

Open Theism (part 3)

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[0:00] You can turn in your Bibles to 1 Samuel 15. We'll be looking just briefly at that in a few moments. 1 Samuel 15. And for the last two weeks, you know that we've been considering a very dangerous view of God.

An alarmingly popular view of God in evangelical churches these days. A view that says that God doesn't know the future. It's called open theism because they believe that God is open to the future. Because they believe in a libertarian free will of man. A will that is free so that if God knew what the choices of men would be, they wouldn't really be free.

And so it follows that God must not know what their choices will be. And so God doesn't know the future. He doesn't know the outcome of the decisions of free men.

It's their view of man's free will and their view of God that they can't reconcile. And so they alter their view of God. And they go further than even Arminians. They go to what were known as Socinians back in the 16th and 17th century.

[1:16] People that believed that God didn't know the future. And so they throw that out even though it seems clear to us that the Scriptures teach it.

Now to be fair, these people aren't people that deny the authority of Scripture. They're not people that deny the inerrancy of Scripture. They believe that the Bible is God's Word. But they interpret it very differently than we understand the Scriptures to be teaching.

And so we've considered some of the things they believe, how widespread it is the last couple of weeks. And today we want to see why it's important. Why have we bothered looking at this? Some of the implications for Christians.

If you adopt this view of God, where will it land you? How will it affect you if you were to adopt this view of God? Maybe there's something about it that's attractive to you. The idea that God isn't the source.

And the attraction here is that God is not the source of your suffering. He's not the cause of it. Because He didn't know it was coming. And so God can't be blamed for suffering.

[2:17] There's an attraction for them in their view of prayer that we'll talk about. But should you be so attracted, and I trust that you're not, I pray that you're not, here's where it will land you.

Here are some of the places that you will go. And I'm indebted to a professor at Southern Seminary in Louisville. His name is Bruce Ware. And this is a book called God's Lesser Glory, The Diminished God of Open Theism.

And I want to be fair to the Bremen Public Library today. I told you back when we started that, oh, about three years ago I found this book, Is God to Blame?, written by Gregory Boyd, who is a known, well-known, a popular open theist.

And it was right on the new material shelf for all to see in the library, and that was troubling to me. And we're making the point that this is right here in your own backyard in Bremen. But to be fair to the library, when I returned this book, I asked to talk to the librarian and just asked her how they chose their books, especially books on theology, how they came to choose this book in particular, and tried to sweetly say that, just so you know, probably 90, 95% of the churches in Bremen would disagree with what this book is teaching.

Remember, we hold something in common with our Arminian friends here, that God knows the future. They affirm that, that God knows the future. And this book denies that. And so, said, just so you're aware, probably a large percentage of the churches in Bremen would disagree with this book.

[3:49] And I gave her a list of books that held to the opposite view, the view that we hold, that God does know the future. I don't remember what was on that list. My guess is that this book was

on there.

It's one of the few books I know, or I knew of then. There were a couple others probably that I would have put on the list. But anyway, when I went back to the library to find this book for these Sunday school classes, I also found this in the Bremen Public Library.

This is the Bremen Public Library's copy of God's Lesser Glory, The Diminished God of Open Theism. So they do have a book espousing what we believe to be the correct view of God. And I would highly recommend that you go over to the Bremen Public Library after I return this and check this book out and read it.

Because it's very good. It's very thorough. It explains clearly what open theism teaches. It answers it well. And then at the end, it draws out some of these implications that we're going to talk about today.

So, excellent book. I'll be quoting from it today. And I'll try to return it to the library this week. And then it will be available to you all. So why is it important?

[4:58] Why is it important that we know something about this? Why is this teaching so dangerous? As we've said, it's not just Reformed Christianity that is at stake.

It is historic. It is Orthodox Christianity that hangs in the balance where large numbers of people to embrace open theism. To deny God's foreknowledge is to deny His omniscience.

