

“The Omnipotence of God”
Omni God Series
Genesis 1:1-27
January 13, 2019
Holiday Island Presbyterian Church

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

³ And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

⁶ And God said, “Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.” ⁷ So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. ⁸ God called the vault “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

⁹ And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.

¹¹ Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. ¹² The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

¹⁴ And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights

in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶ God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷ God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

²⁰ And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky.” ²¹ So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.” ²³ And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

²⁴ And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so. ²⁵ God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

INTRODUCTION:

And there you have it – the Creation as written in our Bibles;

according to Judeo-Christian belief.

And at the helm of all this creating
is this being we refer to as “God.”

Everything you see, hear or touch
is something that was either called into existence by God
or was created by God through us.

Except, of course, for those things which we created
that are not within the will of God.
We’ve been doing that since the Tower of Babel.

There are not enough words in all the languages of the world,
and all of the philosophies, religions and theologies
to fully describe God.

Anselm probably came the closest of anyone
to describing God in his ontological argument.

Paraphrasing Anselm, he said:
God is that than which nothing greater can be conceived.

For if there exists anything which can be conceived greater
than God, that would be God.

Basically, when all is said and done, God remains a mystery –
- THE supreme being beyond which there can be no greater.

And, because we are radical monotheists,
we believe there is only ONE God
a single deity,
which is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent.

**Since the time of the Apostle Paul,
theologians have tried their best
to put into words what these attributes mean.**

**So, over the next several weeks,
I am going to try to explain what it means to say
God is omnipotent
God is omniscient
God is omnipresent
And then wrap it all up and try to explain the Trinity.**

WHAT GOD IS NOT:

**One way to understand a supreme God,
an all-powerful God,
a sovereign God, as Presbyterians are fond of saying
is to differentiate what God is NOT.**

**God is not the Unmoved Mover,
God is not Plato's Supreme Good
or Kant's Pure Reason.**

**God is not a self-contained absolute,
unaffected by the world,
nor is God a watchmaker who created the world,
wound it up
and stands apart from creation.**

**God is neither male or female – or perhaps both –
- although we often refer to God as “Father”
and assign the pronoun “he” to God;
because we can't conceive of a relationship to an “it.”**

**When God instructed Moses to call the Israelites,
Moses asked: Whom shall I say sent me?**

God replied:

¹⁴ God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” Exodus 3:14

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD:

**One thing we believe, as Presbyterians,
is this God we worship is absolutely sovereign.**

**Intellectually and emotionally, we wrestle with what it means
to say that God is sovereign.**

**We simply cannot imagine how someone – or something –
can be brought into existence out of nothing;
yet that is the premise of the Creation story:
God created all that exists out of *nothing*.
Ex nihilo.**

**A scientist was once arguing with God about creation.
The scientist claimed that he could create as God did.**

God accepted the challenge and said, “Go ahead and show me.”

**The scientist bent down, scooped up a handful of dust
and as he began his work,
God interrupted and said:
“Wait. Get your own dust!”**

**A sovereign God creates out of God’s own free will
and according to God’s love and wishes.
God is free to do as God chooses.**

That goodness and love of God may at times confuse us –

- especially when we try to reconcile God
 - to the atrocities of Dachau and Auschwitz
 - to school shootings
 - to the proliferation of drug abuse
 - to poverty and homelessness

We have a hard time understanding how an all-powerful God would allow these things to happen.

The only answer we can live with is one that comes from faith – and faith alone.

The writer of Hebrews said:

“Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” Hebrews 11:1

Since we lack the capacity to fully *understand* these things, we must rely upon our faith that God IS sovereign and loving.

GOD IS LOGICAL IN GOD’S OMNIPOTENCE:

God’s omnipotence also means

the things God does are neither difficult nor easy for God; the actions of God are only either done or not done.

What we might consider “difficult”

arises from the potential for not accomplishing a task.

There is a new athletic program on television –

- The Titans.

It is hosted by Dwayne Johnson

and features amateur athletes who compete against each other.

The tasks they are challenged to accomplish

would be impossible for most of us here.

We take one look at the trials they face
and we know we cannot do those things.

As difficult as it may seem to us,
those athletes do accomplish the tasks set before them.

We look at things or situations
and we ask: How could God possibly do this or that?

What we see are our own limitations.
With God, those limitations do not exist.
With God, all things are possible.
Nothing is too difficult for God
if God so wills it to happen.

You have probably heard the old question:
Can God create a rock so heavy that God couldn't lift it?

That is a senseless and illogical question,
sort of like asking whether Homer could write an epic so long
that he couldn't read it.

That which God does – or doesn't do –
arises out of God's omnipotence
and we may not fully understand it.

GOD IS A LIVING GOD:

Our omnipotent God is a "living" God.
That means that God *can* change;
but God must *always* remain self-consistent.

God is not a prisoner of God's own power;
but the omnipotence of God
allows God to freely react to human situations –
- which, at times, may also mean to not react.

**The good news is that God remains faithful
even when we are unfaithful;
God's promises remain true regardless of our actions.**

**God's ultimate plan for the salvation of all people never changes!
However, God's approach to bring that into being may change.**

**There are examples in the Bible of God's mind changing.
Certainly, God is sensitive to our prayers
and has been known to alter God's course.**

**However, God's love for us never wavers!
We can – and often do - turn away from God;
but God never turns away from us.**

**It is hard for us to conceive an all-powerful God;
a God without any limits
a God whose power is without limits.**

**Yet the omnipotent sovereignty of God
means that God is never subject to physical limitations.**

**Job struggled with the omnipotence of God.
And God answered Job and said:**

**“Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe
the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the
heavens above—what can you do? They are deeper than
the depths below—what can you know? Their measure is
longer than the earth and wider than the sea.”**

Job 11:7-11

**The prophet Isaiah came to a full understanding of God's power.
He said:**

**“This is what the LORD says— your Redeemer, who
formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, the Maker of**

all things, who stretches out the heavens, who spreads out the earth by myself.” Isaiah 44:24

Isaiah also said:

“I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, ‘My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.’ From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that I will bring about; what I have planned, that I will do.” Isaiah 46:10-11

THE GOOD NEWS:

Here is the good news –

- the news upon which I have staked my own salvation**
- the news I have preached my entire career**
- the bedrock of my faith:**

**This Supreme Being, infinite in scope,
absolutely sovereign in power
decided to create us – *us* –
for no other reason
than to be in relationship with us.**

**This all-powerful God
Who can do whatever God wishes to do
chose *us* to be God’s companions,
the object of God’s love.**

**And according to the scriptures,
there is *nothing* God won’t do
to bring us into a covenantal relationship with God.**

**This God offered Jesus as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins.
This God made a way through death
for us to spend eternity in God's presence.**

**This is the God I worship.
This is the God I do my best to obey.
This is the God who loves me without reservation.**

My prayer is that you know and love this God, too.

Let me close by quoting from Jude 24-25:

“To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before God's glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.”

PRAYER:

We do not pretend to understand You, O God. However, we ask that You grant us the faith to face the mystery of Who and What You are and to come to know the love You have for us.

This we pray in the Name of Jesus. Amen.