Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

A Solemn Call to Spiritual Duty
Scripture: 1 Timothy 6:13-16
Code: 54-48

Let's open our Bibles this morning to 1 Timothy chapter 6. If I were to entitle the portion of Scripture we're looking at, 1 Timothy 6:13 through 16, I would call it "A solemn call to spiritual duty...a solemn call to spiritual duty." It comes at the conclusion of this epistle which in general is a call to Timothy to discharge his ministry. He has been given a commission by God. That commission has been made very clear to him not only from the desire of his heart but from the Word of God prophetically out of heaven, from the laying on of the hands of the Apostle and the other elders, very clear to him because Paul has mandated certain things that he is to do. The whole epistle of 1 Timothy lays out Timothy's responsibility to fulfill his commission to set things right in the church at Ephesus.

He was called by God. He was gifted by God. He was sent by the church. He was ordained by the Apostles and elders. And he is there with a great responsibility to fulfill his calling. His calling was publicly confirmed both by his baptism and by that ordination of which I momentarily mentioned...ago mentioned. And he is really just the victim, in a sense, of sovereign circumstances which have placed him in a crucial point in time and space to fulfill the work of God designed for him. The whole epistle then is really delineating his duty to the church at Ephesus to set things right.

But when you come to verses 11 and following Paul really sums up the call. And he says, "O man of God, do this," and do you remember that he said a man of God is known by what he flees from, what he follows after, what he fights for and what he is faithful to? And that was our last message. We're going to pick the text up from there.

Now the man of God not only needs to know what he's to do, not only does he need to know how he is to do it but he needs to know why he's to do it. He needs to be impelled, compelled, constrained or motivated. And the passage we're looking at is a passage about motivation. Let's look at it, verse 13. "I command you in the sight of God who makes all things alive and before Christ Jesus who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good testimony that you keep the commission, or the mandate, or the commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the shining forth of our Lord Jesus Christ which in His times He shall show who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords who only hath immortality dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto whom no man hath seen nor can see to whom be honor and power everlasting amen."

Now the passage ends with one of the greatest doxologies in all of holy Scripture. It is reminiscent of the doxology in chapter 1 verse 17 which says, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the

only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever amen." So in a sense the epistle begins and ends with a doxology, a song of praise to the nature of God.

Now what I want you to grasp in your mind is this. Timothy has been reminded of his commission. He has been called to fulfill his commission. He has been reminded of his salvation. He has been reminded of his giftedness. He has been reminded of his public ordination. He has been told specifically what his instructions are. He has been told that as a man of God he has to flee some things, follow some things, fight for some things and be faithful to some things. And now he is given the motive and the motive is because of the character of the God he serves. Now I want you to grab that thought. It is a surpassing thought. Motivation in ministry, motivation to spiritual duty, the solemnity of our task is related to the nature of our God.

When the Apostle Paul said to King Agrippa in Acts 26:19, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision," he set the standard for all spiritual duty. None of us is to be disobedient when God lays out our duty. We are to show instant, eager, willing commitment to follow the commission God gives is, that is what God has designed for us. And much of our commitment is predicated on how we understand God or who we believe God to be.

J.B. Phillips decrying the problem of ineffective Christians said, "Your God is too small." In other words, your life reflects a weak God. On the other hand, you show me a devoted life, an impactful life, a superior spiritual life, a life of great strength, great and effective ministry and I'll show you a life that's representative of a God that is very large. It is our theology proper, which is the technical category for the doctrine of God, which dictates the impact of our ministry. And so, Timothy is called to fulfill his duty based upon who God is.

Now you might ask the question, well, given the fact that Timothy was called by God, that he heard prophetically out of heaven that this call was valid, in other words, he wasn't just going along on some whimsical feeling, he was confirmed by prophecy to have been called by God, given that he was gifted, given that he was trained by Lois and Eunice, his mother and grandmother who were godly, given that he was the disciple and protege of the Apostle Paul, given that he had a strong desire for ministry, given that he was now maturing, given that the elders had confirmed this calling and sent him out, why did he need any further motivation? Wasn't that enough? Wasn't all of that surrounding his life, ministry and calling enough to compel him to do what God had given him to do?

Well perhaps initially it was. But as is the case, inevitably, in someone who has an impactful ministry, there will be opposition. Timothy had already begun to face that. He was alone in this church as the one Paul had assigned to get it straightened out. It was a very difficult and a very lonely responsibility that Timothy had. And then he was to right the ship in terms of purity and every time he confronted sin he would get opposition from the sinner, and every time he confronted false doctrine he would get opposition from the believer and the purveyor of that false doctrine. He was left there all alone. He

was young. And they were despising his youth for that. He was young and therefore he wasn't as gentle and meek and peacemaking as he ought to have been, intended to argue too much as 2 Timothy 2 indicates. He was young and battled youthful lusts which tends really to drain your selfconfidence away. He was young and therefore didn't have a welldefined polemic and articulated apologetic for every error that was floating around and found it difficult perhaps to be able to answer every argument on a philosophical theological level and the task was very difficult. He was making enemies without making friends, and that's very difficult when you're all alone and perhaps was tempted to compromise.

