

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. Amen.

God knows exactly what He is doing in your life. Recently my wife and I hired a professional painter to paint the walls in our basement. The work they did was absolutely surprising to me. They did it in less than two days, including taking off wallpaper. It would have taken us as a family at least two to three weeks to get it done. Our basement looks brand new. They fixed holes in the walls and painted the ceiling. I can honestly say that if we had done our own painting, it would not look as good as it does. Some jobs are better left for the professionals.

God knows exactly what He is doing in your life. There is no one more professional than God. God is not necessarily painting you on the outside, but God is remodeling you on the inside. You may not even agree with the work God is doing inside of you. Your present circumstances seem unbearable, but God knows exactly what He is doing. God's precepts, actions, and judgements are always perfect for God is holy and perfect in every way.

I know there are a lot of you reading Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Soon you will be in Joshua and Judges. Some of you are reading these books for the very first time. You have not heard much about them since your Sunday school days.

Last week my sermon had two main points. God exists and God is knowable. In teaching confirmation, I emphasize the fact that God exists every time we meet. In future years when they enter secular colleges, their belief in the existence of God will be tested severely. There are professors whose reason for teaching at the college level is to destroy the superstitious religion of Christianity. The student's belief in the existence of God is utterly absurd to some of the professors and an outright insult to their personhood. They live and breathe to destroy that belief in your child that was raised to believe in God's existence. After all, these students' lives are nothing more than an accident of the universe, chemicals colliding

out of nowhere and hence millions of years later here we all are. The belief in a Creator God is only for those weak at heart, emotionally immature. They need a crutch and so people have created a god to believe in instead of viewing God as the creator.

Yes, God exists. In Romans one and two we have the three C's. Creation, Conscience and God consciousness.

1. The vast universe points directly to an Intelligent Designer, a Creator whose name is God. Those who deny this are blind to the truth and are deceived by Satan.

**Romans 1:18-25(NLT)** *<sup>18</sup>But God shows his wrath from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. <sup>19</sup>They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. <sup>20</sup>For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. <sup>21</sup>Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. <sup>22</sup>Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. <sup>23</sup>And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles. <sup>24</sup>So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. <sup>25</sup>They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.*

God's existence is an actual threat to their own existence and identity. If God exists, that means they are answerable to a much higher power than themselves. It means there is a Person for whom one day they will give an account to for their lives. Creation is one of the biggest God pointers there is.

2. Conscience. The fact that every human being has some form of conscience, except the psychopaths and sociopaths, points to an entire moral order over the universe. God has ingrained in humans a sense of right and wrong. This too comes from God and points to God who is over all things. People go wrong because they suppress the truth of their conscience for a lie.

3. God consciousness. Every human being is made in the image of God. Deep inside of every human being is the perception, the knowledge, and the feeling that God exists. The sad

thing is, in our sinful human nature it is so easy to suppress that which is within and completely deny what is known inside of your soul. Therefore, there is no excuse for not believing in God.

I think it most proper to emphasize the existence of God, especially as our society moves further and further into its antigod mode. Atheism is on the rise. Church attendance is on the decline. This is one reason why you have been asked to pray daily for God to show his glory to our nation.

I also spoke last week that God is knowable. There is no one more social than God. God wishes for all to know Him. It is God's will for you to know God and have God as the most important relationship in your life.

One of the most popular of 20th century songs, and not just for Easter, is the hymn "He Lives." Written by Alfred Ackley in 1933, the song is also known by its first line, "I Serve a Risen Savior." After completing his musical training at the Royal Academy of Music in London, Ackley returned to the states to attend Westminster Theological Seminary in Maryland and was ordained as a Presbyterian minister in 1914. For a few years he worked with evangelist Billy Sunday.

While in California in 1932, Ackley began witnessing a Jewish man who attended some of the evangelistic meetings. This young student kept saying, "Why should I worship a dead Jew?"

This bothered Ackley and it stayed on his mind. After waking early to prepare his Easter Sunday message, he was amazed to hear on the radio a famous liberal preacher in New York say, "Good morning. It's Easter! You know, folks, it really doesn't make any difference to me if Christ be risen or not. As far as I am concerned, His body could be as dust in some Palestinian tomb. The main thing is, His truth goes marching on!"

Ackley's anger at this was displayed as he threw the radio across the room, yelling, "It's a lie!" His wife told him it was time for him to do what he did best — write a song — and then he would feel better.

In his study, Ackley re-read the Resurrection account from Mark's Gospel in the Bible, and soon the words began to pour from him. A few minutes later, he put music to the words, and answered the question, "Why should I worship a dead Jew?"

*"He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today!*

*He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way.*

*He lives, He lives, salvation to impart!*

*You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart."*

God is most knowable through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Those who do not believe suppress the truth for a lie.

