

What's God Like?: Infinite & Incomprehensible

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Preacher: Kent Dixon

[0 : 00] So, good morning again. So, as I've said before, preachers, when they start a new sermon series, often, often, I'm a little, am I too loud, Pat? Is that what, yeah, too loud. There we go. Is that better? And as you know, if my batteries die out, it won't matter anyway. I'm just loud.

So, I've said in the past that when preachers start a new series, we often get excited. You've heard me say that before, right? There are some nerves, maybe, about a topic that we're wanting to share with you that God has put on our hearts. We're a little bit nervous about maybe how it'll be received. You know, will it land? Will it be of interest? Will it be encouraging?

Or maybe some anticipation because we've been studying something and we think it's pretty neat and we're hoping you'll think it's pretty neat, too, and something that God has put on our hearts. So, a question in our minds often is, will the congregation be as interested in this as I am?

That's a good question. So, this morning, we're going to find out. And as I was talking about this new series recently, Michelle was kind of nearby and heard me going, oh, well, I'm going to talk about this. And she said, can you tell he's really excited about it? And it's true. I am. It's true.

So, this week, we're starting a new sermon series called, What's God Like? What is God Like? And over the next five weeks, we're going to look at 10 of the attributes or qualities that we can see of God in Scripture, that we can recognize of Him. And you guessed it. You do the sermon math. Two topics a week for five weeks. People nodding. Got it. So, I didn't want to spoil it for you, but the reality is we do not have a hope. Shouldn't be shocking. We don't have a hope of covering everything over the next five weeks in the kind of detail that it warrants. The kind of detail that the qualities of God reflect to us. But we're going to do our best. And you'll stay with me, I hope. So, as we explore each of God's qualities, we're going to look at a human understanding of those qualities. And then, as well, we're going to look at them as how they relate to the overall quality and characteristics of God. And then, we're going to look at how some of those unique qualities and characteristics of God, how they relate to us personally. What they mean for us personally, in our faith and in our lives. How's that sound?

[2 : 32] Does that sound okay? A couple thumbs up, a couple nods, no smiles, all masked smiles except for Myrna. So, over the course of this series, we're going to be exploring a lot of potentially heavy theological concepts. But, my goal is to keep them relatable, as relatable as possible and as anchored in the everyday as possible. Because I don't want to make it too daunting at the same time, right?

I believe, you can challenge me on this anytime, that the church as a larger body, not Brema, the church as a larger body, particularly in the West, has tended to neglect studying things that are hard, things that are challenging, things that are meaty, like the character of God. And perhaps that's because it just seems too daunting, right? Like I said, they're theological concepts. Or perhaps it's because we've become more concerned about what church has for us. How the message of the Bible, or the truth of God's truth for us, His plan for us, how it can be formed and suited to our needs.

Do you recognize that? So, whatever the reason, I believe we've seen a rise in what I've started to call Christianity light over the years, particularly in the West. The church at large, particularly in the West, seems to have become more interested in being culturally relevant, more interested in being relatable and entertaining than grounded in the truth of Scripture. So, some Christian writers have even come to refer to this as consumer Christianity. And lots of pastors that I interact with online have said, you know, where did this come from? Where, you know, this is crazy. Why is this suddenly a thing?

And one really wise pastor said, this is not suddenly a thing. This has been a thing for years and years and years. COVID didn't create it. COVID revealed it. It gave us the time to sit back and say,

so what's God's intention for the church? Is this it? We come, we pick off a menu, we're fed, we engage when we feel like, and that's it? Is that what our faith is about? So, it's somehow recognized as adopting that core message, the essential elements of our faith to make them more palatable, often. But I want us, now I'm going to speak specifically. I want us particularly here at Braemar to be a place where, yes, we welcome one another. Yes, we engage each other where we're at. But where we also challenge one another in our faith. Where we dig deeper into topics that aren't that easy. Because that's how we grow. So, where we need to seek to grow in our understanding of God's truth and our relationship with him, those are important things. Those are important connecting points for us. And as we do that, we have the opportunity to support one another, to build relationship together. Because we're, we become engaged participants in our faith. And we're not all here this morning as individual Christians. This isn't a solo journey. It's a journey of community. And so, we're here this morning as people who are learning together, are growing together, are journeying together, under God's guidance and God's care. Amen?

