

For those of you who may be here for the first time since we started this present series we have been looking at the attributes of God and just by way of introducing you to this we have noted that God basically has two kinds of attributes. Some He shares with us and others He does not. He shares His love, He shares His wisdom, He shares His power, He shares His grace. He does not share His eternity nor does He share His self sufficiency, nor does He share His immensity. And that's the one we want to talk about this morning. There are other words that could be given to this particular characteristic of God. Sometimes it's referred to as His infinity. Sometimes just the word that we use so often, the omnipresence of God. So when we say that God is immense, God is infinite, God is omnipresent, we are saying basically the same thing. And we have learned in looking at these different characteristics of God that it's very difficult to talk about one attribute of God without getting involved with some other attributes of God. And we are going to find that that is true this morning. But with this truth today, there are two things that I would like to do. In fact this is what I am concerned about each Lord's Day as we consider these together. I trust that the Lord Himself will give us understanding in these truths concerning Himself that we are considering together. We are looking at different passages of Scripture because you can't go to one part of the Bible and say everything about God is here. The Bible from start to finish is a revelation of God and therefore we have to go through different passages to see these different places where God has seen fit to make Himself known. But this really is the foundation of all that the Word of God has to say. As I have mentioned repeatedly from this pulpit, you can't understand sin unless you understand God. You can't understand man unless you understand God. You can't understand salvation and the very nature of salvation unless you understand God. And so if you were picking up a theology to read it, or if you were listening to one who was simply trying to take you through all the doctrines of Scripture you would find that men characteristically have found that this is the place where we have to start. And the church today has been weakened because we have paid

so little attention to what the Scriptures teach about God Himself. And hymns like we sang together this morning are rare. There have been many of them in the past. It seems that few of them find their way to our hymn books these days. But this is what we need and I trust that this will be a blessing to all of us. So we need to understand these truths and we need to be looking to the Lord to give us the understanding that we need. But then we need to do as we are encouraged to do all through the Scriptures and that is to see the practical importance of these attributes. If we know the immensity of God, if we know that He is omnipresent, if we see the way in which this is referred to in the Word of God then obviously it is going to have a tremendous affect upon our lives.

Now the first thing that I want to do this morning in getting acquainted with this truth is I want to define what we mean by these terms, the immensity of God, the infinity of God, the omnipresence of God. And I want to do it just from the dictionary to begin with. Then I want to give you just two or three definitions from certain men who have written on this subject and there are many, many definitions that could be given to you. And then finally I want in defining this to go to various passages of Scripture to see what the Word of God has to say. And just as a background and a foundation this morning let's look again at Psalm 139 and verse 7, 8, 9 and 10. Now this is a wonderful Psalm on the attributes of God. And probably one of these Sunday's we are going to be looking at the first 6 verses of this Psalm because the first 6 verses deal with the omniscience of God. And then the next four verses 7-10 deal with the onnipresence of God, the immensity of God, the infinity of God. And so look at these words again if you will. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ^{as-}send up into heaven thou art there. If I make my bed in sheol behold thou art there." And the psalmist doesn't mean that when he ascends into heaven God is there and when he ascends into sheol God simply goes with him but he means that while God is in heaven, He is also in sheol. And while

the psalmist could go from one place to another, God remains where He is and He is everywhere and this is what the psalmist was discovering. Then he says, "If I take the wings of the morning," now that means that if I were to go around the earth and circle the earth with the speed of the day, the wings of the morning I would find every place that I go with all of that speed, that God is already there and that God abides there so that God is everywhere in the world. "Even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me." Now I trust that that that will give you just a little bit of a background concerning this.