The church has always affirmed that God knows everything. And open theists, to be fair again, affirm God's omniscience. They say God knows everything. They just say, some of the future isn't there to know.

That sounds strange, I know, but I'm about to read you a quote that says that very thing. The future isn't there to know because the free choices that men make haven't been made yet, and so they're not there yet, and so they can't be known.

And so they do affirm God's omniscience. But to our way of understanding, to the clear teaching of the Bible, to deny God's foreknowledge is to deny His omniscience.

[6:00] It's to say that He doesn't know everything, even though they affirm otherwise. And it's not a matter of indifference. It's not a matter of Christian liberty.

It's not like eating meat was for the Corinthians, where one man's conscience allowed him to eat meat, and another man's conscience allowed him to not eat meat that had been offered to idols. It's not a matter of indifference or Christian liberty like that. But I want you to listen to how sometimes it's described as though it were a matter that's indifferent, a matter of liberty.

This comes from the website of the church where Gregory Boyd is pastor, Woodland Hills, I think, in Minneapolis. But the website says this, we affirm the omniscience of God with regard to the past, present, and future.

Amen. So do we. We affirm the omniscience of God with regard to past, present, and future. We also recognize the current disagreement among evangelical Christians about the biblical data regarding the content of the future that God perfectly knows.

[7:09] There's a disagreement. Right. There is. There shouldn't be, but there is. They go on. All views hold that God is omniscient. But some interpret this to mean that God knows all things that shall come to pass.

That's us. While others hold that the future is not completely there to know. Okay? Because the choices haven't been made yet, so we can't know what they will be.

They go on. Within the bounds of the wholehearted affirmation of God's omniscience, we recognize both positions as legitimate evangelical options. I disagree.

As a local church, we hold no single position on this issue. As with many issues within the church today, we encourage unity in the essential things, freedom in the non-essential things, and agape love in all things.

No. No. No. This is not a non-essential thing that God knows the future. You can't lump it in with other things of Christian liberty where we disagree. The Bible clearly, unmistakably, teaches the perfect, infallible foreknowledge of God.

[8:20] That God knows all things before they come to pass, including the choices of free men. And so we can't say that unity in the essential things, freedom in the non-essential things, and love in all things.

I think we can say that to an extent, but to include the foreknowledge of God as something that's not essential is clearly out of step with the Word of God.

God knowing the future is not a matter of freedom. It is a matter of truth. It is what the Bible declares and it is what we must hold to. And so to deny God His perfect foreknowledge is to attack His glory. Look at 1 Samuel 15. We looked at this passage last week, but notice verse 29. Notice what God has called here. The name of God.

In 1 Samuel 15 and verse 29. He who is the glory of Israel. That's what they're calling God here. He who is the glory of Israel does not lie or change His mind, for He is not a man that He should change His mind.

[9:29] As soon as you begin to say God doesn't know the future, you have to say that God does change because His plans aren't going to work out as He planned because man's free choices are going to change those plans.

And so you have to say that God does change His mind. But to do that is to deny the glory of God or at least to diminish His glory because the glory of Israel...

And remember, this is who God is. This is God's very nature. We saw that from Isaiah. I am God and there is no other. And He says, from ancient times, I declare to you what is yet to come. That's part of who God is that He knows beforehand things that will come to pass. And so to deny Him that foreknowledge is to attack His glory. To deny the foreknowledge of Christ which open theists must do because Christ is God is in some ways to deny one of the things on which He made evidence of His deity.

That He was God. Remember, we saw that when He predicted His betrayal, He said, when these things come to pass, you will know that I am He. You will know that I am.

[10:34] That I am God. That was one of the evidences that Jesus would be... They would know that He was God. That He knew the future. And what did Jesus foretell? The betrayal of Judas which was a free act by a free man exercising His free will.

Judas is totally responsible for His betrayal. He chose to do it in His freedom. And yet Christ still knew what He was going to do. He knew that free choice of Judas before it ever happened.

