

Last week we touched on God's incommunicable attributes

- That which God does not share with Creation
- They serve to remind us of God's grandeur and make clear the distinction between creature and creator
- The ultimate aim in any study of God is to instill in the heart of a believer a righteous sense of fear, love, and reverence to God. Fear, love, and reverence to God in turn produce obedience and holiness. These are the good works to which we have been predestined unto, says Paul in Ephesians 2.

Who can share a few of the incommunicable attributes we discussed last week?

Now this week we look at the communicable attributes of God or simply put, "those attributes God shares or 'communicates' with us". Now I want to preface this entire lecture with a few key points.

The first mention is that the focus of this lecture is to learn about God. Our aim is not to focus on all of the similarities within the attributes we God communicates to us, but rather to put the focus on learning about God.

And next is that we realize that this distinction, although helpful, is not perfect. That is because there is no attribute of God that is completely communicable, and there is no attribute of God that is completely incommunicable!

For example, God's wisdom would usually be called a communicable attribute, because we also can be wise. But we will never be infinitely wise as God is. His wisdom is to some extent shared with us, but it is never fully shared with us. Similarly, we can share God's knowledge in part, yet we shall never share it fully, for God's thoughts are higher than ours "as the heavens are higher than the earth" (Isa. 55:9). We can imitate God's love and share in that attribute to some degree, in some small measure, but we will never be infinitely loving as God is.

The same is true with all the attributes that are normally called "communicable attributes": God does indeed share them with us to some degree but none of these attributes are completely communicable. It is better to say that those attributes we call "communicable" are those that are "more shared with us".

Those attributes we call “incommunicable” are better defined by saying that they are attributes of God that are less shared by us. Even many of God’s ‘incommunicable’ attributes can be experienced in some sense by humans. For example, God is immutable, which is another way of saying God is unchangeable, while we change. But we do not change completely, for there are some aspects of our characters that remain largely unchanged: our individual identities, many of our personality traits, and some of our long-term purposes remain substantially unchanged over many years (and will remain largely unchanged once we are set free from sin and begin to live in God’s presence forever). Similarly, God is eternal, and we are subject to the limitations of time. However, we see some reflection of God’s eternity in the fact that we will live with him forever and enjoy eternal life, as well as in the fact that we have the ability to remember the past and to have a strong sense of awareness of the future (unlike much of God’s creation; cf. Eccl. 3:11).

So when we use such categories as communicable and incommunicable, we use them lightly and we recognize that they are not entirely precise, but they do serve as a helpful tool and can help us when distinguishing the attributes of God.

We start the list of God’s communicable attributes by discussing those attributes of God which describe His being. (NEXT)

The first attribute of God’s being is His spirituality. God’s spirituality can be defined as:

“God exists as a being that is not made of any matter, has no parts or dimensions, is unable to be perceived by our bodily senses, and is more excellent than any other kind of existence.”

The Scripture declares, “God is spirit.” (John 4:24) We should not think of God as having dimensions or size – even infinite ones. God is not part of space. He is spiritual. God enshrined this concept early on in Biblical history when he commanded the Israelites in the Ten Commandments not to worship any image or likeness of God (Exodus 20:4-6). God is unlike anything else in creation so he forbids his people to compare him by pictifying him in a worship setting. (NEXT)

Just as God is spirit, God is also invisible. This means “God’s total essence, all of his spiritual being, will never be able to be seen by us, yet God still shows himself to us through visible, created things.”

Several verses explain how we cannot see God:

“No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.” (John 1:18)

“To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.” (1 Timothy 1:17)

“Who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.” (1 Timothy 6:16)

“No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.” (1 John 4:12)

So in one sense, we cannot see God. He is invisible to our ways of detecting his nature. In fact, God told Moses “for man shall not see me and live.” (Exodus 33:20). We cannot see God in his total essence. But in another sense, we can see manifestations of God. We can see God through his image in people (Genesis 1:27), through creation (Psalm 19:1), and even his invisible attributes through creation (Romans 1:20).

And so, these are the two communicable attributes of God’s being which God shares with us in some way. Now guys, as we move along, some of these attributes we’ll discuss might cause you to scratch your head and wonder how they made the list. Keep in mind, that some attributes of God can be seen easier, while other attributes we really have to think through to see how they relate to us. **(NEXT)**

Moving on from those attributes which speak to God’s being, we now look at the mental attributes of God. Those pertaining to God’s mind. **(NEXT)**

The first attribute we look at is God’s knowledge. God knows everything. More specifically, “God fully knows himself and all things actual and possible in one simple and eternal act.” This is sometimes referred to as omniscience.

