, there's nothing He knows that He doesn't understand completely, nothing He needs explained to Him. Psalm 103 says, He knows our frame, and He is mindful that we are dust. There's nothing He doesn't get. And His infinite wisdom, His judgments and decisions are unsearchable. He only always intuitively knows the best possible way to do anything, and He acts in complete wisdom all the time. In His infinite wisdom, God always knows intuitively the best course of action to take in every scenario all the time, intuitively all at once. It's been said that knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, knowledge is having the blueprints. Understanding is knowing what they mean.

Wisdom is building the house. God has infinite knowledge, infinite understanding, infinite wisdom. That means that God has the blueprints of every single thing that He created. He perfectly understands everything about them, and He only ever acts in the best possible way to make those blueprints into the glorious reality that He intends. We might not think that it looks like that just now, but God is not bound by time. God is bringing about His creation in the way that He absolutely initially intended. Nothing can thwart the plan of God. In His infinite power, nothing is stopping Him from doing what He knows and understands, and in His wisdom, determines to do. Nothing can stop Him in His infinite power. Who can thwart the plans of God? Who can contend with the Almighty? In His infinite justice, He will never act in a way that is not completely just and fair. God only always acts in a way that is completely just and fair. And this is both good news and bad news. Good news that God is not unjust. Bad news and that we are guilty. But in His infinite mercy, He will never act in any way that has not shown the greatest possible mercy. He is both the just and the justifier. And in His infinite grace, the application of all these things and all that God has done and He is doing is in Christ.

That the infinite God should clothe Himself in a finite human form all the while to act according to His infinite nature. And His infinite grace, the application is all that He has done and all that He is doing in Christ. And in His infinite love, He displays this on a cross to show us the way that we should know and experience His infinite love through His Son, Jesus Christ. Now, let me finish just by saying as difficult as it is for us finite creatures to comprehend the infinite Creator, nevertheless, Paul says in Ephesians 1 that we can know something of the immeasurable greatness of His power towards us in Christ. And in Ephesians 2, he tells us that God is doing this in a way so to display in the coming ages the immeasurable riches of His grace and kindness towards us in Christ. And in Ephesians 3,

He tells us this is the reason that He came to preach to us that we would know all these things through Jesus, the unsearchable riches of Christ. Let me pray.

[23 : 26] Our infinite and holy God, how is it that we finite and weak and fallen creatures, sinful as we are, can come to You that You would make Yourself known to us and that You would hear us? What a wonder it is that You would make Yourself known to us in Christ, that You would clothe Yourself in a finite form, that we might know Your infinite grace and infinite love, Your infinite justice and infinite mercy, that we might know You, that we might know something of Your immeasurable greatness of Your power towards us in Christ, that we might know that You are doing this in this way to show in the coming ages the immeasurable richness of Your grace towards us in Christ, and that we should find Your unsearchable riches in Christ.

Lord, help us to know You through Christ, not that we could ever comprehend the infinite, but that we can know You through Christ, and know something of Your immeasurable grace and justice and mercy.

We pray in Jesus' name for Your glory. Amen. Amen. Let's... Amen. Amen.

Amen.