Some indications are that he may well have been thinking about just backing off from ministry all together. And in 2 Timothy Paul says, "Stir up the gift of God." Paul says, "Don't be ashamed of Christ." Paul says, "Hold on to sound doctrine." Paul says, "Don't crumble under persecution," 2 Timothy 3. So the idea here is that Paul was having....Timothy rather was having a tremendous amount of opposition and he was alone as the special legate, or representative of the Apostle Paul who had gone on west for other duties. It was a tough place. And Timothy, frankly, needed encouragement and he needed courage. He needed courage. He needed fortitude. He needed strength of character to hang on and do his spiritual duty.

I think it's that way for anyone who does their spiritual duty, there's going to be a degree of opposition. It's curious to me, I don't know why so much so lately but it seems as though there's an awful lot of criticism and opposition and even in a verbal sense persecution coming against me in these recent days. I had occasion over the last couple of weeks to listen to three tapes that were given on the heresy of MacArthurism. And they...the people giving them were ranting and raving and so loud at sometimes that it distorted the tape recorder and screaming about all of the error and so forth and so on, and of course, none of them had ever spoken to me and everything they were saying was a misrepresentation of what I believe. And then I found out that this morning at a church here in the San Fernando Valley there is the beginning of a threepart series, one this morning, one this afternoon, and one tonight, on the heresy of MacArthurism. And they have flown in a speaker from the east coast who is an expert on my heresy and will be speaking all day there. That's really not an uncommon thing. I have been accused of all kinds of things and believing all kinds of things which I do not believe.

And sometimes it gets a little distressing. I came home the other day after listening to those three tapes and I know Patricia thought I had been shot in the leg or something because I came dragging into the house. But when you spend your life trying so hard to be a right representative of Jesus Christ and someone tears your reputation to shreds over something that is a lie and not a truth, it's a little discouraging and you get a little bit distressed and you're sort of looking around for somebody who is on your team. I kind of understand that. I read 120page book on me which was quite interesting...it was self published and probably that was the only copy in existence, I don't know. But you know, you read articles and letters about yourself and people accusing you of all kinds of

unimaginable things, discrediting your ministry, calling you a heretic, accusing you of all things. In fact, the thing I think that overwhelmed me more than anything was I was told recently about a group of men in a certain place who met together for prayer, this man was there and said, "The major prayer request they were seeking the Lord for was a way to discredit the ministry of John MacArthur." And they spent an afternoon in prayer on that behalf.

That kind of opposition you might expect from the world, you don't always expect that from those who say they name the name of Jesus Christ. But when you take a firm stand on some biblical issues, some people take great issue with that. And they seek to discredit. And I think Timothy was in that situation, but I'm not speaking to you just out of the experience of Timothy here, I confess that I'm speaking to you out of my own experience, an experience which is going on even today. When you take a firm stand and when you say this is what God says in His Word, it's sometimes tough to stand up under the pressure that comes at you. And there's something in you that says I think I'll just clam up and be a nice guy so everybody will like me. But for me that passes rather rapidly, I am much more concerned with truth than popularity.

You ask yourself the question, how do you stand up under that? How does one deal with that? Timothy's in that situation. He's got to confront the sinners and the people propagating false teaching. How is he going to stick to his spiritual duty when everybody turns against him? How is he going to hold the courage of his conviction when he's under attack facing opposition? And even when he gets persecuted? And I can identify with that. I have people who are greatly concerned about my welfare, who are always worried about me. There have been threats on my life here, there and everywhere. And there's this continual encouragement that I would take greater precautions and greater securities and so forth and so on because certain people... It's hard for me to understand that. But nonetheless that's the case. And you approach life and you say I have this ministry to do and I want to do it with all my heart but sometimes it gets a little overwhelming and you wonder if maybe you just adjusted your theology a little bit it wouldn't be quite as reaction...quite as great a reaction out there.

But where do you get your strength? Where do you get the strength to stand? And the answer comes in one word and that is God. And I don't want to be trite with that so listen to how Paul unfolds that. The answer comes in the name of God. In other words, what compels me and what compelled Paul and what had to drive Timothy was confidence in who his God was. That's the substance of it. It isn't enough to be impelled by a sense of duty, some vigory. It isn't impelled...enough to be impelled by a sense of obligation to the needs of people. There has to be something more sovereign than that that compels you when you face opposition, criticism, attack, persecution. And the answer comes in a word...God.

If I understand the nature of the God whose mandate I follow, if I understand who my God is whom I serve, if I genuinely trust the true God who is my God then I will not compromise and then I will feel encouraged and I'll feel courageous. It all depends on my view of God. And I'll tell you something,

people, the way you live your life is a direct reflection of how you conceive God to be. These people that we're reading about who can get on television every day and talk about Jesus and talk about God and talk about all this holiness and all this piosity and then live in a swamp of gross sin have some kind of God of their own invention who allows hypocrisy. But that is not the God of the Word of God. But their life is a reflection of their theology. I said to somebody the other day, as this whole thing crumbles, I hope the theology crumbles with it because it's at the core of it. You are a living reflection of your theology, so am I. What I really believe to be true about God controls the way I live, the way I talk, the way I think.