Meanwhile back to Exodus through Judges, you will be reading how God purposely wipes out, massacres, and performs blood baths that make us cringe when we read. I know of people who read it and it makes them question the very existence of God. If God is so loving, how can a loving God be so mean, so angry, so full of wrath.

The answer to this falls under the many attributes of God. God is knowable so the more you know about God, the easier it is to answer this most difficult of questions. How can a good God do so many harmful things? Is God schizophrenic, full of hate in the Old Testament and full of grace in the New Testament? The simple answer is God is always the same, yesterday, today, and forever more. God is unchangeable the Bible tells us (Malachi 3:6; Psalm 102:27). God changes not. This means at the core of God is a solid temperament, personality, and character that is always the same. "God is unchangeable in his being, attributes, purposes, and promises" (Wayne Grudem, Christian beliefs, pg. 23). God did not have some conversion experience between the Old and New Testament; He is the same God.

Here are specific facts to think on when pondering the dilemma of a God who kills. "First of all, it should be noted that the destruction of the Canaanite cities was based on religious, not political or military considerations (Deut.7:2-6;12:2-3;20:10-18). Secondly, God's people acted on the basis of God's command (Exod. 17:14; Deut. 7:2; 20:16; Josh. 8:2) and thus refers to the moral character of God. "The Bible tells us that God is holy and without imperfection, it follows that that whatever God commands is just and right" (John J Davis, Conquest and Crises, pg. 49). "God is holy" (Is 6:3). God is completely separated from sin and cannot participate in sin. God is righteous and just. Everything that God does is right. God cannot do wrong. "God always acts in accordance with what is right, for he himself is the final standard of what is right." "As judge of the world, he will do what is right (Genesis 18:25)" (Grudem pg. 31). To put it

bluntly, all of God's actions are right. Who are we to question God's actions? Have you discovered that God did something wrong? If you have, you are not referring to the God of the Bible. You are creating a god in your own image, one whom you place your own view upon.

Yes, God is wrathful toward sin. Sometimes God puts off his wrath of sin until the day of judgment. At other times God's wrath comes instantly. God intensely hates all sin. Sin is a complete affront on our holy God. God's wrath burns hot against sin (Grudem pg. 32). Dr Wayne Grudem writes, "Therefore, wrath is an attribute of God for which we should thank and praise God. If God delighted in or was not troubled by sin, he wouldn't be a God worthy of our worship and praise" (pg.32).

The sin that we see all around us today that deeply troubles us troubles God all the more. God wants us to pray for all to be saved and come to faith in Jesus Christ. We are called by God to love all people, including those who are unbelievers. *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16).

Christians need never fear the wrath of God. Jesus bore all of God's wrath that we deserved. God's wrath cannot even touch us.

God is good (Luke 18:19). "Therefore, God is the final standard of good; all he does is good and worthy of our approval." "There is no higher standard of goodness than God's own character" (ibid pg. 29). God's goodness is most clearly seen in the grace and mercy He freely bestows upon us that saves us for all eternity. Nothing is sadder to me than a person who rejects the goodness of God.

God is all knowing, and God is all wise. When we question God, it is because our minds are limited to what we can fully take in and understand. God's wisdom means God always chooses the best possible goals and the best possible means to meet those goals. He is the "only wise God" (Rom. 17:27) (ibid.pg. 27). **Romans 11:33(ESV)** <sup>33</sup>"Oh, the depth of the riches

and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!"

God is love (1 John 4:8). For this very fact God cannot help but love you. Having said that, God is more than love. God is holy. To put it bluntly, God is holy love. God demands perfection from us and loves us so much that He sent Jesus to die for us so that we can be with God forever and ever. God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked the Bible says.

Finally, the reasons for God's judgment upon the people is clearly stated in Scripture. Deuteronomy 20:18 makes it clear that this was designed to preserve the religious purity of the nation of Israel. The direct judgment of God came to these people because of the iniquity, because of the greatness of their sin toward God. God warned the people of Israel that if they became like the Canaanites, they too would receive the judgments of God and that is exactly what happened.

God is the same God in the Old Testament as in the New Testament. God is a holy God and demands sin be punished. The Lord reserves the right to punish sin wherever it is found. God may act immediately, such as the destruction of cities, or God may prolong his judgment until the second coming of Christ, where those who have rejected Jesus experience God's wrath (Davis pg. 50).

Let me tell you how gracious God is. We are permitted to live only by the grace of God. The Bible says, "For the wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 3:23). God knows what He is doing in your life. His grace is upon you. Jesus bore the punishment we deserve on the cross, the full wrath of God. The more you study who God is, things that at one time bothered you about God's actions will fall into place of their own accord. Therefore, the most important knowledge you can have is knowledge of God. Amen and Amen.