

The Nature of God IV

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Would you turn in your Bibles please to Psalm 89 this morning?

I would like to read the first 16 verses of Psalm 89.

I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever; With my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, "Mercy shall be built up forever; Your faithfulness You shall establish in the very heavens." "I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn to My servant David: 'Your seed I will establish forever, And build up your throne to all generations.'" Selah

And the heavens will praise Your wonders, O LORD; Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the saints. For who in the heavens can be compared to the LORD? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened to the LORD? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, And to be held in reverence by all those around Him. O LORD God of hosts, Who is mighty like You, O LORD? Your faithfulness also surrounds You. You rule the raging of the sea; When its waves rise, You still them. You have broken Rahab in pieces, as one who is slain; You have scattered Your enemies with Your mighty arm. The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; The world and all its fullness, You have founded them. The north and the south, You have created them; Tabor and Hermon rejoice in Your name. You have a mighty arm; Strong is Your hand, and high is Your right hand. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face.

Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! They walk, O LORD, in the light of Your countenance. In Your name they rejoice all day long, And in Your righteousness they are exalted.¹

May God bless this portion of his inspired Word to our hearts.

¹ Psalm 89:1-16.

Let's pray together.

Great is thy faithfulness, oh God. What a glorious God you are. How faithful and loving and merciful to your people. And what a joy it is to serve you, to know you, to be able to say that we have been adopted into your family. We are your children of God, not because of anything in us, but by your grace alone. Lord, I pray now as we come to your Word that you will speak to us through it and I ask that, Father, if there be anyone here this day outside of Christ in that same state in which many of us once found ourselves, that you will pour upon them the same mercy and grace that you poured upon us, that you would enlighten their minds and hearts, that you would draw them to saving faith in Christ. Speak to us through your Word. Prepare us for your table we ask in Christ's name. Amen.

In this brief series of messages on the nature of God we have seen that all that we know of God comes to us from either general revelation, also called natural revelation, which is that which we can discern of him from nature, from the world in which we live. Or it comes to us from special revelation, that which he reveals of himself by communicating to man through some special means.

Natural revelation cannot bring us very far in understanding what God is like. It reveals him to be a God of great wisdom, one who can design such a world as this. It reveals him to be a God of great creativity to design it with such variety. It reveals him to be a God of great power to bring it all to pass. But to know much more about him, we are dependent upon special revelation.

The Scriptures declare themselves to be God's special revelation and they give credence to that declaration by prophecies that are made there that have been fulfilled, by their unity, though written in a period of over 1600 years, by their preservation through time, by their uniqueness, by their fullness and richness, the sublimity and majesty of the style, the amazing accuracy of the factual statements, the extraordinary effect that the Bible has on nations and on individuals.

These Scriptures which provide us with an infallible source of the knowledge of God reveal this God whom we worship to be, first of all, **self existent, eternal, therefore, not bound by time.**

“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”²

The Scriptures reveal God to be **not bound by a physical body.** God is a spirit and has not a body like men.

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”³ Jesus said.

² Psalm 90:2.

The Scriptures reveal God to be **omniscient**. He knows all creatures.

“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”⁴ (Hebrews 4:13).

He knows **all facts**.

“His understanding is infinite.”⁵ (Psalm 147:5)

He knows all future events. He declares from ancient times the things that are not yet done. (Isaiah 46:10).

The Scriptures reveal God to be **all powerful, omnipotent**.

“By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.”⁶ (Psalm 33:6).

The Scriptures reveal God to be everywhere present, **omnipresent**.

“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.”⁷ (Jeremiah 23:24).

Expanding for a moment on this attribute, **some would argue: If God is, in fact, everywhere, then he must be impure, because he is in contact with impurity---** murderers, liars, blasphemers, etc.

W. A. Pratney writes, “As a holy God he enters the hearts of sinners who inspect them and convict them of sin. But his essence is never mingled with any impurity. He is like the sun’s rays. A sunbeam may fall on a pile of refuse, but that pile cannot defile the sunbeam. Similarly, nothing can defile God. Our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world and lived among sinners and yet the apostle John said of him, ‘In him there is no sin,’ (1 John 3:5). He interacted with sinful men and women throughout his life on earth, but remained totally undefiled by them.”

