

Adoring the God of Glory

September 24th, Class 2 – Adult Equipping Center
God's Unity and Immutability (Unchanging)

Recap

1. God is _____ and _____. We can know God _____.

Two Foundations to Studying God's Attributes

2. God is unified ("simple").¹ ²

Scripture:

- God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. (1 Jn. 1:5)
- The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he. (Deut. 32:4)
- God is love. (1 Jn. 4:8)
- God is a righteous Judge, and a God who feels indignation every day. (Ps. 7:11)
- God said to Moses, "I am who I am." (Ex. 3:14)
- The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." (Ex. 34:6-7)

Q: How is the simplicity of God challenged in our world? How about in our life experiences? ³

¹ "The harmony of his Being is the result not of a perfect balance of parts but of the absence of parts. Between His attributes no contradiction can exist. He need not suspend one to exercise another, for in Him all His attributes are one. All of God does all that God does; He does not divide Himself to perform a work, but works in the total unity of His being." (AW Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy*, 15)

² "God's whole being includes all of his attributes...Every attribute of God that we find in Scripture is true of all of God's being, and we therefore can say that every attribute of God also qualifies every other attribute." (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 179)

God is Immutable (Unchanging)

Definition: “God is unchanging in his being, perfections, purposes, and promises, yet God does act and feel emotions, and he acts and feels differently in response to different situations.”⁴

Unchanging Being (see also Mal. 3:6-7, 2 Tim. 2:13, Heb. 13:8, James 1:17)

- Ps. 102:25-27

Unchanging Purposes

- Ps. 33:11 – The counsel of the LORD stands for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.
- Is. 46:8-11 - “Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’ calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.”

Unchanging Promises (see also 2 Sam. 22:31, Is. 14:27, Deut. 7:9-11)

- Heb. 6:13-18

But what about...?

- ...when God “changed” His mind (Ex. 32:9-14, Is. 38:1-6, Jonah 3:4, 10)
- ...when God is “sorry” or “regrets” something (Gen. 6:6, 1 Sam. 15:10)

1. God feels. (Is. 62:5, Ps. 78:40/ Eph. 4:30, Ex. 32:10, Ps. 103:17)
2. God is personal and responds to different situations differently.
3. God uses language that we can relate to / understand (anthropomorphic).
4. God wants to highlight his redemptive purposes.

³ “When a single attribute is chosen as foundational it affects the total portrait of God; a wrong choice here points us to a different God than the one revealed in Scripture. Choosing love, for example, exposes to the danger of regarding other attributes of God, such as righteousness and holiness, as less real.” (Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*-Abridged, p. 176)

⁴ *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem, p. 163

Implications

1. *Class...*
2. God is all of who He is all of the time.
3. You can live expecting God's promises and purposes to come to pass.
4. Everything changes but God.

Conclusion: Great is Thy Faithfulness⁵

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father, There is no shadow of turning with Thee
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not, As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be

**Great is Thy faithfulness, Great is Thy faithfulness, Morning by morning new mercies I see
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided, Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me**

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest, Sun, moon and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness, To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, Blessings all mine with 10, 000 beside

Reacting and Reflecting on the God of Glory⁶

1. How is the knowledge that God doesn't change reassuring to you? How might it be a caution to you as well?
2. How do you personally struggle to believe that God is always, fully Himself? What aspects of God's character do you tend to ignore or question? Why do you think that is?
3. How might an awareness of God's unchanging character affect how you approach an aspect of your life? How about your week?
4. Spend time dwelling on the permanence of God by spending time in a world that reflects both His steadiness and how creatures constantly change. Read, reflect and pray one of the following Psalms: 89, 46, 90 or 85.
5. What human relationship, possession or circumstance do you cling to for stability instead of to our unchanging God? How reliable have you found that substitute "rock" to be?
6. Spend time praising God for all the ways that He hasn't changed and all the ways that He has helped you to change.

⁵ "The Scriptures speak of a God who does not change. Like the tallest mountain peak on the horizon, from generation to generation, God stands unchanging, immutable, anchoring the landscape of human existence as all else around him ebbs and flows, blossoms and withers, waxes and wanes. The Rock of our salvation endures. The sunshine and shadows of human circumstance may reveal different contours of his character one day and different ones the next, but his character remains fixed. His plans remain steady. His promises remain firm. In an ever-changing world, he is the unchanging reference point upon which the inner eye fixes to determine the direction that leads home." Jen Wilkin, *None Like Him*, p. 84.

⁶ Several of these questions come from Jen Wilkin's book, *None Like Him*, pps. 91-92.