

Discovering God's Unsearchable Greatness

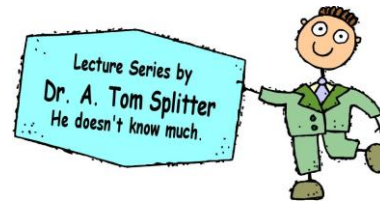
Daryl Wingerd

Psalms 71 contains a puzzling sentence:

My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness
And of Your salvation all day long;
For I do not know the sum of them. (v. 15)

Can you see why I said the sentence is puzzling? The psalmist offers his limited knowledge of God and His ways as his reason for telling others about Him. It is because he *does not* know the sum of God's righteousness and salvation that he resolves to speak of these attributes of God "all day long."

Imagine your response to the following advertisement for a college lecture series on nuclear physics:



**Don't miss the upcoming lecture series
by the Nobel Prize Winning physicist, Dr. A. Tom Splitter.
*He doesn't know all that much about nuclear physics!***

Who wants to hear a man talk about what he doesn't fully understand? Wouldn't we all rather hear someone who has done his homework—someone who has expertise in the field of study he is explaining?

These may be reasonable responses to a speaker's confession of partial ignorance, but consider another option with respect to Psalm 71:15. Could it be that the psalmist's confession of incomplete understanding said less about his own cranial capacity and/or inadequate study habits, and more about the greatness of the subject he was contemplating? Could it be that by admitting that he didn't know the sum of God's righteousness and salvation, he was extolling the unsearchable greatness of the God he knew and was further discovering? Could it be that the prospect of ongoing, even *endless* discovery concerning this amazing God was what motivated him to speak of this inexhaustible treasure "all day long"?

I think this best explains the puzzle of Psalm 71:15. We talk about what we get excited about, and we get excited about discovery.

My thirteen-year-old son is fascinated by science, particularly electricity. His interest has not always brought his mother and me comfort, such as the time he accidentally electrocuted two goldfish, or when he made a battery out of a potato

(which, of course, rotted in the clutter of his room), or when he stuck a bobby pin into an electrical outlet, an experiment which, thankfully, both he and the house survived. Nevertheless, his enthusiastic accounts of new discoveries and his display of electrical inventions, even to people who either don't understand his terms, or don't care, proves my point: We get excited about, and talk about, the things we discover.

It is not mere knowledge that excites the mind and opens the mouth. We all once learned that two *plus* two and two *times* two both produce the same numerical result: four. Some of us may have been momentarily thrilled by the acquisition of that tidbit of math trivia, and we may have even gone out of our way to tell someone else about it. But how many of us still go around talking about it? It was the experience of discovery, not merely the possession of the fact, that moved us to speak.

We are most enthusiastic when one new discovery leads us to another, and then to another, and then to another. A miner who discovers a small vein of gold leading into a mountainside will dig enthusiastically until he has followed his first discovery to its conclusion. If the vein grows wider with each stroke, every inch of discovery will naturally produce more and more excitement—more and more desire to dig deeper.

This is how it is with respect to the study of God. Because our Subject is infinite, our joy of discovery will have no end. When the psalmist said, "I do not know the sum of them," he was expressing joy at the prospect of endless discovery—the ever-widening vein of treasure that is our God. Therefore he opened his mouth and spoke, testifying to all who would listen, just as David did in another psalm:

Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised,
And His greatness is unsearchable. (Ps. 145:3)

Sadly, for many professing Christians, David's proclamation is just another fact on a piece of paper in a book called the Bible. They know it and can quote it, along with chapter and verse, but because it is not their own personal discovery, it does not open their mouths. Please don't let it be so with you. Be busy searching out the depths and riches of the unsearchable greatness of God. If discovery of God's greatness is your habit, your mouth will speak of His greatness "all day long."

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