

V.O.C. – October 2017

October 8, 2017: Who is God? His Word shows us God in His characteristics!

Dear listeners,

During this month of October we have taken our focal point in the question, “*Who is God?*” We want to share with you that we *know* God from His Word. Through the Voice of the Church we want to open God’s Word to see what God has *revealed* in His Word about Himself. It’s very important that we *know* God – *believe* in Him, that is, and *love* and *serve* Him – for *knowing God is eternal life*, the Lord Jesus has said. That starts here already, namely in a life that’s lived for God, in which we honour Him, serve Him, and worship Him in Spirit and in truth! Then we have seen last week that *God is one*; God is *the one, eternal, invisible God, who is Spirit*. It is as such that He has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, the Word incarnate, that is the Word in the flesh. Then in Him we now also come to see some of the *characteristics* of God. That we may know Him even better and come to love Him and live with Him, trusting in Him!

Well, dear listeners, then we must come to realize first of all that God is *the living God!* It’s very important for us to realize that, and that especially in the awareness that God is *here*, God is in this world, as *the living God*. God is in this world, and He knows what’s happening, what’s being said about Him, and how He is being treated by people. From His Word we learn how God is engaged in the events in this world, also those that pertain to His people, His church. We may think that it’s okay that God’s Name is blasphemed, or that He is ridiculed, or spoken about without reverence, but then we should be aware that He is deeply hurt, displeased, and seriously offended when that happens. He is the *living God*. In His Word we can find many a story or event in which the blaspheming of His Name is punished by death. Today as well, we can’t always prevent it or make people aware of it, but as *the living God* He is still very displeased when that happens. Then, as King Hezekiah does in 2 Kings 19: 8-19, we have to bring that before God *in prayer*, asking Him that God would *show* Himself *the living God*, and show it in His deeds, in His judgments!

We cannot ignore this fact, dear listeners, and especially since we know that this living God is *the almighty God*, who is *all-knowing* and *everywhere present*. These, too, are characteristics that we should take seriously. God’s almighty power, too, has been questioned and ridiculed: Can God make a stone, so heavy that He can’t lift it up? No, God can’t, for that is nonsense, and contradictory. God can do everything He *wants* to do. If God is *almighty*, people ask, why doesn’t He make an end to all the suffering in this world? That’s a more difficult question. Indeed, God as the living God is also the almighty God who punished the world in the *flood*. God the living One, however, is also the *Almighty God* who gave His own Son to take the sting out of sin that *caused* all the hunger and misery! God as the *living* and *almighty* God also promised that He will make a new heaven and a new earth, but He will do so in His own time and way! That’s what we can *trust* He will be doing, because we know Him as the gracious God, the merciful Father, and the *reliable* God who keeps His promises! He is the almighty God who does

not fill all our wishes and desires but He will carry out His plans and program with this world! He is the living and eternal God who will show us all He is able to do when Christ returns! We now have to believe that, while then we will see it!

It's comforting to know this about God, dear listeners, as it is also comforting to know that God is all-knowing. Then we may find that unsettling at first hearing, yet it is first of all comforting because He wants to know us in our thoughts and fears, in our needs and requests, in our concerns and anxieties. O sure, the fact that God knows all becomes a *threat* to us when we realize our sins, our shortcomings, and deceitfulness and wicked thoughts. In that sense, God's Word tells us that "no creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." [Hebr. 4:13] God *knows everything*, so we can't pretend anything or He will know that too. It's no use hiding your sins from Him since He knows them all, but it's comforting therefore to know that you can lay all your confessions and petitions before Him in prayer; and He *knows* them, even before you articulate them! Peter, too, knew that God heard him deny His Saviour three times; yet, then Peter was comforted as well when the Lord Jesus asked him three times whether he loved Jesus! "*You know everything*," Peter said to Jesus, "You know that I love you!" God looks right through us, indeed, but then He also sees how gladly and eagerly we *want* to know Him, serve Him, and love Him!

God is almighty, all-knowing, and everywhere present too, dear listener. That, too, is a characteristic of God, which for some people is a fearsome thing; as if He is "Big Brother in Orwell's book '1984.' Big Brother is watching you! That's not what it means though that God is all-knowing and everywhere present. It's important that we know Him rightly, not as the *inspector* who is checking up on us and will punish every transgression of us. No, He is God the *Father* who sees us, follows us, and provides for us, the way David was comforted by this knowledge that God was present everywhere with His blessings! That's how David experienced this characteristic of God's omnipresence: He is there for you, to help you and bless you and protect you! Yes, He will be there for you, also when His way with your life leads through the valley of the shadows of death! "You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me!" [Ps. 139:5]

Of course, dear listeners, then this doesn't mean that you will always *understand* God's way with your life. God also is *unfathomable* and *incomprehensible*, which means that God does not give account for His ways or an explanation of His wisdom. God's ways are higher than our ways and God's thoughts higher than our thoughts, as Isaiah prophesies in chapter 55. God is God, and we cannot fathom His wisdom! God is God, and we cannot fathom His greatness, His majesty, in the storm, as Job's friend Elihu holds up. Today, too, there are so many events happening in the world that we cannot comprehend. Then you may think about it, of course, and speak about it together, yet you sometimes have to put your hand on your mouth because you cannot argue with God. He is the *living* God, the *almighty* God, who *knows* everything and is everywhere *present*, and we may entrust ourselves to Him as a child does with the father, even if and when the child doesn't understand his father; he can *trust* him nonetheless! God is reliable, faithful, good and glorious, as we will see next week!