Paul helps Timothy to understand this by giving him one of the most magnificent presentations of the nature of God anywhere in Scripture. It is the supreme reason to do your spiritual duty because of who God is. It is a solemn doxology that acts as a motivator to spiritual duty because it describes the God who called Timothy, the God who gifted Timothy, the God who ordained Timothy, the God who sent Timothy and the God who promised to empower Timothy. And if he knows who his God is, then he can go ahead and do his duty. But if he's waffling around not sure about his God or what his God will provide for him, or whether or not his God is in control of everything, then he's going to have a very difficult time doing what he ought to do.

Now the doxology doesn't come until verses 15 and 16, but what is said about God in verses 13 and 14 are so important that we want to pick those up, even though we looked at them briefly in our last study. Listen carefully. The source of courage for the one doing spiritual duty, the source of courage to be uncompromising and faithful to the task is found in these following attributes of God. Number one, the preservation power of God...the preservation power of God. Go to verse 13. "I command you, Paul says to Timothy," and he's commanding him in verse 14 to do his duty, to keep his commission without spot and unrebukable. "I'm commanding you to fulfill your ministry, do your spiritual duty, use your spiritual gift, do what God wants you to do, obey the service God's called you to whether that specific service to which Timothy was called or extended to any of us here today, the idea is the same for all of us, we are commanded to do what God has called us to do." And then to help us be motivated, it says you're doing it in the sight of God who makes all things alive. And there is the first characteristic of God mentioned in the text. What God do we serve? The God who makes all things alive. Anything that lives, lives because God gave it life. God is life. God is the source of life.

In fact, we could sum it up in four statements. When it says "God who makes all things alive," it refers to God as creator of all things. Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning, God...what?...created the heavens and the earth." God is creator. In fact, He is called the creator. In Romans 1:25 it says, "Men worship the creature more than the creator." God is the creator of all life. He makes all things live.

Secondly, He is the sustainer of all life. Whatever He makes to live, He keeps alive. He sustains all things. It says in Acts 17, "In Him we live and move and have our existence." God has generated life and God progenerates life and God gives continuity to life, all life is the reflection of God's power. In

Psalm 36 and verse 6 we have the Old Testament simply saying this, and it's as direct as it can be, "O Lord, Thou preservest man and beast." God sustains life.

Thirdly, the implication of the phrase "who makes all things alive" is that God is also the protector of His own. In a unique sense He preserves the life of those who are His own. In Psalm 37, I think it's verse 28, it says, "For the Lord loves justice and forsakes not His saints, they are preserved forever." God gives life to all. God sustains life for all. And God uniquely preserves His own forever. In fact, in that wonderful passage in Matthew 10 verses 29 to 31, the Lord says to the disciples, "If God takes care of the sparrows that hop and numbers the hairs of your head, don't you know you're of much more value than they are?" In other words, God is intimately concerned with His own.

And because of these concepts we can approach ministry without a fear of danger. In other words, translating it into the spiritual dimension, God gave you life, Timothy, God will sustain your life, Timothy and God will preserve your life unto the fulfillment of His plan. And that's the only way to live and do your spiritual duty. If you're concerned with self preservation and reputation and comfort and all of that and those are your preoccupying factors, then you're going to give yourself away to those things. But if you realize your life is expendable and if you're saying to yourself, "I'm not going to fear what men can do unto me, God gave me life, God sustains my life, He promises to preserve my life, what do I have to fear?" Timothy, go at it.

But there's a fourth principle and I believe it is really the salient primary interpretive key to this phrase. "God who makes all things alive" primarily refers not to God as creator, God as sustainer or God as preserver of His own, but God as raiser of the dead. The primary point here is that it is God who raises the dead. And so what Paul is saying to Timothy, in effect, is you know that the worst that can happen to you is that you'll die and that's the best that can happen to you. Paul put it this way in Philippians 1, "For to me to live is Christ and to die is...what?...gain." So he says I'm caught in a place between two things, both that are good, one to stay here with you and one that's far better to go and be with Christ. And you see, that's why he was able to give his life away in spiritual duty because he had absolutely no thought for his life. You remember on his way to Jerusalem, he kept being warned by everyone that he was going to get into chains and bonds and so forth and that he might lose his life and Paul's response in Acts 20, "None of these things move me." I am not motivated by fear of death. I am not motivated by fear of incarceration or imprisonment. Those things don't move me, because he says, Acts 20, "I do not consider my life dear to myself." He wasn't living for the physical. He was living for the eternal. That's the whole point. The worst that could ever happen to the servant of the Lord is that he would be killed. And if he was killed, the Lord would raise him from the dead. The Lord would instantaneously make him alive because absent from the body is what? Present with the Lord as Philippians 1 said, Paul said, "Far better to depart and be with Christ...to depart and be with Christ."

