The Independent God

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[0:00] My name is Rafael Bello, as you just heard, and I'm going to talk about this topic right here of the doctrine of God's independence, or sometimes called doctrine of aseity.

That's a name that you don't hear every day, right? Aseity. And I realize this is kind of a deep theological theme, and most of you probably don't know or haven't heard of aseity as a term. Maybe I'm shooting a little bit too low here, but the idea that I want to focus on today is going to be on two levels, all right? So I'm going to focus first on what is commonly called the doctrine of divine incomprehensibility, or the idea that God is incomprehensible.
And then I'm going to use that to segue into the doctrine of God's aseity, or the doctrine of God's independence. So those are two interconnected doctrines, and I feel like I couldn't really just jump into doctrine of aseity right away without doing what we call a work of theological prolegomena.
It's actually kind of fun for you. I mean, this is actually working well for Brady there, you know, with OBU. This is actually the first 10 minutes of this sermon slash lecture here.
[1:33] It's going to be the first 10 minutes of the very first lecture that I give to every student coming to OBU. Okay, so you are getting a little bit of a taste of this first 10 minutes, and then right after that, I'm going to segue into aseity.

So I'm doing work there for you. If they like it, it works well. If they don't like it, I'm sorry. All right, so how do we talk about the doctrine of God's aseity? First, we need to talk about doctrine of God's incomprehensibility.
And the way to talk about this, I'm going to ask you to switch, so if I do this, does it work? Okay. Talk about coffee snobs, a little bit, okay? Why do I not talk about coffee snobs? It could be any hobby, actually.
Any hobby, but like coffee is prevalent enough. People talk and like coffee a lot. And you probably are at the age where you're starting to drink coffee, or maybe some of you are drinking coffee. Or if you're not drinking coffee, you will start soon.
And there's always that person that likes coffee way too much. Or if you're not into coffee, you know people who like coffee, right? And they talk about the method that they brew coffee. It's a Chemex method, or an AeroPress, or a French press.
[2:41] And the ratio should be 16 for 1 grams, or 15 or 14. It doesn't matter. Or what matters is that at times when you're talking to people that like coffee too much, they can be so particular about the method that they brew their coffee, that it ruins the experience for the other people that are around.

It's like, I just, you know, I just want to enjoy my coffee. And it's going to be for any hobby. Think about this, right? My wife actually says that I'm a hobby hopper. Like I get a hobby for like three months, and I like dive deep into it, and I get to know everything about it.
And then I kind of jump to the next thing. And then that's like my life. And I basically bore her to death, because like for the three months that I'm into the hobby, I just talk about that thing nonstop. And I ruined the whole thing for her. So like I'm there enjoying coffee, and then she's like, just let me have my coffee. Or right now it's like movies or vinyls, and like talking about movies and vinyls a lot, and she's like, I don't care, right?
Just go to the room and do your thing. So the whole thing is interesting. And why do I'm talking this? Because theology, in terms of how we actually work with this, is very similar.
[3:56] It can be a hobby for some people in one sense too, that you talk about these difficult terms such as aseity or incomprehensibility, and you ruin the experience of God for other people.

Because, and here's what I'm going to try to get away of the illustration, is that the goal of theology is not to stay into this, look how much I know territory.

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It's not just head knowledge. You all agree with that? Theology is a way of living and experiencing and participating in God, right? So the difficult terms, difficult theological ideas, we have to use them in a way to invite people into the experience of God with us.
So it would be no good for me to stay here in front of you and talk about aseity and all the technical stuff. And I'm going to talk about some of the technical stuff. But it would be no good if I just did that and not actually invited you to experience the God who is incomprehensible, to experience the God who is and has life in and of himself.
That's sort of an invitation. So theological knowledge, this is why the word prolegomena is here, is another difficult word, right? It basically just means an introduction, a clearing of the throat, so to speak, right?
[5:23] Pro just means before, lego means speaks, it's just speaking before. Like, what do we need to know before we speak about theology? Actually, the word theology itself, in the early church, the first Christians post the apostles, they wouldn't use the word theology as a discipline, like we use.

