

14. Unsearchable, unfathomable

July 29, 2012

If you are thinking that you are a very important person and everyone and the whole universe should revolve around you, let me put the fact in this way. First of all, you live in Sahuarita or Green Valley – neither one is a major metropolitan city in the United States. In other words, either place you live can be considered as a boondock to compare with New York or Los Angeles.

If you drove once around the earth, you would have gone 25,000 miles. That would mean about 45 days of non-stop driving to just go around once. The distance from the earth to the sun is 93 million miles. If you get on a 747 jet that flies at about 600 miles per hour, it would take 17 years to fly from the earth to the sun.

Now let's travel a little faster, at the speed of light which is 186,000 miles per second. It takes 1.5 light seconds to go from the earth to the moon, 8 minutes to the sun, and 5 light-hours to get out to Pluto from the earth.

When we leave our solar system, distances get astronomical. Yes, pun intended. The nearest star from our solar system is over 4 light-years away. The center of our galaxy is about 27,000 light years from us. Our sister galaxy, called M31, is two million light years away.

According to the Hubble Space Telescope and a German super-computer, they estimate that there are about 500 billion galaxies in the universe. Do you still feel that you are the center of the universe? No, God is.

*Isaiah 40:12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand,
Measured heaven with a span And calculated the dust of the earth in a measure?
Weighed the mountains in scales And the hills in a balance?*

The study of Job is more than the study of a man of patience. It is actually the study of God. After all, God is the One who strikes the deal with satan. It's He who points out Job as a God-fearing, blameless man and allows the enemy to unleash his attacks. Then the Almighty steps into the shadows and hides for 35 chapters. No words, no visions, no relief, and no comfort.

All the way through the Book, it is God who captures our attention and makes us wonder. Better stated, He confuses us. As we dig into the Book of Job, and we're puzzled. The heretic "health and wealth" theology that I mentioned last Sunday just doesn't jive with the details of Job's life.

As we delve more deeply into the Book, we realize that we must have misunderstood either the person of God or the person of Job. Most likely, our concept of God needs to be reshaped.

A. BILDAD'S LAST ACCUSATION

Job 25:1-6 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said: 2 "Dominion and fear belong to Him; He makes peace in His high places. 3 Is there any number to His armies? Upon whom does His light not rise? 4 How then can man be righteous before God? Or how can he be pure who is born of a woman? 5 If even the moon does not shine, And the stars are not pure in His sight, 6 How much less man, who is a maggot, And a son of man, who is a worm?"

Bildad's speech in Job 25 is the shortest in the Book and focuses on God's power in v1 through 3 and justice in v4 through 6. It is disturbing to see how Job's friends speak so knowingly about God when, in the end, God revealed that they really didn't know what they were talking about. Too often, those who say the most about God know the least about Him. After this chapter, Bildad was gone. Good riddance!

This reminds me what the Lord Jesus said to the Pharisees in the Book of Matthew:
Matthew 7:22-23 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

Many would think that they know God, but they really don't. I am not talking about Bible trivia knowledge, rather knowing what the Word of God says and obeying it. Satan can quote Scriptures in Greek, Latin, and Hebrews. Does it mean that he is a Christian? No way, Jose. The Pharisees knew the OT like the back of their hands, yet they didn't recognize the Son of the Living God.

As Bildad said, our God is holy, righteous, and powerful, and men's righteousness cannot be compared with His. I love the rendition of NASB of Romans 11:33:
Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!
NASB

What did apostle Paul mean that God is 'unsearchable' and 'unfathomable'? Did he mean that God is a schizophrenic tweeker? By no means. He meant that God's mind, His ways, and His plan often remain incomprehensible to us – wonderfully incomprehensible due to our limited intelligence, near-sighted mindsets, and unbelief.

Let's be honest. We don't like not knowing what's ahead. We'd prefer things to be "fathomable," or, if you will, "controllable." We want to analyze and explain situations so that we can see the big picture and understand the whole story. Most of all, we like to control the whole situation to our physical advantage. But that's impossible when it comes to our sovereign, magnificent God.

When humans have to relinquish the control to God whom they cannot see, nor influence, there are three choices they take:

1) Ignore God

Pretending that He doesn't exist. This is the minority group. Whether atheists like to admit or not, atheism is a form of a religion they are holding onto.

I like what Ravi Zechariah, one of the foremost Christian apologists of our time, said, "The people who believe that there is no miracle insist that everything can be explained with natural way without an exception." He continued, "But when it comes to ethic, their natural way can not explain it away, because ethic directly goes against human's selfish natural way. Thus, their own logic goes against theirs."

2) Replace God with someone or something else they can control

This is what the majority of the world population chooses. All the cults are the outcomes of this concept. Some groups within the ranks of Christianity subscribe to this concept and try to put God within the limitation of their thinking.

