

Systematic Theology: The Mind of God

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By Don Green

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Truth Community Church

4183 Mt. Carmel Tobasco Road
Cincinnati, OH 45255

Website: truthcommunitychurch.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/tcomm

In our second session here this morning, we're going to continue to study the attributes of God. Last time we looked at the incommunicable attributes which we treated all too briefly and now we're going to move into a study of the communicable attributes of God. And let me just say one thing here as we study God's attributes, it's probably good for me to mention this as well, theologians will talk about the simplicity of God by which they mean that his essence is undivided. When we talk about the attributes of God, we're not talking about separate components that are added together like so many Legos into a box, but the divine essence is unified, it is indivisible. God is not a being that consists of component parts, he is a simple being in that he is completely unified within his being. And so we mention that in passing and mentioning that does give us a little help for the approach that we are using here today and why theologians study the attributes. God is one undivided essence but you and I can't begin to comprehend that all at once in our mind. We have to take things step-by-step. We have to start in one place and build and add another thing because we can't absorb all of that at once and so we study his attributes individually and somewhat systematically but it's not because God is divided up, it simply a way for us to be able in our humanity to gain understanding one theme at a time.

Now, with that said, we're going to look at some attributes of God here that have some resemblance in man. In God, these attributes are infinite and they are perfect and they are undiminished. In man, they are limited and imperfect but you can still see a measure of reflection. What we're going to do, we're going to look at his communicable attributes in three separate messages, one today and then a couple over the next two Tuesday studies is how we are going to approach this. Today we're just going to look at one aspect of them and we can classify God's communicable attributes in three different categories, three different classifications, you might say. There are God's mental attributes, speaking about the mind of God. That's what we're looking at here in the session. You can talk about the volitional attributes of God, his power and his ability to do what he wills, his volitional attributes. That will be our study for this coming Tuesday. You'll want to be here for that. And then finally we'll look at God's moral attributes, his goodness, his truth, his love. And so his mental attributes, you kind of peer into the mind of God in this session, his volitional attributes which refer to his will, the volition being that element in character of will, of doing what you want to do, and then the moral attributes will be our third way in looking at this. Originally I was going to do mind and power all in the same

message but then I realized that just wasn't going to work. Too much material at one time. So we're going to simplify here today. What can we say about the mind of God? Well, what does Scripture say about the knowledge of God, point 1, there are only two points in this message, it might be a little bit briefer: God is omniscient. God is omniscient. That means that he is all-knowing. He knows everything in a comprehensive way.

Now, for those of you that are here in the audience here today, just in March, just a few months ago, I did a message titled "The All Knowing God" where we talked about and examined the doctrine of omniscience in greater length. Because that is so recent, I'm going to be briefer here. There are copies of that CD out on the table if you want to bring one of those home or you can download it from one of the two websites where you can find my teaching. What does omniscience mean? Well, in the book that we are using as our textbook loosely, Louis Berkhof says this, "Omniscience is that perfection of God whereby he, in a manner all his own, knows himself and all things possible and actual." I'll say that again: omniscience is that perfection of God whereby he, in a manner all his own, knows himself and all things possible and actual.

Now, if you step back for a moment, just the mere fact that God knows himself is a staggering thought. When you have an infinite, independent spirit that knows everything about himself, knows all of his attributes with perfection, knows the counsels of his will, he knows his own infinite being, that's amazing. I mean, you and I know ourselves a little bit and yet even our knowledge of ourselves is limited and distorted. Jeremiah 17:9 says when it comes to man that the heart is deceitful above all else, who can understand it? So we know ourselves in part but we don't even know the deepest part of our being, of our motivations. Our self-knowledge is limited and incomplete and diminished. Not so with God. An infinite, holy being knows himself with infinite perfection. Wow. How great the mind of God must be for him to be like that, for him to understand himself. There is one being in the universe that understands God fully and that is God.

No one else knows himself like he knows himself. When we say that God knows everything, he knows the past with utter perfection in every detail, he knows the present, he knows the future. He knows the hearts of 7 billion people living. He knows the lifespan and all of the thoughts of everyone who has ever existed before us. You know, sometimes he might be, I don't know if you ever think this way, I do, you go to a stadium maybe you're going to a ballgame, you see 50,000 people or if it's a Reds' game 15,000. No, that's totally unnecessary. Or you're in the midst of a great big crowd, do you ever step back and think that God knows all of these people intimately and that every one of them, most of them in utter oblivion to the fact that they are moving toward an appointment with this holy omniscient God who is going to judge them. And it's staggering to think about. You say, "Could God really know that many people that well and that intimately, to be able to do that? Or are we just kind of...what is this?"

