

SHEPHERD'S COMMUNITY CHURCH

Sunday ABF – February 24 “The Knowledge of the Holy”

by A.W. Tozer

CHAPTER 7 The Eternity Of God

*Lord, You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.
Before the mountains were born or You brought forth the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting You are God. (Psalm 90:1-2).*

*For this is what the high and lofty One says—He who lives forever, whose name is holy:
"I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit,
to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite" (Isaiah 57:15).*

*but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus,
who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Timothy 1:10).*

See also Exodus 3:14; Psalm 41:13; Psalm 93:2; Psalm 102:27; Ecclesiastes 3:11; Isaiah 26:4; Isaiah 40:28; Daniel 7:9; Romans 1:20; Galatians 1:3-5; Philippians 4:20; 1 Timothy 6:15b-16; Hebrews 1:12; Revelation 1:8; Revelation 4:9-10; Revelation 22:13.

1) As a child, did you ever try to grasp the idea that God has no end (lives eternally) and has no beginning?
How did it make you feel?

2) Pastor Tozer points out in Chapter 7 that some theologians try to convince us that the words “everlasting,” “eternal,” and “forever” don’t really mean “without end,” but rather, “to the end of time.” Their argument is based on the fact that sometimes the Bible uses the word “everlasting,” for instance, to describe hills or mountains, which are obviously not eternal (see Deut. 33:15). **But why would people want to diminish the concept of “eternity” in their minds?**

“For every man it must be Christ or eternal tragedy.” A.W. Tozer
(You can never escape God in tomorrow because He’s already there!)

Now read Habakkuk 3:6. **In what way does this verse destroy their argument?**

3) God always Is (Exodus 3:14); He lives as Eternal Now. Tozer says, “I know of no tenet of the Christian creed that could retain its significance if the idea of eternity were extracted from it.” **What does Tozer mean?**

4) **What comes to mind when you read Tozer’s statement** that “everything that will happen has already happened” to God? **How is this possible?** (Please read Isaiah 46:10.)

5a) **Is God in time or outside of time?**

5b) Theology professor, Dr. Bruce Ware, contends that we should think of God as being “omnitemporal,” similar to His being “omnipresent.” Puritan Stephen Charnock explains: “As it is His immensity to be everywhere, so it is His eternity to be alway(s)...His duration is as endless as His essence is boundless.” Ware affirms that God is outside of time and is timeless in His existence. He goes on to explain that God voluntarily entered time in order to sustain His Creation and relate to His people. **What Scriptures come to mind that support the idea that God condescends to relate to our time frame? Does this diminish God in any way?**

6a) Please meditate on Psalm 90. **How can the reality of God’s eternity be a source of strength, reassurance, and joy for Christians?**

6b) Psalm 90 teaches us to number our days. **In view of what is eternally important, how should we spend our few days here on Earth?**

CHAPTER 8 **God’s Infinitude**

Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite (Psalm 147:5 NASB).

*"Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?
They are higher than the heavens—what can you do?
They are deeper than the depths of the grave—what can you know?" (Job 11:7-8).*

Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; His greatness no one can fathom (Psalm 145:3).

“The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain You” (1 Kings 8:27).

1) God's infinitude, like His eternity, is a "negative" attribute. God is infinite, which means He knows NO bounds or limits. But God does exercise Self-imposed "limitations" and these do not conflict with His infinitude. **Is there anything God cannot do? How do these "limitations" affirm God's infinitude?**

2) Pastor Tozer prays, "Whatever the cost to us in loss of friends or goods or length of days let us know Thee as Thou art, that we may adore Thee as we should." **Are you willing to pray and live like this?**

*Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out (Romans 11:33)!*

3) Tozer uses hyperbole at the beginning of Chapter 8 to underscore a growing crisis in the Church today—many believe in a "god" who is less than infinite, less than great, less than holy. Standing gloriously above the balance of Anselm's godly advice and Novatian's sobering insight is Scripture's solution to this crisis:

