

# God is everywhere

*Knowing God*

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**Bible Text:** Psalm 139; Genesis 16:7-15

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Any *Star Trek* fans among us will be aware of the transporter room as a means of transferring people from one place to another within seconds. As clever as that is, and for any of the young ones I will point out that it's not real. Even if it were possible, no one could be in two places at one time.

Then we could take it a step further and say, what about people traveling through time? But, again, if it were possible, you would only be in one place at a time.

The message this morning is very simple. God is not like that. God is everywhere present in time and in space.

We are looking at knowing God knowing the things that God has decided to reveal about himself. And we have looked at the existence of God, the very first thing that God tells us in Scripture.

“In the beginning God...”<sup>1</sup>

We spent some time looking at the existence of God from Scripture and we looked, then, at God as creator. That is the next thing he told us.

“In the beginning God created...”<sup>2</sup>

And we spent a session there. And then we looked at the next thing he told us and that is that there is a trinity. We looked at the fact of the triune God and what that means for us and then most recently on Easter Sunday we thought about the power of God and particularly in relation to the resurrection. And so this morning we look at another aspect of what God has chosen to reveal about himself; that he is everywhere present.

Again, it is one of the things we can't fully take in. We are only used to the dimensions in which we live. I understand that Andy is here with us today and I can understand that he will be in America tomorrow but he can't be in both places at the same time. Yet our omnipresent God can be here and in America and in everyplace in between.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 1:1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

When we look around our land and the world at large it is very clear that people live as if God does not exist at all or he is very far away. He is so far away it's as if just set the world on course, as it were, and now has nothing to do with the world. And the danger is even as Christians we can think of God as being at a distance.

So I want us for a few moments this morning to consider this great fact that God is everywhere present. And the first heading is this:-

## **1 How is God everywhere present?**

What does that really mean? Well, the simple answer is it is because he is God. But we tend to think that God here with us now and we tend to think ... we think of our friend Andy in New Zealand and we think of John and Fiona in Texas and other people, wherever they may be, we think, well, yes, they are there, but they are not here also. But we think, well, we know that God is with them, but God is also with us. We must not think of God in the sense of a body. We can think of him in the sense of a body when his only begotten Son came, the Lord Jesus Christ. But we are thinking now of the godhead being everywhere present. God, we read, is spirit and, as such, fills every part of every place.

Sometimes when we talk to children and we say to them, "Now if you are thinking of being naughty." children look this way and the children look that way. And we say, "Don't forget to up." We know the lessons being taught. Don't forget, God is watching us. But really, you know, children don't have to look that way. God is everywhere present. God is there with us. It doesn't mean God is spread out in some way. God is fully here. He is fully everywhere.

We read and Solomon tells us in 1 Kings chapter eight.

"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 builded?"<sup>3</sup>

Solomon had built this great house. He had got permission to do it and we know the presence of the Lord filled the place so that the priests couldn't minister. And it was a tremendous place to be and Solomon said some tremendous words under the Spirit of God. And he says, "This can't contain God. This isn't all there is of God here. All that what God is is also out there in all of the heavens and the earth. It cannot contain him, not just the earth, but the universe."

God said himself:

"Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off?"<sup>4</sup>

And in the same verses he say:

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<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings 8:27.

<sup>4</sup> Jeremiah 23:23.

“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.”<sup>5</sup>

It is an amazing fact. I am not sure I am really taking this on board as much until I come to look at this, but God completely fills the entire universe without division and he does it for all time in triune presence. Some time back we saw American astronauts flying to the moon. One astronaut said when he came back, “I didn’t see God up there.” And another astronaut was so struck by the beauty of what he saw and the presence of God that he read Genesis one and verse one. Two men and two different experiences. But someone said to the astronaut that said he didn’t see God up there. “You didn’t see God up there, but God saw you.” God is there as much as he is here with us.

Well, we can go further. God is not only everywhere present, but he is everywhere present at all times. God is not limited to our dimensions of time and space. And we have touched on this a little bit when we thought of the existence of God and the eternality of God, that to God it is always now. God is the eternal now. We cannot expect to fully understand how these things can be and I do believe, again, that is why the revelation of God in Scripture, it is limited in the sense of what we might be able to grasp. Psalm 139, says:

“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.”<sup>6</sup>

Now that didn’t mean he switched off and thought, I can’t take that in. It meant that he did ponder it. He did consider it and we know that by the words that he wrote and his conclusion there at that particular point was: This is really difficult. I can’t fully understand how God can be everywhere present. And it is a bit like the existence of God. God announced it in the beginning God. He didn’t give an explanation and God doesn’t have to give an explanation of why and how he is everywhere present. He just says, “That is how it is, believe.” That is what faith is. He is even near to those who don’t believe in him.