And so to deny God His foreknowledge is to deny Him His glory. It is to deny at least some of the evidence of the deity of Christ. And so it is to attack in some ways the deity of Christ.

And so when we come to worship, it has to affect the way you worship. And here is one of the first implications that we see of this doctrine. It's going to affect the way you worship. If you're coming to worship a God whose wisdom is finite instead of infinite, if you're coming to worship a God who doesn't know the future and so isn't totally in control of the future instead of an all-knowing, all-sovereign, all-powerful God, if you're coming to worship a God then who is not all-glorious, that doesn't inspire true, genuine, heartfelt worship, does it?

You begin to think God isn't so much different than us. And again, they affirm otherwise. They affirm the perfect wisdom and knowledge of God, His perfect omniscience, and so on.

[12:11] They affirm these things. But to me, they're emptied of some of their meaning by the way they interpret them. And so you come to worship and God isn't all that glorious anymore. And that's why this book is rightly called God's Lesser Glory.

It diminishes the glory of God to teach these sorts of things about Him. And the subtitle is The Diminished God of Open Theism. And that's what He is if open theism is right, which it is not, of course.

And so we begin to see that our theology isn't isolated. We don't have the foreknowledge of God over here and the justice of God over here and the love of God over here.

Theology is always connected. And so if you mess with your theology over here, it's going to be affected over here. If you begin to deny the foreknowledge of God over here, it affects your view of the glory of God over here and the power of God over here.

And then it begins to affect your practice. It begins to affect the way you live. God isn't so worthy of worship anymore and so worship becomes cold and empty and eventually it stops. you start to play with theology in one place and it will always affect something else.

[13:19] Something else that you believe. Something else about the way you live. Theology is integrated. It's not isolated. And so one of the things that it does is it affects our worship.

It also affects the way that we view prayer. If you all have questions, just put your hand up and ask them as we go or comments. Any thoughts on how it affects our worship or the view of God's glory before we move on to talk about prayer for a moment.

Jim? I think that's my experience that if we couldn't put our trust fully in God as we would trust a man that would affect our worship that we would change his mind as we do. What would our hope be?

We'd have no firm foundation based on it. Exactly. And we're going to talk even more about that very thing. No confidence. No hope. Which also affects our worship. Go on it. It is hopelessness. In some ways they must not because it is they say in Arminian view which says that man is able to choose that which is good. He's able to choose to follow Christ.

[14:43] And maybe somebody that grew up in a church that teaches Arminian truth could help me here. But I think in some ways what do Arminians do with the heart is desperately wicked above all things?

Who can know it? Somebody want to help me out here? That's possible. I just want to be again I want to be I want to be fair.

Okay. Good. Dave? Right. What I've often heard is they will acknowledge the gravity but then it will be in common grace what we call common grace and find differently that God kind of raises the water level above that gravity it does take time to the word that position of the gravity but now anybody choose everybody is what will happen to it.

Fair enough. So they can interpret your way around it and explain it otherwise. And to be fair the church doesn't hold this view. They say they don't hold to one view or the other.

They just acknowledge both as legitimate options which is close enough to holding and their pastor does hold the view but the church as a church does not. Roger.

[16:06] This one. A question and follow up with the family message. Do they believe that it's omnipotent? Do they believe that miracles really are miracles?

That God is all powerful. We're going to talk about that and how it sort of empties part of God's omnipotence as well when we talk about suffering in a few minutes. things.

Maybe I have a hand on it. It's going like that again by George and how he worship him because the whole reason for their view is to make it so God not to blame that things that happen like he's not doing like all these things but does it really?

It's he's all over number four or five down here. Yes.

This Roger. Sure. As we say, you start to mess with your theology here, it affects it everywhere else.

[18:01] And so, yeah, you certainly could end up there. Jim. No. No. No, I read very briefly on that, and they divide the prophecies into three types, I think.

