

What Is God Like?: Omnipotent & Sovereign

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[0 : 00] So, as I said, I want to take a moment to recognize that this is Thanksgiving weekend. And we're facing challenging times and difficult times in many ways.

Difficult times for us to remain positive. I think we'd all agree with that. Michelle and I were watching some Netflix last night, watching *The Right Stuff*, which is a new TV series version of that great movie about the NASA astronauts, the Mercury 7 astronauts.

So, as we were watching that, I said to her, you know, it's strange because I've gotten used to, so used to masks and physical distancing that now I watch TV and I think, why are those people not wearing masks?

Right? Oh, they're standing way too close together. What is going on? And then we remember, first of all, fiction. Hello. And second of all, that's not what normal is, right?

So, we've become used to this normal, but it's not the normal we want. It's not what we crave to have back again. So, it can be challenging. So, not only is it a challenging time, it can be hard for us to be thankful during this time, can't it?

[1 : 10] But I want to encourage you that no matter what your circumstances are, give thanks to God. Because you'll be able to recognize, very quickly, I think, the things that he has provided.

And not just this weekend we can be thankful, but every day. So, as we've explored together over the course of our sermon series on stewardship and the qualities and characteristics of God as well, we've recognized that everything that we have, everything that we are, is a gift from God.

Right? So, I encourage us to reflect, to recognize, to celebrate the many gifts that God has given us, given you specifically, from provision to health, relationships, family, community.

And most of all, if you've received Jesus as your Savior, that's without question the greatest gift God has given us, isn't it?

Give thanks to your God. This week, we're concluding our series called, *What is God Like?* And a pastor friend of mine gave me a hard time this week.

[2 : 32] He said, Wow, five sermons to cover all the stuff that you covered. He said, You must be greater than every theologian ever born. He said, There are volumes and volumes written on every single one of the topics you've covered.

And I said, Yeah, but how boring if I spent weeks and weeks and weeks and weeks. But I could.

Right? We recognize that the infinite nature of God, we've just barely scratched the surface.

We've just gotten a very basic awareness. And so far, over the course of this series, we've explored eight of the ten main attributes or qualities of God that we can see in Scripture.

We've looked at a human understanding of those qualities, as well as what they mean in relation to the overall character of God. And as well, what they mean for us personally, in our faith and in our lives.

Last week, you may remember, we started looking at the omnis. Do you recall that? The properties, the attributes, the qualities of God that are wholly unique to Him.

[3 : 42] Do you remember what the Latin prefix *omni* means? Louder. Oh, thank you. All together. There we go.

And as we looked at those first two omnis last week, we considered what it means to recognize that God is omnipresent. He is everywhere. And that also God is omniscient.

He is all-knowing. Our God is omnipresent. He's everywhere. He's with His creation at all times.

He's not conformed or constricted by time or space as we are.

He's gone before us. And He's always with us. Our God is also omniscient. He's all-knowing. And I believe that quote we considered last week captures it best.

God fully knows Himself and all things actual and possible in one simple and eternal act. Remember? Remember?

[4 : 48] And then we recognize that in itself is one of the most mind-blowing sentences we've ever heard. And then unpacked it a bit together. So this morning we're going to look at the last two qualities in this series.

The characteristics of God. As we consider that God is omnipotent and sovereign. Omnipotent. It's our third omni.

And if you remember me talking about the omnis initially, it means that God is all-powerful. Indeed. Indeed.

The word omnipotence, you know, me the word geek, is derived from two Latin words. Omni, meaning all, and potens, meaning powerful.

So do you recognize the root of many English words here? Potent. Potential. Relating to the Latin word for power or powerful.

[5 : 53] So when you consider the idea of power, what ideas come to mind? Audience participation time. Power. What ideas come to mind for you?

Power. Silence is not one of the ideas I'm looking for. Reverence can come at another time.

Status. Good. You're jumping ahead. Strength. Energy.

Capacity. Ability. Power. Power. Do you remember that we recognize the fact that God is self-sufficient earlier in this series?

So that relates directly to God's omnipotence because God does not need anything. He doesn't need anyone. God doesn't rely on anyone or anything else beyond his own eternal and limitless power to do what he decides to do, to act according to his will.

[7 : 05] And can you see, begin to see, or hopefully you've seen throughout the series that some of these characteristics really are interwoven together quite tightly. And God's power is mentioned over and over throughout the Bible many, many times.

Not just in description as God being powerful, but in action. And not just in the acts of God himself, but also God's power at work through the life and ministry of Jesus, through the lives and ministry of the disciples, and many other acts of people, godly people throughout Scripture.