Well, think about it this way just in terms of a pale justification of the omniscience of God. Isn't it true that the US government takes a census of the 330 million people that live in our boundaries every 10 years and that the government identifies people and that

there is a unique number assigned to everyone that lives within the walls of our country? And that's our limited government that can know an awful lot about every individual, generally speaking, within the boundaries of its borders. Well, how much more so that God would know the entirety of everything that is within the bounds of his creation, of everyone that he has given life to. So again, we realize that as we think about these things, we start our perspective with who God is and what Scripture has revealed him to be and we say, "Yes, God does know everyone like this. Everyone does have to deal with him and his knowledge is infinite and perfect. He knows all men in the same intimate way."

Look at Psalm 139:1-4. David says,

1 O LORD, You have searched me and known me. 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. 3 You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all.

And this is a knowledge of God, God's knowledge of David, what I'm trying to say, was not unique to David, this is how he knows all men. All of our thoughts are open and laid bare before him. When we rise up, when we lie down, God has a perfect awareness of what's going on. God sees every hand gesture that I make while I'm here. He sees you as you sit here. He knows your thoughts. This is how great his omniscience is and we discussed that more in that message that I alluded to a moment ago.

Not only that, not only does God perfectly know the past, present and future, not only does he know every man and every man's heart and every man's ways with intimate perfection, no detail missing, no fact has fallen out of his mind as so often happens to us. "Where did I put my car keys anyway?" You know, this is foolish to speak this way but God is never looking for his car keys because he never forgets anything and his knowledge is something that he has always had. Remember we said that his essence has never changed and so this perfect knowledge of all things past, present and future, of things possible and things actual, is a knowledge that God has somehow always had. He has never learned anything. He's not like you and I. We want to learn something, we go and we read a book. We go to class. We go to college in order to learn things to get a degree. That's so foreign to the nature of God. He has never learned anything. No one has ever given him knowledge that he didn't already have. That's how great his mind is and as you read Scripture, you see that God knows things which are merely possible but will not happen or even come into existence.

Look over at Matthew 11 beginning in verse 20.

20 [Jesus] began to denounce the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent. 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if [if, watch the conditional statement] if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they

would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. 23 And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. 24 Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you."

Jesus is stating something that is contrary to reality. He says, "If this had happened, but it didn't, this would have happened, but it didn't." And so what he's saying is, he says, "I know exactly what would have happened in these ancient cities. If what had happened here today had happened back then, this is what the result would have been. It didn't happen but I know for certain what would have occurred if it had." So he has knowledge, God has knowledge of things potential that didn't even occur and so we can say without qualification God comprehensively and exhaustively knows all things.

Look at Hebrews 4, we'll begin in verse 12,

12 the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

And so making this statement which seems to be referring to the written word of God as opposed to the Incarnate Word of God, but in either case judging the thoughts and intentions of the heart, going that deeply, and then it expands and speaks about the omniscience of God.

13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

How expansive is his knowledge of creation? How full and complete is his knowledge? Look over at Matthew 6 and, again, the knowledge of God feeds your peace and comfort and security in the Christian life. The attributes of God are essential for you to understand if you are going to grow into a mature stable person that is not tossed about from wave to wave by every shift in doctrine, every shift in your personal circumstances, every change in a national leader. We must realize that God is over and above all of those things and that the God who reigned before time began, the God who reigned at the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was living and active and was reigning on the day of your birth, the God who was alive and reigning in 1776, is the exact same powerful, wise, infinite, independent God that's going to be on the throne when we wake up on Wednesday, November 9th.

We have to think this way. We have to anchor our thoughts in these things and whether you're thinking on it on a macro or a micro level, look at Matthew 6:6 which we'll expound further in a few months on Sundays.

6 you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. 7 And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. 8 So do not be like them

This command not to be like unbelieving pagan Gentiles is rooted in the omniscience of God. He says,

8 So do not be like them; for [because, for this reason] your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

So when we go to prayer, we should remember that we are praying to a God who already knows everything, who knows what we're going to say before we say it. So we pray not to give him information for he already knows. We pray not to, if you're wise in your praying, if you're maturing in your prayer, you are praying not to give him advice on what he should do but rather to bring yourself dependently and consciously under the sovereign care of this one who knows all your needs before you ask. This changes the whole way that you live in prayer. It changes the way that you pray so that when you are mindful of these things, you pray and you honor God and you submit to him.