Now the dictionary defines immensity as that which is vast, huge, immeasurable, boundless. Now the dictionary doesn't relate this to God. But Bible teachers have taken this word immensity because it fittingly describes God. God is immeasurable. God is boundless. God is so vast in His Person that you can't go any place but what God is there. The dictionary defines infinity in much the same way. It means immeasurably great. That which is boundless and unlimited. When we go to the word omnipresent which means literally all present or everywhere present, this is the characteristic of a being who is everywhere at the same time. Now theologians have sought to define this in ways that we can understand and Dr. Schaffer in his Systematic Theology has quoted Samuel Clark and his definition of the immensity of God. And this is Dr. Clark's definition, "God is at all times equally present to every point of the boundless immensity as if it were all but one single point." Now his definition means this. That God isn't spread out so that everybody has a little bit of Him. I remember hearing a mother one time complaining that her children, and she had several children, all wanted her attention at the same time and in a rather frustrated way she said simply, "You know there isn't enough of me to go around." Well now God is not spreading Himself throughout the universe so that we have a part of Him but somebody else has another part of Him and on the other side of the world they have still another part of Him. But this truth as you see it in Scripture means that I have all of Him and

you have all of Him and Christians in Africa today have all of Him, and Christians in China today have all of Him, and Christians in South America have all of Him. So that God is omnipresent in the sense that He dwells every place just as though that were the only place that He would dwell. So that I have the Lord with me just as though He didn't dwell any place else on the face of the earth. But every child of God can make that same claim wherever they live throughout this world on which we all live. So Dr. Clark does not mean that God is spread out so that we all have a part of Him, but that He is completely present everywhere throughout the universe. Now in other words God isn't like our President. When President Carter travels overseas he's not in Washington. He can't be in two places at once. But God can not only be in two places at once, He can and is everywhere at once. So that you can't go anyplace but what God is there. Now that's amazing truth isn't it. And I am sure that it takes time for us to even begin to comprehend this. I am sure that there are none of us that can fully comprehend what this means. But we can certainly enter into the enjoyment and the blessing of it as we consider more of the infinite majesty of our wonderful God.

Let me give you another definition. This comes from Thomas Watson who was one of the Puritans in a book written several hundred years ago now and he simply gives this statement very similar to Dr. Clark's, "God is not confined to any place and so is present all places at once." Or I could go to Augustine this morning and Augustine said, "In no place is God's being either confined or limited." Now that means when you think in the Old Testament for example of the building of the tabernacle and God said He wanted the tabernacle built so that He could dwell in the midst of His people, there were special ways in which God manifested His presence. But that in no way contradicts the teaching concerning the immensity of God. Because God could be there and yet be everywhere present throughout the universe.

Now what do the Scriptures say about this and this of course is the most important point because all of our theological definitions and all of our definitions otherwise are based upon what we find in the Word of God itself. As I took my Bible and began to look over these various passages of Scripture I was not only blessed and impressed to see what they said but I was interested also to see when this truth was used. Now Solomon seems to have been the first one who in Scripture has given a formal statement of the immensity of God. He did this when the temple was constructed. And you find it in several passages of Scripture. In fact you can find some references even in the New Testament referring back to what Solomon said. Now I will just refer to one of these this morning. It is found in I Kings 8:27. You can turn to it if you like or I am going to be going over some of these passages rather rapidly and you might prefer to look at some and not look at the others but take down the references so that you can look at them a little bit later. But in I Kings 8:27 when Solomon contemplated the glory and the majesty of the temple that he had constructed he said this, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth. Behold the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house that I have built." Now there was a sense in which he felt that his work was to no avail. He goes on to say this was the place where the people could bring their sacrifices to the Lord but it was just inconceivable to Solomon that they had gone to all this work to construct a house where God could dwell in the midst of His people knowing all the time that heaven and earth itself is not sufficient to contain God. He is so vast, so unlimited, so boundless, so immense, so infinite. He was overwhelmed once again with this wonderful truth. Two prophets in the Old Testament talk about the immensity of God. I don't say that they are the only two but they are very prominent in their emphasis. One is Isaiah and the other is Jeremiah. In talking about the time in which this truth was used, these men preached just as Judah was going into captivity. Many of them were killed, many of them were moved first to Assyria, the Israelites went to Assyria, the people of Judah were carried into captivity into Babylon. And it seems