Perhaps you have wondered: **If God is everywhere, why does the Scripture say he withdraws himself or is far away at times?**

“The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.”⁸ (Proverbs 15:29).

³ John 1:18.

⁴ Hebrews 4:13.

⁵ Psalm 147:5.

⁶ Psalm 33:6.

⁷ Jeremiah 23:24.

⁸ Proverbs 15:29.

And doesn't the psalmist pray on occasion, "Lord, why are you so far from me? Why have you withdrawn yourself from me? Come to me, Lord."

Why do we pray for God *to be with us*? (It is not uncommon for us as we begin a worship service to say, "Lord, be with us as we seek to worship you. Be present with us,") if, in fact, God is *everywhere present*?

John MacArthur writes, "The important thing to keep in mind is the distinction between *God's essence* and his *relation to people*. He is *everywhere in his essence*, but only in certain places *relationally*. In a relational sense, both the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus reside in every true believer, Romans 8:9, Ephesians 3:17, Colossians 3:11." He notes, "Paul wrote, 'Christ in you is the hope of glory,' Colossians 1:27. But before he ever indwelt us relationally as believers, his essence was present to convict us of our sin and to save us."

In other words, as we strive to understand the Scripture, we must conclude that although God is *everywhere present*, there is also a sense in which he can *withdraw his presence* which must refer, then, to *his relationship to an individual*.

Thus, theologian **Herman Bavinck** put it this way.

"It is not with respect to *place*, but with respect to being *unlike him* that a man is far from God."

Note: There is a great difference between the biblical doctrine that God is an omnipresent, personal, loving, creative being who not only made the world and mankind, but revealed himself to us by communicating his Scripture----there is a great difference between *that doctrine* and the doctrine of *pantheism*, that sees God as an *impersonal life force*.

"The universe is God," says the pantheist. "We do not need to postulate a personal intelligent creator."

You will remember, in George Lucas' epic *Star Wars* saga the great power behind the universe was depicted as an *impersonal life force* which we could, in a sense, *tap into* and to be used for *good* or *evil* purposes.

But the Scriptures present us with a God who is personal, who *thinks* and *feels* and *creates* and *acts*, who knows you intimately so that Jesus could declare:

"But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered."⁹

"Not even a sparrow falls without our Father," Jesus said, "And you are of more value than many sparrows."

⁹ Luke 12:7.

Now when you contemplate the *vastness of the universe* and when astronomers tell us that there are more stars in the heavens than there are *grains of sand upon all earth's beaches* and when you realize that *earth's sun* is just *one of those grains of sand*, just a *medium size grain of sand* and that our planet is therefore comparable to one little fleck of dust circling that grain of sand, *a fleck of dust that is, by the way, a million times smaller than the grain of sand*, it becomes difficult for us at times to believe that the God who created all of this actually knows and cares for us.

Author **Samuel Shoemaker** addressed this point. He said,

“There are many who think God is so great and so impersonal that he cannot possibly mean anything personal to us and we cannot even say that he is ‘a personal God.’” He says,

“Let me try to answer that not from my own wisdom, but from that of a man who graduated from Princeton with the highest honors in all of its history, *signe cum laud*, the late **Dr. Henry Norris Russell** of the Department of Astronomy. One evening he had been giving us some head splitting figures on the size of the universe. Taking with him afterwards I said, ‘Dr. Russell, how is it possible for an infinite God, in other words, a God who made all of this with such magnitude, how is it possible for an infinite God to have time for us?’ He replied, and I recalled his exact words, he said:

‘The trouble is that your infinite God is not infinite enough. If he is really infinite he can dispatch with the affairs of this universe in the twinkling of an eye and then have all the time in the world for you.’”

That is the God with whom we have to do. He can have all the time in the world for you and so he says to you, ‘Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.’ He says to you, ‘Cast all your cares upon him for he cares for you.’ Peter said, ‘Cast all your cares upon him for he cares for you.’”

This God who created all--- this majestic God of great power and authority and might and dominion, He *cares for us*? Absolutely. He cares for us. The God revealed in Scripture is not an impersonal life force, but a personal being who has revealed himself to the men and women he has created in his own image, who came to us in the person of his Son, the Son who was called **the express image of God's person**.