They use the theology to talk about the knowledge of God himself in distinction to what they call economy, which is the knowledge of God in relation to us, not economy in the sense of money, but there is two types of knowledge, right?
The knowledge of God in relation to us, we know God as savior, right? That's God in relation to us, that's the economical knowledge, and we have the theological knowledge of God in his life and himself, the incomprehensible God, the God who is our say in and from himself.
So, my goal is actually to go into this next idea of these two types of ways. I'm actually going to focus more for this class, for this lecture here, more on the what is theology, right?
And you can go to the next slide already. So, the idea, if you look here on this slide, some of these definitions for theology, for example, I'm trying to set the stage for the doctrine of divine incomprensibility here for you, okay?
[6:44] So, look at this. Theology, all these definitions. Theology is faith, seeking understanding. That's the classic Augustinian, Anselmian turn of phrase, right?

That's, theology is not just a headspace thing. I can't just know God by my knowledge of things. I have to have faith. It has to be incorporated into my knowledge of God.
That's one definition of theology, right? So, look at all these definitions. So, this, we are not, in other words, we're not just brains on a stick, right? Let me pause here and say this again.
We are not just brains on a stick. Our most important factor, what defines the humanity in us, is not that we are thinking creatures. That's really an innovation post the 18th and 19th century.
We used not to think in this way. They were just people who think. If you say that, I think, therefore I am, you're reducing humanity just to brains and all this chemical stuff that happens in your head.
[7:52] But if we say that what we do in theology is not just correct thinking about God, but it's that correct faith in thinking about God, then you're already kind of moving to a different territory, aren't you?

The second one there you see is that faith is, or theology is the ecclesiological science of faith. Now, this is a different definition, right? This is from another theologian, a 20th century theologian, who would say that theology is the ecclesiological science of faith. The word ecclesiology just means church, right?
So what he's saying is theology is the church science of God. That's different, that's a different definition, isn't it? It's the church science of God. The word science evokes connotations of stuff like methodology, right?
Observation, testing, having a hypothesis. It's much more observable. It's much more objective in one sense than the first definition, right?
[8:57] You guys tracking with me? The third one you see, theology is the science of God in relationship to God in the world, to man in the world. It's a science, it's observable, it's testable maybe, but it's not just about the things that we dissect God in a lab.

It's about a dissecting of a type of relationship. This is from the 19th century Princetonian theologian, B.B. Warfield. Then theology is the science of God.
Pannenberg saying as we just have the right, you have to have the right thinking about God. Observe, test, compare, right thinking about God.

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It's kind of moving to religion, comparative religion stuff. And then, the last one from the Thomistic Websterian idea, theology is about God and all things in relation to God.
What he's saying here is not that theology is about biology or about medicine or about anything else or psychology, but theology is how about medicine and biology and all these things relate to God.
[10:09] Because all these things are created by God and they relate to God in a certain way, don't they? They have some sort of relationship to God. Back in the old times in the 13th century in medieval world, before you even get the right to study theology, you have to be a doctor and a lawyer first.

because you have to know how those things work for then you to make relationships between those things to God. So, let me pause here for a second.
Look at all these definitions, all these definitions that I just gave to you and just ponder that these are complex, interesting definitions about the doctrine of God, about theology, right?
Not necessarily about the doctrine of God, but some of them are more on the subjective side, some of them are more on the objective side, they seem to be at times at odds with each other, maybe?
So, am I advocating it?
Am I saying here to you in one way that theology is relative, anything goes? Am I saying that it doesn't really matter, just believe whatever you want about theology?
[11:21] No, right? That's absolutely not what I'm saying. What I'm saying is setting the stage again for the doctrine of divine incomprehensibility, right?

That the fact that we have this multiplicity of definitions of theological knowledge doesn't mean that God is relative and just whatever it means for you, it goes. It means that God is so big, right?
So amazing, so transcendent, that whatever we come up in terms of definition is not going to contain God, right?
We can't objectify God like we can objectify, you know, a frog in a lab. It's impossible because God is incomprehensible.
We can't, we can't just objectify God in totality. So what do we do? Do we say that God is, do we say that God is something that we just, it's just hopeless?
[12:26] I can't never understand God. No. Different than anything else, right? The fact that God is incomprehensible is not a motive for you to kind of shy away and back down and say, I'm never going to understand, so who cares?