We look, Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5, we look for that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. In fact, we groan for that experience. Job saw it. The worms destroy this body yet in my flesh shall I see God. The Psalmist David saw it, "Thou will not allow Thine holy one to see corruption but will show him the path of life." Daniel said there will be a time when many shall rise from the dead unto the resurrection of those that are good and unto the resurrection of damnation...very much like John 5. Abraham was willing to plunge the knife into the heart of Isaac because he believed in the God who raises the dead, Hebrews 11:17 to 19. You see, those servants of God who could give their lives away in spiritual duty without fear were that way because they worshiped the God who raised the dead. You understand that? It's your perspective on God that dictates how you're going to live your life. We receive courage to continue in our spiritual duty when we realize the preservation power of God. God may preserve my life in life or He may preserve my life through death, either way I'm okay. And so the solemn call to spiritual duty is a call that demands we understand that God is the God who makes all things alive. God is the God who can raise even the dead.

And a strong reason why we know the resurrection seems to be the strongest implication of this phrase is because of the following illustration in verse 13. We are not only in the sight of God fulfilling our commission, but the sight of Christ Jesus who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a noble...I might add fearless...testimony in the face of death. Jesus, you know the story, was brought before Pilate, right? And the Jews had accused Him of being a king, claiming to be a king. He says He's a king. He says He's a king. He's an insurrectionist. He's saying He is the Messiah and we reject that. He's saying He's a king. He's not only a threat to Judaism, He's a threat to the Roman political system. He's a revolutionary. They accused Him of being a king.

He could have gone in before Pilate when Pilate said to Him, "Are you a king?" could have said, "Of course I'm not a king, take a look at Me, do I look like a king? I'm not a king." He could have backed off, said nothing, denied the truth. But He didn't. You want to see what He did? Look at Luke 23. In Luke 23:1 it says, "The whole multitude of them arose and led Him to Pilate. And they began to accuse Him." Here's the accusation, "We found this fellow perverting the nation." That's a lie. The nation was already perverted. He was straightening it out. "And forbidding to give tribute to Caesar," that's a lie. He said, "Render to Caesar...what?...the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." "Saying that He Himself is Christ...that means Messiah...a king." That was true. He did say He was the Messiah and He did say He was a king.

Pilate asked him saying, here it is, it's the crux of it, "Are You the king of the Jews? He answered him and said, You said it, what you said is true, is that means. That's exactly right, Pilate. I am a king."

Look at John chapter 18, starting at verse 33 you get an even more detailed account. "Pilate entered the judgment hall again and called Jesus and said to Him," John 18:33, "Are You the king of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Are you saying this thing of yourself or did others tell it you of Me?" In other words, is this your question, Pilate, or are you a parrot? Are you just mimicking what you've

heard? "Pilate answered, Am I a Jew?" In other words, what do I care? This isn't my question...I'm no Jew. "Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You unto me, what have You done? Jesus said, My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world then would My servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now is My kingdom not from here. Pilate therefore said to Him, Are You a king then? Jesus answered, You said it, I'm a king; to this end was I born, for this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth, everyone that is of the truth hears My voice."

That is a noble confession. Jesus said I'm the Messiah and I'm the king. And He knew it would cost Him His what? His life. And that's exactly the point that Paul wants to make to Timothy. Timothy, I'm commanding you before the God who raises the dead to look at the model of Jesus who when faced with His very life made a noble confession. In other words, He never equivocated as to what He ought to say in the face of imminent danger and death to himself because He committed Himself to the God who raises the dead. Jesus knew He would rise, did He not? He said earlier in His ministry at the very outset, "Destroy this temple and in three days I'll build it again." He knew He would rise from the dead. He committed Himself, it says 1 Peter 2:23, He committed Himself to the God who discerns and judges and acts righteously. He knew God would raise Him from the dead. That's the whole point. He confessed openly the truth of His Lordship. He confessed openly the truth of His Messiahship. He confessed openly the truth of His sovereign authority though He knew it would cost His life because He trusted the God of resurrection. And I love the fact that Revelation 1:5 and I think it's also in chapter 3 verse 14 calls Jesus "the faithful witness...the faithful witness." Unflinching courage in the face of persecution, unflinching courage in the face of opposition, unflinching courage in the face of difficulty, unflinching courage in the face of temptation to compromise is based upon the fact that you believe the preserving power belongs to God. I will speak the truth. I will live the truth. I will say the truth. I will not equivocate and I will commit myself to the care of the God who will sustain my in life or who will sustain through death.

Now if you can approach life like that, then you can give your life away...then you can give your life away. In the words of Jesus, the one who gives his life away finds it. The one who tries to hold onto his life loses it. That's the heart of it. I can tell you with all of the warnings and all of the things and it hasn't been as frequent with me as it has with some other people and the concern about threats on your life and hostility and people reacting and all of that, in my life that has never given me one fleeting second of anxiety. And I think the bottom line reason is simply because my life is in the hands of God and He is preserving my life and no one can touch me until He sovereignly allows that. And the worst that could happen would be He'd take me to heaven and make me all that He ever designed for me to be in His grace.