And so the Bible urges you to *approach him*. You are to approach him. *Come*, come to him. *Call upon him*. *Ask him*. “See what I will do,” he says.

We saw that this personal God is **immutable**, that is **unchangeable**.

“The counsel of the LORD stands forever.”¹⁰

He is the same “yesterday, today and forever.”

¹⁰ Psalm 33:11.

A. W. Pink writes, “He cannot change for the better, for he is already perfect. And being perfect, he cannot change for the worse. He is altogether uninfluenced by the flight of time.”

You and I are bound by time. Our lives are scheduled by time. We are bound in this time continuum. He is not bound by time at all. He is beyond it. He is uninfluenced by the flight of time.

So when the Scripture speaks of God, for example, being sorry that he had made man on the earth (Genesis 6:6), it must therefore be describing a change in his dealings with men *in time* and not a change in his *eternal counsel* which is, the Scripture says, **unchangeable**.

Closely linked to God’s immutability is his **faithfulness**. We read of it this morning from Psalm 89.

“Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God.”¹¹

Psalm 40 verse 10:

“I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.”¹²

“...with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.”¹³

“You are the Lord God who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans. You have performed your words,” (Nehemiah 9).

“For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.”¹⁴ (Psalm 94:14).

“But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children’s children.”¹⁵ (Psalm 103:17).

“Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD, according unto thy word.”¹⁶

“For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations.”¹⁷ (Psalm 119)

¹¹ Deuteronomy 7:9.

¹² Psalm 40:10.

¹³ Psalm 89:1.

¹⁴ Psalm 94:14.

¹⁵ Psalm 103:17.

¹⁶ Psalm 119:65.

¹⁷ Psalm 119:89-90.

Psalm 121:

“He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.”¹⁸

He is a faithful. God is faithful in his **disciplining** of his people.

“I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.”¹⁹ (Psalm 119:75).

God is faithful in **providing for** his people.

“Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”²⁰

Note that there may be times when you are **tempted to doubt** the faithfulness of God. There are times in our lives when each of us is tempted to doubt the faithfulness of God. When that happens, cling to his Word. Wait upon him for more light, because Jesus told his apostles:

“What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.”²¹ (John 13:7).

He was speaking to them of his departure, of his crucifixion and ultimate resurrection and glorification.

“What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.”²²

Christian, cling to that. There are things he does in your life and you will not understand them when they happen, but *you will understand after this*. What he said to his apostles he could say to us because we know the Scripture says when we get to glory we will understand all those things that were so mysterious here.

Author Grace Groben writes,

“Some time ago when it became necessary to break her of the habit of sleeping with me, I laid my little child in her crib, kissed her goodnight, and turned out the light. She cried long and bitterly, thinking that I did not hear her cry and that I did not love her, not knowing that I was in reality not far away---only hidden by the darkness--- and that my mother-heart was aching for her. I indeed heard her cries and longed to do what she wanted, but for her own good I must hide myself.”

¹⁸ Psalm 121:3-4.

¹⁹ Psalm 119:75.

²⁰ 1 Thessalonians 5:24.

²¹ John 13:7.

²² Ibid.

“And so in times of *affliction*, our God, indeed, hears our cry, and he is near, Psalm 23 verse four. (He is with us through that valley of the shadow of death.) He feels for us, (Exodus 3:4) though for our own good he may hide his face and may seem not to hear.”

To say that God is **faithful** is to say that he is **trustworthy**. We can safely trust him to do not only what he has said, but to always do what is right.

“Who is among you that fears the LORD?...that walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the LORD, and STAY upon his God.”²³ (Isaiah 50:10.)

“...blessed are all they that wait for him.”²⁴ (Isaiah 30:18).

Perhaps you know the story of William Cowper. We pronounce it **Cooper**. It is spelled *Cowper*. He struggled with deep depression much of his life. He was ministered to by John Newton, former slave trader, and of course the author of *Amazing Grace*. Newton ministered to Cowper for decades. Cowper found himself in such deep depression that for years he *couldn't even* or *wouldn't even* worship. He loved Newton. He loved to talk to Newton, but there were years when he just withdrew himself from the body of Christ and struggled with what we would call mental illness.

