

Thought for the Day

Monday 18th May 2020

At breakfast time every day I read a Christian book (not a whole book obviously – I don't eat that much breakfast!). As I munch my weetabix I like to think I'm feeding my spirit as well. Currently I am reading a little book by one of my favourite authors A.W. Tozer. It's called *The Knowledge of the Holy*. A little tome with 23 short chapters exploring 20 attributes of God. Tozer is not the easiest read, partly because his language is from the 1950's and 60's and partly because it's very challenging stuff.

The premise of the book is that God is far greater than we imagine. In fact God is incomprehensible. Tozer suggests that much about God is difficult for us to grasp and so we tend to cope by thinking of Him in manageable terms. That is, in ways we can describe Him from our own experience. He becomes a composite of all the best people we have known or heard about and all the sublime ideas we have entertained. That's nice for us, because we end up with a God who is to some extent definable, measurable and hence in some measure controllable. Tozer says having a God we think we fully understand is a moral calamity for Christians and the church.

There are 20 attributes of God Tozer looks at in this book. But he reminds us that these are just the ones we can understand. There are many more attributes beyond our experience and therefore our comprehension. Each attribute, is complete, perfect, constant and of infinite capacity. So that means God's love is complete, perfect, constant and infinite; His grace is complete, perfect, constant and infinite; His knowledge is complete, perfect, constant and infinite. I won't go on, you get the picture. It all takes a bit of getting your head around. In fact it is impossible to get your head around. It's like a mouse trying to hug an elephant – it's not going to happen.

'What's the point?' you may ask, if we can't get our head around it. If it's beyond our understanding why should we bother? Well a 'God in a Box', that we can define, explain, understand and is made up of the very best of everything good we can imagine, is not much use to us. Our trust and faith in what we expect from Him will be limited by the way we have defined Him. But if we accept that He cannot be explained or fully understood then He has no limits and what we can expect from Him is limitless too. Our God is love without limits, grace without limits, knowledge without limits, mercy without limits and so on - wow!

There will always be much about God that remains a mystery, inaccessible to us. But there is still much, much more of Him than we already know that is accessible for us to discover and experience. We are like someone paddling on the seashore with an ocean in front of us to be explored. The greater the effort we put in to finding out more about God, the greater our wonder love and praise.

I am reminded of the young lad experiencing a thunderstorm at night. His mother rushed upstairs to see if he was frightened and found him at the window shouting 'Do it again Lord'. Not limited by the science or frightened by the unknown, the lad simply rejoiced in another facet of God's wonderful creation.

So the challenge for each us in today's thought is – in the words of J B Phillips – Is our God too small? Hint - the answer is always 'Yes'. Our understanding of God is always too limited, because we can never grasp the fullness of our amazing God. But stretching our hearts and minds to know more of Him will always be wonderfully rewarded.

Why not find time today to read Isaiah 40:12-31, perhaps in The Message version if you can.

John Langridge

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