3) Simply trust what the Word of God says about Him

This group of Christians don't understand everything about God, but they trust the face value of what the Bible teaches us as is – not limiting the Lord's capabilities according to what they can understand; not trying to control Him according to their desires. I hope that all of us are in this group.

The more we learn about God, the more we discover how much more there is to know! Beware of people who claim to know all about God, because their claim is proof they know neither God, nor themselves.

B. JOB BEFORE THE SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY OF THE EARTH

Job 26:7-10 He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing. 8 He binds up the water in His thick clouds, Yet the clouds are not broken under it. 9 He covers the face of His throne, And spreads His cloud over it. 10 He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters, At the boundary of light and darkness.

V6 and v10 show us that even though the Bible is not a scientific book, but it still contains many scientific facts way before humans discovered them.

V6 is clearly contrary to the common belief of the time, even until 18th Century, that the earth was not only flat, but had to be supported by something, be it the god Atlas, giant elephants, or what have you. Then, v10 tells us that the earth is round, not flat. Prophet Isaiah also echoes this:

Isaiah 40:22 It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.

C. ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

Job 27:11-13 "I will teach you about the hand of God; What is with the Almighty I will not conceal. 12 Surely all of you have seen it; Why then do you behave with complete nonsense? 13 "This is the portion of a wicked man with God, And the heritage of oppressors, received from the Almighty:

In chapter 27 and 28, Job deliberately reminded the three friends that they needed to watch themselves or the punishments they ascribed to others would be applied to them instead. This is what we say, "What goes around comes around."

The Bible contains numerous examples of people who faced the punishments they had prepared for others. We call them "poetic justice."

Pharaoh ordered the newborn Jewish boys to be drowned, and his own army was drowned in the Red Sea in Exodus 14. Haman who hated the Jews in Medo-Persia built a gallows on which to hang Mordecai, but Haman and his sons were hanged there instead in Esther 9. Daniel's enemies tried to have him destroyed, but they and their families ended up in the lions' den in the place of Daniel in the Book of Daniel 6.

Proverbs 11:8 The righteous is delivered from trouble, And it comes to the wicked instead.

If you wonder, "The wicked people who are doing everything they can against God are well. Are they ever going to be punished by God?" Yes, they will, but according to His time and His way.

D. WISDOM, NOT KNOWLEDGE

Job 28:12 "But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?"

The 21st Century people have more knowledge than any period of the human history. Thanks to the internet that was invented by Al Gore, just about any kind of knowledge is at our disposal and only a few clicks of computer keyboard away. But it seems that even though we might be smarter intellectually, we are not very wise in many things in our lives. Because we often do not look at things of our lives from God's perspective.

I like what one of my favorite British preachers Charles Spurgeon said: "Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. Many men know a great deal, and are all the greater fools for it. There is no fool so great a fool as the knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom."

E. WHERE DO WE GET WISDOM?

Job 28:28 And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, And to depart from evil is understanding.'"

Since I tell you that wisdom is better than knowledge, I must tell you where you can get wisdom as much as you want – the Bible, the God's Word, not from some Bible teachers' books.

While we study the Bible, we get to know this unsearchable and unfathomable God a little more than before. The Bible also shows us how much we need the Lord.

What is "the fear of the Lord"? It is loving reverence for God, who He is, what He says, and what He does. It is not a fear that paralyzes, but one that energizes. When we fear the Lord, we obey His commandments, walk in His ways, and serve Him. We are loyal to Him and give Him wholehearted service. Like Job, when we fear the Lord, we depart from evil things. The "fear of the Lord" is the fear that conquers fear; because if we fear God, we need not fear anyone else.

F. STEPS OF KNOWING GOD

1) Have a reverent and respectful attitude toward God, which also involves a humble attitude toward ourselves.

Personal pride is the greatest barrier to spiritual wisdom.

2) Ask God for wisdom and make diligent use of the means He gives us for securing His wisdom, especially knowing and doing the Word of God.

It is not enough merely to study; we must also obey what God tells us to do. As we walk by faith, we discover the wisdom of God in the everyday things of life. Spiritual wisdom is not abstract; it is very personal and very practical.

As we fellowship with other believers in the church and share with one another, we can learn wisdom. The important thing is that we focus on Christ, because He is our wisdom and in Him is hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

The better we know Christ and the more we become like Him, the more we will walk in wisdom and understand the will of the Lord. We must allow the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of our heart so we can see God in His Word and understand more of the riches we have in Christ.

Yes, our God is a unsearchable and unfathomable God, but it doesn't mean that we cannot understand what He is doing in our lives. As a matter of fact, He encourages us to find out more about Him.

Jeremiah 29:13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.