that the Spirit of God leading Isaiah and Jeremiah wanted to instill in the hearts of the people of God that they could be transported from Israel to Babylon and they would be away from the temple. The Temple would be destroyed, they would be away from their homes, they would be away from the priesthood, they would be away from all of these things that were a part of their relationship of God, but that there was no nation on the face of the earth who could take them away from God Himself. And so Isaiah says and you may want to look at these because there are several verses in Isaiah 40 that I want to refer to. But in Isaiah 40:12 we have these words from Isaiah, "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand. And measured out heaven with a span." Now that is he is picturing God as holding in His hand all the waters that are on the face of the earth. Possibly all the waters that are in the universe and measuring out heaven with the spreading of His hand. "And comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains on scales, and the hills on a balance." Who has done all this? Well obviously the answer is only God could do this. Look at verse 15. "Behold the nations", now not one person in a nation and not just one nation, but all the nations on the face of the earth, "are as a drop of a bucket and are counted as the small dust of the balance. Behold he taketh up the isles as a very little thing." Now you and I read about the nations of the earth in our newspapers or news magazines and it's easy for us to get fearful. It's easy for us to be concerned. It looks even now like things are building up to something on an international basis. But you see this is the reason that you and I, not to minimize those troubles but to see things as they really are need to recognize that we have a God Who is so immense, so infinite, so great, so omnipresent, He fills all things, so that all of the nations of the earth with all of their might, with all of their scheming; and with all of their plans and with everything that you can say about them, their wisdom, they are to Him as nothing more than a drop in a bucket, or as dust on the scales. Look at verse 17, "All nations before him are as nothing and they are counted to him less than nothing in vanity." You see they don't even give God the con-

cern that they would if they were nonexistent altogether. They are nothing in His sight. Verse 22, "He is the one who sitteth upon the circle of the earth and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers. That stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." And I want to say to you this morning as we read these passages of Scripture if you are fearful about conditions in the world and anxious about what's going to happen and all the difficulties that take place and we may be in store for some difficult times. I am not saying that we aren't. But in order to keep your heart in peace, contemplate the infinite majesty of our wonderful God and you will know why in the 26th chapter of this prophesy of Isaiah, Isaiah says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee because he trusteth in thee." Why should I worry about that which is nothing in His sight, when I am in the care of an infinitely great God. Jeremiah is in much the same position in the 23rd chapter of the prophesy of Jeremiah and two verses the 23rd and the 24th verses, because he was to live to see much of the captivity of the people of Judah. The question is asked by the Lord, "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord and not a God afar off." Now that is am I a God who is here but I am not a God who is there? I am in this place but I am not to be found in any other place, is that the kind of God that I am? And then he says, "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth saith the Lord?" So when the children of Israel were going into captivity one of the truths that the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah preached to them was the truth of the immensity of God. Because they needed to know that when they got into captivity, God would be there as well. Let me take a couple of examples from the New Testament. One from Stephen who was talking to a group of unregenerate Jews and one from the Apostle Paul the passage that we had last Sunday morning in Acts 17 when he was talking to a group of unregenerate Gentiles. Now this could easily be a clue to the preaching of the Gospel to people who have never heard or people who may have heard but have never trusted the Lord Jesus Christ. You want to know how to talk to your unsaved

family members. You want to talk to your unsaved neighbors, your unsaved friends. There are many places in the Bible that would indicate to us if you want to approach people who don't know the Lord, talk to them about God. Tell them what you know of Him. Because it's only as they understand Him that they are going to understand their sin, that they are going to see their need. And you see many times we plead with people to receive Christ but we don't tell them why. Because we have never set before them any of these marvelous truths concerning God. In Acts 7 when Stephen was preaching the message that was going to cost him his life he says beginning with verse 47, "But Solomon built him an house. Howbeit the Most High God dwelleth not in temples made with hands as saith the prophet." And then here in Acts 7 Stephen is quoting from Isaiah 66 where you could turn and read in the first verse, "Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool, what house will you build me saith the Lord or what is the place of my rest. Hath not my hand made all these things?" So simply going back to one of the greatest of their prophets he quotes the Scripture seeking to enable them to understand some of the issues. But here is a God so vast, so great in His person that you can't build a place for Him to dwell. "Heaven is his throne and the earth is his footstool." Notice what Paul said in speaking to the Athenians in Acts 17, the passage that we had last week and a couple of the verses apply to the attribute that is before us this morning. In Acts 17:24, "God that made the world and all things therein seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth dwelleth not in temples made with hands." And then verse 27, after saying that God had determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation he says, "that they should seek the Lord if happily they might feel after him and find him though he be not far from everyone of us." And you could say that in Athens, you could say that in Jerusalem, you could say that in Rome, you could say that in Spain, the Apostle Paul wherever he preached could say because of the immensity of God, "He's not far from everyone of us." You might add to this one of Paul's great statements about God in Ephesians 4:6 where he is speaking of the church and then he comes down to the end and he says, "And there is one