Let's look at a few verses that point to the wonders of God's knowledge including... (NEXT)

(Job 37:16) "Do you know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him who is perfect in knowledge." (NEXT)

(Hebrews 4:13) "And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

(1 John 3:20) "For whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything."

God's knowledge is unlike human knowledge or even computer knowledge. God already knows our words before they're even on our tongue (Psalm 139:4) and the number of our days before we are born (Psalm 139:16).

Amazingly God knows the outcome of even potential events even if they never happen. Jesus says in Matthew 11:21, "For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they (Chorazin & Bethsaida) would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." The extent of God's knowledge is astounding. It is so elevated, it compelled David to say, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it." (Psalm 139:6) (NEXT)

Beyond knowledge, God is wise. (NEXT) God's wisdom means "God always chooses the best goals and the best means to those goals."

And God chooses those best goals well. God is the "only wise God" (Romans 16:7), in Job 9:4 God is said to be "wise in heart", God made all things in wisdom (Psalm 104:24), and God has "counsel and understanding" (Job 12:13).

But not everyone understands God's wisdom. The world, with its backward value-system, considers God's wisdom as foolishness – and therefore they cannot understand it. (NEXT) Paul says in 1st Corinthians 1:20

"Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater

of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.” (1 Corinthians 1:20:21) (NEXT)

Along with being wise, God is also true. (NEXT)

“God’s truthfulness means that he is the true God, and that all his knowledge and words are both true and the final standard of truth.”

In contrast to being a false god, the Lord God revealed in Scripture is the true God (NEXT- READ) Jeremiah 10:10 says that “the Lord is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King.”

This means that all other gods are idols and do not possess the characteristics of true deity. Idols are not perfect in power, wisdom, goodness, love, or justice. Moreover, they are created beings, unlike the true God who is uncreated.

Just as the God of Scripture is the true God, he also tells the truth. “Every word of God proves true” (Proverbs 30:5). God’s word is truth (NEXT) (John 17:17), and God does not lie (Titus 1:2). God’s truthfulness is intricately woven into his character.

This stands in contrast to the world, which does not always tell the truth. Friends, family, bosses, colleagues, and everyone else may lie, but God never lies. (NEXT)

Now let’s talk about the moral attributes of God.

- Christianity inherently and historically rejects any notion of relativism and subjectivism. Morality to the believer is objective. Right and wrong is determined by God, not by man and certainly not by woke culture. Anytime someone makes a moral assertion, the question you should always ask is, “According to what standard”. It’s wrong to tell a

girl than she can't be a boy... oh really, by whose standard? Abortion is every womans right... according to whos standard?

- But the Chrisitan rests all argumentation and moral standards on God's Word. Let God be true and every man a liar. We can KNOW right from wrong, but not because local law says so, or the media says so, but because God says so.

Just as God is true, He is also a good God. (NEXT)

"The goodness of God means that God is the final standard of good, and that all that God is and does is worthy of approval."

Goodness can be a relative term, but this is not the way it's being used. In the case with God, God is good and everything he is and does is worthy of our approval.

Goodness is not ultimately defined by us, by the US Constitution, by the Pope, or what's trending and 'woke'. God sets the standards of what is good and it is from Him that we derive our understanding of what goodness is and there is no higher standard of goodness to which anyone can appeal. (NEXT)

(Psalm 100:5) "For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations."

(Psalm 106:1) "Praise the Lord! Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!"

(Psalm 34:8) "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!" (NEXT)

More than good, God also demonstrates love in his character. (NEXT)

"God's love means that God eternally gives himself to others."

God is love- 1 John 4:8 "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love." (NEXT) This love is expressed in the Father toward the Son (John 17:24), in the Son toward the Father (John 14:31), in God's love toward the world, meaning all men without distinction, both Jew and

Gentile. (John 3:16), and in God's love toward believers even while we were sinners- Romans 5:8 says that God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

God's love is immense and expansive in Scripture.

And we are to express a measure of that love toward others. When discussing the most important commandment in Scripture, Jesus pointed his hearers to love.

(Matthew 22:36:40) "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." (NEXT)

God's attributes of love and goodness can be demonstrated in three other attributes: mercy, grace, and patience. (NEXT)

"God's mercy means God's goodness toward those in misery and distress. God's grace means God's goodness toward those who deserve only punishment. God's patience means God's goodness in withholding of punishment toward those who sin over a period of time."