It was Cowper who wrote:

“Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace.
Behind a frowning providence,
He hides a smiling face.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds you so much dread,
Are rich with mercy, and shall break,
In blessings o'er your head.”

A. W. Pink writes,

“Human nature cannot be relied upon; but God can. However unstable I may be, however fickle my friends may prove, God changes not. If he varied as we do, if he willed one thing today and another tomorrow, if he were controlled by caprice, who could confide in him? But all praise to his glorious name, He is ever the same. His purpose is fixed. His will is stable. His Word is sure. Here, then, is a rock on which we may fix our feet while the mighty torrent is sweeping away everything around us. The permanence of God's character guarantees the fulfillment of his promises.” ([The Attributes of God](#), p. 39)

²³ Isaiah 50:10.

²⁴ Isaiah 30:18.

Closely linked to God’s faithfulness is his goodness. Listen to some verses that exalt his goodness.

“He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”²⁵ (Acts 14:17).

“Good and upright is the LORD.”²⁶ (Psalm 25:8).

“...the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.”²⁷ (Psalm 33:5).

“O taste and see that the LORD is good.”²⁸ (Psalm 34:8).

“...the goodness of God endureth continually.”²⁹ (Psalm 52:1).

“Blessed be the Lord, Who daily loads us with benefits, even the God of our salvation!”³⁰ (Psalm 68:19).

“For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.”³¹ (Psalm 86:5).

Psalm 100 vs. 5: “ For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting.”³²

The goodness of God is evident all around us, but how seldom do we pause to meditate on it? Not only did he provide food for men, but think about it. He provided *an infinite variety* of food for men.

He could have just said, “Ok, you guys, people, you eat the grass.”

He provided us with an infinite variety. He could have given us pellets, you know, just little rabbit pellets that fall off the tree---we eat the pellets, we are done.

But the goodness of God is demonstrated in the variety of the good things that he gives to his people. He didn’t just put *plants* on the earth to give us oxygen---we need oxygen. We have to have plants in his plan. But every plant could look alike. Every tree could be the same. Why not? He gave us this infinite variety.

He didn't just give us *animals*, the animal kingdom. He gave us this *infinite variety*, fish of every different color and size and shape. Some of them look like horses for goodness’ sake! I mean, *go figure!*

What an incredible demonstration of the goodness of God.

²⁵ Acts 14:17.

²⁶ Psalm 25:8.

²⁷ Psalm 33:5.

²⁸ Psalm 34:8.

²⁹ Psalm 52:1.

³⁰ Psalm 68:19.

³¹ Psalm 86:5.

³² Psalm 100:5.

And what about *colors*. You know, everything could simply be grey or black. Why the colors? Why the beauty? Why the sunset? What is *that* all about? ---the beauty of a sunset. It doesn't *have* to be beautiful. It doesn't serve any purpose, does it? It is a sign of the goodness of God. It helps us to glorify God.

God's goodness is displayed *in his wonderful care for us*. Pink writes,

"Everything about the structure of our bodies attests the goodness of their maker. How suited the hands to perform their allotted work. How good of the Lord to appoint sleep to refresh the wearied body! How benevolent his provision to give to the eyes lids and brows for their protection!"

And he says, "and so we might continue on indefinitely..." That is, describing just the goodness God showed to us in the way he created us.

Consider his provision of *the circulatory system*. Carrying oxygen to our trillions of cells are the tiny **red blood cells**.

"The red blood cells are small, thin and disc-shaped with depressions on both sides. They are by far the most numerous of the solid elements in the blood stream. At any given time the body contains perhaps 25 trillion of them, enough, if spreads out, to cover four tennis courts. The red blood cells work extraordinarily hard circuiting the system some 300,000 times before they finally wear out and disintegrate after a life of about 120 days. Replacements are made at a rate of **three million new cells every second** in the bone marrow. There they are taken up by the capillary network and sent on their way through the blood stream." [[The ABC's of the Human Body](#), published by Reader's Digest, p. 94]

Three million every second! Count three seconds, a little bit more, 10 million new red blood cells have been formed inside your body by this God who wondrously planned it all!

