

Sermon Supplement, Morning Worship Service, September 23, 2007
Kihei Baptist Chapel, Kihei, Maui, Hawaii
IN THE IMAGE OF GOD, BECAUSE HE IS, I CAN BE.
PART FIVE; SHARING THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD
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SHARING THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD **Because God is...I can be...**

DEFINITION: When we use the term, “attributes” of God we speak of the essential characteristics and powers that help define the deity. Attributes are what constitutes God as what he is and are inseparable for Him. When God created mankind in His image, these attributes He offered to share with man in a totally different manner than with any other part of God’s creation.

CLASSIFICATION OF GOD’S ATTRIBUTES: The attributes of God are grouped in two different manners:

1. The non-moral attributes of God which define the powers and abilities God has at His willful disposal.
2. The moral attributes of God which define the personal character of God that governs the treatment of His creatures.

LIMITED ABILITY TO POSSESS GOD’S ATTRIBUTES: While it is impossible for finite man to totally possess the infinite attributes of God, it is none the less, possible for God to share them with us on a limited base. To totally share them would make man a God. This is a major theological error that is being currently taught by impressive and persuasive people! Being created in the image of God does make us capable of sharing God’s attributes, but in doing so it still makes us sinners saved by the attribute of God’s grace—nothing more, nothing less.

GOD’S NON-MORAL ATTRIBUTES: The non-moral attributes are God’s qualities that speak of His power and abilities.

Omnipotence of God: This means that God is all powerful and nothing is impossible for Him to do, should He choose to do, because of any lack of power.

Application: Because God is all powerful, I can have some power in my life.

Omniscience of God: This means that God possessed the total amount of wisdom and knowledge at all times, and even ahead of time. He knows as if the past, present and future are always in the present. He knows all possibilities and what would happen even if it does not take place.

Application: Because God knows everything, I can know some things and by His providence gain information that I may need to know.

Omnipresence of God: This means that God is totally everywhere present at all times. This is different than the Pantheistic belief that God is everywhere by being in everything. God transcends all barriers of time, space and materials.

Application: Because God is everywhere present I will always be present somewhere.

The Eternity of God: This means that God is without beginning or end, having neither past nor future. He lives in the eternal present. This is true of His person as well as His attributes.

Application: Because God eternally exists I will never cease to exist.

The Immutability of God: This means that God is unchangeable. It means more than that God will not change; it implies that He cannot change or even will to change. All of His attitude and acts are without change even when He sorrows (repent) about the human defilement and results of His actions. All His counsel is constant and confirmed by His changelessness.

Application: Because God is constant I can have consistence in my life.

GOD'S MORAL ATTRIBUTES: The moral attributes speak of those qualities of God that govern how He makes use of His non-moral powers and abilities. They include:

Holiness: The holiness of God speaks of His being totally separate from any thought or act that is evil, defiling or sinful. The holiness of God is the one attribute of God that is mentioned in Holy Scriptures more than any of the others. It may be said that His attribute of holiness is foundational to the use of every other attribute, causing God to remain totally pure and without any defilement.

Application: Because God is separate from sin, with His aid He expects me to separate myself from sinful thoughts, places and actions.

Love: The love of God speaks of His supreme concern for the welfare of His creation. The highest form of love is *agape* love—God's love. This is

a self-sacrificing love in which one gives for the good of another without any thought of reward in return. God's love prompts Him to always act toward believers in a manner that is good for us.

Application: Because God is love I can have a redeemed nature with a love received from God that will cause me to care for others in a manner that is good for them and that is nonself-serving.

Grace: The grace of God speaks of the manner in which God works toward His creation as a result of His attribute of love. He demonstrates His grace in acting in a manner undeserved, in part or whole, by man. He does this through being a loving-kind, long-suffering, patient forgiving God. It is because of His grace that He offers forgiveness and redemption to repenting individuals who receive His Son's payment on Calvary as the only possible pardon for their sins.

Application: Because God acts toward me in a forgiving manner, I can live graciously toward others, even toward those who may be unpleasing toward me.

Mercy: The mercy of God speaks about the end result of God's love and grace. His love and grace are displayed in God's actions that are always benevolent, compassionate, pardoning and forgiving. Even when it may not seem like it, God is concerned about our well-being. Mercy is often written as the concept of "loving kindness." Mercy, like love and grace, is not merited.

Application: Because God demonstrates loving kindness to me, He expects me to always do the same toward others, especially when I do not think they deserve it.

Truth: The truth of God is more than just information that conforms to reality. It is the total amount of information available which has its base in God Himself. It is never in contradiction nor can it be falsified. Truth is consistent throughout eternity, the same in every culture and at all occasions. Truth is not a system of precepts, but rather it is the personification of a person—God Himself and Jesus in particular. What is truth is true because it is a demonstration of an eternally trustworthy God—who can reveal error as truth. Truth that is available through revelation, inspiration, and inscripturization is more reliable than human rationalization.

Application: Because God is always truthful and thus trustworthy, I can experience and know truth by knowing Him. I can also ask Him to develop me into a trustworthy person, in spite of any and all past failures.

Justice: The justice of God speaks of His judicial action which demands the penalty for those who have failed to measure to His standard of righteousness and holiness. The complication in speaking of justice is that everyone has failed in every attempt to establish righteousness equal to God's demand. The gospel alone is helpful since it offers a pardon for failure than punishment because of it. The justice of God is satisfied with the substitutionary payment of Christ as equal payment for sin. Those who trust this payment are forgiven from their debt to God and receive the righteousness of the one who has paid for their pardon. Justice also demands punishment as well as pardon and requires an eternity for justice to have meaning. Eternity will justify all the injustice of this world system that often prospers evil.

Application: Because God had freely pardoned my sins against Him, I can with His help forgive those who have sinned against me. In addition, I can forever be thankful for giving me Christ's righteousness that is equal to His demand.

Righteousness: The righteousness of God speaks of the state of being eternally morally pure and just in all His actions. He will always keep His conduct in harmony with His perfect nature, will and law. God loves righteousness as much as He hates evil. Because of His righteousness, God will never fail to reward right conduct nor will He fail to condemn evil behavior.

Application: Because God is totally righteous, I can by a gift of His nature abiding in me, correct my conduct and grow in His grace and righteousness.

CONCLUSION: By being created in God's image every person was originally capable of living a divine/human cooperative holy life. While this relationship was lost in the fall, it can be reestablished by being spiritually born again. This occurs when we receive a new spiritual nature when we receive eternal life through the sacrificial payment of Christ at Calvary. To assist and empower the believer, God has given us the guidance of the Holy Spirit as God's indwelling power to both convert us and change us into a Christ-likeness.