Now when you view your spiritual duty like that, you get on with it. And you don't spend all your time trying to pad your chair, because you're not going to be in it very long.

Second attribute of God in verse 14 is indicated, we're not looking at all the detail in these two verses because we covered them last time, but just to pick up the thoughts that are germane to our main point. You will notice in verse 14 it says that he is to keep the commandment until the epiphaneia, the appearing or the shining forth of our Lord Jesus Christ. This leads us to a second characteristic of God which gives courage and encouragement to God's servants and that is the promise of God. Or if you want, the truthfulness of God, or the trustworthiness of God, or the veracity of God or the providential control of God.

In other words, God is working out a plan that culminates with the shining forth of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we've got to live in the light of that. It refers to the visible, glorious display when Christ returns to earth to establish His glorious Kingdom. Of course, from our viewpoint, the first event is the Rapture but this is not looking at the Rapture, this is looking at the shining forth. The Rapture is somewhat secretive. We go up to meet Christ in the air and we're removed from the world. The shining forth is Christ coming in blazing transcendent glory. And that is seen as the culmination of human history and primarily as the vindication of Christ and the vindication of those who are Christ's.

So Paul says, "Timothy, you've got to have this perspective, that what is happening here is very temporary, very brief...as James called it, a vapor that appears for a little time...and this little moment, this little gleam of human history will come to an end and there will be a dawning of blazing eternal glory in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and it is that to which we look. It is that promise of God for which we labor." John says, "He that has this hope in him purifies himself." The Apostle Paul said that it was his great desire to give his life in service to Jesus Christ so that when Christ came He would give him a crown of righteousness. And he said in 2 Timothy 4:8 it will not be for me only, but all those who love His shining forth, all those who love His epiphaneia, His blazing glory, His epiphany. It's the visible return of Christ that we focus on. It's the new age, the new dawn, the new day, the millennial kingdom and the eternal kingdom.

This same Jesus, said the angel in Acts 1, that you have seen taken up from you shall so come in like manner as you've seen Him go. How did He go? In the air with clouds and angels. And He'll come in blazing glory. It says in Matthew 24 and 25 He'll come with the hosts of heaven, He'll come with the clouds, He'll come with great glory. It says in Revelation 19 He has on a leukon robe, that has to do with white but more than that the idea is dazzling brilliant, riding on a leukon dazzling brilliant horse, accompanied by all the saints who are with Him on white horses in dazzling brilliant garments. And all of this great entourage of angelic beings, the blazing Shekinah glory of Christ and all the saints who have been raptured with Him returning to earth will cause people to scream and cry for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them at the face of His coming. The great shining forth of Jesus is primarily the vindication of Christ that reverses the stupid and erroneous verdict of earth that said He's worthy to be killed, kill Him and get Him out of the way. And when He comes in blazing glory, He will be vindicated and so will al who are with Him. Christ when He appears, Colossians 3:4 says, then shall

you also appear with Him in glory. Isn't that a great thought? We'll all be coming back in blazing glory with Him. And not only will He be vindicated but so will all of us.

And right now the world doesn't know who we are. Do you know that? You get in your car after this is over and go putting down Roscoe Boulevard here, somebody will pull up to you at the signal, they have no idea who you are. They have no idea that dwelling in you is the life of God, the eternal God of the universe. They don't know that you possess the divine Holy Spirit. They don't know that you will live forever. They don't know that you will rule over the earth in the millennial kingdom. They don't know that you'll sail from one end of the endless universe to the other by a thought forever. They don't know that about you. They don't know that your sins are forgiven. They don't know that you're a new creation. They don't know that some day your body is going to be redeemed and you're going to glow and shine like some kind of celestial light. They don't know that. You look like everybody else. That's why Romans 8 says we are longingly waiting for the visible and glorious liberation of the children of God. We're waiting for that, for that time when we get rid of this unredeemed flesh and we get our glorious body which is like unto His resurrection body. They don't know who we are out there.

Beloved, it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know when we shall see Him we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is. So said John in 1 John 3. They don't know what we are. Wouldn't it be amazing if they did? I mean, if you went into the market like you were transfigured like Christ was? Nobody would say...are you a Christian? Oh....voom...see. That day will come. The glorious manifestation of the children of God. It's coming. When we are liberated. He calls it the liberation, I love that, in Romans 8, because we'll be freed from the incarceration of our fallenness. That day is coming and you have to live in the light of that day...when the Savior returns to earth and rewards His own and sets up His Kingdom. And the verdict of men, the stupid inane immoral ungodly sinful verdict of men that Jesus was worthy of death is reversed and He reigns supreme.

