

The Attributes of God: Part One

By Bryce William Klassen

“For while the name of God is secret and His essential nature incomprehensible, He in condescending love has by revelation declared certain things to be true of Himself. These we call His attributes.”

- A.W. Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy*

In my sermon on Sunday I covered how important it is that we know God. If we have no problem taking the time to get to know someone on earth whom we love, then we should be all the more eager to learn of God, who we are commanded to love with our whole being. This is the purpose of theology. It is the study of God. But it should never be just an academic exercise. If our theologizing doesn't lead to glorifying, then something is missing. Now, I am not saying that we are all called to a life of intense theological training. However, given all the knowledge at our fingertips and the fact that we are a literate society, surely we can spend a few hours here and there seeking to better understand who He is, no?

Traditionally, theologians have separated the so-called properties of God into two categories. *Communicable* (those things which humans also possess in part) and *incommunicable* (belonging only to God). Today I want to look at what makes for a communicable attribute.

God's Communicable Attributes

Let us say that an attribute of God simply refers to something true of God. God has many attributes, and yet He is one and the same. What makes God different than ourselves is that He is not a combination of various attributes. Everything that He is He is in equal, perfect measure. This is similar to what we mean when we say that Christ is fully God *and* fully human. In short, we might simply say that God is God. Or, as He says to Moses, “I AM THAT I AM” (Exodus 3:14).

When I say communicable attributes I am referring to those things which are at their fullest in God, but that human beings also exhibit to some degree or another! For example, God is a spirit. We too are spiritual beings. God is love. We too are able to express love. God has a will, as do we. He is relational, and we also seek relationships with one another. God is good. We are capable, by His graces, of behaving goodly (a weird word!). He is the truth. Although we are not truthful in the same sense that He is, we can from time to time be honest with each other! The list goes on! I encourage you to take this time to stop and think of some other attributes that would fall under this category!

On Wednesday I want to explore what we call the incommunicable attributes of God. These are those attributes which He alone possesses. So in the meantime, try to think of an attribute or two that is unique to God and on Wednesday we will see if it makes the cut!

In Love,
Bryce