

The Attributes of God - Part 5

by William MacDonald

The sermon explores the attribute of God's omnipotence, discussing its definition, importance, and manifestations in creation, salvation, and judgment.

Duration: 34:32

Scripture: Romans 5:20, Ephesians 2:8, James 4:6

Topics: "Attributes of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the limitless love and boundless grace of God. He highlights that even when we reach the end of our own resources, God's grace is just beginning. The preacher references the Bible verse Romans 5:20, which states that where sin abounds, grace abounds even more. He encourages the audience to rely on God's grace and mercy, as it is through His love that we find freedom and strength. The sermon concludes with a reminder that God continually gives us grace and that we should seek His mercy in all aspects of our lives.

Transcript

Thank you. And I'll see the pitch pipe here. 608.

No, he'd give us more grace. 600 and 8. 600 and 8. He gives more grace. We were singing this morning, his power has no boundary known unto men.

That's what we'd like to talk about today. We'd like to talk about that attribute of God which is known as his omnipotence. Omnipotence, we have to use some big words, but all it means is all power.

God is all powerful. What a tremendous thought that is. There's nothing God cannot do.

One of the names of God in the scripture is the Almighty. And we use that word and sometimes I don't think we stop to think what it really means. He is almighty.

He has all power. He can do anything. There's nothing he cannot do.

And you know, the omnipotence, the all power of God is one of the favorite themes of the Bible writers. I'm going to read some of the passages to you. It would take quite a while to look them up.

So I'll just read them to you. Genesis chapter 17 and verse 1. I am the almighty God. Walk before me and be thou perfect.

Genesis 18, 14. Is anything too hard for the Lord? And the implied answer is nothing. Is anything too hard for the Lord? A very favorite verse of mine, Job 42, 2 says, I know that thou can't do all things and that no purpose of thine can be thwarted.

That's great, isn't it? I know that thou can't do all things and no purpose of thine can be thwarted. There's no one and nothing that can ever hinder the purposes of God from being carried out. Jeremiah 32, verse 17.

O sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you. Matthew chapter 19, verse 20.

With God, all things are possible. Luke chapter 1, 37. But with God, nothing is impossible.

And then finally, Revelation chapter 19, verse 6. It says, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. That day is coming when the nail-scarred hand of Jesus is going to take the scepter of universal dominion. And it will be true that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

One of the great men to write on the attributes of God was a man named Charnock. And he said this, the power of God is that ability and strength whereby he can bring to pass whatsoever he please, whatsoever his infinite wisdom can direct, and whatsoever the infinite purity of his will can resolve. Of course, when we speak of the fact that God is omnipotent, we mean that he can do anything that is consistent with his other attributes.

I think we've suggested that the attributes of God can't fight against one another. They have to work in unison with one another. And so now you'll think I'm engaging in double-talk again when I say there are certain things that God can't do.

There are certain things that would be inconsistent with his other attributes. For instance, God cannot lie. Because he's holy, and because he's righteous, and because he's faithful.

And you see, if God were to lie, that would be a contradiction of those other attributes. He cannot lie. Numbers 23, verse 19.

And Hebrews 6, 18. It's impossible for God to lie on a pillow on which to lay our heads. He cannot deny himself.

2 Timothy 2, 13. God cannot deny himself. He ever abides faithful.

God can't be tempted with evil. James, chapter 1, verse 13. We mentioned that in connection with the temptation of the Lord Jesus.

Jesus was tempted from without. But he couldn't be tempted from within. He couldn't be tempted with an evil solicitation, if there was anything in him, to respond to it.

You say, well, then he wasn't perfectly man. Yes, he was perfectly man. You and I aren't.

He was perfect man. Perfect humanity. And we're not.

We're fallen humanity. God cannot condone evil or look with favor upon it. We already had that, didn't we, in Habakkuk, chapter 1, verse 13.

Thou art of pure eyes, and to behold iniquity. He can't condone evil. He can't wink at it.

He can't say, oh, well, it was just a little one. God can't say that. Because God is eternal, he can't age.

He can't grow old. Isn't that wonderful? I tell you, it's a wonderful thing to use our minds just to dwell on this. God cannot grow old.