[6 : 10] So, over time, I believe that the church has developed a tendency to choose comfort over conviction. But as we did with our longer sermon series on the story last year, as we did with our sermon series on the Lord's Prayer and on stewardship, I want us to challenge ourselves by digging in more, digging deeper than just a surface understanding. And this morning, we're going to begin our series on what is God like by recognizing that God is two things, infinite and incomprehensible.

And without power on, you can't advance your own slides. Infinite and incomprehensible. Are you immediately thinking, sheesh, God may be infinite, but I hope this sermon is not.

And it sure better not be incomprehensible while we're at it. Does that resonate for you? So, to say something is infinite means that it has no end, right? It means that it goes on forever.

To say something is infinite, I'm also going to suggest, says that it existed before. It exists now, and it will exist forever.

Something has always existed. It always will exist. Infinite. But we're not going to overcomplicate that idea. Too late. So, as parents or grandparents, you may have become familiar with the Pixar animated franchise Toy Story, right?

[7 : 51] As a fan of those films, for me personally, the word infinity, when I think about it, it always reminds me of the catchphrase of Space Ranger Buzz Lightyear, who says, to infinity and beyond. Exactly.

Tom, what's his name? Tom. No, not Tom Hanks. That's, anyway. So, perhaps when you think of that word, you think of infinity, you think of all the grains of sand on all the beaches in the entire world.

Or all the stars in the entire universe. Or every drop of water that together makes up every ocean around the world.

Every stream, every pond, every lake. Is that how you think of infinity? Well, I hate to break it to you, but there is, mind-bogglingly, a last grain of sand.

There is a last star. There is a last drop that makes up the last body of water on this planet. So, while they may seem infinite, those things, beaches and galaxies and oceans, they may seem infinite, they are still very finite in their composition.

[9 : 09] They have an end. They're ultimately measurable, not immeasurable, and they can be counted, not by us.

I'll give you tweezers in 50 years. Start counting sand. But we recognize that humans are finite, right?

We had a beginning. That's what we celebrate every year when people give us cake and stuff. We had a beginning. We will definitely have an end.

All of us are measured by boundaries in some way or other. Our skills, our capabilities, our age. We recognize, oh no, we say things like, oh no, you're too young for that.

Maybe when you're older. Or we say, oh no, I am too old to shovel snow again. So, we recognize that. Limitations. Our experience limits us, potentially.

[10 : 10] Or experience is an opportunity to learn something new. But we recognize that we're limited by many factors. And friends, that is why we are not God.

Got it? And that's also why we need him. Because he is infinite. Do you recognize our human need to measure and count?

I have friends in this congregation right now who are professionals who count on the ability to measure. The ability to calculate.

The ability to know those things precisely. We need to recognize what time is it. How much time do we have? How much gas is in our car?

That's fairly important. We need a gas gauge. How much money we have in our bank account.

That's why we have an accounting of what's in our bank. So, we need to measure.

[11:12] We have a sense of humans that we need to measure everything. Because we've learned from experience that things run out. Right? Our gas. Our money. Maybe your bladder capacity as you're on a long walk.

I've had that happen. It's not fun. But things run out. Our capacity for things. Have you heard of the expression?

Of course you have. Nothing lasts forever. Right? We say it often. It's because we know from experience that nothing does.

Most things don't. And that's the nature of our existence. At least for now. But this morning when we're studying these qualities and these characteristics of God, we're recognizing that God has no limits.

He has no boundaries. No beginning and no end. God is infinite. Still hard to wrap your head around.

[12:15] God created the beaches. He knows the number of grains of sand. God created every star. Knows how many. What their time span is.

