Welcome to “Learning and Living the God-centered life”

Carmel Baptist Church

www.learningandlivingtheword.com

January 17, 2009
**Transcendence** means that God is far "above" the creation in the sense that He is greater than the creation and is independent of it.

**Immanence** means His nearness, kind, caring, protection and being close to us.

**Incommunicable** means certain attributes of God that are not communicated to us, this does not mean that they are not revealed to us, but rather we do not share in any part of that attribute, this is distinctively divine.

**Communicable** attributes are those attributes which He communicates and this means shares in kind with His creatures in part.
Review

Transcendence means that God is far "above" the creation in the sense that He is greater than the creation and is independent of it.

Immanence means His nearness, kind, caring, protection and being close to us

➢ Isaiah 57:15
➢ Isaiah 6:1-8

This morning

➢ Isaiah 66:1-2 (Bible reading plan)
Questions for our study in the self-sufficiency of God

Why are we here? What is our purpose?

Why does God demand our obedience?

Why does God enlist our service?

Why does God call us to pray?

Why does God require our worship?
The Self sufficiency of God

Definition of the sufficiency of God - *God possesses within Himself, intrinsically and eternally, every quality in infinite measure.*

Another way to say it - God has no need for anything outside of who God is, in and of Himself.

God needs nothing apart from Himself, for He possesses every quality within Himself.

God has this attribute intrinsically but we possess our attributes derivatively in that we had to get them from someone else.

God possesses all His qualities by nature:
- It is God’s nature to be good, loving, holy, just and glorious
Isaiah Chapter 40
These questions are rhetorical which means that the answers are so obvious that you don't even need to give them

Is. 40:12  *Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand,*
*And marked off the heavens by the span,*
*And calculated the dust of the earth by the measure,*
*And weighed the mountains in a balance*
*And the hills in a pair of scales?*

Now let's stop there and just look at verse 12 and look at the images
Illustration: this is one that I am planning to do should we ever have grand children and this came from Dr. Bruce Ware
My plan is to have this very devotion in the morning with the grandchildren and then go to the beach
When I get there I am going to ask them if they want to see me do an experiment?
Illustration:
So I say now kids when Pa Pa B gets out in the ocean he is going to go down and scoop up all the water in his two hands and when he comes up out of the water I want you to notice the level at which the water drops

Of course they will say they didn't see any change and that is when I will act amazed and say OK I am going to do it again and this time watch very closely Again the same response and then I plan to come up on the beach and kneel beside them and tell them about the God who made everything and how He can scoop up the Atlantic Ocean in His hand and hold it.

So what kind of picture is Isaiah trying to get us to see in this passage about our God?

He is really big, powerful and immense
Illustration:
Look at the next image - "And marked off the heavens by the span" This is the distance between the thumb and little finger

Think of it light traveling at 186,000 miles per second and it takes approximately 7 minutes to get to us from the sun to the earth.

The next closest star is 4 and ½ years from the time it leaves the star to planet earth and by the way this is our next door neighbor which is the Milky Way Galaxy.

When you look at the stars on a clear night almost every star you see is in the Milky Way Galaxy of which there are about 10 billion stars and those are the ones in our neighborhood.

Separated by an average distance of about 10, 20 or 100 light years spanning out across this Milky Way Galaxy.
Which begs the question, how many Galaxies are out there?

The Hubble telescope still finds more and more but it seems as though there are millions upon millions more spread out across this universe.

And they are hundreds of thousands of light years away –

So who is big enough to mark them off between His thumb and little finger?
Who could possibly do this?
Answer – only God
Next image - Who do you know that can weigh out the Rocky Mountains on a pair of scales? And the Himalayas and Mount Everest on a pair of scales.

The answers to these rhetorical questions is "ONLY GOD"
God is so big, power, awesome and so immense

But now notice in verse 13 there is a shift in the topic
The rhetorical questions continue but the emphasis is different
Is. 40:13 Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD,
Or as His counselor has informed Him?
Is. 40:14 With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding?

And who taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge
And informed Him of the way of understanding?
Answer - "No one"

God doesn't need our advice nor does He want our advice. Sometimes in our prayer life we can cross the line from seeking God to instructing God.

Who do we think we are? Who do we think God is?

Think about all the things that God is doing everyday 24/7 in running the universe and He never once seeks any advice. God is not meeting with a committee to talk these things through.

God does not need any help, His wisdom and His power are perfect.
Now get the image we have in verse 15

“the nations”
This is the totality of all mankind considered collectively

So take all of the power on planet earth that we have discovered militarily, all of the knowledge that we have technology and all of the advancements we have made medically

When you get to the final summation of all those things when added up they are but a drop in a bucket of water as compared to the power and wisdom of God Himself.
Illustrations:
Our aquarium every year at the beach and the 10 gallons of ocean water that it takes to fill it up. So Anna and I get all these gallon water containers and on the way back we spill one single drop of ocean water.

Question - "how much does that matter to that 10 gallon aquarium? Answer - Nothing, or insignificant

How about the next image - a speck of dust on the scales. Nancy B. goes to the deli to buy a couple of pounds of ham and the butcher is getting ready to weigh and price it and the lady says "wait a minute." And the man says what is the problem and she says there is a speck of dust on the scales.
What is the point regarding the drop of water from a bucket and a speck of dust from the scales?
Answer - they are trivial or they are inconsequential, they don't make a difference
So who are we before this great and powerful God?

- A drop from a bucket
- A speck of dust

Well at least we are drops and specks - right?
Remember the context here is the nations and everything that we have taken collectively if put before God.

Keep reading - Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust. Next image - the islands of Hawaii and Bermuda just shift through His fingers
Is. 40:16  Even Lebanon is not enough to burn,
      Nor its beasts enough for a burnt offering.
Is. 40:17  All the nations are as nothing before Him,
      They are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless.
In Bible hermeneutics we know that the key principle is to understand what the author meant by what he wrote.

So what does this verse NOT mean and what does it really mean?

I find sometimes it is very helpful to come from what a verse does not mean in order to give me better clarity as to the real meaning.

So let's start with what the verse DOES NOT mean;

- When God says the nations are as nothing He does not mean that they are nothing to Him or He doesn't mean I couldn't care less about the nations.

How do we know that God doesn't mean that?

- Revelations 5
- John 3:16
How does Chapter 40 of Isaiah end after going through this description of how great God is and the nations that are nothing before Him?

What is the overriding theme of this chapter as to our relationship with God?

Isn't the main point;
- Trust Me,
- Rely on Me,
- Wait upon Me

God says just look to Me and I will give you everything you need
If God didn't care then He wouldn't plead for us to wait upon Him
We can see plainly from Scripture that God cares very much about the nations.

So, what does God mean when He says that the nations are meaningless or nothing before Him?

Think about the context in which we have been reading? It is God’s power and His wisdom - right?

Here is the point:
The collective whole of all the nations, their knowledge, power, wealth and influence and military might collectively when compared to the power and wisdom of God, they in essence amount to nothing.
What can man add to the infinite power and the infinite wisdom of God?
And the answer to that question is nothing.

How can the nations contribute to the richness of God?
➢ The answer is they can't

What can the nations add to what God possesses intrinsically?
➢ Again the point is there is nothing they can add

So if God is self-sufficient and needs nothing, then why does He command us to;
Pray, Evangelize, Serve, Tithe, and Disciple just to name a few

Stay tuned…we will cover the answer to these questions in the weeks to come
A special thanks to Dr. Bruce Ware to whom I have learned so much from in the study of the doctrine of God.

I consider it a privilege to be able to sit under his teaching and stand on his shoulders so to speak in the presentation of this material.