When Paul was preaching in Athens on Mars hill and he saw all the false gods, he saw one to the unknown God, just in case they had forgotten one. And, of course, they had forgotten one. The one they had forgotten was the true and living God. And he says, “Here I declare unto you.” But he says in one place in that little sermon in Acts 17 he says, “As far as God is concerned, he is not far from every one of us.”

And people like professor Hawkins and others may go to great lengths, to deny his existence but we can say this morning, “Despite the views of anyone, God is not far from them.”

We think of the problems at the moment in North Korea. And we think of that ... I will call him not much more than a lad who is ruling that country as a dictator, just setting out

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<sup>5</sup> Jeremiah 23:24.

<sup>6</sup> Psalm 139:6.

all these toys in front of him as it were, a very difficult and dangerous situation, a country where if you just possess a Bible you will be taken off to a camp for the rest of your days and not only you, but your children and your parents and all you family and all those that they can gather up and just put you out of the way, miles and miles from anywhere, because you possess the Bible. That man, God is not far from him.

Consider Chinese leaders, particularly some of the local leaders who imprison God's people. God is not far from them.

Let's come a little closer. God is not only present in all places, but there is a personal application, particularly to believers. You see, I say that God is not far from all of those people. We take that North Korean leader. But he does not know that. He is not aware of the presence of God. There is a great difference between the fact that God is everywhere present and when he manifests his presence, when we are aware of his presence. God is not only near, but he is with his people. And we read about the story of Hagar and we could have read of others like Jacob. I may quote him in a moment where the Lord was right there with them. We will come back to Hagar in a moment. But we can go further. Not only was the Lord with them in that sense, the Lord Jesus said:

“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”<sup>7</sup>

We can go further - in the book of Romans we are told there that God's people are the temple of God the Holy Spirit. So he dwells within us. Now how near is that. And we can go even further than that. We read in Peter that we are partakers of the divine nature, that we are partakers and members of the very body of Christ. He is our head. He has made us the Church. We are near. We are nigh. We are with. We are in. We are joined and all the words that God uses for the great intimacy of being present with the Lord's people.

But whilst we remember that he is present with us as the Lord's people, never forget that God in his very nature is everywhere present.

## **2 He is with us in our particular circumstances.**

It's all right knowing that God is everywhere. That is mind blowing and it needs some thinking about and it is a great thought and it is good just to sit down for a while quietly, perhaps with the Scriptures open and just meditate on this very fact. But he is with us in our particular circumstances.

I have said we have the example of Hagar. Hagar was at her wit's end and she gives us a great example of how the Lord is with us in our circumstances. Everyone seems to be against Hagar. She was in a strange land. Wouldn't, at first, have known the language even. She was with strange people. And eventually she finds she is going not have a child with someone who she might not have chosen to have a child with. She might not even have chosen to have a child at all. And she gets kicked out of the house, out of the family

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<sup>7</sup> Matthew 18:20.

home. She is at the end of her tether. And, my friends, sometimes it is when we are at the end of our tether that we particularly know the presence of the Lord. It is when he appears with resources for us. In her situation she was isolated. She was isolated from her family. She was isolated from any concept of God in the sense that she came from a pagan land. The only knowledge that she would have had of God would have been what Sarah and Abraham would have told her.

And Sarah certainly was not always a good example here. Hagar was at the bottom of the social scale. Today she would be there with asylum seekers and refugees. But by actually conceiving a child by Abraham in the culture of the day, all of the sudden she was catapulted from the bottom of the social scale right up to the top. She was elevated above Sarah. And that gave extra problems. And that is why she was removed from the home.

And so here she is not knowing where she is going. She is destitute. And the Lord comes to her and we read of the meeting between her and the Lord. And at that end of that meeting she says in verse 13:

“Thou God seest me.”<sup>8</sup>

Isn't that a wonderful thing? Out of all that we could say with respect, all the business of God he is interested in one destitute person. He was able to help this dear lady and to make a plan for her and to guide her back home again and to deliver a child and we know all that followed on from that.

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Hagar was like the woman at the well that the Lord Jesus Christ came to visit. He walked miles out of his way just to visit that one woman. There is a lesson there for us there: sometimes we are called to preach or to go somewhere and there is just a handful of people there. If the Lord could walk many miles in the heat to visit one lady, then we can get in our cars to go and visit someone, can't we. The Lord said “I must needs go through Samaria.” It was predetermined in the plan of God. Going to meet that woman at that well at that time was an eternal appointment. And it is lovely. God has eternal appointments. He has them with us, too. We may not know them at the time, but he does. And so he met this one woman and it was a woman that everyone knew here only by her sin. But the Lord comes and speaks with her.