When they'll burn out. When new stars will form. He knows all of that. God knows every drop of water. Every drop. In every ocean and body of water around the world.

And God always was. He always existed. He always has existed. Infinitely. Immeasurably. In time before humanity was ever even a thought.

And God always will exist. In infinity. After our time on this planet is done. We read in Revelation 1 verse 8.

I am the Alpha and the Omega. Says the Lord God. Who was. Who is.

[13:20] And who was. And who is to come. The Almighty. That's it. That's the statement of God. Of his infinite nature.

The Bible says in Jeremiah 23 verse 24. Can a man hide himself in hiding places. So I do not see him. Declares the Lord.

Do I not fill. The heavens and the earth. Declares the Lord. Scripture makes it abundantly clear.

That God exists in infinity.

He has none of the limitations. Or boundaries that we have. So is it any wonder then. That humans seek to. Develop religions.

Or ways of. Believing. That strive. To have the nature of God. That strive for something of that. Infinite nature. Some way to attain.

[14:19] God's infinite existence. So yes. You're probably. You may be thinking this. Some of you. As someone who believes in Jesus Christ. And has surrendered their life to him.

We will have. Eternal life with God. That's a fact. But that still doesn't make us. Any more like God. We will not become.

Infinite. Infinite. Infinite. On the wrong syllable. We won't become infinite. In terms of pre-existence. Or some of those other qualities. That are relatable.

Only to God. God. I personally believe. That when we die. And go to be with God. We may gain. A more clear perspective. On infinity. We may gain.

A better understanding. Of God's existence. Of his nature. But for now. It can be. Very difficult. For us to wrap our heads. Around what infinite means.

[15:16] And let's recognize that. What about the idea. Of something being. Incomprehensible. Perhaps that's what you're feeling.

At this point. Right now. This is incomprehensible. So far. The time we've spent together. This morning. But I hope not. But if we break it down. Let's break this down. You know. I'm a word guy.

I'll suggest that. Comprehension. Relates to understanding. Does that make sense? So if something is. Beyond our comprehension. Incomprehension.

Incomprehensible. It can be said. That it's beyond. Our understanding. Does that make sense too? Is that helpful? So in saying.

That one of the qualities. Of God. Is that he is. Incomprehensible. It's not that he is. Completely beyond. Our understanding. In many ways. Yes.

[16:11] But what it's really saying. Is that. He is beyond. Our understanding. So does that. Make you frustrated? Does that make you think. Oh. If it's beyond understanding. Then why even bother?

Why even bother? We say with exasperation. In situations. I don't understand it. Right? Something happens. I don't understand it. Why did that happen to me? Or. I do not understand it.

Way over my head. Right? I say it all the time. So when we're faced with a situation. Or a problem. That we can't wrap our heads around.

We say that in frustration. I don't understand it. And this morning we heard. In our song. Worship song. I stand in awe. And it's one of my favorites. That considers the nature of God.

The lyrics say. You're beautiful beyond description. Too marvelous for words. Too wonderful for comprehension. There it is. Right? Like nothing ever seen or heard.

[17:10] Our understanding. Not big enough. Our vocabulary. Not descriptive enough. God is simply.

Completely. Utterly. Beyond our understanding. So does that leave you. As the song says.

Standing in awe. Or does that leave you.

Feeling. Frustrated. And discouraged. Are you left with the idea that. Well if I can't understand God. How can I possibly. Relate to him.

And then. How can I possibly. Connect. With him. In a meaningful way. Friends. I want to encourage you. This morning. Think about it this way.

Are there people. In your life. That you don't understand. You're all thinking of someone. I see the smiles. And the nods. Do you think.

[18:06] My goodness. I can't even begin. Don't even start. And yet. Do you feel that you know them. Well enough. To have a conversation with them.

Do you feel like. You would miss their absence. With pain in your heart. Do you feel like. Do you feel like. You deeply love them.

Even though you don't. Completely understand them. I have. Teenagers. And I was one. And I remember being.