Prophecies where God acts unilaterally, where there's no decision on men's part to be made. And so God knows what those things will be because He alone is going to do them. And then there's ones that involve God's action and man's action together.

And then a third category, and I'm still not ready to tell you their view of prophecy, except that I believe it's a problem for their view.

That if God doesn't know the future, how do you explain all the prophecies that are fulfilled in the Scriptures? I'm not prepared to answer that fully. It's a good question, though.

Okay, let's talk about prayer for a few minutes. How does it affect our view of prayer? They claim their view gives a more motivating view of prayer. If God doesn't know exactly what will come to pass in the future, then our prayers take on great significance.

[19:10] We can inform God of our greatest desires that He might not know because they're our chosen desires. And we can tell Him what we think is best, what we think should happen, and actually influence God towards one course of action or another.

Bruce Ware, from this book, describes their view. Because the future is not exhaustively foreknown by God and settled, that is, there is no divine blueprint, and because God seeks to know our thoughts, concerns, longings, feelings, and requests, it follows that all we bring to God in prayer can truly make a difference to what happens in the future.

God often takes into account our prayers before He decides what to do. They want to make our relationship with God more like a human-to-human relationship, where I get some information from you, and that affects my viewpoint, and it affects what I do.

And you get some information from me, and that might alter your course of action, and what you're going to do, a give and take of information between God and men. And that may be attractive to us.

Our prayers, you know, if you have a hyper-Calvinistic view, you might say, well, prayer is useless. God's going to do what He's going to do, and what we say can't make any difference. That's a misguided view of prayer.

[20 : 27] But it's sort of the view of prayer that they set up to attack. But anyway, it's more attractive to them to actually be able to influence God.

He wants to know what we think, what we have to say, and so He waits to hear it before He decides what He is going to do. Their own view of God creates all sorts of problems for their own view of prayer.

We don't have time to discuss all of those. They still affirm God's perfect knowledge, His perfect wisdom. But then they say that we can somehow add to that wisdom by telling Him what we think. They say that God perfectly knows us. But He doesn't know our choices. He gives you three or four of the dilemmas of their view of prayer from their view of God.

Not from the biblical view of God, but from their own view of God. Their position is inconsistent. We don't have time to discuss those things here. But let's summarize the implications for their view of God and prayer for us, if you were to adopt that view.

[21 : 33] If God doesn't know the future, He doesn't know what's going to come to pass, because He hasn't fully planned it, because He can't. Because He doesn't know what the choices of men will be.

And if God doesn't and can't control the choices that men make, then our prayers really are futile. They're not more effective. We're praying to a God who can't really control what's going to happen, because He doesn't know what's going to happen.

And we'd better spend our time persuading free men, rather than trying to persuade God of what to do. Instead of talking to God who's made mistakes in the past, and without perfect knowledge of the future, who's probably going to make mistakes again in the future, prayer is really a waste of time from their view of God.

I'm not going to take time here to defend a fully orthodox view of prayer that holds that it's one of the means that God has ordained to accomplish His ends. We pray for the same reason that we preach, for the same reason that we do missions.

Yes, God has ordained all things that will come to pass. He has also ordained the means by which those things will happen. One of those means is prayer. And you don't know if it will be by your prayers that someone is drawn into the kingdom.

[22 : 50] We don't know if it will be by the sending out of missionaries that a particular person in a particular place, that will be the means that God uses. And so God ordains these means, and He commands us to pray, and He commands us to go and preach the gospel.

And so we do these things, understanding that while God has ordained all that will come to pass, He's also ordained the means. And those means are you. And so prayer really is effective. Prayer really is powerful.

Prayer really does accomplish much. The effective prayer, the fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Amen. Although their view of prayer would deny that.

So we pray, we preach, we do missions. But it's a detriment to your view of prayer if you adopt this view of God. Mark. You mentioned just a moment ago that they believed God had made mistakes in the past.

Yes, like making Saul king. God regretted it. God wished that He hadn't made Saul king. And so that was a mistake that God made.

