

He is!

An Expository Exploration of the Attributes of God

Sermon Six: He is Everywhere (Omnipresence)

February 9, 2020

Psalm 139:7-12

Opening Illustration: Have you ever been walking on the sidewalk and trip over your own feet, or maybe even trip over an uneven patch of concrete. Right after you do whatever you can to keep from completely wiping out and you gain your balance and you keep walking...right after THAT, what do you do? Answer: You look around to see if anybody saw you. Now, if we are with a friend, there is no way that they didn't see it. We are stuck with their ridicule. That being said, though, most of the time we do our best to make it look like we did not, in fact, trip. No. We MEANT to do that! ☺ Why do we do this? Because the only thing worse than stumbling is being embarrassed because of our stumbling. The only thing that can make our failures more humiliating to us is the fact that other people know them.

Well, the reality is that most of the time people do NOT notice when we stumble and even if they did, they wouldn't say anything about it. They themselves have experienced embarrassing circumstances and know full well the blow to one's ego that they bring. Therefore, hiding our imperfections is a loser's game. God, on the other hand, not only perfectly knows our every foible, there is no way to put our situation in which He is not present there with us. The question is, "What will God do about our countless mistakes?" Will He laugh at us? Will He punish us? Will He humiliate us? Or...maybe there is another experience waiting for us.

I. Introduction

A. *What is the Omnipresence of God?*

1. God's omnipresence is His perfect presence everywhere.

Quote: "Those passages supporting this truth are so plain that it would take considerable effort to misunderstand them. They declare that God is immanent in His creation, that there is no place in heaven or earth or hell where men may hide from His presence." A. W. Tozer, page 74.

B. *Some verses to consider:*

1. **Hebrews 4:13** 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.
2. **Psalm 23:4** Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

C. *Why is the omnipresence of God so important?*

1. God must be everywhere or He is not fit to be God.
 - a. Why is this?
 - i. Because, otherwise, there would be a location somewhere in the Universe where we could escape His authority and become our own authority. God simply will not have that.

II. A Revealing Question (*Psalm 139:7*)—Where can I go from Your Spirit?

A. *There is a desperation to David's question.*

1. **Psalm 139**
2. David is desperate to escape God's presence, not because of any fault in God. No. It's just that David keeps tripping and is embarrassed that God sees it every time.
3. David longs to live a life that honors God, but finds himself unable to do so. This drives David to desperation just like it would later drive the Apostle Paul.
 - a. **Romans 7:15-24**

ILL: Our immediate reaction to being exposed is to hide. This has been true of humanity ever since the beginning. Notice that this was even Adam and Eve's gut reaction to God's presence after they had sinned. **Genesis 3:8** They

heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

B. There is a defiance to David's question.

1. David is not only desperate to escape God's presence because of His frustration with his sin. He also longs to escape God's jurisdiction because he loves his sin! Are we not the same way? Don't we hate and love our sin? Don't we sometimes wish that we could step out of God's view and sin with immunity?

ILL: "God is not in France this time of year." This is a quote from the great movie, "The Count of Monte Cristo." In this scene the jailer was about to wrongfully punish the main character (Edmond Dantes) and, when God is brought up, seems to think that God was not there. Dantes' response: "God is everywhere. He sees everything."

C. There is a dependence in David's question. [Note: this is not in the handout notes]

1. I have to be careful here not to read too much into the passage, but here is where I get this from?
 - a. **Psalm 139:10** Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me.
 - i. The first verb (lead) is the Hebrew word (לְהַנְיֹת) which is a term for guidance in the wilderness. To have a guide in the wilderness is a good thing. Because of this, I am taking this verse in a slightly more positive light than the other verses.
 - ii. The second verb (take hold) can also be translated simply "hold" (see NKJV and ESV). I am taking it, then, in this more positive sense. See CSB "hold on to me".

ILL: There are cops everywhere! This can be a negative thing (if you are speeding down the highway) or it can be a positive thing (if you are afraid of getting mugged).

Point: We use the expression: "You are always there for me." Perhaps includes that in his thought here, too.

III. A Resplendent Answer (Psalm 139:8-12)—God is terrifyingly and gloriously unavoidable.

A. No matter how far up I go... Psalm 139:8a

1. What does this mean?
 - a. This means that God is very present in the heavens (שָׁמַיִם)
 - b. This means that we could never ascend so high that God could not reach us.

ILL: A very tall brother playing keep away with a shorter brother. What does the taller brother do? He holds whatever he is keeping away from his shorter brother up so high that the shorter brother cannot reach it to grab it.

2. Why is this wonderful?
 - a. It is wonderful because nobody can avoid dealing with this God!
 - b. It is wonderful because it drives us to worship!

B. No matter how far down I go... Psalm 139:8b

1. What does this mean?
 - a. That God is very present in the depths of the Earth (תַּיִם). [NKJV: "hell"]
 - i. The Hebrew word here, "Sheol" refers to the place of the dead.
 - ii. This word is most often associated with the ground, because people were buried in the ground.
 - iii. This word also includes where souls go when they die.
 - b. That death is in no way an escape from the all-seeing, all-knowing, ever present God!
 - c. Possible objection: Isn't Hell eternal separation from God?
 - i. Hell is eternal separation from God's grace and kindness. It is eternal separation from His benevolence. Most often, when God's presence is referred to, there are positive connotations that go with it. There will be none of those positive connotations in Hell, but do not be deceived: God will have a very real presence there.

2. Why is this wonderful?
 - a. Because the concept of God will be very real in Hell!

b. Point: Often people think of Hell as a place of partying with the Devil as the boss. Nothing can be further from the truth. Hell is a place of eternal torment under which the Devil himself will suffer.

C. *No matter how far away I go...Psalm 139:9-10*

1. What does this mean?

a. This means that there is no distance we can travel to escape God's jurisdiction.

ILL: International incidents. From time to time you hear of Americans being prosecuted or punished in other countries because they broke the law in the country to which they had gone. One example is the 1994 caning of an 18-year-old American in Singapore for vandalism. We can't live according to American law in other countries and automatically assume that we will be ok. America only has jurisdiction in America. Not so with God. He is everywhere and His authority spreads to every land.

2. Why is this wonderful?

a. Because God is more holy than any human court or institution.

b. Because God is more gracious than any human court or institution.

i. That's why David chose God's punishment over enduring the punishment of his enemies.

See **2 Samuel 24 12-14**.

D. *No matter how dark it gets...Psalm 139:11-12*

1. What does this mean?

2. Why is this wonderful?

ILL: Sin tends to happen in the dark. Or, perhaps to say this more clearly, there is often a correlation between deeds of darkness and, well, darkness! Why is this? Because people think that they are safe and protected and anonymous in the darkness. They are not. Their sins are just as exposed to Him as if they were practicing those sins in broad daylight.

IV. A Required Application (Psalm 139:7-12)—You cannot avoid Him. What will you do?

A. *You cannot pull the wool over His eyes.*

B. *You cannot escape His jurisdiction.*

C. *You cannot hide from His presence.*

D. *There is only one thing you can do!—Embrace His Omnipresence!*

1. His presence is inescapable. His wrath is not inescapable.

2. He is never far from us in our sin. He is never far from us in our need.

V. Conclusions

A. *What must we do?*

B. *What will be our focus next week?*

1. Next week, Lord willing, we will discuss God's omnipotence, His perfect power to do anything consistent with His character.

Quote: "God is present, near him, next to him, and this God sees him and knows him through and through. At this point faith begins, and while it may go on to include a thousand other wonderful truths, these all refer back to the truth that God is, and God is here." Tozer, Knowledge of the Holy, page 75