No. It's exactly the opposite, right? It's an invitation for you to keep diving into the knowledge of God because as, as deeper as you go, you're never going to reach the bottom.
That's good news for you, right? Because our human tendency, think about this, our human tendency is that once we really get something, we objectify.
Once we comprehend everything, we objectify. Now, I have an iPhone 11, right? It's a pretty old thing, okay? Now, maybe some of you have a newer iPhone.
As, as soon as you get the iPhone, maybe you have, I don't know, I don't even know what number iPhone is out there now, but as soon as you get a newer iPhone, they get, you know, a year later, they're going to have a new one.
[13:34] Because, why? Because it's a, it's an objectification game. Like, if I make a, a, a marker or a, a computer and I show it to the board of the company and I say, here is my computer, it works fine, it does well, and I know everything there is to know about it.

Then, by next year's board meeting, the board is going to require me for do what? Upgrade it. we want to sell more because we're objectifying the thing. Now, pause.
Isn't that what we would do with God if we could objectify Him? Right? I know everything, there's no, I know all true facts about God and think about how much, how many of us work with it, within this type of mentality that as long as I have all the right knowledge about God, I'm going to be okay.
But the fact is you can't just list all the right things about God. First of all, you can't. Second of all, that's not the goal of theology, it's not the listing, it's the knowing, living, experiencing.
That's where theology actually lives. Right? So, this, this is what we do. I mean, think about it, go to the next slide here for a second, just know this, right?
[15:00] This is, this angry blue bird there, you see that? This is probably not going to connect with you, but like that's Twitter, isn't it? Used to be a blue bird Twitter, but it's, it used to be that you go, you used to go on Twitter and then as soon as you get there, you say good morning and then someone replies to you, why do you say good morning?

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There are people in Africa that are dying of hunger and then it's like, dude, I just wanted to say good morning and that's because you would think that in 140 character, I think it's now 280, but you think in 280 characters, you could know everything there is to know about a person and then you just start objectifying them and interacting in those sense.
But no, even us, we're so complex, we're hard to objectify, but we do it because that's the human tendency, we objectify and that's all social media does, right?
In Instagram, you objectify your body, you get a lot of likes. In Twitter, you objectify your thoughts, you get a lot of likes or hearts, whatever. In Facebook, you fringe thought, you objectify it, so you become the person, right?
I'm the fringe thought person, I am the body person. Like, oh, you objectify and you get rewarded for it, but that's not who God is. It's different when we talk about God.
[16:23] God's incomprehensibility is good news for you because with that, you can actually dive deeper into his own person and never get to the bottom.

You can actually experience God more and more every day. So go to the next slide there for a second. There are two ways we can actually think about this, right?
Theology can be seen in two main focus. There are two types of theology.
There are archetypal theology, which is God's perfect, infinite knowledge of himself. That's, that's, God is not incomprehensible for himself, right?
This is, I'm grabbing this for this theologian from this guy called Francisco Junius. And he says this, that there are two types of theology, that there's both the archetypal theology, which is God's perfect knowledge of himself.
[17:25] 1 Corinthians chapter 2, when Paul says, for no mind has, you know, thought, no ears heard, no eyes seen what God has prepared for those who loved him. And then that actually, that verse is in the context of the Spirit because the Spirit knows the deep things of God.

Paul is defending the divinity of the Holy Spirit by saying the Spirit has what we call archetypal theology. The Spirit has this knowledge that we will never have.
We, even when we go to heaven, right? Even when we go to heaven, we will never have a knowledge of God in perfect sense.
our knowledge of God is not like the Father, the Son, and the Spirit know God. Our knowledge of God is archetypal, right?
I'm throwing all these terms to you, but I'm not trying to be like the coffee snob, right? I'm not throwing these terms so that I can know, look how much he knows. I'm throwing these terms so that you are invited to get to know theology.
[18:29] These things actually help you, okay? Etypal theology, that's our knowledge, that's the angel, knowledge, that's all the created things knowledge.

