



Pastor's Pen

The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. Acts 17:24-25

Dear Bethel Church Family and friends,

Grace to you and peace from our glorious Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I pray that you are doing better than you hope or imagine. As I write this article, we are getting a heavy soaking rain, and thankfully the weather has turned a bit cooler with the arrival of autumn. Thank you, Lord, for your continued provision!

After spending the last year reviewing a few of God's promises to His children, a recent Sunday school class discussion encouraged me to spend the next few months studying some of the Lord's attributes. Unfortunately, we can't say everything that the Bible teaches us about the Holy One of Israel all at once. He's much too big and complex for that! Therefore, we need a framework—a way to investigate and better understand the traits which describe the amazing being we know as God. So, I will adopt the classification system used by many theologians. This structure splits how we explore God's attributes into two categories. First, we have the communicable characteristics, those which He's shared with us as beings made in His image. These are traits like love, joy, grace, and justice. The second category includes traits that belong to God alone. These features are called the Lord's incommunicable attributes. These describe His qualities, such as eternity, unchangeableness, and omniscience. It is my prayer that the Holy Spirit will use what we learn to instruct and inform us, and to give us fresh reasons to praise our Heavenly King.

So that you know what's coming, I plan to spend the next few months working through God's incommunicable attributes. I'm going to deal with these first because these traits are usually harder for us to understand. After all, we don't share them. Thus, we don't have any personal experience from which to draw.

Our exploration of the nature of God begins with His being. This trait is known as His independence or, classically, as His aseity. What is it? Aseity teaches that the God described in Scripture is self-existent. As the self-existent One, the Lord is not only independent in Himself but also causes everything to be dependent on Him. Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology offers a good definition of aseity. Grudem explains, "God does not need us or the rest of creation for anything, yet we and the rest of creation can glorify Him and bring Him joy."

Unfortunately, Bethel, some people believe and teach that God created humans because He was lonely and needed someone with whom to share His love. But this isn't true! Remember, the Lord has existed eternally in the unity and joy of the Trinity. In that Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all experience perfect love, communion, and communication. If it weren't true, it would mean that God needed creation to be complete, to be fulfilled in His own existence. And, as we read in the Acts passage above, this doesn't describe the God of the Bible.

The doctrine of God's independence also reminds us that He exists by virtue of His nature alone. This means that there was never a time when He was not. We see this in the fact that He made all things that exist. As we read in Genesis 1, "**In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth**" (Genesis 1:1). Or from Psalm 90, "**Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God**" (Psalm 90:2).

Saints, even though the Lord is independent of His creation, this attribute does not teach that we are without purpose or meaning. In fact, just the opposite is true. For, as we begin to grasp, while God needs us for nothing, He freely chooses to delight in us and allows us to bring Him joy. Indeed, He freely chooses to give each of us value and worth as His image bearers. So let me encourage you today, child of God. As His people, our Lord rejoices over us (Isaiah 62:5) with gladness. He also renews us in His love (Zephaniah 3:17-18). What an amazing God we love and serve!

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Chris

this week

Sunday's sermon:

Concluding Actions

Nehemiah 13:15-31

YGDG
9/27 at 4:00 pm

Kids' Quest
9/27 at 5:00 pm

Youth
9/27 at 5:00 pm

YACG
9/27 at 6:00 pm

events

Men's Bible Study
9/30 at 6:00 am

GriefShare
9/30 at 1:30 pm

Senior Citizens Lunch
9/30 at 12:00 pm

Mentors & Moms
10/1 at 9:30 am

volunteer schedule

Infant Nursery
Trinna Meek
and Cindy Love

Toddler Nursery
Brittany Neely and
Cathy Robinson

Worship Training
Kyla Ferguson
and Cullie Mounts