He can't die. Because he's immortal and eternal. And I love this, God can't swear by anyone greater than himself.

Hebrews, chapter 6, verse 13. Why? Because there's nobody greater than himself. I often think of that in connection with the Bible.

People trying to prove the Bible to be the Word of God. Look, there's nothing greater than the Bible to prove it. The Bible is the Word of God.

And there's nothing greater than the Word of God. So the best way is just accept it as the Word of God and then God will show you. He who has felt the force of it is not likely to deny the source of it.

So there are things in the moral realm that God can't do, but they don't affect his omnipotence, do they? They're not a contradiction to his omnipotence. Now, some people raise absurd questions like, Could God lift a stone? Could God make a stone too heavy for him to lift? You know, those are intellectual absurdities and not worth even discovering. They make me think of an old Puritan.

Somebody said to this old Puritan, What was God doing before he created the world? And the Puritan said he was creating hell for people who ask foolish questions. The power of God, the power of God is seen in the creation of the universe and in the creation of man. Just think of this, he created the universe out of nothing, without using tools, instantly and by a word.

How do you like that? He created the universe. He created the universe without using materials, without using tools, and he did it instantly, and he did it by a word. Think of the power that spangled the heavens with stars, with all the galaxies of the heavens.

I'll tell you, it boggles the mind. Man, with telescopic vision, man can look out and see stars, and it has taken 20 billion light years for the light from those stars to reach us. In other words, when we look up into the heavens at night, we're not looking at current events, we're looking at history.

We don't see them where they are now. We see them where they were billions of years ago. It's amazing, 20 billion light years.

A light year is the distance that light travels in a year. Just think of 20 billion. Well, I can't even think of that, it's too big for me.

But just think of the universe we live in. And yet I don't think the universe is infinite, only God is infinite. And the universe is not as great as God, but man can see no limits to the universe, and God created it.

Think of the power that created you and me in the mother's womb. You know, it's interesting to me that when the psalmist thought of the power of God in Psalm 139, that's what he thought of. Turn to Psalm 139, it's really quite beautiful.

And incidentally, this deals primarily with three attributes of God. Maybe tonight we'll take up the other two. Verses 1 through 6 deal with the omniscience of God, that he knows everything.

Verses 7 through 12 deal with the omnipresence of God, that he's in all places at one and the same time. But I want to begin with you in verse 13. And it describes the formation of the baby in the mother's womb, and it's done with extreme delicacy and extreme beauty, so don't be afraid of it.

Worship. It says, For thou hast possessed my reins. The word possessed means formed.

And it refers to the formation of all the parts of the human body. Thou hast possessed my reins. Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

And in the original language of the Old Testament, that word covered is knit. Knit, K-N-I-T. Thou hast knit me.

Well, you know, that's beautiful when you think of all the veins and all the arteries and all the muscles and all of the tendons and how they're all knit together in the human body. That's what the psalmist is speaking about. Knit.

Thou hast knit me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.

My frame, my substance. The word there is frame. The word for substance really means the skeletal structure, the bones.

This is really lovely. My bones, my skeletal structure was not hidden from thee when I was made in secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Now, I'm going to surprise you by what I say here, but I want to tell you this morning that the expression the lowest parts of the earth is a poetic expression, is a figurative expression for the mother's womb.

You say, how do you know? Well, he certainly wasn't formed under the ground, was he? I mean, the psalmist wasn't made under the ground. He's not a subterranean being. The psalmist is describing what happens in the womb.

And the lowest parts of the earth describes that. It's just a poetic expression for that. And you've got to get used to figures of speech when you study the Bible, don't you? Incidentally, let me take a detour now and go over to Ephesians chapter 4 where that expression or a similar expression is found.

Ephesians chapter 4. It says, verse 9, Now that he ascended, this is speaking about the Lord Jesus. Maybe I should go back to verse 8 because he quotes there the psalmist. The psalmist says, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men.

Now that he ascended, what is it that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? Now, first of all, the argument is this. You go back to the Psalms and you read about the Messiah ascending. How could he ascend? He had always lived in heaven.

Yes, it presupposes that he came down from heaven to earth. The ascension of Christ spoken of in the Psalms presupposes that he first came down to earth. Now it says in verse 9, Now that he ascended, what is it that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? Now I know some people think that this means that he went to hell after the crucifixion and emptied a compartment of hell and took the saved of the Old Testament home to heaven.

