

As most of you know, we have recently begun a short topical study on The Glory of God. Thus far we've defined His glory as "the sum-total of who He is" or "the summation of His divine perfections," and then last week we considered His glory in His Knowability (the fact that God has made Himself known, in His word, through His names and attributes).

Thus, having seen The Glory of God in His Knowability, we come this week to The Glory of God in His Spirituality (or the fact that God is Spirit), and I want to consider our theme under three main headings: His Spirituality Explained, Expanded, and Applied.

But, before we do that, let me start by reminding you something we learned last week—if you recall, we learned that God is incomprehensible—which simply means, He cannot be fully comprehended—while we can understand and know God rightly, really, and increasingly, we cannot know God exhaustively—only God can fully comprehend God.

And I want to remind you of this, because much of what we will discuss today are rather lofty concepts. And while I intend to suggest some practical applications that result from these truths, we will all be forced to stretch our thinking today (and the more we stretch our minds and hearts the better we will be).

- I. God's Spirituality Explained
- II. God's Spirituality Expanded
- III. God's Spirituality Applied

I. God's Spirituality Explained

1. Here I must begin by clarifying something—when our Savior says God is Spirit, we have to distinguish this from the Holy Spirit.
2. When Jesus says that God is Spirit, He means, God Himself (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), is a Spiritual Being.
3. When we speak of the third Person of the Godhead as the Holy Spirit, this refers to His relation to the Father and Son.
4. The Holy Spirit eternally proceeds (comes from) the Father and Son—He is the Spirit of the Father and the Son.
5. Thus, when Jesus says God is Spirit, He's speaking about the entire Godhead, which is true of all three Persons equally.
6. And so, the third Person of the Godhead is THE Spirit in a way that the Father and Son are not—the Holy Spirit is the Spirit, the Father is the Father, and the Son is the Son.
7. And yet, all three Persons, as one Divine Being, are Spirit (that is Spiritual)—this is true of the whole Godhead.
8. There is a sense in which, in this short affirmation of our Savior (God is Spirit), we have a simple description of God Himself.
9. Thus, I want to suggest, in seeking to explain what it means that God is Spirit, three closely related facts or truths.
10. (1) Spirituality denies a physical body—the fact that God is Spirit, necessarily means He does not have a body.
11. Now, obviously brethren, the Scriptures often ascribe to God human body parts (eyes, ears, mouth, hands, arms, face, and back).
12. Furthermore, at times human organs are ascribed to God—for example, He is said to have a heart and bowels (intestines).
13. But, obviously, these are ascribed to God in a figurative way—they reveal truth about God in ways we can understand.
14. For example, when Scripture speaks about God's arm it refers to His power, and when it speaks about His eyes it refers to His knowledge.

15. Thus, God is described as invisible, Col.1:15—"Christ is the image of the invisible God" 1Tim.1:17—"Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible."
16. God is invisible because He is Spiritual—He does not possess any physical or material substance to Him—God is Spirit.
17. (2) Spirituality doesn't deny substance—this is where things become difficult—though God is Spirit He is a real Being.
18. When we say that God is Spiritual we don't deny any substance, but we simply deny all and any material substance.
19. William Shed—"While the spiritual essence of God is non-physical and formless, it is at the same time the most real substance of all."
20. Thus, by "substance" is meant real and actual Being—God is a real Being—He is not a nonentity or nonbeing.
21. If we deny any substance to God at all He would be nonexistent, which would contradict the fact that God exists.
22. It's for this reason, the Scripture uses various terms to describe the Being of God, that suggest substance in some sense.
23. For example, we read about the "form of God," the "Godhead," the "Nature of God," and the "Being of God."
24. Acts 17:29—"We ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising."
25. The phrase "the Divine Nature" refers to the nature of essence of God—God has a nature and this nature is Spiritual.
26. Now, I know brethren this topic can be difficult to grasp, but remember we are dealing with a transcendent theme.
27. It's for this reason theologians use terms like Nature, Being, and Essence as synonymous terms to describe God.
28. God is a Being—He has a Nature—He has Essence—though this Being, Nature, and Essence is Spiritual, it's real.
29. (3) Spirituality necessitates personality—that is, at the very heart of the idea of Spirit is the notion of personality.
30. Essential to personality is self-consciousness and self-determination—Scripture says God has a mind, heart, and will.
31. We must never think because God is Spirit He is not personable—God isn't like the wind, with no personal qualities.
32. But in fact, the exact opposite is true, because God is a pure Spirit, He is a perfect Being, with perfect personality.
33. And thus, when Jesus says God is Spirit, we must understand this to mean—He has no body, and yet, He is a real personable Being.