[23 : 56] Yes, they believe that God has made mistakes. Absolutely. That's an unmistakable or an unavoidable consequence of their view. That's why...

I don't know that I've read a quote where they actually say that God made a mistake. But it's the implication of it.

They may say it. I don't know. I'm not well read enough in it. But... No. They're going to say it. Do you think you're a good one? No. No, that's our understanding.

God describes these things in the Scriptures in human terms. It's what we talked about last week. Anthropomorphisms. Where the Scriptures have to describe God in human terms. Because we're humans. And that's all we can finitely comprehend.

But yes, their view has to hold to the idea that God has made mistakes. It's inescapable. Roger.

[24 : 56] Right.

It does. And that's one of the problems. It's one of the reasons. I don't want you all to be open theists. It'll kill your prayer life, even though they claim the opposite. Another implication. We've got to hurry on, because this is our last week for this topic. It destroys confidence and hope in God and in His guidance in our lives. It undermines our confidence in His guidance. We'll always be second-guessing if the path that God has laid out for us is the right one. If we're on the right path. If God has us going in the right direction. Are these things that I'm suffering really part of God's plan?

Are they pointless and I'm totally in the wrong path for my life? Maybe I'm bringing these things on myself. Maybe they're coming from somebody that's acting outside of God's control. [26 : 10] Outside of His knowledge. There's no confidence in knowing that the trials we're enduring are part of His great plan for us. In open theism's effort to put God right there on the path with us.

To feel our pain with us. To make the journey with us. Which He does. And anyway, that's another issue. But in their effort to have us helping God out with our input through our prayers.

The power is taken out of God's hands. It demotes God and it glorifies man. It gives man what ought to go to God alone. Listen to how Bruce Ware puts it.

What possesses open theists to revel in the notion and to think it good that God waits to make up His mind until He hears from us? Why would one ever think that it is a benefit to us that God takes into account what we think as He decides what is best?

How can it be better that God and I decide my future together rather than leaving this all together in God's infinitely wise and perfect hands? Who do we think we are? Why have we come to think that we have something, anything, that can make a difference to God's wise purposes for our lives?

[27 : 21] What fools we are to take to ourselves what is God's alone. How impoverished is the resultant relationship we have with Him. And how detrimental this is to our life of faith.

Right. I don't want to improve on God's wisdom for my life. It would be foolish to think that we know better than God. And so, try to plot our course and help God understand what we think is best. Ultimately, all of God's promises and assurances of victory are called into question because God can't guarantee the outcome of the future. He's powerful.

He's highly resourceful. He knows us perfectly. He knows the present perfectly. He knows the past perfectly. And so, God is better than anything else we've got. But He's not totally trustworthy.

His promises aren't certain if He doesn't know the future. And so, our trust, our confidence in God and His guidance in our lives is misplaced.

[28 : 27] He can't fully anticipate what is coming and so He can't perfectly guide us. His promise to bring us safely home is a pretty sure thing, but it can't be an absolutely sure thing.

And this will lead, if you can't figure it out, it leads to a life of insecurity in the Christian life. A life of worry and uncertainty instead of a life where we don't have to worry about tomorrow because God knows what it will bring.

It makes the command to not worry a cruel, unkeepable burden rather than a joyful freedom for us. It's a life of despair and worry instead of confidence and certain hope.

And so, it erodes our confidence, our hope in God and His guidance in our life. One, that we have to contribute to that guidance and that God doesn't know the outcome of it.

Any questions on our confidence in God? We're going to talk about suffering next. And so, if you've got a question about suffering, hold on to it for a second and we'll get there. A comment, sure.

[29 : 35] Yeah, the pot can't say to the potter, here's how things should be.

Exactly. It's backwards. And Bruce Ware goes on to argue that it really does. It's another way that it robs God of its glory. It gives to us what belongs only to God.