Psalms 24, verse 8, asks the question, this will be familiar from our singing this morning, who is this king of glory?

And answers back with, the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. This passage refers to Jesus, the Son of God, and God himself in eternal unity as part of the Trinity.

So just how powerful is our God? Seems like a basic question, right? And I don't want to be flippant in saying this, but just look around you.

[8 : 39] Everything has been created by him. Everyone sitting here in these pews this morning, created uniquely, specially, specifically, by God, according to his purpose and for his pleasure.

Do you feel special? Maybe you don't this morning, but I want you to feel deeply special. That seems pretty powerful, doesn't it?

All of creation, all of us, seven billion people around the world and counting. Psalm 33, verses 6 to 9, gives us a beautiful, poetic account of Genesis and God's awesome power.

By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea into jars, and he puts the deep into storehouses.

Let all the earth fear the Lord, and let all the people of the world revere him. For he spoke, and it came to be.

[9 : 52] He commanded, and it stood firm. The Bible says in Isaiah 44, verse 24, this is what the Lord says, your Redeemer who formed you in the womb.

Now this is God himself speaking here. I am the Lord who has made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth, by myself.

For those of us who are parents or grandparents, those words are familiar probably. By myself. I want to do it by myself.

Right? Children say that all the time. Teenagers say it all the time. By myself. But the creator of the universe created all things by himself.

1 Corinthians 1, verse 16, frames God's lordship over all things so beautifully. For by him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities, all things were created by him and for him.

[11 : 21] God not only created all things, but he created them for his pleasure. So what does that mean to us then?

To recognize that God is all powerful, that he has unlimited power. Well, as we read about God's promise to Abraham and Sarah that they'll have a baby in their old age, you can probably remember if you know the story, Sarah laughs.

Sarah's essentially saying, you've got to be kidding. Don't be ridiculous. So if you're familiar with this story, do you remember God's response in Genesis 18, 14?

God calls Abraham aside. Come here for a second. God says directly to Abraham, asking why Sarah laughs, is anything too hard for the Lord?

Our God sure does love to mess with our misconceptions about conception, doesn't he? When the angel Gabriel appears to Mary to tell her she will give birth to a baby boy whose name will be Jesus, Mary thinks back, no, no.

[12 : 44] And she's pretty positive based on her understanding that that's just not possible. Gabriel responds to Mary in Luke 1, 37, and he reminds her, for nothing is impossible with God.

As the disciples wrestle with the idea that a rich man can't buy his way into heaven, how could he not? And they're suggesting that then it must be impossible for anyone to be saved.

We read in the Bible that in Matthew 19, 26, Jesus looked at them and said, I imagine him saying, guys, get it through your heads.

But that's not what scripture says. Jesus looked at them and said, with man, this is impossible. But with God, all things are possible.

Think of the greatest challenges in your life. The obstacles that, to you, seem impossible to overcome. The relationships that seem hopelessly beyond repair.

[13 : 59] Those hurts that you're unable to forgive. Can you look at them from the perspective that the all-powerful God is in your corner?

He's with you. And I don't mean that in the sense that he's in your presence. Absolutely, you are in his presence. But he is with you.

He is for you. You have his power at your disposal to help you make it through. Can that perspective then remind you to ask God, seek God for his power to help you?

The Apostle Paul says in Ephesians 3, verse 20, and this is one of my favorite passages in Scripture. I got lots of favorites. I don't know, I got to narrow it down.

Or not. Ephesians 3, verse 20 says, this will be familiar from the end of services. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.

[15 : 14] To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations. Say it with me, forever and ever.

Amen. Friends, what may seem impossible to you is not impossible to God. lean on him.

Ask him for help in whatever circumstances you're facing because he will come through for you.

And so now we come to our final quality of God that we'll be considering in our series.

Do you understand what the words sovereign or sovereignty mean? You can't answer Jessica because you jumped ahead before. Just kidding.

I think at times people can use those words as another way of describing God's omnipotence, right?

We say God is omnipotent and sovereign. They're paired to some extent.

[16 : 21] But there's more to it than that. There's a deeper, richer meaning here and there's a distinction between those two qualities. Rulers of kingdoms or countries are often referred to as what?

Somebody got right there. So kings, queens, sovereigns. And so in recognizing that, we can also recognize that that term then means dominion over or rule over something else.

Can't we? And so in the case of human rulers or sovereigns, their kingdoms have limits or boundaries or in very real terms, borders.