I don't think it means that at all. I believe the lower parts of the earth in that verse is a poetic expression for Mary's womb. And in a general way, it's speaking of the incarnation, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ down to the earth.

What is it but that he also descended? In other words, the ascension of Christ presupposes the incarnation of Christ. Just something to think about and talk about at the lunch table. So going back to Psalm 139.15, My skeletal frame was not hidden from thee when I was made in secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

That is in the mother's womb. Thine eyes did see my substance yet being unperfect. This is a fetus in the mother's womb.

And in thy books all my members were written which in continuance were fashioned. Or it says in the American Standard Version, In thy book were all my members written which day by day were fashioned when as yet there were none of them. You know, God knew all about us before we were ever formed.

And each one of us started off smaller than the dot over an eye in that section that we just read. And yet in that dot all the characteristics that you have today were already written. Isn't that remarkable? It really is.

Smaller than that dot, the shape of your chin, the color of your hair, your eyes, your teeth. It was all programmed there. Do you believe that? Well, it's absolutely true.

Once that baby is born, that baby never gets anything else. Everything he's ever going to have he has at the moment of his birth. It's just a case of development from then on.

And no wonder the psalmist said, How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God. How great is the sum of them, if I should count them there more in number than the sand. I tell you, I love that verse because I oftentimes go down when I have to get some nervous energy off and I walk along the beach in Alameda, California and I think of all the grains of sand on that beach.

And this verse says that God's great thoughts of love and grace to me are more than all the grains of sand on that beach. That's a lot. It really is a lot.

If I should count them there more in number than the sand, when I awake, I am still with thee. I think, this is just my own thought, when I awake, I think that means at the moment of birth. God is with us all through that nine-month period of preparation and then when we awake and as we say, when we first see the light of day, I am still with thee.

But the psalmist is using this section as a picture of the omnipotence of God, the power that creates the human body in the mother's womb. Then think of the power that holds matter together. Colossians chapter 1, verse 17 says, By him all things consist.

And in Hebrews chapter 1, verse 3b, it says that he does it by the word of his power. It's really wonderful. I was traveling from England to Ireland once in a plane and I sat next to a physicist, a very educated man, a very gentlemanly fellow, and I said to him, Oh, I'm so glad to sit next to you, because I have a question for you.

And he said, What is it? And I said, What holds matter together? And he chuckled. He said, I wish we knew. And then he said, I guess cosmic glue.

Cosmic glue is an expression that indicates ignorance. But we know, we know that matter is held together by the word of his power. We know that it's his power that keeps the planets in their orbit and preserves his creatures and answers prayer.

Mind you, we see divine power in floods, don't we? The power of a flood, in earthquakes, in fires, in volcanic eruptions, in storms, tornadoes, wind and waves. We also see it in the salvation of a sinner. And in the healing of diseases.

And in the judgment of the wicked. It's interesting to me that men measure power with a word called megatons. Does anybody know what a megaton is? Well, it's the explosive power of a million tons of TNT.

I guess that's the best that man can do. The explosive power of a million tons of TNT. That's a megaton.

We have no word in human vocabulary to measure the power of God. I mean, megatons, that's chicken feed when you think of the power of God. When the Old Testament saints thought of the power of God, the greatest display of his power in the Old Testament was the Red Sea, crossing of the Red Sea.

That was a wonderful thing, wasn't it? Children of Israel coming to the sea and God parting the waters, and they're able to walk over dry shod. I tell you, that's wonderful. When you come to the New Testament, the greatest display of the power of God in the New Testament was the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You say, why? Why was that the greatest? Well, I believe that all the forces of hell, I believe that Satan and all his emissaries were camped there at that grave outside the city of Jerusalem, determined that he wouldn't rise again from the dead. And God reached down in mighty power and brought him out from the grave. And it was after that that the stone was removed, you know.

The stone wasn't removed to let him out. The stone was removed to let us look in and see that he's no longer there. The greatest display of power in Ephesians chapter 1 verses 19 and 20, Paul speaks of the exceeding.