And so, elevates man and lowers God. Jim. I had a question for something you touched on earlier to make sure I understood correctly. Do you say that they believe that the Bible is the truth?

Mm-hmm. I thought that's what you said. I just wanted to make sure I understood correctly. But I'm having a hard time with that because I go to 2 Timothy. So, 1 Timothy 3, 16, 17, which is all scriptures God reads.

That's where I'm kind of wondering. Yeah, they believe that. These, I want to distinguish, these aren't liberal churches that have gone liberal and denied the deity of Christ and the resurrection of Christ.

[30 : 49] And denied that the scriptures are the word of God. These are evangelical churches, evangelical people that are holding to these things. And they say they're being faithful to scripture,

interpreting the things that we talked about last week.

We can't go back and rehash all of those things. But yes, they do believe that it's the word of God. All right, let's move on to suffering. It affects the way we view suffering and the way that we suffer. However, another of the supposed attractions of this view is that God can't be the source of our suffering. God can't be blamed for it. The title of Boyd's book is God to Blame.

And even the title, we don't blame God. Blame is the wrong word to use. And even in the title, they caricature a view of a sovereign, all-knowing God.

But you can't blame God for evil with their view. Again, Bruce Ware summarizes the attraction this way. At the heart of the pastoral counsel offered to suffering people by open theists is this claim.

[31 : 56] God did not bring about your suffering, so don't blame God for it. Instead, be encouraged because He feels as badly about the suffering you are enduring as you do. To many, this has an initial appeal.

On the surface, it offers suffering people comfort. God didn't do this to me, they say. And furthermore, God cares about the pain I'm experiencing. To many, this sounds like good and wise counsel.

But problems begin to come when you ask the questions that Roger was asking earlier. Open theists, we ask them the question, Okay, God didn't bring the suffering.

He didn't cause it. We'll grant you that for the sake of argument. But could He have prevented it? Is He all-powerful? Able to calm the storm? Able to stop men in their actions as He sees them unfolding?

Is God able to prevent it? And it puts them in a quandary because they either have to answer, Yes, He could have stopped it, but He didn't. And this comes into their whole view of suffering.

[32 : 56] They believe that any sort of suffering could not come from God because God's love for His children demands that He only do good to them. They don't see that suffering can be good for God's children.

I haven't actually read that anywhere, but I can't really escape that conclusion. Because God loves us, He's not going to bring suffering. It assumes that suffering is never good, never a thing of benefit to the Christian.

And so, if you ask them, could God have stopped it? They have to either say, yes, but He chose not to. And then, from their point of view, you're denying God's love and His goodness, which puts them in a quandary.

Or you have to say, no, God couldn't have prevented it. And then you're denying God's power. And then you don't have any hope. And so that view does put them exactly in that difficult, impossible position, really.

And I think it misunderstands the teaching of the Bible on suffering. Blessed are you when men persecute you, says Jesus. Don't be surprised as though some strange thing were happening to you, says Peter.

[34 : 04] And James says, count it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials. And seeing those things as coming from the hand of a good God is the right view.

Their view is really bankrupt of any hope. Because either God isn't good, or He's impotent. He couldn't have stopped it. Think of Joseph, for example.

He clearly views his suffering as coming from God's hand. He says to his brothers, not, you sent me down to Egypt, but God sent me down to Egypt. He says, you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.

And an open theist would have to argue that only Joseph's brothers sent him to Egypt. It was their decision to throw him in that pit, and then to get him out and sell him into slavery.

And that was outside of God's knowledge, His foreknowledge at least. And then God had to make the best out of it, instead of seeing it as coming from the hand of God from the very beginning.

[35 : 05] Bruce Ware has a bit of satire. He's a little bit sharp sometimes. And his criticism of open theism. But he's gentle as well.

But listen, imagine Joseph. If Joseph were an open theist. And these are the thoughts of an open theist, Joseph. Imagine Joseph's dismay when he thought about his situation while in prison the way open theism would encourage.