Look at verse 9,

9 Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

Let's step back for a moment. Just step back and think about what we're doing, think about what we're saying about what's real and true about God. This is the way things really are. He is invisible. He is infinite. He is immutable. And we realize that we are coming into the presence of this God and Jesus had just said one of the applications of the being of God is that he knows everything before you ask. He sees in secret. He knows what you need before you ask him. Do you realize that if we thought about that consciously and we really believed that, do you realize that it would force you to change the way that you pray, many of you anyway? Some of you may be hearing these things for the first time or having an opportunity for spiritual growth laid before you in the words of our Lord Jesus. "God, I've got a problem here." "Yeah, no kidding. I already know that," and so let's just move on to something else. Do you realize that when you start to contemplate the attributes of God, the only way that you can rightly respond to any of this is in worship. Such a greatly superior being, you're in his presence, all you can do is fall down, as it were, and worship and acknowledge him and praise him.

Well, that's what Jesus says to do. "Pray, then," as a result of God's omniscience, "Pray like this: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Let me hasten and hurry right into what matters here. God, let Your name be praised.'"

10 Your kingdom come, Your will be done.

Do you see, beloved, that the way Jesus teaches on prayer, rooted in the character, in the attributes of God in which we are speaking, it leads you to worship and it leads you to submission. It leads you to bow before him and to submit your will to his. "God, your will be done, not mine. Just like my Lord prayed on the cross, 'Father,'" in Gethsemane, I should say, "not my will but thine be done." You see, that's compelled. The attributes of God compel you in this direction. When you realize he is so great, "I must worship." When you realize how great and how good he is, all I can do is just submit to him and say, "Lord, whatever your will is, that's what I want." And this actually simplifies prayer greatly.

Then in verse 11, he goes on,

11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts

You know, "Lord, let me just lay out in light of who you are and I am here as a finite creature, God, I depend upon you. I consciously acknowledge and express my dependence upon you." We worship him, we submit to him, we depend upon him in prayer, all flowing from the attributes of who he is and so the omniscience of God has very specific implications for us.

How important is the doctrine of omniscience? How important is the mind of God in biblical thought? J. Gresham Machen said it this way, "If one thing lies at the basis of the whole biblical teaching about God, it is that God knows all things." God knows everything and everything else flows out of that. Contrary to what some theologians teach, process theologians, that God is kind of changing along as he learned, God is learning and seeing things unfold and so he's gaining knowledge even as we do and he's kind of a joint spectator at the events of the world. That's utterly false. That's not true. God knows the beginning from the end.

I think it's Isaiah 46:9, I'm taking a shot here, I didn't include this in my notes, Isaiah 46:9-10, you do need to turn here. Another statement about the omniscience of God, the power of God. Isaiah 46:9,

9 Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';

God can declare the end from the beginning because he knows the end. That's how he's able to declare it. So his omniscience is vast. It is marvelous. It is inexhaustible.

Now, there's a second aspect as we consider the mind of God. God is omniscient, God knows all things. There is a second aspect of the mind of God that perhaps we don't think about quite as much but is equally valid and crucial in our thinking. Point 2 is that: God is

wise. God is wise and this, beloved, is another way that we must humble ourselves before God, is to recognize his wisdom and bow before it.

Let's start this point this way. You and I all know or have known in times past, people who are intelligent but make foolish decisions in life. You know, the absent-minded professor or somebody who is really smart in book learning but he's now working on his fourth or fifth marriage. You realize his Ph.D. did not make him wise in life or, you know, you can just multiply the examples. People who had great financial wealth but squandered it in loose living. You say, "But they had so much." They were smart enough to get it but they weren't wise enough to keep it. Understand this, beloved, that that distinction...or let me go another way, let me state the other side of it. In other ways, we know people that are not accomplished in education, maybe they haven't even finished high school, maybe they haven't finished college or whatever, all of those standards of success that the world laps at and licks at the altar of, and the person that comes to our mind, maybe somebody, maybe a grandparent of yours that you knew that didn't have much education but, man, where they wise; did they have insight into human character; did they know how to understand a man's character or to know how to live life well. We know people who lack education but they live life in a way that shows remarkable perception even though they don't have degrees after their names. We see it on both sides. Book smart, dumb in life. No formal education but a man that you'd sit at and listen to see what he had to say. You see it on both sides, right? Well, understand that in God there is no distinction like that. There is no difference. His knowledge is perfect and his wisdom is also perfect. Knowledge and wisdom are not separated in God like we see it all around us in men. God is wise in his omniscience and he is all-knowing in his wisdom.