But not God's kingdom. God rules over, God is sovereign over all earthly rulers and leaders, all countries and nations.

All countries and nations. The entire earth, the entire universe, all of creation, all of time, everything. God's sovereignty refers to God's rule over, his power over creation.

[17 : 48] So we can see and sovereign and sovereign ruling over all things can be confused at times because they are definitely intimately connected.

God is all powerful. We can recognize that. But sovereignty means that he has the authority to rule over all things as the creator of creation.

So what does God's unlimited power and his authority to extend that power as Lord of all creation, what do those things mean for us personally?

Because at the end of the day, I can preach to you about what scripture says, I can preach theological topics, that if you can't connect with it, I've missed the mark somehow.

So it's important to recognize that God is not just sovereign over all things, over all creation, but he is sovereign over each of us as well.

[19 : 01] We owe him our allegiance as our ruler. We correctly talk about bowing down to worship God.

We even sing in one worship song that we gladly bow our knee and worship him alone. As author Jen Wilkin correctly frames it, we owe God our allegiance.

Not because we sinned against him and we feel guilty, although repentance is part of it. Not because he saved us and we feel grateful.

That's part of it too. We owe him our obedience because he made us. He holds authority over us because he is our author.

It's the natural right that he holds as our creator. It's not optional. God who rules over all things.

[20 : 10] The same God who created you. He's the same God who saw you and saw your days before you were ever born. God sees all things.

He has power over all things. As the Apostle Paul reminds us in Romans 8, 28. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

The truth we see here is that God is at work. He is always at work. Not just in random or selected events, but in all things. Nothing happens by chance.

And I believe honestly that Christians may at times misinterpret the message here. This is not saying that everything that happens to us will always be good.

Or that God's purpose somehow is to just make us happy. I'm not happy God, you're not, you're letting me down. See that flavor of prosperity gospel there?

[21 : 23] God's job is to make me happy. Nope. Read it again. God is at work in all creation according to his will, for his glory, for his purposes.

But without question, friends, God's purposes include us as part of creation. He longs for relationship with us.

God's love. So we can, from this perspective, we can take comfort that while not everything that's going to happen to us is good or will feel good, I'm sure we've all got lists, I know I do, stuff that happened that was really less than ideal, that felt like you were being boiled in your own skin, circumstances that you went through or are going through.

and we live in a world that we can recognize is truly, deeply evil at times. There is evil influence in our world.

But we can take comfort that God will use everything, the good and the bad, according to his will, according to his purpose, God will and ultimately for our good.

[22 : 57] Amen. So this morning we've come to the end of this series and we come to the end of our recognition and exploration of some of these characteristics of God that we can recognize in Scripture.

My prayer is that over the course of this series that you've gained a better understanding of our God, a better understanding of him being infinite and incomprehensible, self-existent and self-sufficient, eternal and immutable, omnipresent and omniscient, and finally omnipotent and sovereign.

I thought about doing a bit of a recap this morning but that would have taken a long time. So instead I encourage you to go back through this series, go back on the website or on our Facebook page, especially if you missed any of these messages because they all connect together and there's powerful truth in here and powerful recognition of who God is.

And I want to encourage you as well to keep the truth of what we've studied together in your heart, close to your heart. God. Because the God that we've been talking about over these weeks is your God, your Father.

He's with you. He's dependable and reliable. And he has a plan for you specifically. I've really enjoyed this journey together.

[24 : 36] And I've learned new things about God and I've deepened my own understanding of some of the things that I thought I understood pretty well. And I hope you have too.

Next week we're starting a new series called In His Image, Reflecting God. Because through this series we've recognized many ways that we simply cannot be God.

These are not qualities that make us, that we can connect to, that we can even relate to in a very significant way. But in our next series we're going to spin from here into exploring some of the ways that we can be like Him.

We can reflect Him. There are qualities of God that He shares with us, that are open to us. And that's not going to be weird because we're going to talk about holiness and love and some of those qualities that we recognize as humans.

But we're going to recognize where they come from and what that means in relation to God Himself. Let's pray. Father God, thank you again for the opportunity to come together this morning to study you in this way, to study your word in this way, to be together in this place in whatever way that looks in this time.

[26 : 03] Lord, thank you that you are faithful, you are trustworthy, and your qualities are truly awesome. And so I pray for a great Thanksgiving weekend this weekend, a great time of spending time in each other's company where that works, sharing good food and fellowship where that works.

Just remind us to be thankful, Lord. give us perspective and give us gratitude. We pray these things in your name. Amen.