And if you remove them from your body, there are so many of them they would cover four tennis courts. Do you think you are tired now? Take away those red blood cells!

The most complex organ in the human body is *the brain* weighing about three pounds. An individual brain may be connected to as many as 10,000 other cells. In the book *The ABCs of the Human Body*, a Reader's Digest book, they asked the question: Is the brain a computer? And they try to answer it and I am reading a little segment of this.

"While a computer processes information, a single step at the time, the brain with its trillions of cross-linked neural connections, processes information along millions of multi-directional pathways *simultaneously*. Both a computer and a brain are equipped with electricity-powered mechanisms for storing, retrieving and processing information."

I didn't know that. You people have an electricity-powered system. What else are you keeping from me? Apparently it's talking about these *electrons firing* in your brain.

“Does all this make the brain a computer? Well, in a limited sense, yes,” they write. “But the brain is *much more than a computer*. No computer can decide that it is wasting its talents and should embark on a new ways of life. The computer cannot drastically alter its own program; before it sets out in a new direction, a person with a brain must reprogram it. More important still, a computer cannot relax, it cannot daydream, or laugh. It cannot become inspired or creative. It cannot experience consciousness or perceive meaning. It cannot fall in love. Once more, then, is the brain a computer? In a word, no.” [Ibid.]

Truly we are fearfully and wonderfully made. And God's goodness to us is evident in creation. But how few of us give glory to God for his goodness in creation, for those colors, for the music, of the sense of smell and touch and speech.

“Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!”³³ ---the psalmist cries out, Psalm 107 verse eight.

But too many of us *despise* the riches of his goodness (Romans two). Not only do we despise the riches of his goodness, that verse says we also despise the riches of his forbearance and long suffering which leads us then to another aspect of God's character, **his forbearance, his longsuffering, his patience**, in other words.

Exodus 34:6:

“The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.”³⁴

“The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression...”³⁵

God is *patient* with his people---**longsuffering** with us.

And it could be argued that God's patience and longsuffering is an aspect of **His Power**.

Perhaps that is the idea of Romans nine:

“What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, *endured with much longsuffering* the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction...”³⁶

Perhaps his patience is an aspect of his power and his might. In other words, by withholding his hand of judgment he is demonstrating his power, his self control. If God

³³ Psalm 107:8, 15, 21, 31.

³⁴ Exodus 34:6.

³⁵ Numbers 14:18.

³⁶ Romans 9:22.

had immediately destroyed the wicked, his power of self control, his patience, his long-suffering would not have been so clearly manifested. But the power of his patience is displayed in his bearing along with sinners.

He waited 120 years as Noah preached righteousness before destroying mankind. Even after he saw that “the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

God’s people were in bondage for 400 years before God brought justice upon Egypt. God’s patience and long suffering with sinners delayed his wrath, but, no doubt, from the perspective of his people, God was *delaying justice*.

Even as the martyrs cry out around his throne:

“How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”³⁷ (Revelation 6:10).

In other words, perhaps when God delays an answer to you, when God delays to answer you a prayer for justice in a certain matter, it is because he is manifesting his patience to the one who deserves his wrath.

What seems to you like God failing to do what he promised, may be, in fact, God patiently and graciously withholding his wrath for a season.

The way it works is when God deals with **us** we appreciate his patience. *We want him to be long suffering.* When he deals with others, we want *his justice to be swift and sure.* How long will you delay? When will you avenge? What sort of God would allow such wickedness?

What sort of God would allow such wicked men to live? ---the same sort of God who allows *you* to live, and *me* to live.

“Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?”³⁸ (Matthew 18).

God is patient and long suffering.

We thought for just a few minutes this morning about his goodness, his faithfulness, his patience, his longsuffering. These are what are called ***communicable*** attributes of God. They can be shared by us, unlike, for example, his ***omnipotence*** or his ***omnipresence***.

Christian, you are called to glorify God by reflecting such things as his goodness, his faithfulness, his patience.

³⁷ Revelation 6:10.

³⁸ Matthew 18:33.

So I ask you. **Is the goodness of God reflected in your goodness to others?** Jesus said:

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things.”³⁹

The fruit of the Spirit is goodness (Galatians five). You are called to be ready to every good work, (Titus three). We are to provoke one another to love and to good works, (Hebrews 10).