What do we mean by wisdom? Let's just put it this way, not technical, simple as simple can be: God knows the best way to do things. God knows the right way to do things. God is perceptive. God is infinitely intelligent and God knows what is best. Think about it this way: God before time began, and remembering that God had no counselor, we saw that in Romans 11, right? "Who has become the counselor of the Lord? Who has given anything to him?" The answer is nobody. Nobody taught God and yet God knew how to make a universe out of nothing simply by speaking the words. What's more, God knows how to operate that universe and to do it well. Do you realize that God had the wisdom to know the exact distance to place the earth from the sun so that the climate would be properly heated but not too hot, not too cold, but in the words of the little bear, it's just right? God knew that. How did he know that? How did he know that 93 million miles was the right distance? Why not 95 or 70 million miles? Because he's omniscient. Because he's wise.

And not only that, as God is working out the purposes of his creation in his providence, God knows how to bring all of these things together so that they are going to accomplish everything that he desired in the end. God is so wise that he knows how to use the actions of wicked men which they mean for evil in order to accomplish good. Who is wise like that? When Joseph's brothers threw him into a pit to get rid of him, they meant evil, they meant nothing other than to do away with him and yet, you know the story, Joseph is pulled out, he rises to be prime minister of Egypt and he becomes the human instrument of the deliverance of those brothers who once tried to kill him. How does Joseph describe

that? Genesis 50:20, "You meant evil against me but God meant it for good." God is so wise that what men mean for evil, he can use for good purposes. How do you know that?

God is infinite in his wisdom. In like manner, with the Lord Jesus Christ, godless men nailed him to a cross trying to kill him and what does God do in his wisdom? He turns that crucifixion into the focal point, into the point of substitution, into the moment of salvation that results in the accomplishment of his eternal plan to save countless souls from their sin. While wicked men in their mind are just doing what they want to do and actively killing Christ, God is wisely bringing about the plan of redemption. Acts 2:23 says, "You crucified Him by the predetermined plan and purpose of God." How does he do that?

What do we mean when we speak of God's wisdom? Let me give you a little more formal definition now: wisdom is the virtue of God which manifests itself in the selection of worthy ends and in the choice of the best means for the realization of those ends. That's from Berkhof, page 25. I'll say it again. It's about ends and means, you might say. Wisdom is the virtue of God which manifests itself in the selection of worthy ends and in the choice of the best means for the realization of those ends. God is so wise that he knew what to accomplish and he knew what would be worthy to accomplish. And all of this is simultaneous knowledge, it's not a progression, an unfolding in the mind of God but we must speak about it in these ways because our minds aren't like his. God chose worthy ends for creation and he knew how to go about using different processes, different things, in order to make sure that those ends were achieved.

Think about it, think about it in terms of your personal salvation, those of you that are Christians. This is amazing to think about. God chose the end. He said, "I will have you as my own in the end." That's the goal he established. That's a worthy goal. He was wise in doing that, and for reasons known only to God, he chose you and not everyone else to be saved. And yet we had to get you from the point of being dead in sin to being alive in Christ. How are you going to do that? How is it ever going to happen that someone who is dead in sin and hateful toward God is going to be converted and is going to turn into someone who loves Christ and is declared righteous and made fit to be with him forever? How are you ever going to do that with someone who hates God and is not seeking God? How did he do that in your life? Well, you know, God in his wisdom in some manner, in some way that was outside of your control, he brought the Gospel to you through a book, through a newspaper column, through a friend, through a parent, through family members. Somehow someone communicated the Gospel to you in a way that was perfectly fit for you to receive well at that time and to receive it in a receptive way, and God somehow in a way just like we can't explain how the wind blows or where it's going, in a way that we can't explain, God knew how to do a work in your inner man to impart new life to you so that you would repent and believe.

