### **Really Knowing The Real God... The Nearness of God**

### John E Brown May 24, 2020

* Today we will talk about the immanence or nearness of God. He is alive and present throughout the universe.
* “God is not just over and above the creation, He is also powerfully in it.” – Martin Robinson
* Although He is distinct from the entire universe, God is not an ‘absentee landlord’, but is everywhere present and active in it.” - John Blanchard
* “God is omnipresent, which means God is everywhere. God is also immanent, which means that God penetrates everything.” - A.W. Tozer
* The teaching of Scripture about the relationships between God and creation is unique among the religions of the world. The Bible teaches that God is distinct from his creation. He is not part of it, for he has made it and rules over it. The term often used to say that God is much greater than creation is the word transcendent. Very simply, this means that God is far “above” the creation and he is independent of it. God is also very much involved in creation, for it is continually dependent on Him for its existence and its functioning. The technical term used to speak of God’s involvement in creation is the word immanent, meaning ‘remaining in’ creation. The God of the Bible is no abstract deity removed from, and uninterested in his creation. The Bible is the story of God’s involvement with his creation, and particularly the people in it. Job affirms that even the animals and plants depend on God: “In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind” (Job 12:10). In the New Testament, Paul affirms that God “gives to all man life and breath and everything” and that “in him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:25, 28). Indeed, in Christ “all things hold together” (Col. 1:17), and he is continually ‘upholding the universe by his word of power” (He. 1:13). God’s transcendence and immanence are both affirmed in a single verse when Paul speaks of “one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all” (Eph. 4:6). Not only is our God transcendent, above us in every way, but He is also immanent. In other words, He has an indwelling presence in the universe and is personally involved in its in-working and out workings. – Chris Poblete
* The nearness of God to His People
  + God’s presence is what ‘distinguishes’ us – Exodus 33:13-17
  + “Now therefore, I pray You, if I have found favor in Your sight, let me know Your ways that I may know You, so that I may find favor in Your sight. Consider too, that this nation is Your people.” **14**And He said, “My presence shall go *with you*, and I will give you rest.” **15**Then he said to Him, “If Your presence does not go *with us*, do not lead us up from here. **16**For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the *other* people who are upon the face of the earth?”  
    **17**The Lord said to Moses, “I will also do this thing of which you have spoken; for you have found favor in My sight and I have known you by name.” **Exodus 33:13-17 NASB**
* God’s presence is a covenant reminder
  + “The Lord descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the name of the Lord. **6**Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; **7**who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave *the guilty* unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.” **8**Moses made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship. **9**He said, “If now I have found favor in Your sight, O Lord, I pray, let the Lord go along in our midst, even though the people are so obstinate, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your own possession.” **Exodus 34:5-9 NASB**
  + “For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the Lord our God whenever we call on Him?” **Deuteronomy 4:7 NASB**
  + …” What other great nation has gods that are intimate with them the way God, our God is with us, always ready to listen to us?” **Deuteronomy 5:7 The Message**
* God’s Nearness in the Old Testament.
  + “Whom have I in heaven *but You*?  
    And besides You, I desire nothing on earth.  
    **26**My flesh and my heart may fail,  
    But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.  
    **27**For, behold, those who are far from You will perish;  
    You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You.  
    **28**But as for me, the nearness of God is my good;  
    I have made the Lord God my refuge,  
    That I may tell of all Your works.” **Psalm 73:25-28 NASB**
  + “The proud have had me greatly in derision, yet have I not declined in my interest in *or* turned aside from Your law.” **Psalm 119:51 AMPC**
  + Psalm 139
* The Nearness of God in the Prophets
  + “Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;  
    You will cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’  
    If you remove the yoke from your midst,  
    The pointing of the finger and speaking wickedness,  
    **10**And if you give yourself to the hungry  
    And satisfy the desire of the afflicted,  
    Then your light will rise in darkness  
    And your gloom *will become* like midday.  
    **11**“And the Lord will continually guide you,  
    And satisfy your desire in scorched places,  
    And give strength to your bones;  
    And you will be like a watered garden,  
    And like a spring of water whose waters do not fail.  
    **12**“Those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins;  
    You will raise up the age-old foundations;  
    And you will be called the repairer of the breach,  
    The restorer of the streets in which to dwell.” **Isaiah 58:9-12 NASB**
  + “Am I a God who is near,” declares the Lord,  
    “And not a God far off?  
    **24**“Can a man hide himself in hiding places  
    So I do not see him?” declares the Lord.  
    “Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?” declares the Lord.” **Jeremiah 23:23-24 NASB**
  + *“The city shall be* 18,000 *cubits* round about; and the name of the city from *that* day *shall be*, ‘The Lord is there.’” **Ezekiel 48:35 NASB**
  + “For thus says the high and exalted One  
    Who lives forever, whose name is Holy,  
    “I dwell *on* a high and holy place,  
    And *also* with the contrite and lowly of spirit  
    In order to revive the spirit of the lowly  
    And to revive the heart of the contrite.” **Isaiah 57:15 NASB**
  + “But now take courage, Zerubbabel,’ declares the Lord, ‘take courage also, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and all you people of the land take courage,’ declares the Lord, ‘and work; for I am with you,’ declares the Lord of hosts. **5**‘As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear!’” **Haggai 2:4-5 NASB**
* The Nearness of God in the Gospels
  + “But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. **21**She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” **22**Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: **23**“Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which translated means, “God with us.” **24**And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took *Mary* as his wife, **25**but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.” **Matthew 1:20-25 NASB**
  + “For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.” **Matthew 18:20 NASB**
  + “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **19**Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **20**teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” **Matthew 28:18-20 NASB**
  + “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” **John 1:14 NASB**
  + “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. **5**I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.” **John 15:4-5 NASB**
  + “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; **21**that they may all be one; even as You, Father, *are* in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.  
    **Their Future Glory  
    22**The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; **23**I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.” **John 17:20-23 NASB**
* The Nearness of God in the Epistles
  + “The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; **25**nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things; **26**and He made from one *man* every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, **27**that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; **28**for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His children.’” **Acts 17:24-28 NASB**
  + “But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, **31**so that, just as it is written, “Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.” **1 Corinthians 1:30-31 NASB**
  + “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, **4**just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love **5**He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, **6**to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. **7**In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace” **Ephesians 1:3-7 NASB**
  + “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, **5**even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), **6**and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,” **Ephesians 2:4-6 NASB**
  + “Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” *which is* performed in the flesh by human hands— **12***remember* that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. **13**But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. **14**For He Himself is our peace, who made both *groups into* one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, **15**by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, *which is* the Law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, *thus* establishing peace, **16**and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. **17**And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; **18**for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. **19**So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, **20**having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, **21**in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, **22**in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.” **Ephesians 2:11-22 NASB**
  + “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. **17**Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. **18**Therefore comfort one another with these words.” **1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 NASB**
  + “And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. **3**And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,” **Revelation 21:2-3 NASB**