

TEXT SERMON

SERIES: *THE GOD WHO IS*

Message #2

“THIS GOD IS OUR GOD”

Psalm 48:14

“For this God is Our God forever and ever; He will be our guide even to death”

A Kindergarten teacher told everyone to draw a picture of what was important to them. Everyone else finished and handed their drawing in except little Johnny near the back of the room – he was still drawing, tongue out and oblivious of everything else.

The teacher graciously walked back, put her arm around his shoulders and said, “Johnny, what are you drawing?” He did not look up but just kept feverishly drawing. He said, “I’m drawing God.” The teacher said, “But Johnny, no one knows what God looks like.” Without stopping he answered, “When I get through they will know!”

What is the highest goal we can set for ourselves in life? Answer: to know God. What is the best thing we can acquire in life? Answer: an intimate knowledge of God. Acting religious without truly knowing Him is dangerous! It is the danger of false security.

Do you remember the Apostle Paul’s encounter with religious people in the city of Athens recorded in Acts chapter 17? He said to them, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I found an altar with this inscription: ‘To An Unknown God’ whom you ignorantly worship, him I declare to you.” (Acts 17:23) Most people claim some knowledge of God. However, if they really knew God, it would show in their lives! Religion without God characterizes many church-going people.

Illust. A rather rough and tough looking Sunday School teacher was attempting to impress upon his class of boys the importance of living the Christian life. He asked, “Why do people call me a Christian?” After an awkward moment of silence, one boy said, “Maybe it’s because they don’t know you.” He was implying that if people knew him they would not call him a Christian! Why do some Christians live such ugly lives? It is because they do not know God.

Psalm 48:14 can teach us much about God: “For this God is Our God forever and ever; He will be our guide even to death” or “to the end.” It is my desire that a contemplative analysis of this dogmatic statement will help us to know Him better. Verse fourteen is the conclusion to the Psalm but there is considerable information about God throughout. Although this Psalm has for its setting the city of Jerusalem, it is God Who gives prominence to the city.

The opening words of the Psalm are, “Great is the LORD”. Those words put the entire Psalm in perspective. Against the background of that introductory statement let us now consider verse 14 as follows:

I. THIS GOD IS OUR GOD.

Those who make the claim that “this God is our God” should evidence that knowledge by

their godliness. What does the word “godly” mean? A “godly” person is one who is God-like. We become Godlike when we truly know God and are changed by Him. We are “unlike God” when we do not know Him.

What do we learn of God from Psalm 48? There are several characteristics of God in the Psalm which reveal His nature:

- a. He is great. v.1
- b. He is praiseworthy. v.1
- c. He is holy. v.1
- d. He is knowable. v.3
- e. He is powerful. v. 7
- f. He is loving and kind. v.9
- g. He is to be worshiped. v.1 says He is to be praised.
- h. He is righteous. v.10
- i. He is Judge. v.11
- j. He is eternal. v.14

What a great God! No wonder the song writer opened the Psalm with the words, “Great is the LORD.” Who would not desire to know Him better? The greatest saints of ages past have been men and women whose desire to know God better propelled them and compelled them to draw nearer to God.

- Moses prayed “that I may know You.” (Exodus 33:13) and “show me your glory.” (Exodus 33:18)
- David’s life was one long pant of spiritual desire. He said, “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.” (Psalm 42:1-2)
- Daniel adds, “the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.” (Daniel 11:32)
- The Apostle Paul hungered and thirsted for a better knowledge of God. His desire is recorded in Philippians 3:10 - “That I may know him.....”

These examples challenge us today to be seriously seeking to know God better. Those who make the claim that “this God is our God” have the responsibility to prove their claim by demonstrating in the arena of life the characteristics of the One Whom they claim to know. The lack of an in-depth knowledge of God and conformity to His likeness has brought the church of Jesus Christ to the present low level of spiritual poverty that we see so prevalent around us today.

What do best-selling authors Jerry Bridges, J. I. Packer, A.W. Tozer and J. Oswald Sanders have in common? They, along with others, have written books to inform, inspire and encourage the acquisition of a deeper knowledge of God. Bridges wrote “The Practice of Godliness”; Packer wrote “Knowing God”; Sanders wrote “The Pursuit Of The Holy” and Tozer wrote “The Knowledge Of The Holy” and “The Pursuit Of God.” Why this emphasis? Because a knowledge of God is the greatest knowledge we can possess!

Jesus emphasizes the importance of an intimate knowledge of God in His prayer in John 17:3 - "This is life eternal, that they might know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."

Illust. J. I. Packer begins the first chapter of "Knowing God" with a quotation from a sermon preached by Charles Spurgeon. Here are his words: "The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father." Indeed:

"What a mighty God we serve,
What a mighty God we serve;
Angels bow before Him,
Heaven and earth adore Him;
What a mighty God we serve."

As we meditate upon v.14 we see first that "This God is our God." Secondly, looking further into this Psalm we see that,

II. **THIS GOD IS OUR GUARD.** v.3

"God is in her palaces; He is known as her refuge" Or, as the NIV: "he has shown himself to be her fortress."