Who knows how to do that? How does that happen? Jesus says it's beyond men but God knows. God knew and in an intimate knowledge of the operation and the motions of your affections and soul, an intimate knowledge at the particular place where you were at in life, brought these influences to bear on you in a way that guaranteed the result that you

would believe. He chose a worthy end, one for which you should give him eternal praise. "O God, you determined to save me." He deserves praise for that. But understand and we're just illustrating God's wisdom here, God knew the perfect way to convict you of sin, righteousness and judgment so that you would turn to Christ in repentance and faith. That's wisdom. God knows how to deal with the human heart. God knew how to deal with your human heart.

Let me give a word of encouragement to some of you that perhaps became Christians later in life. I often have pastoral conversations like this, people who came to Christ in their 40s or 50s or 60s or 70s and they say, "Oh, I wasted all those years. I regret those missed years." At a human level, I understand that. You should think differently about it though. Rather than a defeated sense of regret about that, you should bring the omniscience and the wisdom of God and view that completely differently and say, "God in his wisdom saved me at this age and God knew that it was better, that was the best way for me to be saved was for God to save me at a later age for reasons I can't understand but God's wisdom was perfect in bringing me to Christ exactly when he did." And the person who comes to Christ when he is 70 in some senses can give even louder praise to God that he was saved then after a lifelong time of sin than the person who comes to Christ when he is of tender age and not established in his habits and patterns of iniquity. So if you've come to Christ later in life, I understand the sense of regret and I have regrets that I didn't come to Christ sooner. I get that, but what we need to realize is that God in his wisdom knew what the best most worthy way was for you to come to Christ and he did it and you rest in that and you give him thanks for that and say, "My salvation was a worthy goal and God chose what he determined to be the best means and the best timing to bring me to Christ." And all of a sudden instead of regret, you're left with wonder, praise and worship yet again.

Scripture extols the wisdom of God and here's another point and I'm about to get animated. I've got to control myself here. Scripture extols the wisdom of God in a way that again humbles you. And just as we said in the first session, that we should not bring the being of God and subject it to our human reason but rather the reverse, we subject our human reason to the being of God, so in like manner you must understand that your wisdom is less than God's and you must submit your wisdom to his realizing that his wisdom is higher, greater and eternal in a way that you could never imagine, that you could never aspire after.

Look at Isaiah 55. You see, the knowledge of God humbles you. It makes you less insistent upon having it your way. It makes you less resentful over the ways that you've been sinned against in the past. It frees you from regret because you realize that all is under the wise omniscient hand of God and you trust him for that. You trust him for that. Do you hear me? You trust him for that. You trust him and you – listen – you trust God and you trust his wisdom more than you trust your own thoughts and your own perceptions about what you think you would like it to be.

Isaiah 55:8,

8 'My thoughts [God says] are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,' declares the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth

How much higher is the sky than the earth? You can't measure it.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.

God knows better than you do. God thinks better than you do. And so as you're going through life and you run into disappointments or sorrows or calamities that you didn't see coming and you say, "How could this possibly be good?" beloved, as you know the attributes of God, you realize, "I can't measure them by the standard of my own perception. I don't know what is best. I don't know what is wise. But God does and I'm in his hands and I trust him even if I don't understand." And understand that God in his sovereign prerogative holds some things to his secret counsel and chooses not to reveal them to us and that's all right. That's his prerogative.

Go back to Deuteronomy 29:29,

29 The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.

There are things in the mind of God which he has chosen not to disclose to us and we defer to that. And beloved, I can tell you based on scriptural authority, that when things come into your life that you don't understand, that you find to be very painful about human relationships or life circumstances or the course of the world and you don't understand, you have to come back and say, "Ah, but God is wise and God knows and I trust him even if I don't understand. I trust him even though this hurts." You see, this is where the character of God leads you. It brings you to know him, when you know his attributes, you get to know him and then it affects the way that you think and respond to all of life. So you put away, you repent of, you do away with a sense of demanding expectation, "God, you owe me an explanation here." God owes us no explanation. If he gave it to you, it would be too high for you to understand anyway.