Gratuitous evil happens, Joseph would reason. And it has happened to me. I'm a victim of this pointless evil and revengeful plotting of my brothers. And now of the false accusations of Potiphar's

wife.

Even the dreams God gave me about my brothers, dreams he meant to be an encouragement to me, have actually contributed to their hatred of me. And thus to my increased suffering. God didn't mean to do this.

But the fact is that he has made my life immeasurably worse. And the dreams. Ha! Imagine my brothers bowing down before me. How absurd. The dreams were wrong anyway. Furthermore, God did not even know this was going to happen to me.

[36:07] And he's totally unable to control these horrible events or do anything about it. After all, free agents have done these things to me. And God cannot know in advance what they will do. And he certainly cannot control their actions.

And all I can do is accept the fact that this pointless suffering has been directed at me. And that it has now ruined my life. Yes, I'm glad to know that God is with me in this prison. But how I got here, when, if ever I might get out, and whether there is any purpose served from it, are all beyond God's control.

Woe is mine, Joseph would think. What hope is there in this? My life is over. All I can do is despair.

You see where open theism lands you in the midst of your suffering. It leaves you no hope.

It leaves you no confidence. And so, it would be for us. Open theism often blames Satan for much of the suffering.

There's a cosmic battle going on between God and Satan in the world. And that is right, that Satan is the source of evil in the world. The source of some suffering.

[37:09] But they deny the God who allows Satan to act. Think of Job. Satan acting under God's permission. Think of Paul's thorn in the flesh that was a messenger of Satan, but was used by God.

Was under God's control to demonstrate his power in Paul's weakness. Our only true comfort, and you all know this, but our only true comfort in time of trouble is that God does know what will happen and is in control of it all.

That he is bringing these things to us for a reason, whether we understand it or not. Open theists find comfort in a God who does not know and is not fully in control.

Imagine it this way. Imagine it this way. And I think I may have used this illustration before. But imagine that you're trapped in an elevator, in a burning building. There's no way for you to get out of the elevator.

You're trapped there. And unless somebody can get you out, you're going to burn. You're going to die. What would you rather have? Would you rather have a firefighter who's trapped in the elevator with you?

[38:19] And he doesn't know what's going to happen. And he can't do anything about it. But he sure does feel your pain. He's right there with you. He's walking that path with you.

He knows. He fully understands and experiences what's going on with you. But he can't do anything about it. Or would you rather have a firefighter who's outside of the elevator, who's got an axe and can pry those doors open?

The guy inside the elevator doesn't have an axe. He's got an axe. He can pry those doors open. He can get you out and deliver you to safety. He sees that there's a clear path.

He knows he can get you out. And he's going to do it. Which would you rather have? The firefighter with you in the elevator that doesn't know and can't do anything or the one outside that does know what's going to happen and can do something about it?

Open theism puts God in the elevator with you, unable to act. And it denies that God does understand our suffering, our pain. We have a high priest who's been tempted in every way, such as we are, yet was without sin.

[39:21] Jesus does understand what we experience. And so you get the best of both worlds if you believe the right view of God. God does understand.

And yet God is in control of it. And he knows what's going to happen. I'll take the firefighter on the outside of the elevator any day. Open theism takes the one that's on the inside, unable to do anything.

An open view of God will lead to despair. Bruce Ware says, That's where it leads.

A lack of confidence in God. That will be its legacy if it continues in the church. Again, these are the inescapable outworkings of it.

[40:31] Some things are not harmless. Little variations in doctrine that don't really make a difference. There are significant attacks on the person and the work of God, His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

There's no confidence. So, whatever you're enduring at this moment in your life, be grateful that God is on the throne. And He is bringing all things to pass. Working all things together for good. For those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

We worship an all-glorious God. Don't diminish His glory by denying what the Bible teaches about Him. Seek to honor Him and worship Him today. And be grateful for a God that does indeed know and control the future.

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