You see, for Timothy and the saints of this age, we have to keep our focus on that. We have to look at the public visible display of Christ and His own in full glory at His return to establish His Kingdom on the earth in order to make sure we have our perspective. You say, "Well how does that impact us right now?" Because Paul said in Romans 8:14 the sufferings of this present age are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us. We say who cares. I know where I'm going and I know what God has for me and I'm certainly not going to get myself all full of anxiety because some people are kicking at my heels...some people are jabbing me...some people are attacking me...some people are persecuting me or even if some people decide they ought to take my life. That doesn't concern me. I'm waiting for the day, when as Lenski(?) the commentator, used to say, "Jesus steps out of His present invisibility" and becomes visible to the whole world and with Him all the redeemed saints who have already been gathered in the Rapture to be at His side come back in blazing glory with Him. Here we are, world, can't you see us coming out of heaven? Here we are, you didn't know who were did you? Here we are.

He comes to vindicate His Son. He comes to vindicate His people. Glorious thought. God has provided an incredibly magnificent glorious future for us. We can't even imagine what it will be like. And so if we keep our focus on that we can endure a little bit of hassling while we're down here doing our little spiritual duty. By the way, no one knows what's going to happen. Look at verse 15, "Which...antecedent ofis the shining forth of our Lord Jesus Christ...which in His times He shall show." And we'll stop at that point.

Who is He? That is God, the Father, not Christ. Because the doxology then follows, who is the blessed and the only potentate, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, that much could refer to Christ. Who only has immortality dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto...that probably wouldn't make sense referring to Christ. Who no man hath seen or can see, that can't possible be Christ. So we know this is a doxology with reference to God the Father. And just as God the Father, according to Galatians 4:4 in the fullness of time at the right season, at the right moment, in the proper time sent forth His Son, just as God sent forth Christ the first time, God will send forth Christ the second time. So verse 15 says which in God's times He will show. And this is attested to even by the words of our Lord Jesus who in Mark 13:32 says that time the Son of Man does not even know, only the Father knows. And in Acts 1 verse 7, He said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has put in His own power." It is God's timing. God's planing.

The church then must live in the imminency of that event, to some extent. We don't know when Jesus will return. We don't know when that all begins with the Rapture of the church. We are at all times living in the anticipation of that event. The church must never settle into the world for a long comfortable life. That's what's so gross and so tragic about people who say they represent Jesus Christ and are preachers of the gospel, just amassing fortunes of money to themselves, all of which is wasted on their indulgence in this earthly existence incredibly.

First Corinthians 7 makes it about as clear as it could be made. "Behold I say, brethren," verse 29, "the time is short." Time is short, he says. "It remains that they that have wives be as though they had none, they that weep as though they wept not, they that rejoice as though they rejoice not, they that buy as though they possess not, they that use the world is not abusing it for the fashion of the world is passing away." Don't get caught up in it. Now that doesn't mean that Paul thought Jesus was going to come in his life time and that was his theology. I believe Paul felt that Jesus could come in his life time, and so do I and so has every thinking Christian who rightly interpreted the Word of God. God purposely didn't tell us when. If we knew when Jesus was going to come, the temptation for many people would be to live like the devil until just before He came and slide in under the wire. The Lord doesn't tell us when He's coming. He doesn't tell us when He's setting up His Kingdom. Those things are in the mind of God. We don't know when that's going to happen. But God in His own time in due season will reveal before the eyes of the world the one who once walked in obscurity, the one who was rejected will now be displayed in all of His majesty and all of His glory and all of His magnificence

and all of His power. The whole present state is temporary, folks, and eternity is forever. And you just can't get too caught up in it.

And so, you get attacked here and there. And you get some opposition here and there. But you never waver and you never compromise because you know your view is beyond the temporary. You can face all difficulty with courage in the light of God's preserving power and in the light of God's promised plan.

Paul lived in the light of that. He looked for the day when he would be awarded at the feet of Christ. He said to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 5, because we know the terror of the Lord we persuade men. He also said we know we're going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ some day and we're going to have to face the fact of things done good and things done useless. And there will be a time of rewards. We live in the light of that. First Corinthians 5...4, rather, 1 to 5, Paul says I don't judge my own life, I let the Lord do that in the day that He reveals the secret things of the heart, then shall every man have praise from God. He lived in the light of the Second Coming.

The man of God, then, has a spiritual duty. He fulfills that spiritual duty because he is driven to do that. He is driven by a clear understanding of and confidence in his God. And I say it again, I said it at the beginning, you are a reflection of your theology. Your life is the living out of what you really believe about God. That's right. If you believe God is a God of utter holiness who despises sin, that's going to dictate the way you live, if you really believe that. If you believe that God chastens wickedness, that's going to effect the way you live. If you believe that God has gifted you and sovereignly called you and sovereignly placed you for ministry, that's going to be the way you approach life. If you believe that you are in the family, married to the person, living in the place, serving where the Lord has you all by His sovereign choice, that's going to dictate how you approach all of those circumstances. If you believe God to be a God of mercy and grace and love and tenderness and kindness, as indeed He is, that's going to dictate how you live also because you're going to recognize that you can go to Him for forgiveness and find grace to help in time of need.

Your theology about God, your thinking and understanding and knowledge of and belief in the nature of God is going to impact directly how you live. And if you've got a God who can tolerate sin then you'll tolerate it. And if you've got a God who can tolerate mediocrity in spiritual service, then that's what you'll give. And if you've got a God who doesn't really care that much whether your life is invested in eternity or in time, that's the way you'll do it.