In both the Old and New Testaments, these attributes are often found together. For this reason, it seems best to keep them together. (NEXT)

"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" (Exodus 34:6)

"The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." (Psalm 103:8)

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort" (2 Corinthians 1:3) (NEXT)

God is good, but God is also holy. Brian spent an entire hour on this attribute alone a few weeks back. Holiness is God's most defining attribute.

(NEXT) "God's holiness means that he is separated from sin and devoted to seeking his own honor."

It contains both a relational quality in separation from evil and a moral quality in devotion to God. God is holy and expects his people to be holy.

(NEXT)

"Since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'" (1 Peter 1:16)

"I will also praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, O my God; I will sing praises to you with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel." (Psalm 71:22)

"Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully." (Psalm 24:3-4)

(NEXT)

God is also a God of peace. **(NEXT)** "God's peace means that in God's being and in his actions he is separate from all confusion and disorder, yet he is continually active in innumerable well-ordered, fully controlled, simultaneous actions."

Paul says that God's actions are characterized by "peace" and not by disorder, confusion, unrest. **(NEXT)**

God himself is said to be "the God of peace" (Rom. 15:33) **(NEXT)**

But those who walk in wickedness do not have peace: "There is no peace," says the LORD, 'for the wicked' (Isa. 48:22; 57:21; cf. 59:8).

The Scripture is clear about God's order: "For God is not a God of confusion but of peace." (1 Corinthians 14:33).

God is not interested in disorder, turmoil, or any other form of confusion. And where you see such disorder, you can be assured that God's Spirit is not at work. Have any of you been in a church environment where there's chaos and disorder?

God delights in peace, structure, and order. **(NEXT)**

As God is a God of peace, he is also **right**, which is to say that he is righteous in everything he does. (NEXT)

“God’s righteousness means God always acts in accordance with what is right and is himself the final standard of what is right.”

The original words for righteousness and justice were the same words in both Hebrew and Greek, so the concepts are very similar (if not synonymous) in the Bible.

God acts righteously and he defines what is just. He will do what is right, Genesis 18:25- “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?” (NEXT)

God’s precepts are always right, Psalm 19:8- “The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes”.

Only God can declare what is right, Isaiah 45:19- “I the Lord speak the truth; I declare what is right.”

Now, we who trust in Christ’s finished work on the cross, receive God’s mercy (Romans 3:25-26), but those outside of Christ will ultimately get justice for their rebellion against God because God is always just and righteous.

Because God defines what is just and always does what is right, nobody can rightly question the legitimacy of God’s actions. Those who question God’s justice are rebuked in Scripture.

In Job, God reproached Job for questioning his judgements, “Will you even put me in the wrong? Will you condemn me that you may be in the right? (Job 40:8). God then enumerated how different Job was from God. In the same way, Paul rebuked those who would accuse God about his decisions given God’s status as Creator and their position as creatures. (Rom 9:20-21) The bottom line is that God makes the rules and God determines what is right and just. (NEXT)

Likewise, God is a jealous God. (NEXT)

“God’s jealousy means that God continually seeks to protect his own honor.”

Though jealousy may often contain a negative connotation, jealousy can be positive as it often is in Scripture. As a husband is jealous for the affections of his wife, so also is God jealous for the affections of his people. (NEXT)

“for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God” (Exodus 34:14) (NEXT)

“You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me.” (Deuteronomy 5:9)

“For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.” (Isaiah 48:11) God persecutes Israel’s salvation not because they earned it, but rather for His own name’s sake. (NEXT)

And the final moral attribute we’ll discuss is God’s wrath. (NEXT)

“God’s wrath means that he intensely hates all sin.”

(NEXT) The Bible frequently speaks of God’s wrath against sin in both the Old and New Testaments. God wanted his wrath to burn against his people, can someone read Exodus 32:9-10 on the screen for me? (NEXT)

God’s wrath rests on those who do not obey the son, John 3:36 “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.”, and God’s wrath is against all ungodliness and unrighteousness in men (Romans 1:18). Many other verses in both Testaments speak of God’s wrath.

Though God is a God of wrath, Christians do not need to fear God’s wrath. We were children of wrath before our conversion (Ephesians 2:3), but God has delivered us from the wrath to come (1 Thessalonians 1:10). God’s

wrath is real and is present now, but genuine Christians should rest confidently in the finished work of Jesus for salvation from the coming judgement upon the world accentuated by God's wrath.