Are you looking for opportunities to *do good* to others?

You are called to be faithful. You are called to be faithful to your Lord, faithful to your promises, faithful to your word, faithful to your family. You are called to reflect God’s *faithfulness* in your character.

You are called to be *patient and long suffering toward others* that they might see God’s patience and long suffering manifested in you.

The story is told of a Union soldier who was bitter in his hatred of the Confederacy. The soldier lay wounded at Gettysburg. At the close of the battle General Lee rode by, and the soldier, though faint from exposure and loss of blood raised his hands, looked Lee in the face and shouted as loudly as he could, “Hurrah for the Union.”

The general heard him, dismounted and went toward him and the soldier confesses, “I thought he meant to kill me. But as he came up he looked at me with such a sad expression upon his face that all fear left me. And looking right into my eyes he said, ‘My son, I hope you will soon be well.’ If I live a thousand years I shall never forget the expression on General Lee’s face. There he was defeated, retiring from a field that had cost him and his cause almost their last hope and yet he stopped to say words like this to a wounded soldier of the opposition who had taunted him as he passed by. As soon as the general left me I cried myself to sleep there upon the bloody battleground.”

“In the morning I awoke to find myself attended by a confederate soldier who, though having suffered a severe head wound himself, showed me no little kindness. May God grant long life to Corporal Henry G. Carpenter of Mississippi.”

Could that be...? No. What are the odds? May God grant long life to....

“And may he be restored to soundness of mind----huh.”

Well, not all prayers are answered yes, I guess.

Well, we are called to be patient and long suffering to one another just as Henry is patient and long suffering with me.

³⁹ Matthew 12:35.

But let me remind you as we come to the Lord's Table that it would not be possible for sinners to manifest any of these attributes of God had not God shown his goodness and patience and faithfulness to us by sending his own dear Son to this sinful earth. God's holiness required that your sin be punished. But God's love led him to provide a way of redemption. The second person of the trinity would leave the glory above and take upon himself human flesh. He would live that sinless life that no mere man or woman could live. And then he would go to that cross and endure the wrath of a holy God, the wrath of his Father as if he were a sinner so that you could be forgiven. "God made him to be sin for us, he who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Now God says to us, he says to you, "If you will repent of your sins and lay hold upon Christ alone, acknowledging him to be the Lord of glory who died that you might live, who rose again in majesty, if you will cease trusting in your own efforts to merit eternal life, transfer your trust to Jesus alone, rest completely upon him, all your sins will be forgiven." He will give you this precious gift of everlasting life. He will adopt you into his family.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."⁴⁰

Our good and faithful God has been patient and long suffering toward you, sinner. God has been patient and long suffering toward you. He could have taken you life away by a thousand different means, but he has preserved you unto this day, to this hour to hear, once again, this good news that you don't have to die alone without Christ. God provided a way for your sins to be forgiven. You don't have to bear the punishment for those sins. There is one who came to live a sinless life, die upon the cross and bear that punishment for you.

If you will come to him, cry out to him sincerely from your heart, "God be merciful to me a sinner. I have broken your holy laws. But I believe that Jesus lived a sinless life, died upon that cross and rose again from the dead. And I am hereby transferring my complete faith and trust from myself and my goodness to Jesus Christ alone, because I know my goodness is not good enough. There is not one righteous, no not one. And I am resting upon Jesus Christ. And, Lord, you say in your Word that if I trust in you all my sins will be forgiven. Jesus said, 'He who comes to me, he who *believes in me* has everlasting life.' That is what I want."

If you will come to God that way right now you will *know* this God---this infinite God, all powerful God, all knowing God, patient, merciful, kind and gracious God. Will you come here? Come to him now.

Let's pray.

⁴⁰ Ephesians 2:8-9.

Father, you are glorious in your majesty, in your person. You are the eternal one. You were here before anything existed, before the mountains were brought forth or ever you formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting. Lord, I pray, if there be souls here this day, dead in sins, without hope, draw them, open their eyes, give them saving faith. May this be the way of salvation for some. We ask in Christ's name. Amen.