

Romans: The Crown Jewel of Salvation

57-“All to the Glory of God, Part 2”

Romans 11:33-36

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / Nov. 15, 2015

“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us... For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like.” A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 9

Your doctrine of God will either HELP you or HURT you in **Three of the Biggest Struggles** you’re going to be up against as a Christian in this life.

I. Your Doctrine of God has to be Big Enough to Motivate You to be Killing Pride and Cultivating Humility for a Lifetime

Pride is one of your most dangerous, deadly, deceptive and destructive sins that you have to be battling in this life because it’s a root sin that feeds so many other sins and keeps them alive in your life!

Your worship and your pride struggle to co-exist in the same heart, because one starves and chokes out the other.

Studying God is primarily to transform us and humble us before God as we see who we are in light of who He is.

The study of God, when you use it right with the Bible as our textbook, was meant to shrink us, quiet us, and cause us to be still. One of the best representations of humility is stillness. You can just relax, because you don’t have to be in control!

Having a ‘Big God’ theology like what you see in **Psalm 46** should bring stillness into your life.

Psalm 46:10 “Be still and know that I am God.”

The very categories we try to fit Him into are insufficient to capture everything about God. And that’s good because it humbles us.

“Forget your sense of awe, let your conceit diminish your ability to revere, and the universe becomes a market place for you. The loss of awe is the great block to insight. A return to reverence is the first prerequisite for a revival of wisdom... Wisdom comes from awe rather than from shrewdness... The greatest insights happen to us in moments of awe.” *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism*, by Abraham Joshua Heschel, p 78

Job 26:7-14 “He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing. He binds up the water in His thick clouds, yet the clouds are not broken under it. He covers the face of His throne, and spreads His cloud over it. He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters... indeed these are the mere edges of his ways, and how small a whisper we hear of Him! But the thunder of His power who can understand?”

Look also at **Isaiah 40** to see how great and big God is.

“Thoughts that reach up toward the excellency of God's majesty are beautiful and delicious to the soul, but they come with unpleasant side effects. Even a hint of His greatness shows us up as grasshoppers, dust, and ‘less than nothing’ in comparison (Isaiah 40:12-25). No one wants to go out of his way to feel small, weak, and defiled; but this strong medicine gives us hope against sin. In this humiliation our sin withers... Our puny minds can't take Him in. And that helps, because it humbles us before Him...” *The Enemy Within*, Kris Lungaard, P&R, 1998, p. 128-129

The closer you get to God the more you should feel undone! That’s what Isaiah was saying in **Isaiah 6:1-6**, when he saw the Lord!

The more aware you become of the infinite holiness and distance between you and God the more humility you’ll experience and express.

So at some point, along with reading your Bible, read:

- A.W. Tozier’s ***Knowledge of the Holy***
- A.W. Pink’s ***Attributes of God***
- J.I. Packer’s ***Knowing God***
- John Piper’s ***The Pleasures of God or Desiring God***

II. Your Doctrine of God has to be Big Enough to Trump Your Unruly Feelings and to Fuel Hope that’s Not Based on Your Circumstances

Ezekiel 1 begins with a mind-blowing vision of who God is because when everything familiar to you is taken away from you, your feelings will most often scream that there’s no reason left for trusting God or hoping in God.

In this passage you see the transcendence or ‘otherness’ of God that reminds us that He’s not like us. His power and character do not ebb and flow based on circumstances. God doesn’t need favorable circumstances to still BE who He is and to DO what He does.

In the times where you feel like there’s been a big reversal in your life where everything that was familiar to you was taken away, you need to be ready to talk back your feelings. You won’t have the courage or heart to talk back your feelings if you don’t have a theology of God that’s bigger than the categories you try to put Him in.

“...we learn to live not by our feelings about God but by the facts of God. I refuse to believe my depressions; I choose to believe in God... My feelings are important for many things. They are essential and valuable. They keep me aware of much that is true and real. But they tell me next to nothing about God or my relation to God. My security comes from who God is, not from how I feel. Discipleship is a decision to live by what I know about God, not by what I feel about Him...” ***A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society***, Eugene H. Peterson, p. 83

The feeling-oriented life walks by sight and circumstances and has a little-bitty, manageable God that does you absolutely no good.

What you need is a ‘Big God’-oriented life that’s been seeing God from the pages of Scripture, believes God, and makes decision based on God –regardless of feelings.

“I say that we must talk to ourselves instead of allowing ‘ourselves’ to talk to us! ...Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? Take those thoughts that come to you the moment you wake up in the morning. Your self is talking to you. Now [the psalmists] treatment was this; instead of allowing this self to talk to him, he starts talking to himself. ‘Why art thou cast down, O my soul?’ His soul had been depressing him, crushing him. So he stands up and says: ‘Self, listen for a moment, I will speak to you.... Why art thou cast down? – What business have you to be disquieted?... And then you must go on to remind yourself of God, Who he is, and what God is and what God has done, and what God has pledged Himself to do. Then having done that, end on this great note: defy yourself, and defy other people, and defy the devil and the whole world, and say with this man: ‘I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance.’” Lloyd-Jones, *Spiritual Depression*, pp.20-21

Look at **Psalm 42:5-11**.

Your circumstances may be new to you but they’re not to God. He was there before you arrived.

III. Your Doctrine of God has to be Big Enough to Help You Say ‘No’ to the World’s Puny Value System that Screams, ‘Right here! Right now! And More!’

When you really understand WHO God is and ALL that He’s doing, it makes the world’s value system look like the plastic trinkets and baubles that it really is.

Look at **I Timothy 6:13-19**.

Keep God big for the glory of God. Keep God big because it’s only a ‘Big God’ theology that will give you what you need to fight against your pride, your feelings, and against the world’s value system.