"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." (Exodus 34:6-7) (NEXT)

Now we'll examine God's attributes of purpose that is, attributes that have to do with making and carrying out decisions. (NEXT)

We'll look at three of God's attributes of purpose beginning with the will of God. The will of God can be a challenging attribute of God, because there are multiple aspects of God's will in Scripture.

God's will can be defined as "That attribute of God whereby he approves and determines to bring about every action necessary for the existence and activity of himself and all creation."

Beginning with God's general will, God accomplishes all things according to his will. Paul speaks of the general will of God by saying "according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will." (Ephesians 1:11).

(NEXT) So God is at work in election (in this passage) and also in all things according to his will. Other passages reveal more of God's will such Revelation 4:11 "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created." (Daniel 4:32, Romans 13:1)

But there are other aspects of God's will. One aspect is his necessary will: that which God wills because his nature demands it. For instance, God wills good things because he is good.

But another aspect relates to his 'free' will: what he was not compelled to do but did it because of his nature. For instance, God was not compelled to create the world but chose to do so freely. (NEXT)

In addition, God's will is sometimes secret and sometimes revealed. His secret will cannot be known, whereas his revealed will is evident for us in Scripture. The classic text for God's secret and revealed will is found in Deuteronomy 29:29, "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

What some examples of God's secret will?
(NEXT)

Another of God's attributes of purpose is His freedom. (NEXT)

Psalm 115:3 says that "Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases."

Or in more systematic theological language, "God's freedom is that attribute of God whereby he does whatever he pleases." (NEXT)

So whatever God wants to accomplish he does it. Whatever he wants an earthly king to do, he moves him to do it, Proverbs 21:1- "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will."

- This verse is such an anchor for the Christian in light of recent of events.

Even the pagan ruler Nebuchadnezzar proclaimed, "none can stay his hand" (Daniel 4:35). God does what he wants because he is free – nobody is like that in God's pure freedom. (NEXT)

Will someone read 1 Thess 5:18 on the screen for us... (NEXT)

Moving into the summary attributes of God. We call these attributes, summary attributes, because they have to do with looking at and evaluating all the other attributes of God considered together as a whole.

The first summary attribute we consider is God's perfection. (NEXT) Deuteronomy 32:4 says that God is "A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he."

"God's perfection means that God completely possesses all excellent qualities and lacks no part of any qualities that would be desirable for him."

So God lacks nothing and God needs nothing. He is perfect. Several verses point to God's perfection: (NEXT)

"This God—his way is perfect" (Psalm 18:30)

"...as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48) (NEXT)

In addition to being perfect, God is also blessed or happy in a complete sense. (NEXT)

"God's blessedness means that God delights fully in himself and in all that reflects his character."

(NEXT) Paul calls God "the blessed and only Sovereign" (1 Timothy 6:15) and "blessed God" (1 Timothy 1:11). God is happy.

The reason for God's happiness is that he takes joy in his creation because it reflects his nature. You remember on his 6th and final day of creation, God reflected with pleasure on his handiwork and declared everything he made "very good" (Genesis 1:31).

God rejoices over his people in Isaiah 62:5- "And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.", (NEXT) The Lord is even said rejoice with singing, Zephaniah 3:17- "The Lord your God

is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.”.

In other words, God is happy and is happy in his own creation including his people. (NEXT)

Beyond blessed, God is also described as being beautiful or possessing beauty. (NEXT) David says of God “And there is nothing upon earth that I desire besides you” (Ps. 73:25)

God’s beauty is that attribute of God whereby he is the sum of all desirable qualities. King David often spoke of God’s beauty... (NEXT)

“One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.” (Psalm 27:4)

To David, seeing God’s beauty was a goal to be obtained: an aspiration. And like David, our desire for beauty must find its fulfillment in looking at God. One of the blessings of heaven will be to see God’s beauty in his face (NEXT)

Could someone read Revelation 22:4 for us? (NEXT)

The final summary attribute to cover is glory. (NEXT) “Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory! Selah (Psalm 24:10)

“God’s glory is the created brightness that surrounds God’s revelation of himself.”

Although glory can imply “honor” or “excellent reputation,” Biblically it often implies a brilliant light that surrounds the person of God. Many verses extol the glories of God including... (NEXT)

“He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.” (Hebrews 1:3a)

“Everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.” (Isaiah 43:7)

The attribute of glory is one that Paul suggests we will receive more of as we mature in Christ. As we behold “the glory of the Lord” we “are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.” (2 Corinthians 3:18). Just as God is glorious, so we too receive a measure of glory as we walk with him.