This Psalm is a song about God's city, Zion – Jerusalem. It is referred to as:

- "the city of our God" – v.1
- "the city of the great King" – v.2
- "the city of the LORD of hosts" – v.8
- "the city of our God" – v.8

Jerusalem is seen as very dear to the heart of God. It was a place of refuge, a fortress. It was and is a walled city. The words "refuge", "towers" and "bulwarks" are used to denote a place of safety and security. When hostile armies plotted an attack, the people took refuge in the city. I have been there, I have seen the walls, we have seen them on television.

However, the Psalmist recognizes that the ultimate refuge is not a walled city but God Himself! He says in v3 "God is in her palaces; He is known as her refuge." God was recognized as the ultimate refuge. What God was perceived as being in relation to a city, He is to all His children in all countries, cultures and cities in all times. This God is not only our God, He is our Guard! How does He guard us?

A. **He Guards Us Internally.** Phil 4:6-7

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will *guard* your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Within the citadel of our soul is God's peace guarding us. You may say, "it is God's peace, not God Himself." Ah, but read on in Philippians 4 and verse 9 tells us that He is

“the God of peace”! We only have the “peace of God” when the “God of peace” is present guarding us!

B. He Guards Us Externally. Jude v.24

“To Him who is able to guard you from stumbling...” (YLT) There are sin obstacles external to us that, when we insist upon walking in our own willful way, cause us to stumble. However, when walking in “paths of righteousness for His name’s sake” (Psalm 23: 3) He guards us from falling away utterly.

C. He Guards Us Eternally. II Tim. 1:12

“I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.” (niv)

Do you think that God would guard a city and not guard His children? Of course not! Go back two Psalms to Psalm 46: “God *is* our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” (v.1-2) And “The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah.” (v.7)

Check out this eternal security statement in Psalm 125:2 – “As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people from this time forth and forever.” How Long? Eternally! Our security is perpetual.

So, Psalm 48 tells us that God is our God, our Guard and, one last look at v.14 tells us that:

III. THIS GOD IS OUR GUIDE. v.14

“He will be our guide even to death.”

A god who cannot or does not guard is not God. Likewise, a god who cannot guide is not God! A person who wants God to be their God but not their Guide is a fool – do not walk with them! Self-appointed guides have rejected God – so they have neither God nor guide. We need guidance for the same reason that we need God, we are lost and cannot find our way home.

Israel was a pilgrim nation. They journeyed from Egypt to Canaan, their “promised land.” We too are pilgrims. Peter addresses us saying, “Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul...” (I Peter 2:11). And since we have not passed this way before we need a guide. And, praise God, ““He will be our guide even to death.”

How does our Savior, Shepherd guide us?

A. He Chooses The Way I Take.

“He leads me beside still waters – He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.” (Ps. 23:2,3)

“Not what I wish to be nor where I wish to go,

For who am I that I should choose my way?
The Lord shall choose for me, 'tis better far I know,
So let Him bid me go or stay."

B. He Cares For Me On The Way.

"He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside still waters, He restores my soul, my cup runs over." (Ps.23:2,3,5)

C. He Companies With Me On The Way.

"Though I walk through the valley Thou art with me." (Ps.23:4)

D. He Clears The Way Before Me.

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies." (Ps.23:5)

E. He Concludes The Journey With Me.

"I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." (Ps.23:6)

As pilgrims through this world we need a Guide who *knows* the way, *shows* the way and *goes* the way with us. We have that Guide. Let us follow Him unerringly.

Illust. I lived and ministered near Detroit, MI in October, 1972 when two ships collided in the Detroit River. The Greek ship the Navishipper collided with the Homer when the Navishipper failed to make a turn at the proper time. The reason was not an equipment malfunction but the fact that the Navishipper did not have a pilot on board! A pilot is required by law to be aboard all saltwater vessels navigating the Great Lakes. The ship had left Toledo, OH earlier without a pilot because the pilots were on strike. Both ships sustained heavy damage and blocked the Detroit River to other traffic.

Christians have a Pilot "on board" at all times, Who never goes on strike and never slumbers or sleeps! Let all of us who know Him and trust Him to be our **God, Guard** and **Guide** be lifted in spirit, strengthened in faith, and rejoicing in our hearts because of the great truths in Psalm 48:14 and say, in the words of the hymn;

"Guide me O thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak but thou art might,
Hold me with thy powerful hand."

Do you know the truth of Psalm 48:14? Can you say, "this God is *my* God forever and ever; He will be *my* guide even to death"? How can this God become my God? Jesus said when we receive Him we are receiving God. His words: "He that receives me receives Him that sent me." (Matt. 10:40; Mark 9:37; Luke 9:48 & Jn. 13:20) By confessing that we are sinners and accepting Jesus Christ as God our Savior we then can truthfully say, "this God is *my* God forever and ever; He will be *my* guide even to death."

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