Now you may know better, but what you know and what you really believe are two different things. It's what you really believe that effects how you live. And so, all of our life is a reflection of our theology proper, our view of God. Spiritual duty then is impelled by how you view God. And if you see God as the God of preservation power, then you don't fear anything because He can preserve you in life or He can preserve you through death into eternal life. And if you see that God is a God who has a

promised plan of eternal glory and some day you're going to be gloriously manifested in the shining forth of Jesus Christ into a world you can't even conceive of with eternal blessings beyond imagination, then you're not going to get too caught up in time and you're going to be willing to give your life in hope of what is yet to come. That's the way to live.

Now, in verse 15 at this point, he launches into a magnificent doxology, much like the one in chapter 1 verse 17. And in this doxology there are yet more attributes of God discussed, more attributes of God which act as motivating forces in the servant who is doing his spiritual duty. Each phrase, by the way, in the doxology, expresses the transcendent incomparable greatness of God. Let me read it to you. Speaking of God, "He is the blessed and only potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords who only has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see, to whom be honor and power everlasting, amen." You need to read that over about a dozen times just to let it sink in.

But let's go to the third attribute and the first one pointed out in the doxology. Follow the thought. Who is the blessed...stop there. That word hit me like it never has hit me in the past. God is the blessed. God is the blessed. How are we to understand this use of the word makarios? The word means happy, content, fulfilled. How are we to understand it? Listen carefully. It has the idea to the absence...the idea of referring to the absence of any unhappiness, the absence of any frustration, the absence of any anxiety over anyone or anything when used in reference to God. It is saying God is content, did you get that? God is happy. God is satisfied. God is fulfilled. With reference to God, there is no frustration, there is no anxiety over anyone or anything. God us unfrustrated. God is perfectly content. God is perfectly happy because anything that isn't the way God wants it cannot exist within His sovereignty.

Did you get that? Anything that isn't the way God wants it can't exist. Therefore God must be in the purest and truest sense content with everything. Think about that in reference to your life. You're a ball of frustration and God is perfectly happy. You say, "Well, doesn't He care about my frustration?" Yes, but He also cares about what the particular anxiety your going through will produce and He has that all under control. God is not like we are. God is absolutely unperturbed by anything. God is not wringing His hands. God never sweats. God is unperturbed. He is perfectly free from worry. Why would He worry when He controls everything? And anything He didn't like, He'd change. Everything is exactly as He wants it to be. Understood? It has to be. He's sovereign. He's God. He is the blessed.

Those who enter a relationship with God then enter into that calm. And we too can be unperturbed when we understand that God is perfectly content...perfectly content. We could call God the happy one. You say, "Well isn't He burdened over the lost?" Well there's a sense in which that is true. That's a sort of an anthropomorphic view of God. God takes in to His mind every single thing that exists, some things are pleasing to Him, some things are displeasing to Him. But nothing is beyond His control and everything is working exactly as He has designed it, therefore He is totally content and

contentedness is the source of happiness.

And that can be our lot. Psalm 2:12 says, "Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him." "Happy is the man who trusts in Him," it says...I found three places in the Old Testament. "Happy is the man who fears the Lord and delights greatly in His commandments. Happy is everyone that walks in His ways," Psalm 128:1. We can be content.

Listen, our God is content. He's calm. Why are you upset? Why are you fretting? Why are you anxious? How wonderful it is for the servant of the Lord to know no matter what the opposition is, no matter what the persecution is, God's calm. God's happy. God's satisfied. God's absolutely content. And I say to myself, what am I upset about? And I say, "God, don't You know they're having seminars about me?" This frustrates me. "Don't You know there's a lot of opposition? Don't You know that every time we try to build a building here we have to fight the whole city? And now they tell us we've got to go back and do a whole new thing to all of our buildings to bring them up to a code that didn't even exist when we built them?" And I'm unhappy and He's happy. Totally content because it's all under control. Boy, what a way to live your life. Marvelous thought.

Yes, God has emotions of anger and emotions of wrath and love and compassion and all that, but they never effect His mind by creating worry. They never effect His mind by creating anxiety. They never effect His mind by creating fear. Because He controls them all...always calm, always happy...totally content because He's totally sovereign. So when I face danger with the knowledge that the God who preserves and restores life is my God and the God who has promised future glory and vindication is my God, and that my God is perfectly calm and perfectly happy because He is perfectly in control of everything, then I can be happy too with anything.

I'm blessed because I'm plugged into the one who is the blessed. What a wonderful attribute. I don't think I ever really thought about that before, the blessedness of God, that's the third attribute...the blessedness or the happiness of God, the contentedness of God. And so here we are in this world and we say we serve and love God and we say God is our God and then we just get all uptight. So I...this has been good for me this week, I almost came out of my seat on that airplane going to Pittsburgh when I began to look to at this truth. Saying, what am I worried about? What am I concerned about? God is happy because He's in control of everything. And I remembered Romans 8:28 that He's working things out for my...what?...my good and His glory. Why am I going to worry? The blessedness of God, what a tremendous thought.