*"Be still, and know that I am God."
Psalm 46:10a*

There is much we cannot understand about the Almighty, but our Lord sweetly encourages us to know Him rightly (Jeremiah 9:23-24). **In what way would a serious understanding, and a continual contemplation, of God's infinitude be an antidote to the poison of today's diminished view of God?**

"How completely satisfying to turn from our limitations to a God who has none." A.W. Tozer

4) As big as the universe is, only God is infinite—Creation is finite. **How might an exploration of Creation, however, assist us in developing a grander "view" of the One who alone is Infinite?** (The known universe is 28 billion light-years in diameter, which means that it would take a spaceship traveling the speed of light—670 miles per hour—28 billion years to go from one edge of the universe to the other, *just once!*)

Our Heavenly Father is extremely kind! God is Spirit and His greatness cannot be measured or fully grasped, yet He wonderfully illustrates the inconceivable vastness of His Being through the creation of His universe.

5) Unlike our boundless Creator, we frequently reveal our limitations: “I’m out of patience!” “I’m just too tired to do that!” Pastor Tozer goes on to observe that “for those out of Christ, time is a devouring beast.” But God, in His infinitude, never hurries. **If we are called to be godly (and we are) why are we so often in a rush? Should we expect others to hurry to meet our needs or wants—is it godly to expect this?**

6) Dr. Bruce Ware states, God “never is out of grace, mercy, power, wisdom, knowledge; all of His qualities are infinite, boundless.” **In what ways does Jesus apply His infinitude to the benefit of God’s children?**

The Confessions of St. Augustine Bishop of Hippo

(Excerpt translated by Edward Bouverie Pusey)

Great art Thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised; great is Thy power, and Thy wisdom infinite. And Thee would man praise; man, but a particle of Thy creation; man, that bears about him his mortality, the witness of his sin, the witness that Thou resistest the proud: yet would man praise Thee; he, but a particle of Thy creation. Thou awakest us to delight in Thy praise; for Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it repose in Thee. Grant me, Lord, to know and understand which is first, to call on Thee or to praise Thee? and, again, to know Thee or to call on Thee? for who can call on Thee, not knowing Thee? for he that knoweth Thee not, may call on Thee as other than Thou art....

What art Thou then, my God? what, but the Lord God? For who is Lord but the Lord? or who is God save our God? Most highest, most good, most potent, most omnipotent; most merciful, yet most just; most hidden, yet most present; most beautiful, yet most strong, stable, yet incomprehensible; unchangeable, yet all-changing; never new, never old; all-renewing, and bringing age upon the proud, and they know it not; ever working, ever at rest; still gathering, yet nothing lacking; supporting, filling, and overspreading; creating, nourishing, and maturing; seeking, yet having all things....And what had I now said, my God, my life, my holy joy? or what saith any man when he speaks of Thee? Yet woe to him that speaketh not, since mute are even the most eloquent....

Narrow is the mansion of my soul; enlarge Thou it, that Thou mayest enter in. It is ruinous; repair Thou it. It has that within which must offend Thine eyes; I confess and know it. But who shall cleanse it? or to whom should I cry, save Thee? Lord, cleanse me from my secret faults, and spare Thy servant from the power of the enemy. I believe, and therefore do I speak. Lord, Thou knowest. Have I not confessed against myself my transgressions unto Thee, and Thou, my God, hast forgiven the iniquity of my heart? I contend not in judgment with Thee, who art the truth; I fear to deceive myself; lest mine iniquity lie unto itself. Therefore I contend not in judgment with Thee; for if Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall abide it?

But Thou, Lord, who for ever livest, and in whom nothing dies: for before the foundation of the worlds, and before all that can be called "before," Thou art, and art God and Lord of all which Thou hast created: in Thee abide, fixed for ever, the first causes of all things unabiding; and of all things changeable, the springs abide in Thee unchangeable: and in Thee live the eternal reasons of all things unreasoning and temporal.

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