

# Boundless God?

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Lawrence Peak

There is a lot of talk these days about boundaries – setting limits, this far and no further – Don't cross the line – This is my space, don't invade my space. All through history there have been wars about territorial disputes, the latest being the tragedy we are witnessing in the Ukraine. In Australia we are so fortunate not having to share a common border with any other country. And on a smaller scale, how many neighbourhood disputes have been triggered by the positioning and upkeep of border fences?

Of course it is a good thing in personal relationships and in the social scene to define clearly what is acceptable and what is not. And yet I guess we should not be too strict with our “no go” areas remembering that strict guidelines can be softened when love and compassion come into play. The story of the Good Samaritan tells us this very clearly. The Jewish tradition was very firm with its rules and regulations – what was acceptable and what was not – quite rigid in terms of Gentiles, Lepers, Samaritans, Sabbath observance and women; and it took Jesus to come along and show how important it is to factor love and compassion into the equation and hence soften the boundaries.

I have one simple point to make this morning

Although we are bound by restrictions and limitations in so many ways in our day to day living, our Father God does not have any limits nor boundaries.

**God is not limited by space.** Wherever we are, be it at home, abroad or at sea. Be it in the middle of a storm or any other scary situation, be it on a mountain top or down the depths of a mine, be it in a rocket ship heading for the moon or Mars, we can rest assured that God can be right beside us to strengthen and comfort. As Psalm 23 says

*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for Thou art with me, Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

**God is not limited by time.** He is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob – and of Mother Therese and Martin Luther King and Billy Graham and all the saints and of us right here now as we worship together this morning in July 2023!

The fact that God is not limited by time means that he has all the time in the world to attend to our prayers even if there are millions and millions coming in

at the same time. I have a mental picture of an old-fashioned telephone operator frantically trying to connect cables to a switchboard to keep up with all the calls coming flooding in. God, on the other hand is not like this he is not limited by time – He has all the time in the world for each and every one of us and our concerns.!

**God is also not limited by scale.**

He is the creator and sustainer of the Universe with all its mind boggling power and majesty. It stretches out further than we can imagine and has galaxies and stars too numerous to contemplate counting. It is a creation that includes black holes and warped time and immense distances. Even when we look at the closest star we are seeing what it looked like four years ago – and as we go deeper into space our view gets earlier and earlier.

As King David comments in Psalm 139

*“God, your plans are incomprehensible to me! Their total number is countless! If I tried to count them—they outnumber grains of sand!”*

And yet, and yet he is also the God of the microscopic and the infinitesimal with all its amazing detail. According to Jesus – the Son of God, this God of infinite power and majesty also cares when a sparrow falls from the branch to the ground. As the hymn says

*Why should I feel discouraged?  
Why should the shadows come?  
Why should my heart be lonely?  
And long for heaven and home  
When Jesus is my portion  
My constant friend is he  
His eye is on the sparrow  
And I know he watches me  
I sing because I'm happy  
I sing because I'm free  
For his eye is on the sparrow  
And I know he watches me*

So this means even if am no mover or shaker, no prominent leader. No conspicuous, sensational or impressive person – God cares for me as he does even for the sparrow and the most unlikely humble person on earth. There is no limit nor bound.

As we sang in Sunday School

*Wide, wide as the ocean  
High as the heavens above  
Deep, deep as the deepest sea is my Saviour's love'  
I feel so unworthy – still am a child of his care  
For his Word teaches me that His love reaches me everywhere.*

Simple theology but oh so true, and so far reaching!

### **God is not limited in His attention to beauty.**

The more we delve into the depths of creation, the more we are stunned by the intricacy and beauty of what we are seeing. Be it the pattern on a butterfly's wings, the cathedral like hexagonal design of every common snowflake, the extraordinary design and social structure of a colony of ants or bees or of any other insect population, the extraordinary beauty in each flower that adorns our gardens, the staggering beauty of every vivid sunrise and sunset – and so on and so forth to an infinite degree. I personally feel that every time I am close to such beauty I am somehow closer to God the designer of it all. And when we have an urge to create and appreciate beautiful things it is because we have been created in his image.

### **Finally, God is not limited in his forgiveness.**

There are so many in the Bible about God's boundless forgiveness.

- **1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- **Isaiah 1:18** I, the Lord, invite you to come and talk it over. Your sins are scarlet red, but they will be whiter than snow or wool.

And not just once or twice but as many times as are required. Provided we are contrite and truly repent of our sins and failures and ask for forgiveness, God will be there for us ready to welcome us back into his open arms as did the father of the prodigal son.

This is great news indeed but it comes with a sting in the tail. We are expected to also forgive as God forgives. When Peter asked Jesus how many

times should we forgive our neighbour the answer was, as we know, seventy times seven. As if anyone would count up to 490 and then say "That's it – no more forgiveness"! No we are expected to be boundless in our forgiveness as God forgives.

But the sting in the tail goes further - every time we pray the Lord's Prayer we say

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us" meaning we can't expect God's forgiveness unless we are also prepared to forgive.

There are two possible ways to interpret this petition

Forgive us our trespasses **in the same way as** we forgive others  
Forgive us our trespasses **because** we forgive others – already!!

Slightly different slants of meaning but arriving at the same conclusion. We cannot expect forgiveness if we are unwilling and don't practise forgiveness ourselves.

So let us praise God that he can be there for us without restrictions or hampered by any boundaries. His Holy Spirit permeates the whole of creation and is there to provide us with sustenance, comfort, strength and hope. He is a God of unbelievable majesty and yet at the same time capable of the intimacy of a loving Father for all of us!

Let me finish with one last thought. Having said all of this it is worth noting that there is one thing God cannot do – he cannot perform a logical impossibility – he cannot have a window open and shut at the same time!! That would not make any sense and the entire created universe has a very real sense and reason.

Therefore he cannot give us the gift of free will and still have us moving around like puppets on strings or automatons responding to predetermined programs. That would have no sense or reason. So we are free to do things however we choose even if contrary to his will and hence make a right royal mess of the world – something we are pretty good at.

But that is another story for another time!

To God be the glory, great things he has done and continues to do **Amen**