Not even the angels have access to archetypal mode of knowledge. All of us, all creation, visible and invisible, Nicene Creed, right?
All things visible and invisible, know God, act typely. Now, what does that mean? It means that we have a knowledge of God that is true, but finite, finite, shadow copy of the divine knowledge, of the divine archetype.
So, it means that we know God, we know God, but we know him in a shadowy mode. It's true, but it's not complete because we can't exhaust it.
It's a true knowledge, and that works, and next slide there, that works exactly because, as John Webster said, and I'm grabbing this for him, it says, archetypal theology acknowledges the restrictions, which restrictions?
[19:41] The idea that we don't know God fully, right? archetypal theology acknowledges the restrictions, the fact that we don't know God fully, but places these restrictions within a sphere of God's communicative and saving causality, meaning, and this is where I'm trying to, I haven't even gotten to the Bible yet.

I'm going to get there, okay? This is just to state that the fact that we have restrictions in our knowledge is not something that you should be discouraged, but it's an invitation that God still speaks because he spoke to you in the saving causality.
The limitations of our intellect, the limitations of our thoughts, render vicious by the fall, do not sever, do not cut, create his intellect's natural connection to God, or placed it beyond the reach of providence, regeneration, and revelation.

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This is the gospel, friends, right? This is the gospel. So, who would have thought that talking about the doctrine of divine incomprensibility, you can actually get to the gospel?
Well, if you actually think about this, the only way you can actually have access to God's knowledge knowledge, it's because God made that possible.
[21:01] Right? He made it possible in these three umbrella terms. Right? Providence, the fact that God provides, He gives, He sustains all things that He gives to His creatures.

Parker just read Psalm 50 before I came up. Right? Regeneration, He renews your thoughts, your minds, so that you have renewed minds, Romans chapter 12.
And then in Revelation, He gives you these thoughts. You couldn't do those things apart God's action. Okay? So, that's what we are trying to get God in Christ at the cross, at the resurrection, in ascension of Christ.
He made it possible for us to get to know Him. Okay, so go to the next slide there. We'll see, for example, now, as we transition from divine incomprehensibility, as we transition out of this knowledge that God is incomprehensible, uncontainable, and still, even though incomprehensible, still knowable, we're going to talk about the doctrine of God's independence, or aseity.
But even before that, I'm a college prof, guys, so I'm sorry, I have to always qualify what I'm going to say, right? I can't just go ahead and say it. So we have to talk about what is an attribute, right?
[22:26] We're talking about this stuff here, eternality, we're talking about incomprehensibility, we're talking about immutability, all these things are what we call divine attributes.

But what is an attribute? Well, first of all, an attribute is just a quality of something, right? A quality of something, or a property. So a quality of something, so like I have the quality of having, you know, a big nose, and dark hair, and 5'8", those are qualities that belong to me, okay?
And God's qualities are such that he has two qualities, right? Not two qualities, but two categories of qualities. We have these categories that we call communicable qualities, or communicable attributes, and the incommunicable qualities, or incommunicable attributes.
So I'm not going to spend much time on communicable, because that's not the focus for this camp, right? But communicable attributes are the idea of love, justice, kindness. You know this stuff because you also have it.
So when the Bible says God is love, God is kindness, God is mercy, you know it because you also experience mercy, kindness, love, justice. The focus today is on the incommunicable attributes, the idea that God's attributes are not experienced by us in a certain way.
[23:54] And this is why I started talking about the idea of divine incomprensibility, because we're talking about these attributes in certain sense of immutability and eternality and aseity, those things are things that you have no idea what those things are.