So it teaches us humility in a way that honors his wisdom, and as we said, the ultimate display of the wisdom of God for us is in our salvation. How can a perfectly just God deal with sinners in mercy without compromising his law? Surely he either has to judge the sinner and mercy goes unfulfilled or he overlooks and washes away the sin and his law is violated if he just deals with it like that. How can he show mercy to sinners without setting aside his law which they have broken? Only a wise God could come up with a plan that sends the Lord Jesus Christ into the world to fulfill the law perfectly in his perfectly righteous life and then offer that lifeblood as a sacrifice that fulfills the blood penalty required of sinners so that those who turn to him and embrace him could have their sins forgiven while the law of God is perfectly upheld. Who could think of anything like that? God could. God had that wisdom to establish that. Do you see that his

wisdom is a source of your salvation? His wisdom not only in orchestrating the circumstances that led to your conversion but the whole greater plan was an act of his wisdom as well.

In a smaller dimension those of you that have walked with Christ any length of time, haven't you seen this play out in your own life? I have. I have talked about him from this pulpit. You found, you've walked into, sorrows came upon you that seemed overwhelming and devastating at the time, life as you knew it ended and where do you turn from there those of you that have tasted the bitter outworking of a broken marriage that you didn't want to come to an end like it did, those of you that have dealt with cancer or sudden death in loved ones? You know and the sorrow was overwhelming at the time. It was crushing but even in the span of this life as time goes on and you get a little bit of separation and you continue to grow and God brings comfort to your heart, you find that somehow God turned that crushing event into an instrument that he has given blessing to you through, right? You know something about that. Well, what are you seeing in that except that a God of great wisdom is accomplishing spiritual goals, worthy spiritual goals through ends that you never would have chosen. So whether you're in those trials now or you can look back and see it in retrospect and say, "Oh, now I understand. With the benefit of 30 years of perspective, now I get it, there was a lot of good coming out of that crushing moment in my life." What can I say except that God has the wisdom in order to cause all things to work together for good to those who love him and are called according to his purpose; that what seemed like reversal at the time was wrapped in an unseen wisdom accomplishing a goal that was worthy to be accomplished. It's amazing. It's incredible.

Speaking personally which I don't like to do but I'm going to anyway, every moment of ministry that God gives to me is tinted with, is flavored with the event that I've spoken too much about when my dad and brother died and it crushed me and broke me beyond recognition. Every moment of ministry is flavored by what transpired with that. That's the wisdom of God. In my ways, I was in no way, I would have vetoed that in advance. "No, not going there." Thankfully God doesn't give us veto power before he brings the trials that break us in order to accomplish the more worthy end beyond them that allows us to minister in his name with a different spirit than we would have before, to humble you in a way that you would not otherwise have had, to treasure his wisdom and his comfort and his mercy. You know, those things only mean something when they actually count. You know, if we just lived all of life with prosperity and getting everything we wanted and had no sorrows and didn't know anything about tears, then what would his mercy and kindness mean to us if we didn't really need it? It's when you really need it that the wisdom of God is on display.

God can do that because he is wise and you may not always understand and you may stagger under the load and your heart may be broken in the process but, beloved, don't ever forget that in the midst of that brokenness, the wisdom of God, the eternal wisdom of God who knows worthy ends and knows how perfectly to achieve those ends, that wisdom is at work in your life as a believer in Christ and that's comfort. That's your rest. Because God is omniscient and wise, therefore you have a basis upon which, you have an

infallible perfect foundation upon which, because God is sovereign in knowledge and perfect in wisdom, you have every conceivable reason to trust him because he is good and he is wise and he has all the details in his hand.

Let's bow in prayer together.

Father, we bow before your great mind. You know all things. You are wise in your dealings with us and you have greatly worthy ends that you are working out in creation, in the church and in our individual lives. You are working out great and wise purposes in the course of our nation. Father, we believe that and we trust you for it all. Yes, Lord, we bank everything that is precious to us, the destiny of our eternal soul, the affections, the deepest affections of our heart, we bank it all, Father, we deposit it all in the assurance, in the Scripture inspired confidence, in the biblically guaranteed reality of your perfect omniscience and your perfect wisdom. So we bow before the mind of God in worship. One who is greater than us is in our midst. We recognize you and bow before you. And one who is great in wisdom is at work in our believing lives. We bow low and we give you thanks. We give you humble thanks, recognizing that your ways are greater than our ways. They are higher than ours and so, no, we're not always going to understand but, Lord, we have something better than understanding our circumstances, we have a true knowledge of you and that is surpassing and that is what we rest in, O God. It is in you and who you have revealed yourself to be and in the salvation that Christ has purchased for us at Calvary. We trust you. We worship you. We submit to you. We depend upon you as we close now in Christ's name. Amen.

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