We may be unwell. We may be despondent. We may be burdened. We may be worried. You cannot list anything that the Lord cannot feel and cannot help. He is touched with the feelings of our infirmities. And he is here with us.

Let us move on.

### **3 He is with us sometimes when we don't know it.**

There is the example of Jacob. We didn't read of him, but most of you will be familiar with the story. Jacob is running away from home and on his journey he sleeps and he had

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<sup>8</sup> Genesis 16:13.

this dream, of a ladder reaching up into heaven. And in that dream the Lord spoke to him confirming his covenant blessings. And when he woke up in Genesis 28 we read in verse 16 he says:

“Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not.”<sup>9</sup>

And that was a wonderful thing. Jacob had no mind for God, not at that particular time. Quite the opposite, really. He wasn't expecting to meet the Lord there. He didn't kneel down, as it were and ask that the Lord might meet with him. He just went to sleep. But the Lord came in grace and the Lord often does that. He will come to us even when we are not thinking of him, that the Lord is still there with us. And we are not always aware of his presence.

But, you know, it is something we need to crave, isn't it, that we might know more of his felt presence.

At our prayer meeting in Lincoln yesterday we looked to those just two verses of Jabez' prayer when he said:

“Oh that thou wouldest bless me.”<sup>10</sup>

That is a wonderful prayer. And he goes on in that prayer. He asked the Lord to strengthen, that he might have his hand with him. He asked that his coast might be enlarged. And he asks that he might mark sin, because he know that sin grieved him. And so he was asking the Lord again that he might be holy and it was in order of these things that the overarching, request was: Lord, let me know you are there with me. And that is what we need, isn't it, to feel him near. Present we know thou art, but, oh, thyself reveal. Yes, in public worship but also in private.

We read in Romans there was a time when the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, when there is that flooding of the streets, as it were, with the blessing of the Lord. He is with us even at times when we don't recognize he is with us as Jacob.

#### **4 But then also he is with us at all times.**

The psalm that we read just of that in so many ways. We can't escape is presence. Ask Jonah. He knows what it is to know the presence of the Lord in the depths of the sea. Even inside that great fish. And Psalm 139 says whether we are on the sea, in the sea, whether we are in the sky, whether it is day or night the Lord is there. It is interesting. He says and night it is the same with the Lord, isn't it? You know, when we are younger, perhaps, some are a little afraid of the dark. And it is a great comfort, isn't it? Well, the Lord is there with us. And it doesn't make any difference whether it is light or dark. If the Lord is there, it is the same to him.

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<sup>9</sup> Genesis 28:16.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Chronicles 4:10.

He speaks about the fact he was with us when we were formed in the womb and it is a great, another great lesson. And this psalm—I won't go into the detail of it now—but this psalm is one of the great passages of Scripture that teach us of the error of abortion, that when people tell us, oh, we are not formed until a certain time or whatever. This Scripture tells us that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. And that was in the womb from the very beginning.

“For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb.”<sup>11</sup>

And whether we look at being in the womb right through our lives the Lord is with us even until we get to the tomb. From the womb to the tomb we may know the presence of the Lord. The psalmist says:

“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.”<sup>12</sup>

He is with us when we are mysteriously made in the womb and he is going to be with us in that last day when another hymn writer says he takes us by the hand and leads us to the Promised Land.

So wonderful encouragement there. The Lord is with us in so many ways. You know, he is with us even in nature. You know, we not only see his handiwork, but we see the very force that keeps things going. And we mentioned that when we were looking at Genesis one, that is by him all things consist, all things are held together.

Mr. Spurgeon said, “There is no other life except the life which leaped from the eternal existence. He fills the universe with his presence.” And that is why we sang the hymn that we did a few moments ago.

How great a being, Lord, is thine, which doth all beings keep.  
Thy knowledge is the only line to sound so vast a deep.  
Thou art the sea, without a shore...

See, the hymn writer is using picture language that we can understand, but he is greater than this.

Thou art a sea that without a shore, a stone without a sphere,  
Thy time is now and evermore, thy place is everywhere.

You know, there is an awful lot in that little verse of a hymn describing the omnipresence of our God.

But He is also with us in providence, isn't he? He is not only with us in time, and in place, but in situations. We know the verse in Romans 8:

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<sup>11</sup> Psalm 139:13.

<sup>12</sup> Psalm 116:15.

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”<sup>13</sup>

Well, how are all these things good? Because God is there. He is everywhere present. He is even at this moment maneuvering and working in the minds and in the feet and in the hands of people that you and I will meet in the coming days. He is there. He is into next week before we get there.

And, my friends, isn't he with us in prayer and communion? If it he isn't, it is not prayer and communion. Is he not with us in meditation when we sit down and you ponder some of these things? My friends, he is with us in all of this.