And neither do I. Right? Last I checked, no one here is immutable. Right? As a matter of fact, middle schoolers are pretty much immutable.
Right? You're changing in every single way possible. So, you're actually changing a lot. God is immutable.
Last I check, no one here is eternal. Everyone here has a beginning and an end. Right? At least in one sense. So, we're talking about the incommunicable attributes of God and specifically now, we'll focus on the doctrine of divine incompressibility.
Right? So, divine aseity, sorry. Divine aseity, what does it mean to say that God is aseity? So, finally, I don't know how long I've been talking, but finally we got to it. Okay? So, divine aseity derives its term, or aseity derives its term from the Latin ase, or from himself.
[25:17] The idea is that God has life from himself. God has life from himself, and it means that God is full of life in himself, indifferent than other religions.

God is not in need of our worship. So, the main idea of the doctrine of aseity, or the idea of God's independence, is the idea of life.
So, I'm trying to connect this because we can't understand independence in totality, right? So, the main idea of independence is the idea of life. Because we all have a beginning, don't we?
You were non-existent, and then at a certain point, you started to exist. Okay? Start this word right there, existence.
I'm going to need that word. Say it again, existence. Existence? Existence. Start that word. I'm going to need it. So, we all did not exist, and then we started to exist.

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[26:29] God's life is not a life that begins to exist. And this is where things start to crumble for our understanding, okay? Because we can't conceive, even when we talk about eternity, we can't conceive of stuff beginning to exist.

God is not a life.
God is not like that. He has life in it of himself. In other words, it's what the Bible, the Bible is not worried about philosophers, right? It's what the Bible says, God is the source of all life.
Psalm 145, Psalm 50, Psalm 82, we all talk about God's being the source of all life, meaning all life has its beginning in God.
So, that whole idea is going to be pretty important. But is it biblical, right? Let's think about this. Is it biblical? Well, I think it is, right?
[27:35] I think it is. And the text that I'm going to spend a little bit of time here with you is the text of Exodus 34, 5 to 7, okay? Because I think that connects with the idea of life pretty well.

That's, if you remember correctly, Exodus 33, 34, Moses is having quite a good experience with God, right? He's, you know, getting the same commandments, he's having like all these amazing communion with God, he's pleading with God, he's walking with God, and he's hearing God speak, and then he asks God in Exodus 34, he says, God, let me see your glory.
And God replies to him, no, you can't see my glory, no one has seen God and lived, but I will pass, you know, I will pass by you in my back, and I will proclaim to you my name.
Okay? So let's just listen to this. So Exodus 34, 5 to 7, the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the name of the Lord.
The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgressions and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty visiting the iniquity of the fathers and the children and the children's children to the third and fourth generation.
[29:21] Now I want you to pay attention, this is such a pivotal passage in the Bible, like everything hinges upon this point, and we read it and we barely recognize what's truly happening here.

Okay? I love, I think yesterday, I don't know who it was that prayed and the person that prayed, I think maybe it was Parker, prayed and he actually said, God, we thank you because you are a God slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
That's amazing that that prayer was made right here because at that moment when God passes by Moses and he proclaims his name, that idea of the proclamation of the name of God goes so far for the doctrine of Asadi, they have no idea.
And I'm going to tell you why. When you were born, guess what? Someone named you. Right? No one here named themselves.
No baby is born and said, hey, I want my name to be Raphael. Right? That is just an illogical thing. That makes no sense.
[30:38] Your identity is given by someone else. Right? Your name is given. Now think about what's happening in this passage here and what's happening to Moses and God.

Moses wants to know God and God doesn't really say, hey, this is what this name was given to me. Right? Moses doesn't say, oh, your name is the Lord.
Actually, as you see, this is in all caps there, that's the covenantal name of God, Yahweh. So in your Bible, when you see the all caps the Lord or Lord, the original Hebrew there behind it is Yahweh.
And so what's happening here in Exodus is that God is telling Moses, my name, I am not being named by you, you're not naming me, this is who I am.
It connects well with Exodus 3, right? The I am is sending you. No one names God. He gives his name, he proclaims his name, he declares his name. And that separates him because that's the foundation of independence.
[32:00] That's the foundation of aseity because he's not being given a name by another. He has life in and of himself.

himself. And his name already proclaims that. So God is not given a name, he proclaims his name. And that proclamation as you see right here, right? You want to know what's in a name, you don't know what it means to be God, right? I think it's clear in the Bible, you see people changing names because their identity changed.

