

God Is Incomprehensible Yet Knowable

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- [0 : 0 0] If you have a Bible, please turn to Romans chapter 11. If not, there are Bibles in the pews, and it will be on the screen.
- I'll be reading it out. There is a riddle that you may have heard of. You might know the answer to. What gets wetter the more it dries?
- You know the answer? A towel. Absolutely right. A towel. It's a play on words. And as we come to trying to come to grasps with who God is, we must realize that the more you know, the more you know how little you know.
- The increase of knowledge shouldn't puff us up. It should bring us to a place of humility. And so I'm going to read just a couple of verses from Romans chapter 11, from verse 33.
- You'll be familiar with the verses. At times, some of the authors of different parts of the Bible come to a point of just having to ponder, meditate, admit that we cannot touch the riches and wisdom of God.
- [1 : 3 4] And this is where Paul comes to in Romans chapter 11, verse 33. He says this, Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God.
- How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways. Amen. For who has known the mind of the Lord?
- Or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? For from him and through him and to him are all things.
- To him be glory forever. Amen. Amen. We come to this point of trying to understand more and more of God and his ways and his thoughts.
- And we finally come to a point of admitting that they are so rich, so unsearchable, inscrutable, we couldn't possibly understand. And then that moves from that place onto praise.
- [2 : 4 1] These things are not supposed to lead us to despair, but lead us to praise. For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. Well, ever since the beginning of time, since the Garden of Eden, there has been some desire in humans to gain knowledge.
- Two trees in the garden, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Think about this. It was not the tree of life that the devil tempted Adam and Eve with.
- It was not with life that God forgave them, forbade them to seek. The first temptation was for more knowledge than humanity was originally granted.
- And being tempted, Adam and Eve risked death just to know it. It's not that knowledge itself is bad. But think of the many ways that humans are not able to handle knowledge.
- We consistently demonstrate our tendency to misunderstand, to misinterpret, to misuse knowledge. We are hasty to act upon incomplete knowledge as humans.
- [3 : 5 4] We misinterpret knowledge. We use knowledge to destroy ourselves and one another. However, we've all likely seen or experienced when a child is exposed to things that children shouldn't need to know.

Without maturity and stability to bear such things. Now, even as adults, we are not morally mature enough to correctly handle the things that we know.

Think of Adam and Eve. Think of Adam and Eve. When knowledge of good and evil is gained through disobedience and rebellion. Do you think that they are positioned to now choose the good that the knowledge has given them, or choose the evil that they now know about?

When they gain that knowledge through disobedience and rebellion, which way do you think they're going to swing, into the good or into the evil? There are many ways and many things that we could desire to know.

We would be fools if we didn't admit that we often want to know things because we are control freaks. And we think if we know more about certain things, it will ease our fears and anxieties, or it will give us an advantage.

[5 : 09] Another desire and temptation that I'm keenly aware of every day is a desire to know things that we don't really need to know. Some piece of juicy gossip about someone else's life or misfortune.

Every day we're presented with juicy fruit of knowledge that we simply do not need. We must be very cautious about what we think we need to know.

But again, knowledge itself is not bad, neither is desire. There is a good desire to know. Think about just every single relationship, every marriage, every friendship.

There is a desire to know a person. And it's the same at every single funeral. We want to know a person more. We feel like we've never taken the opportunity to know a person.

We spend so much time trying to know the wrong things that we don't spend enough time trying to know the right things. But there's a difference between knowing everything about a person and knowing a person.

[6 : 12] There's an interplay of knowledge and trust. How many relationships are destroyed because people want to use what they know about a person against them.

Is that not true? You use the information that you know about a person to destroy them. Are we always going to use the knowledge that we gain for good or for evil?

And how many relationships are destroyed because of a lack of trust? People want to know everything about a person, where they are, what they're doing at every minute of every day, because they have trust issues.

So there's a difference between knowing everything about someone and knowing someone. The relational side of knowledge, of knowing. And so in the Garden of Eden, it's not that knowledge is bad, but rather when and how and why that knowledge is gained.

It was not to be on the basis of disobedience, and it was not to be on the basis of a lack of trust in God. If you want to know God, you must in some way accept that it will not be on the strength of your own understanding.

[7 : 21] For Adam and Eve, could they gain understanding on their own? Or just go to God and trust God? It's not that he was going to withhold understanding from them, but we must not lean on our own understanding.

You see, we generally have too much pride to admit how little we know. We are finite beings. As Paul said, we know in part.

If the collective knowledge of billions of humans throughout thousands of years cannot even come close to understanding everything about ourselves, how can we think that we can possibly know everything about God?

We are so finite. Furthermore, it's not just that we have finite knowledge. As explained. And as history has shown, we do not have the moral maturity to properly handle or understand knowledge.

So in our desire to know God, we must recognize that God is incomprehensible. That's what we're looking at this morning. God is incomprehensible.

[8 : 31] We cannot fathom the fullness of God, both because we are finite and He is infinite, and also because He is holy and perfect, and He is not like us.