Incomprehensible to my parents. At times. And yet. Deeply loved. God. I have. I have. So. While. Our full understanding. Of God.

Is likely impossible. We'll never completely. Get there. You can. Know God. See the difference. That's the.

[19:02] Illustration. Of someone. You don't understand. But you can love. And know them. In a way. That builds. Meaningful relationship. And I want you to recognize.

That as much as you may not. Completely understand. God. He always. Has completely. Understood. You. He gets you.

Speaking to his disciples. In Luke 12. Verses 6 and 7. Jesus said. Are not five sparrows. Sold for two pennies. Yet not one of them.

Is forgotten by God. Indeed. The very hairs. Of your head. Are numbered. Don't be afraid. You are worth more.

Than many sparrows. So the disciples. We recognize. May have thought. What Jesus said. Was for the birds. Right? But there was.

[19:59] A clear message there. That the infinite God. Who is beyond. Human measurement. Or understanding. Knows every detail. Of each of us.

Intimately. Down to the literal hairs. On our head. And obviously. For some of us. That number is larger. But did you catch.

The irony. Of that idea. That the same God. Who utterly. Alludes. Our understanding. Our ability. To measure him. Or define him. Or conveniently.

Package him. Counts and measures. Each of us. As valuable. As deeply valued. And he understands us.

More than we'll ever understand. Even ourselves. That's comforting to me. That's marvelous. Too marvelous for words.

[20:54] Jesus. So this morning. We've begun. To consider. Some of the awesome qualities. Of the creator. Of the universe. The creator.

Of all things. Our God. Our father. In heaven. And we can take great comfort. In.

That in the limits. Of our own capacity. Our own abilities. We have a limitless God. Who loves us. Infinitely. And while our God. Is beyond human comprehension. Beyond human understanding. Too awesome. And infinite. To wrap our heads around. Through. Jesus Christ. And his sacrifice. On the cross. We have been welcomed. Into God's. Family. And we can grow. In knowledge.

[21 : 50] And relationship. With him. We have the amazing. The amazing ability. To call the creator. Of all things. Abba.

That's the Aramaic word. That means. Father. Some theologians say. It means daddy. Not quite. Daddy. Implies. A childlike. Nature. Not. So much. The familiarity. But it's about. Being able. To come to Jesus. Come through Jesus. To God. And say. Father God. And recognize. That we are his children. Through Jesus. We recognize. When we recognize him. As Savior. And Lord. That God. Also becomes. Our father. Our Abba. Jesus.

[22 : 44] Makes that possible. Do you recognize. Jesus. As your Savior. And Lord. This morning. Have you. Given your life. To him. And surrendered. Your future plans. To his. Infinite ones. God. If you have done that. I celebrate. With you. This morning. And you can still. Join me. In the prayer. That we're about. To pray together. Affirming. Your commitment. To Jesus. As Lord of your life. And if you haven't. Done that. And it's something. That you'd like. To do. I invite you. To do that. Through praying. This prayer. This morning. Let's pray. Jesus. I believe. You are. The son of God. That you died. On the cross. To rescue me. From sin. And death. And to restore me. To the father.

[23 : 39] I choose now. To turn. From my sins. My self-centeredness. And every part. Of my life. That doesn't please you. I choose. You. I give. Myself. To you. I receive. Your forgiveness. And I ask you. To take your rightful place. In my life. As my savior. And the Lord. Jesus. Come reign. In my heart. Fill me. With your love. And your life. And help me. To become a person. Who is truly loving. A person. Like you. Restore me. Jesus. Live. In me. Love. Through me. Thank you. God. For your son. And it's in Jesus name. We pray.

[24 : 33] Amen. If you have. Prayed that prayer. For the first time. This morning. Come and talk to me. If you have. Prayed that prayer. This morning. For the 50th time. But you're recognizing. It's a recommitment. This morning. Come and talk to me. We're going to close our service this morning. With Leah singing. The blessing over us. We're going to close our service this morning with Leah singing. The blessing over us.