He piles words on words to create the effect of enormous power, the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe. According to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. Dear friends, that is power.

Then the question oftentimes arises, well, when the Lord Jesus came down to this earth, was he still omnipotent? And I'm amazed by how men try to deal with the person of the Lord Jesus and oftentimes in a dishonoring way. Did he lay aside his omnipotence when he came to earth? Or if he didn't give it up, did he refuse to use it ever, ever, ever? They say, well, he performed all his miracles in the power of the Holy Spirit. He didn't do anything that you couldn't do in the power of the Holy Spirit.

I would admit this morning that there were times when Jesus didn't use his omnipotence. He still had it, but he didn't use it. He could have called legions of angels to come and deliver him, but he didn't do it.

He was so morally perfect that he couldn't do anything outside his Father's will. But I believe he was omnipotent at any one time. He said, He said, Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it.

When he spoke of the temple of his body and in raising it, he would raise himself from the grave. He said, Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself.

I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. I would say that Jesus did not empty himself of his omnipotence when he came to earth, but he veiled it at times. In other words, he could walk the streets of Nazareth and people didn't realize that the Almighty God was in their midst.

Aside he threw his most divine array and veiled his Godhead in a garb of clay and in that garb this wondrous love display restoring what he could not take away. Our hearts should be filled with worship when we think of the omnipotence of God and the omnipotence of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we think of power, we think of physical power, but you know, there's such a thing as moral power too.

And I'd like to just mention that in passing. Jesus has not only physical power, he had moral power. He had the power not to strike back when men abused him.

That's power. E. Stanley Jones said, The world is at the feet of the man who had power to strike back, but who had power not to strike back. That's power, the ultimate power.

He had power to summon more than twelve legions of angels, and yet he couldn't save himself if you and I were to be saved. Isn't that amazing? Moral power. Himself he could not save.

He on the cross must die. Our mercy could not come to ruin sinners. Christ, the Son of God, must bleed that sinners might from sin be freed.

Now, there are great lessons for us to learn. We were hearing yesterday afternoon that we must always make practical applications of our study of the Word of God, and that's true. There are practical lessons to be learned in connection with the omnipotence of God, and one is that man can't fight successfully against him.

That's great for us to know, you know. It would be like a gnat trying to fight a blast furnace. Hopeless.

Hopeless. Psalm 2130 says, there's no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord. Another great lesson is that those who are friends of God are on the winning side.

I love it. God before us, who can be against us? That is successfully. At any particular time, the waves may seem to be against us, but the tide is sure to win, and nothing can happen to us apart from the permissive will of the Lord, and we're immortal till our work is done.

I mentioned about white flour and white sugar yesterday in jest. I eat both. I receive all things with thanksgiving.

I eat whatever food is put in front of me and believe that I'm immortal till my work is done. I believe the schedule is all there, and if I live sensibly, I cannot go ahead of my time. I'd like to give you a beautiful

illustration.

I wish the time weren't going so fast, but I'll just close with this. Exodus 34-23, the omnipotence of God. Exodus 34-23.

You won't see it at first, but let me explain it to you. It says in Exodus 34-23, thrice in the year, three times in the year, shall your men, children, that means your males, appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. He said, look, three times in the year I want all the men, folks, to come up to Jerusalem for the feast.

What would the women say? They'd say, look, we're surrounded by enemies. Israel is in constant danger of being attacked, and all our men go up to Jerusalem? Who's going to protect us? Listen to the next verse. For I will cast out the nations before thee and enlarge thy borders.

Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year. Now that's a wonderful thing. Only an omnipotent God could say something like that.

You know? He says, don't you worry. You obey my word. You go up to Jerusalem, and I will control the intellect and the emotions and the will of your enemies so they won't even want to come to your land at those times when you go up to Jerusalem.

It's marvelous, isn't it? That's our omnipotent God. Let me just say this. We as believers will never be omnipotent.

Only God is omnipotent. We'll never be omnipotent. But I want to just leave this closing thought.

We're never more omnipotent. We're never closer to omnipotence than when we pray in the name of Jesus. You know why? Because when we pray in the name of Jesus, it's just the same as if Jesus were making those requests to the Father.

If we really believed that, we'd pray more in his blessed name. Glory to God.

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