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And in here, God tells his name and you want to know what it means to be God. Look at this passage, right? Look at this passage, exactly what it's saying here. The Lord, the Lord, God's merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.
This passage becomes so central in the life of the Israelites. So central. If you actually pick up your Bible and read, you wouldn't get much far than two pages without seeing that same phrase being repeated in the Old Testament.
[33:17] Just do the work. You see in the Psalms, in the prophets, a version of this would come up. God slow to anger and about steadfast love.

That phrase comes up again and again because that's the identity of God. That's who God is. That's the identity that he's given. God is what about Jesus?
Is Jesus also independent? John 5, 25 to 29, we're actually in here just 26, in a doctrine that we call the doctrine of eternal generation.
Jesus says, truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear his voice, the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.
For as the Father has life in himself, so he has also granted the Son to have life in himself. This is in the context of Jesus' dispute with the Pharisees, okay?
[34:17] And Jesus' way of actually saying this is pretty, it's almost paradoxical, or an antinomy, whatever you prefer to say, when he says, the idea, it seems that Jesus is some sort of inferior being here, but if you actually pay attention to what he's saying, he says, how can you be granted to have life, which is something that is derivative, like you guys, right?

All of you have been granted to have life by God, but at the same time, to have that life in and of yourself. Maybe Jesus is hinting at a pretty deep Trinitarian thought here, isn't he?
The idea that there is a difference, but at the same time, a unity, an essence that is the same. So, the doctrine of Asaity independence actually underscores and is part of what we call the doctrine of the Trinity as well.
I'm not going to spend much time on this because this gets pretty deep pretty soon. Next slide there on Paul actually says the same thing or a different way of approaching this when he says in Acts chapter 17, God is not in a human tent or in a human temple, but he is the source of life.
So, again, go back to what I just told you just a second ago. Life goes with asaity. God is the source of life. He is life.
[36:11] Different than you, I'm going to say this is a key distinction. God doesn't have life like you, like I have.

God is life. That's a big difference. He's not being granted life. He does not participate in something that has life. He is life. So, in philosophy, you can see this, right?
I know this, I don't want to get too highly philosophical here, but just this, I promise. Hang tight with me because I know this is going to pay high dividends for you. Okay? So, in philosophy, we have these two concepts of essence and existence.
Remember, I told you existence a while ago? Just hold that, grab that for a little bit. I'm going to dive into this type of knowledge here with you for a second.
Everyone, so this is where my illustration is going to come, right? Every one of you here, you are human beings, right? We are all human beings, okay?
[37:19] But you are a particular existence, I know, I know, it's getting deep. It's going to be quick, but I need to pay attention. Everyone here is a human being, but everyone here is a one instance or one individual existence of the human being, correct?

So if you die, boof, right now, human exists, human essence continues to exist, correct? If you die, there is still humanity because human essence is not derived from you, all right?
You just participate in humanity together with everyone here, but you instantiate or you are one particular existence of that humanity, okay? This wasn't too difficult.
Now, let's think about God. There is nothing out there in terms of God that is God-ness that God instantiates, like you instantiate humanity, having two arms, one nose, two eyes.
There is nothing that is God-ness that God is like, aha, I'm going to become that thing. No. This is why in philosophy our philosophers say that God's essence and existence is the only being in which essence and existence are the same thing.
[38:40] God is not given existence, he is existence, and God's essence is his existence. Now, it's super deep, but if you just get out of here, just knowing this, God's essence is his existence, you

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grasped more philosophy in terms of metaphysics than like 80% of philosophers out there, okay?

You are going to be a more competent philosopher if you know that God's essence and his existence are the same than if you just don't do it, okay? All right, so, driving now towards application.
I know, stuff, I know it's difficult, but if you paid attention up until now, we're going to drive into some applications. So, think about this. Quick summary, right?
Quick summary for you. God needs nothing. God needs nothing. I can depend on him for everything.
So, some of you, some of you feel like, I'm not funny enough, I'm not athletic enough, I'm not pretty enough, I'm not cool enough, I'm not spiritual enough.
[39:56] guess what? You don't have to be, right? Don't have to, if you're waiting for you to be cool enough, or pretty enough, or athletic enough for God to start using, loving, liking, caring for you, you know the most athletic person, the prettiest person out there, who do they derive their beauty and their coolness from, God, is the source of all things, right?

