**The Aloneness of God**

Have you ever read the Guinness Book of World Records? I don’t know if they still publish it, but when I was younger, I’d take every chance I got to read through some of the ridiculous things that people pursued records in. I guess I just like fun facts – like that there’s a slew of people that can do any Rubik’s cube in less than six seconds. Or that there’s that guy in Africa whose fingernails are thirty feet long and still growing. He’s like the Wolverine, only unkempt and kind of disgusting.

The world records have immortalized individuals who are the best at their craft, or the strangest amongst that particular thing that they do. Like Anthony Kelly, who, like a boss, mind you – caught 10 spears shot from spear guns six feet from him in a swimming pool in a single minute. Thunder Law of the Harlem Globe Trotters drained an 82-foot shot backwards at the US Airways Center in Arizona. A hotel in China holds the record for 388 people eating breakfast in bed in one room. And a London group owns the record for most people in one place dressed as penguins - 373.

Someone somewhere looks back and says – “I was a part of that. Penguin 236; that was me.” Strange, yes. But it’s a record – and that dude is one of the few that can admit to being part of it.

I play this game with my wife: where I point out something that distinguishes me from the rest of the world at the present moment. A couple Sundays ago, I told her that I was pretty certain that I was the only preacher in the world that would preach in a tie with scorpions on it. Now, I can’t be certain of this – but I know that among preachers, I’m probably one of the more fun. So although others might own a scorpion tie, they probably wouldn’t be wearing it. Some might even wear that scorpion tie, but they probably aren’t preaching. And so I must conclude, of that exclusive subset of preachers preaching a sermon on this day in history, I’m probably the only one with a stinging arachnid on their person.

There are a lot of things that distinguish me from other preachers. I’m different. I’m unique, and so I’m bound to be alone in some of the unique things that I do. There are attributes that make me ‘me.’ I’m awesome, because I’ve got these awesome aspects of ‘me-ness.’ Of course, you are awesome as well in this way.

Imagine with me the world’s perspective of religion - of God. They look at the strangeness of Him, and they’re unable to understand it. He’s the guy that does the six-second Rubik’s cube, and they’re looking at the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of those things that make Him unique, and they can’t understand those distinctions.

That’s why when they talk about God, they’re forced to consider that strangeness from their own perspective. A big, Bible word for it is ‘holiness.’ God is different; composed of all kinds of unique characteristics - stasis and stuff. And your teachers, and your friends – they’re looking at God, and they’re trying to use words to describe what they see. And they’re wrong.

It’s like being from a two-dimensional world; living in a comic book, and one day you encounter a three-dimensional object. You’re looking at this sphere and trying to describe it in terms of a circle. That’s how foreign godliness is from carnality.

When we talk about God, the only way we can appreciate the uniqueness of His person is from a biblical perspective: what does the Bible say about how we should understand God?

The first and most important thing that you can know about God is that He’s alone. He is cosmically and eternally alone. There is no one, nothing, no figure for comparison in power or potential. In the Apostolic church we preach the Oneness of God, because in the Old Testament, the primary emphasis was His aloneness!

God’s godliness consists of all kinds of stuff that is unique to God. His characteristics and nature include His love and mercy and grace and happiness, peace, joy.

If I asked you the question: “who is God?” You’d hit me with all kinds of attributes! God is love. He’s timeless. He is powerful; you’d plug in words like omnipotence, omnipresence, omnibenevolence, omniscience.

But what you’d end up describing would be a Being that has no parallel.

There’s a precedent for all of this in the Bible; a single God, who is big and powerful, and – just because – He creates this incredible universe. He creates beings to occupy it. And the Bible is a story about God’s creation of man and His subsequent efforts to interact with boys and girls everywhere throughout eternity – to get to know them and teach them how to know Him.

But His ‘otherness’ can be something that is hard to grasp, because we aren’t wholly like Him. That’s why we hear all these false ideas about God’s nature: that He’s no different, and the Bible’s moral outline isn’t better than any other. Or even that He consists of three persons; a Father, a Spirit and Son. And this confusion exists, because of how complex God’s nature really is.