God and Father of all who was above all and through all and in you all." Even our Lord Jesus Christ spoke of the immensity of God when He was talking to an unregenerate Samaritan woman. I would like for you to see these passages where men were talking about the doctrines of Scripture to unsaved people. Somehow we've gotten the idea that you have to be saved before you can learn anything. But the Word of God teaches us that if we are going to reach people, genuinely reach people we've got to reach them with the truth of the Word of God and especially with the truth concerning God Himself. And you remember when the Lord Jesus began to get a little bit close to this woman in His conversation and was probing into her life then the question came up, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Now the Samaritans worshipped in the mountain because they believed that's where they would find God. The truth concerning the immensity of God had deteriorated to the point among the Jews where they felt that the only place that God dwelt or many of them felt this was in Jerusalem. So she says, there is a difference between us as to where we are going to find God. Do you remember what the Lord Jesus said? The Lord Jesus said, "God is a Spirit," or God is spirit, God is immense, God cannot be confined to a place, "and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." So when you take these passages and you look at them carefully you see that you can never be in any place but what God is there. He is always accessible. If I could bring it down to some of the circumstances that you and I are familiar with perhaps this would help to bring home the truth to your own heart and I don't mean in any sense to be irreverent. God doesn't keep office hours. He never goes on a vacation. I was in a store last night and there was a sign up on the door it said, this store will not be opened Sunday or Monday. So if you want to get food from that store today or tomorrow you are in trouble. You know what it is to call to get the service of some person and get an answering service or get a recording on the telephone that such and such a person is out of the office and won't be back until the first of the week. You never

get that kind of treatment from God. He is never so busy with some people that He is unable to take care of others. When you call on Him you never get a busy signal. He is never for a moment out of touch with you. He is always present in all places at the same time. And you know if all of us, in fact I could expand that to say if every believer on the face of the earth, or let me expand it beyond that and say if every person on the face of the earth were suddenly to call upon God for help it would not present the least kind of a problem to God Who is so great. He would hear every cry. He would never get any request mixed up and He would be completely sufficient to meet the needs, whatever those needs might be. That is wonderful truth. Now let me take the rest of the time this morning just to speak very briefly some of the practical consequences of this truth. And I must hurry.

The first and greatest and you see this from the Scriptures is that the more you and I realize the immensity of God, the greatness of God, the omnipresence of God, the more we are going to be inclined to worship Him. Would you disagree with me this morning if I said the reason we know so little about worship is because we know so little about God. The last Psalm in the book of Psalms contains these words, "Praise him according to his excellent greatness." And David when he worshipped the Lord before the people of Israel in I Chronicles 29:10-11 said, "Blessed be thou Lord God of Israel, our Father forever and ever. Thine O Lord is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine. Thine is the kingdom O Lord and thou art exalted as head above all." So when you and I begin to learn something of the immensity of God we are also going to begin to learn something of what it means to worship God.

You can't learn about the immensity of God in the second place without realizing

the corresponding insignificance of man. You know I think we must weary the Lord with our exaltation of even the Lord's servants. And the way we put men on a pedestal, and practically become the worshippers of men. Let me say to you this morning there isn't a servant of God who is worth worshipping. God is the only One who deserves our worship and if all the nations of the earth, all the nations of the earth are as a drop in the bucket then where does that leave me, where does that leave you. When we talk so glowingly about men and the achievements of men it's an obvious confession that at least for the moment we have forgotten the infinite majesty and greatness of God. And David worshipped the Lord in such wonderful words, he also said as you go down through that passage in I Chronicles 29, "But who am I and what is my people that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort." When you and I see God then we are going to be more amazed than anyone else that God even in His wonderful grace would have anything to do with us.