We are neither pure nor morally mature. As finite creatures, we cannot comprehend the infinite Creator, and in our moral imperfections, we cannot rightly understand the perfections of a holy God.

Now, this shouldn't stop us trying to understand, but we must have humility and realize that we cannot lean on our own understanding. Because even when we do gain knowledge, we often misunderstand it.

We often have the wrong view about a thing because we are not morally mature. We are morally corrupt. We don't come to the table with neutral minds on these things.

So it's no surprise to be reminded by God Himself in Isaiah 55 when He says, My thoughts are not your thoughts.

[9 : 41] Neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

And it's not merely a degree of height. Think about it. The highest point on earth is still lower than the lowest point of the heavens. It's not merely about height because there is no earthly height that you can reach where your thoughts become like God's thoughts.

It's never going to happen. This is what Paul expresses in 1 Corinthians 1.25. Paul says this, The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men.

Even at the highest degree of human wisdom and understanding, we are not even scratching the surface of God's wisdom. The heavens are not only higher than the earth, they are of a different nature than the earth.

Is that not true? By nature, the heavens will always be higher than the earth, different from the earth. And so God's thoughts and God's ways, by nature, will always be higher and different than ours.

[10 : 59] And the idea isn't to try and get us to think that we can be more like God, but rather to recognize this simple fact, God is God, and we are not.

God is God, and we are not. So we must trust God, and trust not merely that He knows better than us, but that God knows things which we cannot know or comprehend.

God knows that which we cannot know or comprehend. And so it's not just like we need to trust that God knows better. There are things that we just cannot know. Think about this.

We want answers to prayer. We ask the why questions to God. Sometimes I think that God couldn't give us an answer because we couldn't accept it. We couldn't understand it. And that's the story of Job.

Job never gets an answer why, but he just gets to see something of God, and he understands that he is not like God. God is God, and man is not. And so this is what God says to Job, in Job 11, 7 to 8.

[12 : 07] Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty? It is higher than heaven. What can you do? It is deeper than Sheol.

What can you know? And so Job is humbled. I get it, God. You're God, and I'm not. God himself is incomprehensible.

His greatness, unsearchable. His ways, inscrutable. His power, unimaginable. And his fullness, indescribable. But this is not supposed to lead us to ignorance or agnosticism.

It shouldn't drive us to abandon our pursuit to know God. It's supposed to lead us to humility and trust and worship. And Paul is clear in Acts 17, that God does not need anything from us, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

And he does that, yet God made us in such a way, even the place we were born, the time we were born, that we should seek him, that we should feel our way towards him, and that we should find God.

[13 : 23] If you seek him, you will find him. In fact, as we read in Isaiah 55, that God's thoughts and ways are higher than ours, just the verse before that, it says, Seek the Lord while he may be found.

So here's the fact. God is incomprehensible, yet he is not unknowable. He has made himself known, as David said.

He has made himself known. He has revealed himself in the things that he has made. This is what Paul says in Romans chapter 1, or Psalm 19, The heavens declare the glory of God.

Day after day, night after night, pouring forth speech. Romans 1 says that he has revealed himself in the things that he has made, his nature, his divine nature and character, and power in the things that he has made.

Furthermore, that's called general revelation. Furthermore, he has revealed himself because he has spoken. God has spoken. Through the prophets. This is Hebrews 1.1, that God has spoken to us long ago through the prophets.

[14 : 37] Through the prophets, the word of God, he has revealed himself. And this is called special revelation. But finally, and more fully, he has made himself known through his Son.

And so, this is what it says in Hebrews. That long ago, at many times, in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. But in these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son.

And we appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He's the radiance of the glory of God, the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

God has revealed himself through his Son. And John reflects on this in his prologue, in his gospel. He says, no one has ever seen God.

No one. Man could not possibly see God. No one has ever seen God. But the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

[15 : 47] You can know God. You might not be able to comprehend him, but you can know him. And you can only truly know God through Jesus, his Son, who came from the Father's side to make him known.

Just as Jesus said to the Pharisees in John 8, you neither know me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also. If you know Jesus, you know the Father.

You know God. You can only know the Father through the Son. No one comes to the Father except through the Son, for he is the way and the truth and the life.

This is one of the great differences between Christianity and every other religion. Only Christ bridges the gap between divinity and humanity. He is both fully God and fully man.

We will never know God fully, but we can know him truly if we know the Son. And the only way is through Jesus, the Son of God, for only Jesus has made God known.

[16 : 48] So if you know Jesus, you know God. Let me pray. Heavenly Father, there is so much for us to meditate on, to ponder, but lest we crowd our minds with magnificent thoughts and never do a thing, let us be doers of the Word and not just hearers.

Let us seek you through Jesus who has made you known. Please, God, would you reveal yourself to us through Jesus more and more that we might know you, not just information, but relation.

Please help us have a personal relationship with Jesus each and every day that we might know you for this is eternal life, to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

In his name we pray. Amen. Amen. Thank you.