So, what have we seen so far? The Lord is everywhere present. He is near. He is nigh. He is with. He is in. He is in union. He is with his people. He is with us in our particular circumstances. Think of Hagar at her wit's end. He is with us sometimes when we don't know it, like Jacob who went to sleep, really, running away, but God came in grace and met with him. And he is with us at all times. He is with us in nature, in providence, in prayer.

So let's make some application of these things.

The very fact that we learn these things about God should have an impact on us. They aren't there just a head knowledge. But one of the things this should really help us with in the avoidance of sin. He is there as a preventative. Would we sin if the Lord was standing right next to us? Well, he is. There should be a comfort in that, too, because the Lord is there. Will not give us a temptation that we can't cope with.

I don't want to be too indelicate, but, would most people commit a sin such as adultery in the sight of God? Oh, no, we say. And yet we do know that people do and with every other sin beside, because everything is open before the Lord.

One has said that a knowledge of the only presence of God should sober us up.

The psalmist says that he knows our thoughts before they even arrive in our minds. Look at the effect that it had on David. He meditated on these things. He wrote them down under the hand of God the Holy Spirit. And he says in verse 23, the last two verses of this psalm, you know, having written all that, having come to a certain understanding of the fact that God is everywhere he says:

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:  
And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way  
everlasting.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Romans 8:28.

<sup>14</sup> Psalm 139:23-24.



What is he saying? He is saying, “Lord, I know thou art everywhere present. Come and test me. I want to be the person that I ought to be for thee. So come and make me that person. Search me.”

You see, we can't hide. That is the opposite, isn't it? Jonah wants to hide from God. And there are people that want to hide things from God, sins and activities and all sorts of things. And when we are right with God, when we understand that God is everywhere present, we want to be right with him. You say, “Lord, I am not going to hide anything from thee. But, rather, come and search me and see if there is something hidden that I am even not aware of, the secret sins, the thing that, perhaps, I am not yet aware of. Lord, search me. Know my heart, the heart that is deceptive above all things, that is able to, as it were, contain awful things. But try me. Know my thoughts, what is going on in my mind. See if there be any wicked way in me. And if there is...” He doesn't say just forget it but ...

“...lead me in the way everlasting.”<sup>15</sup>

Oh, that we might have such a spirit. Is this not also only an avoidance of sin, but it is a comfort to know that the Lord is with us. It means that we are never alone. And sometimes people say we might be in a crowd, but you can feel alone. We can feel alone, but we are, in fact, never ever alone. He has promised never to leave us nor forsake us. And he can promise that because he is everywhere present. We ought never to be fearful in the sense of being alone, because he is with us.

The hymn writer says:- ‘Where Jesus is, ‘tis heaven there.’ And it is when we know his presence. Oh you might say, “Doesn't the Lord sometimes hide his face from us?” That is true. The Lord may shield his presence from us but He is still there. He has shielded your sense of an awareness of his presence and it is for a good reason that you might long after him more.

We say in, perhaps, a slightly jocular way, ‘absence makes the heart grow fonder.’ And that is how the Lord tests us sometimes that we might be driven to our knees.

Is this not also a strength for the battle? We are in a spiritual battle every day. We are confronted with the problems that come from the flesh and the world and the devil and particularly the devil. He knows how to fire those fiery darts. He knows where the little chinks are in our armor. The captain of our salvation is not hiding behind us. He is there right with us to help us. He has given us all our armor. He has given us the sword. And he is there with us.

And then, finally, is it not a challenge to any that know him not. If he be not far from any of us, he is near enough to see your sin. He is near enough to know whether you are seeking him or not. He can see little faith as much as great faith. He sees a refusal to yield to the ways of God. He sees an unwillingness to leave sin. Oh, may it please the Lord to let you feel his presence.

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<sup>15</sup> Psalm 139:24.

Like Thomas we were looking at last week, he is doubting. He doesn't believe the Lord is risen. And the Lord appears before him and he says, "Thomas, behold my hands." That is enough, isn't it? There is the very presence of God in his midst. He has no argument, but he says:

"My Lord and my God."<sup>16</sup>

He just comes to confession. And, my friends, that is what we as Christians need to pray for that that people who come into the fellowship, people we meet that we might take with us the very presence of God that people may simply be able to just confess him under the power of the Spirit of God.

At the moment we know him by faith. And sometimes when we feel his presence, our faith might be strengthened, but when we don't, we still know he is present because of the Word of God and faith cometh by the hearing of the Word of God. But, you know, one day faith will be sight. We will still know he is everywhere present, but we will be with him and he will be with us in such a way as we don't see now.

We read in Revelation where John writes:

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."<sup>17</sup>

And be our God will be with us as never before. So shall we ever be with the Lord.  
Amen.

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<sup>16</sup> John 20:28.

<sup>17</sup> John 21:3.