II. God's Spirituality Expanded

1. Here I want to suggest three inferences that flow from God's Spirituality—Spirituality argues simplicity, immutability, and infinity.
2. Now, let me just say, these are three large words that are not easy to understand, and yet, they are important terms.
3. (1) Spirituality argues simplicity—now, this term simplicity is an old term that communicates important truth.
4. Simplicity does not here mean easy, but it refers to singularity—God is simple in that He is a single divine essence.
5. 2LBC (2:1)—"The Lord our God is but one only living and true God... a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions."
6. When our Confession affirms that God is without "parts" it means, God is not made of parts that make a whole.

7. We will come back to this next week (as we will consider the Trinity), but we must never think of God as three parts.
8. It's not that the Father is a 1/3 of God, the Son a 1/3 of God, and the Spirit 1/3 of God, and together they make God.
9. God is a single, pure Spirit, Deut.6:4—"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one!"—that is, He is without parts.
10. The Belgic Confession (1561)—"We all believe with the heart, and confess with the mouth, that there is one only simple and spiritual Being, which we call God."
11. I don't think I need to mention, how influential this confession was—it was in many ways THE confession of the reformation.
12. And notice it begins with a clear affirmation of God's simplicity and single spiritual Being—"there is one only simple and spiritual Being, which we call God."
13. Perhaps another way of describing God's simplicity would be to say, all that is in God is God—there isn't parts to God.
14. Thus, as we learned last week, all of His divine perfections (attributes), do not collectively comprise or make up God.
15. Each of the divine perfections of God are God viewed from a specific perspective, God one—He is a pure Spirit.
16. (2) Spirituality argues immutability—the word immutability refers to the unchangeableness of God's character.
17. Because God is a pure Spiritual Being He can never change for the better and God can never change for the worse.
18. Put another way—God's immutability is the necessary result of His simplicity—a pure Spirit can never change.
19. Now, this is different from man because is body and soul, and thus, even in heaven the only reason he will never change is because of God's will.
20. As a creature, even a glorified creature on the new heavens and earth, our immutability is dependent upon God.
21. This is also true of angels—while they are spiritual beings without bodies, their immutability is a created immutability.
22. God alone is naturally immutable, because God alone is by nature pure Spirit, uncreated, and without body or parts.
23. Now, I know brethren, that what I've just said is not easy to understand, and it may go over some of our heads.
24. But let me put it into a statement—because God is Spirit He is simple, and because He is simple He is immutable.
25. Jas.1:17—"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning."
26. In other words, there is no hint of change or alteration in God—because He is eternally good, He can only do good.
27. (3) Spirituality argues infinity—infinity is a theological word that describes the boundlessness (limitlessness) of God.
28. Infinity weds together two related words—immensity (which relates God to space), and eternality (which relates God to time).
29. Because God is Spirit He is not bound by space or time—He exists beyond or outside of all space and all time.
30. In contrast to this man is finite—he is bound both by space and time—he is bounded or limited—a fact that will remain true forever.
31. Man will never become infinite but will remain as a glorified finite creature for all eternity, bound by space and time.
32. But because God is a pure Spirit, is not bound by space of time—He is infinite both in relation to space and time.

33. 1Ki.8:27—"The heaven of heavens cannot contain You"—that is, God exceeds the limitations of His creation.
34. While He is everywhere present within creation, God is not limited by creation but He exceeds or surpasses creation.
35. The same is true of time—while God is everywhere present in time (past, present, and future), He exceeds time.
36. Time is a created reality designed to govern creation, and God is not governed by anything outside of Himself.
37. Thus, the very fact that God is Spirit argues His simplicity (oneness), immutability (unchanging), and infinity (immense and eternal).