This serves as a warning in the third place. Proverbs 15:3, do you remember reading this verse, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good." You can't go anyplace to hide from God. The day and the night are alike to Him. And His eyes are everywhere because He is an omnipresent God. There are lots of encouragements in this truth. In times of trial, could I go back this morning to that 23rd Psalm again, "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for thou art with me." In prayer, we all know, "Be careful for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God and the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." But how many times have we noticed just before Paul says, "Be careful for nothing," or "be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer let your requests be made known unto God," just before that he says, "The Lord is at hand." And I know that that can mean the Lord is coming but there are many who believe that this is Paul's

appropriation of that statement in Psalm 145 where in the Greek translation of the Old Testament the same word is used and translated nigh, "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth." He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him, He will also hear their cry and will save them." Isn't it wonderful that when you and I perhaps suddenly come to face a real emergency we don't have to go anyplace, we don't have to wait. Tuesday night of this week my neighbor's chimney caught on fire. And his house is pretty close to our house. And he called for the fire department to come. And we waited and in just a few minutes the fire department was there. But as I was reflecting on these truths isn't it wonderful that when needs arise in our lives we don't have to say where is the Lord, somebody get the Lord for me, "The Lord is at hand, be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication let your request be made known unto God." Whenever you face opposition this truth is very precious. Hebrews 13:5-6, "Let your conversation, your manner of life be without covetousness and be content with such things as you have for he hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." I am reading a delightful little book on prayer with various quotations from some of the saints of past days and one of these saints remarked, "God may have taken some precious things away from me but after all hasn't He given me Christ." He has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, so that we may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper I will not fear what men shall do unto me." It's wonderful to see the Lord putting that truth into action. In the fellowship of the saints as we gather here this morning and we wouldn't have to have this many, the Lord Jesus Himself said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them." And that could be twos and threes all over the city of Portland, all of over the state of Oregon, all over the United States, all over every nation of the face of the earth, "Wherever two or three, " the Lord Jesus in the completeness of His person is there just like He is in any place else, but He is in all of these places.

Wouldn't it be dreadful if we had to meet together this morning without the promise of His presence with us. In our service the Lord Jesus told the disciples to "go into all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I command you and Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." It would be impossible for us to fulfill the mission that God has given us in preaching the Gospel to every creature if we didn't have an immense, infinite, omnipresent God.

Let me give you this last one and if you want to see it turn to the book of Ephesians 1. It is the last part of Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:19 he is praying "that they might know 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, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come and hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to his church which is his body, the fullness of him who filleth all in all." Our God is One Who fills all in all. He doesn't just dwell here or there, He fills everything. He is immense, He's infinite, He's omnipresent. And Paul says that I am praying that you would know the power of Him Who filleth all in all, the power of Him who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead and set Him above all principality and power, He has given all things under His feet, He gave Him to be over all things to the church so that what does this mean. Well it is a very wonderful lesson in the providence of God. Because God is the kind of a God He is, Paul could write earlier in this passage that God is One Who is so mighty, so great, so immense, so infinite that He is "working all things out according to the counsel of His own will." Is it any wonder that some of the writers of the Scriptures comprehending the greatness of God say that no man says to God

"What are you doing?" I trust this morning that through these passages of Scripture especially that I have read to you we have seen something of the immensity of God. And when you look at your needs this morning, and I look at my needs and I have needs just as you do, but don't they look insignificant in the light of the greatness of our God. There are burdens that would crush us but we have a God so great that He not only is able to bear our burdens but He is able to bear the burdens of all who call upon Him, wherever they may be and He is able to deal with you and me and to care for us in all of His immensity and greatness, just as though His care of us were all that He had to do. Let's worship Him and humble ourselves in His presence and rejoice that such a great God is the God Who has called us to Himself. If you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior this morning let me encourage you to put your faith and your trust in Him. He's the only One Who can take away your sin and to give you that peace and joy which comes when we know that our sins are forgiven.