God lacks nothing, and you don't have to fix him or earn his love. There's nothing to be fixed on God, there's nothing to be made new by God, or in God.
God actually gives everything to everyone, love. So, in result, I should live with gratitude and with trust.
Live with gratitude and trust. So, as we move towards the last application there, some practical applications for us, you want to think about this.
The first one is that contemplation matters. my students make fun of me all the time because, like, you know, in what way is this practical? And I often say, it doesn't have to be practical, right?
[41:31] It doesn't have to, like, you don't have to think about stuff that's practical all the time. Sometimes the most practical thing that you can do is just to behold God, right? Just sit there in awe of God.

You just sing that song, right? Behold God. We don't need to get, like, what should I do with it? That's actually trying to bring God down all the time. What about if instead of bringing God down all the time, we actually lift our gazes up to God and just contemplate Him and His beauty and His majesty?
Think the true things, love the true beauty of God for who He is. Second there, you can trust God, right?
You can trust God, you can trust Him completely. Because God doesn't need anything, He'll never run out of power, love, or help.
God is not like your phone that dies, right? That's a practical application of independence, right? Your phone needs a source. And we are so tied to our phones that when our phone dies, we think like we die a little bit inside, right?
[42:44] What if our source of joy and happiness and love isn't our phones, but God. When you're stressed out in school, friends, family, problems, the future, money, just remember this, God isn't weak or shaky, and you can't lean on Him.

Third, we do not need to help God. help God. Some kids like that they like to think or like that they have to be really good so that God will like them in some way, fashion, or way, so that He can win against evil, will good.
But God isn't struggling, right? There's no cosmic battle between God and the devil. Although you think that God, if He does this, I'm not passing this slide, if God does this, the devil is gone.
It's not like God is threatened by the devil. You don't have to help God on His, He will use you. It's an invitation for you to, you're invited to His banquet, into His party, quite honestly, and just to live well in it.
You don't have to earn anything. Worship becomes more real because of that.
[44:31] That's the fourth point. God does not worship you. If God needed us, worship would be like giving food to a hungry person. God is not there craving your worship.

He's not there like, oh, if only Raphael read his Bible this morning, I would be happier. Nah. God is just full of joy in the Trinity already.
The Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit have a perfect joy, what theologians call the perfect felicity. It's another term for you guys just to grasp. God has perfect felicity.

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He's a perfect joy in and of himself, his Father, Son, and Spirit. He didn't create the world because he was just lonely. He just is. Right?
God is. Next, it makes you humble grateful and grateful. Right? Everything you have, your life, your friends, your family, your talents, even the air you breathe right now, comes from God, who didn't have to give it to you.
[45:44] He gave. Your existence, remember the philosophy stuff? You have given existence, God's existence, is the same of his essence. That's philosophy at the highest level, but it actually has some practical implication because you have derived existence different than God.

So it makes you humble. Right? You're living here just for a little bit and then you go away. So it makes you humble. And then lastly, it gives you courage to live for God.
Since God is totally self-sufficient, he doesn't need the popular kid's approval, your teacher's approval, or even your parents' approval to keep being God.
And guess what? Sometimes he doesn't, right? You're all living in the world. We have friends, family members, people on the street that don't care for God.
God's not threatened by it, and we're not threatened by it, but he gives us courage. They're like, if I fail in my evangelism, if I fail in my witness, it's okay.
[46:56] Keep trusting God. God is sovereign. He gets to use you, but doesn't need you. Right? So be willing to be used by God when he gives you courage.

Let me pray. No, turn the mic to the next person. God, thank you because you are in life in and of yourself.
Think because you're not given a name, but you proclaim your name. May that give us courage to behold you, to love you.
May it keep us humble in our place. Bless these people here, the camp, the organizers. Thank you for the opportunity to be together with them.
In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.

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