III. God's Spirituality Applied

1. Here I want to suggest several applications that naturally and necessarily flow out of all that we've just learned.
2. (1) If God is Spirit, then let us adore Him for His perfection—because God is the only pure Spirit, He is the only natively perfect Being.
3. Dear brethren, I know that some (or much) of what I've said has been difficult to understand—perhaps high theology.
4. Thus, let me summarize everything I have thus far said this morning into this single thought—God alone is perfect.
5. And when we speak of God's perfection, we speak of something that is only true of God—only God is perfect.
6. In this sense, nothing else is perfect, as only God is pure Spirit, self-existent, eternal, unchangeable, and infinite.
7. Stephen Charnock—"Every creature, even the highest creature, is infinitely short of the perfection of God; for whatsoever excellency they have is finite and limited; it is but a spark from the sun—a drop from the ocean; but God is unboundedly perfect, in the highest measure, without any limitation."
8. 2LBC (2:1)—"The Lord our God is but one only living and true God; whose subsistence is in and of Himself, infinite in being and perfection; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself; a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, who only has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; who is immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, every way infinite, most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute."
9. You know, sometimes it's necessary, or perhaps I should say, all the time it's necessary, to adore God for being God.
10. Hymn—"This, this is the God we adore, our faithful unchangeable Friend, whose love is as great as His power, and neither knows measure nor end."
11. (2) If God is Spirit, then let us take comfort in His perfection—that is, let us be comforted in all that God's Spirituality infers.
12. Here I mean, let us not only marvel at God's perfection, but let us take refuge in the great reality that God is Spirit.
13. Because God is Spirit He is everywhere present—because God is Spirit He is eternal—because God is Spirit He is unchangeable.
14. The perfection of God isn't merely something we must study and adore, but something we must trust and find refuge in.
15. Dear brethren, behold your God—behold your Spiritual, immutable, all-present, all-knowing, absolutely perfect God!
16. As we especially read through the Psalms, we again and again find the Psalmist applying these truths to Himself.
17. Ps.103:17—"The lovingkindness of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him"—all that has been He will be.
18. Ps.102:25-28—"Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; yes, they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will

- change them. And they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will have no end. The children of Your servants will continue, and their descendants will be established before You."
19. (3) If God is Spirit, then let us marvel at God's image in man—that is, in the narrow sense, God's image in man is man's spirit.
 20. Now, this doesn't deny that certain theologians have suggested that God's image in man, in some sense, includes his body.
 21. But this is only said in a qualified sense, in that, because man has a body he is able to exercise dominion on earth.
 22. But almost every reformed theologian, without exception, agrees that God's image in man exists primarily in the soul.
 23. Although our bodies are fearfully and wonderfully made, they share similar characteristics with various beasts.
 24. But, our souls (spirits) alone share similar characteristics with God Himself—because God is Spirit men have spirits.
 25. Heb.12:9—"We have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?"
 26. Here Paul contrasts our human fathers with our Heaven Father—our human fathers, in some sense, gave us our bodies, and our Heaven Father, gave us our souls (spirits).
 27. I think this is what is meant by the phrase, "the Father of spirits"—He is the Father of spirits in that He's the source of our spirits.
 28. Here's the point—while we all bear the image of our human fathers bodily, we also bear the image of our Heavenly Father spiritually.
 29. Thus, while we must take care of our bodies we must be more concerned for our souls (which renders us most like God).
 30. O brethren, what a tragedy that so many professing Christians are far more concerned with their bodies than souls.
 31. It's our souls that make us most beautiful, it's our souls that make us most like God, and thus it's our souls that deserve the most time.
 32. And yet, we are careful to nourish the body, exercise the body, and adorn the body, often at the expense of our souls.
 33. (4) If God is Spirit, then let us worship Him in spiritually—I suggest this means two things—that we worship God as Spirit and with our spirits.
 34. (a) We must worship God as Spirit—by this I mean we must never pretend to worship God under physical images.
 35. Ex.20:4—"You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth."
 36. This of course has been the practice of man from the beginning—because we are physical we want a physical image of God.
 37. Thus, people have worshiped various images as God—the sun, moon, stars, animals on the earth and in the sea.
 38. But remember brethren, the second commandment is not talking serving other gods, but serving the true God wrongly.
 39. The first commandment address idolatry, the second commandment address the false worship of the true God.
 40. Because God is Spirit, to worship Him under any physical representation, is the very height of dishonor and disrespect.
 41. (b) We must worship God with our spirits, Jn.4:24—"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."
 42. If God is Spirit than we can only truly worship Him in spirit—we can only truly worship Him with our spirits.
 43. Now this doesn't deny that we also worship God with our bodies, but it simply means, without the heart, there can be no true worship.

44. (5) If God is Spirit, then let us behold Christ who explains Him—remember Christ is the image of the invisible God.
45. While it's true we can see something of God's invisible attributes in creation, we see all of God's attributes in Christ.
46. And this at the very heart of the incarnation—perhaps I can put it in the form of a question—Why did God become Man?
47. Well brethren, I think you know why—He became a Man so that He can live perfectly and die sacrificially in our place.
48. But there is another reason—God became a Man so that we can behold God—so that we can understand God.
49. Because God is Spirit He is invisible, and thus, God in Christ became visible—Christ is the image of the invisible God.
50. Jn. 1:18—"No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him."
51. In fact, Stephen Charnock, in His Existence and Attributes of God, offers a rather interesting suggestion in the chapter entitled, On God's Being a Spirit.
52. He suggests that throughout the OT, when body parts are ascribed to God, they are previews of the incarnation.
53. It's like God was referring to Himself as having arms, hands, eyes, and feet, because one day, in Christ, He would.