Jesus talks about misunderstanding God’s nature to Nicodemus; He talks at length about the need to be born again of water and Spirit…and Nicodemus, terribly confused by the prospect of finding an avenue back into his mother’s belly, cites his inability to understand. Jesus even notes his deficiency: “how could you possibly understand spiritual things!?”

Your human limitation is a problem when it comes to talking about big issues like God, so we must begin every conversation about Him with the Bible itself - the only outline we have of His character. Tell your friends, tell your teachers, tell your uncle: God can only be understood when His own Word is consulted.

And in the Bible we have this record of God playing that same game I play with my wife:

Isaiah 43:10-11 (KJV) reads, "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour."

And in Isaiah 44, He says, “I am your redeemer, I’m the God that formed you in the womb – I stretched forth the heavens alone, I made the Earth by myself.”

In the Bible, God makes a case for His complete and total aloneness. All of this was made by Him; John notes in his gospel that there is no other force in the universe that can make anything out of nothing – apart from God. God’s aloneness was heralded in Scripture throughout the Old Testament; “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord; and that’s why you have to love Him with all your heart, soul, and strength…” because there’s no one else unto whom you can apply that adoration.

And I know you guys get it; “Yeah, I can count the number of actual Gods in the universe on one finger. I see what you’re saying; you’re belaboring the point.” But you have to understand that this point isn’t explicitly understood by the world you live in.

And God says it throughout Scripture, through the mouths of His prophets – “I am the Lord thy God, there is no other. Beside me there is not God. Beside me there is no savior.”

Which is complicated by the introduction of a New Testament savior named Jesus. Because He acts like God, and He talks like God, but as a man, He could not have been God. And that is the primary reason for most of the confusion about God’s aloneness. Because they call God the Father, and they call Jesus the Son, and they call that feeling I get when I speak in tongues, it’s the Holy Ghost…

Isaiah 63:5: “And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me.”

Isaiah expresses it clearly: as people continued to move away from Him, God’s observations reinforce the plan He’d formed from the beginning. He accounts and determines that He is alone in His status as God. He was certain of it – and figuratively, He compares himself to others – and He looks at the world at large and examines all its problems. He sees the issue of sin, and the plague that it has been on humanity. He sees that there is no one to save them, but Him!

He was the only one in the universe that could help, and so He does. The Isaiah 63 passage says that He rolled up His sleeves, and He came down Himself to bring salvation.

And some theologians and intellectuals are going to talk about functional differences between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit – and we may do some of that here. But you should know that all of God’s godliness, all of the strangeness, all of His character and person was in Jesus; Paul says that the fullness of God was bodily contained in Jesus’ literal flesh.

And the reason for the dramatic display; the ministry - the sermons, the miracles, the Cross, the resurrection - was because He was the only one that could do it. He does the impossible, because His nature is to make all things possible! And so He came and lived in the same condition as any other person, only He did it without sin or guile, so that you could have the same Holy qualities that He has. And as He was in Christ, He is in you; giving you the same capability to live holy and righteous and godly.

Most Christians don’t even know how to pray, because they’re confused by the relationship of God and His Son and His Spirit. They don’t know how to baptize. They don’t know whose name to call on. So a major part of why we see God move, and how we have access to His Spirit, is because we understand His aloneness!

He created Heaven and Earth Himself. He came and walked with us Himself. He’s filled us with Himself.

We know it - Acts 4:12 - there’s no other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved; because Jesus is the only God who could ever save us.

Close:

In John 4, we encounter a woman that in her own words was waiting and watching for the Messiah. She had all these ideas about who He would be and what He’d look like – but all of them were wrong. Her whole life was messed up – but she had ideas about God.

We meet her drawing water from a well in Jesus’ presence; looking for Him, and unable to recognize Him in plain sight. I can’t say I’d blame her, because it wasn’t like God to arrive unannounced, without all His power and brilliance on display. And Jesus talks to her about living water and salvation, and worship. Jesus says to the woman, “You know, you worship a God that you don’t even know.”

She was looking for someone to tell her more about Him: a Messiah, a prophet, anyone that knew Him.

Jesus was who she was looking for: He knew everything about God, because He was God. And so He does what only God can: He reads her mind, He speaks to her situations, and she races off to tell the world about it.

He was the One. He, alone, and she experienced Him for herself.