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

Carmel Baptist Church

www.learningandlivingtheword.com

February 14, 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. (*Study this first*) - Scripture support Isaiah 6

**Immanence** means His nearness, kind, caring, protection and being close to us (*Study this second*) - Isaiah 6

**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.
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
Scriptural Support for the self-sufficiency of God

- Psalm 50:7-15
  God is judge, prosecuting attorney and witness

- Isaiah 40:12-17
  We are drop in a bucket, speck of dust, nothing, less than nothing

- Acts 17:24-25
  God can’t be served by human hands, as though He needed anything
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?
Questions for our study in the self-sufficiency of God

*Why are we here? What is our purpose?*

The answer is NOT that God was lonely and needed fellowship. Ps 50 – he’s offended and dishonored to think so.

Rather, particularly in relation to his people, the answer it this: though he doesn’t need us, he loves us, and his purpose in creating and redeeming us is not that we might fill up some lack in Him, but that He might fill us up with Himself.

He made us empty to be filled with his fullness, thirsty to drink of the water of life, weak to receive his strength, foolish to be instructed and corrected by His wisdom.
In His love, He longs to give, to share the bounty. He wants us to experience in finite measure the fullness of joy and blessing that he knows infinitely—all to redound to the praise and glory of his name, the Giver and Provider of all the good we enjoy.

C. S. Lewis, in his The Problem of Pain, says that God’s love is not like ours, helping another while needing also to be helped. No, God’s love, says Lewis, is “bottomlessly selfless, by very definition; it has everything to give and nothing to receive” (p. 50).
Why does God demand our obedience?

- Because he loves us and wants our best, and because he knows that our only true joy is found when we follow in his ways, he demands (yes, demands!) that we obey him. His commandments lead us to life.

- That is, His demands are given as from a Lover. C. S. Lewis, again, says concerning the commandments of God, “Those divine demands, which sound to our natural ears most like those of a despot and least like those of a lover, in fact marshal us where we should want to go if we knew what we wanted” (p. 52).

- As he says in his sermon, “The Weight of Glory,” we are far too easily satisfied. God calls us to life, and this is found only in obedience to his will and ways.
Why does God enlist our service?

Psalm 100:2 and Acts 17:25 – how to put these together?

He doesn’t need our service, so his call for us to serve is a call to participate in the privilege and joy of the ministry of grace that flows from him, into us, and then through us into the lives of others.

We can take no credit. All we have is a gift from him, and he gives us what we have to be used in service to others. God is so shareful! He is so generous!
Rather than just doing the work unilaterally, he devises a plan by which he intends that some of his work be done in and through others, by calling and equipping and using them. We have absolutely no basis for boasting, either before God or others. Human pride is utterly shattered; it is devastated, when we understand in the depths of our souls the infinite and intrinsic fullness that is God’s alone for all eternity.

It not only is not about us; it is not of us, or from us, or because of us! All that we are—every quality that we possess; all that we have—every good and worthwhile characteristic; and all that we can do—every ability, both in its kind and in its degree – all are gifts to us from God.

We simply cannot rightfully take credit for anything we ever are or ever do.
Why does God call us to pray?

Does God benefit from our prayers?

Does he learn new things?

Think of it, in Matt 6, in light of Jesus telling us not to worry since the Father already knows what we need, you might think that he’d teach regarding prayer, “don’t bother.”

But God invented prayer as a tool, a mechanism, for drawing us close to him, in sensed dependency, trust, hope, faith, love, longing, anticipation. It is for relationship—for our relationship with him!
Why does he require our worship and praise?

- It is our highest duty to worship God alone, for in him alone is the fullness of infinite perfection. Hence, Isa 42:8; 1 Cor 10:31.

- It is our greatest delight to worship God alone, for from him alone do we receive the fullness of everlasting joy and satisfaction. Hence, Isa 55:1-3; John 15:11.

- It is our ultimate destiny to worship God alone, for to him alone are we drawn to know the intimacy of his glorious presence. Hence, Isa 11:9; John 17:24.
C. S. Lewis writes:
But the most obvious fact about praise—whether of God or any thing—strangely escaped me.

I thought of it in terms of compliment, approval, or the giving of honor. I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise unless (sometimes even if) shyness or the fear of boring others is deliberately brought in to check it.

The world rings with praise—lovers praising their mistresses, readers their favorite poet, walkers praising the countryside, players praising their favorite game—praise of weather, wines, dishes, actors, motors, horses, colleges, countries, historical personages, children, flowers, mountains, rare stamps, rare beetles, even sometimes politicians or scholars.
C. S. Lewis writes:

I had not noticed either that just as men spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it: "Isn't she lovely? Wasn't it glorious? Don't you think that magnificent?" The Psalmists in telling everyone to praise God are doing what all men do when they speak of what they care about. My whole, more general, difficulty about the praise of God depended on my absurdly denying to us, as regards the supremely Valuable, what we delight to do, what indeed we can't help doing, about everything else we value.

I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation.
Conclusion

- Marvel at the glory of God’s self-sufficient fullness;

- Be humbled by the glory of God’s self-sufficient fullness;

- Find your true joy and satisfaction in the glory of God’s self-sufficient fullness;

- And love, obey and worship God to the glory of God’s self-sufficient fullness.