A fourth attribute, it says He is not only the blessed but He is the only dunastes, potentate, and the Greek text reads this, the King of those kinging and the Lord of those lording. Tremendous statement. He is the only potentate, again refers to God, the one who will display Christ at His appearing. He alone is God. There's no other God. He alone is God. Well what that means is if God, my God, is the only the God then there's no competition so He is absolutely sovereign and no one is vying for control

of me who can defeat Him. You understand that? Wow! It's like Romans 8, who shall lay any charge to God's elect? I mean, if God, my God, is the only potentate, if He is the King over all of those who are kinging and the Lord of all of those who are lording, then I don't have anything to fear because He's on top of the pile. To put it in childlike terms, He's King of the mountain. The Lord our God is one.

Isaiah understood that. Look at the fortieth chapter of Isaiah just ever so briefly. Isaiah chapter 40 verse 12 and following talks about God. You can read all down through there but maybe we could come down to verse 25, "To whom then will you liken me? To whom shall I be equal, saith the holy one. And the answer is nobody...nobody." Verse 28, "Have you not know, have you not heard, the everlasting God the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth doesn't faint, never gets weary, there's no searching of His understanding and gives power to the faint and to those who have no might He increases their strength." The only true God gives strength to those that are weak and he goes on to say so much strength that they're like eagles and mount up with wings. Marvelous.

In the fortyfourth chapter of Isaiah verse 6, "Thus says the Lord the King of Israel and His redeemer the Lord of hosts, I am the first, I am the last, and there is nobody in between. Nobody beside Me is God." The only God, that's what that means. The word "potentate" dunastes is from the group of words that we know as dunameo, dunamis, it has to do with power. It refers to one in whom all power resides inherently, not a delegated power but inherent power. And He is the only one who inherently has power. The word dunastes by the way is only used here, different forms of it are used to speak of human rulers, Luke 1:52, Acts 8:27 and once in the Old Testament Septuagint Daniel 4:35. And so it's a word that has the idea of absolute monarchy. It is used of human rulers but here it is used and for the only time in the New Testament in the noun form of God who is inherently in charge. He has absolute power. There is nobody else to compete with Him.

You say, "What about Satan?" Satan isn't even close to being on His level. He created Satan. He kicked Satan out of heaven. And He has sentenced Satan to eternal hell and Satan is not an issue in the sense that he has any force that can overpower God.

In Deuteronomy 4:35 it says, "Unto thee it was shown that thou mightest know that the Lord He is God, there is none else beside Him." Verse 39, "Know therefore this day consider in your heart, the Lord He is God in heaven above, He is God on the earth beneath, there is none else." And I could track you through the Old Testament, a myriad of passages that say the same thing in one form or another. God is sovereign.

Now let me tell you something. This to me is the most hopeful encouraging comforting doctrine of God in Scripture. This is it. The fact that God is sovereign takes every anxiety out of life. God's in charge. And God's sovereignty is further amplified by that statement, "King of those kinging, and Lord of those lording." Such titles, by the way, are given to God in the Old Testament. Some feel that this

is referring to Christ because He is called King of kings and Lord of lords in Revelation 17:14 and Revelation 19:16. That is true, He is called King of kings and Lord of lords, the terms used there are different but in the Old Testament God is also called by these terms. Let me show you. Deuteronomy 10 verse 17 is the first place, it says, "The Lord your God is God of Gods and Lord of lords," Deuteronomy 10:17. In Psalm 136, I believe it is, verse 3,...no, yes it is, yes..."O give thanks to the Lord of Lords." And then in Daniel's prophecy, the second chapter and verse 47 it says, "The king answered to Daniel and said of a truth, It is your God who is the God of Gods and the Lord of kings." See. So that's Old Testament terminology.

And I really believe here in a sense it's a conscious rebuttal to emperor worship. You remember now, Timothy was in the Roman Empire in the ballywick(?) of Caesar being in Ephesus. And the people were into the worship of Caesar. In fact it kind of an interesting thing that there was a growing cult of worshiping the Caesars after their death, a sort of way to immortalize them. They were turning them into gods after they died and what the Apostle Paul is saying to Timothy is there is only one God...solitary deity...absolute and only monarch. This again I say is a conscious rebuttal of the cult of emperor worship.

But what a thrilling encouragement it is. I'm telling you, folks, this more than any other attribute of God encourages me. God is in charge of everything. Isn't that wonderful? He is the ruler over everybody. That takes all the fear out of everything. I don't fear. I don't worry. I don't have to manipulate people. I don't have to compromise to accomplish something. I don't have to even be subtle. God is in charge. What a comfort. I don't have to depend on human power. I don't have to depend on a human ingenuity. I don't have to depend on a human wisdom, on human talent. I mean, if I was an Arminian in theology and I believed that salvation was a result of the will of man, I would be a basket case. If I believed that my task was to convince people apart from God that my job was to convince people in their own human will to receive Christ, I would bear a responsibility that would create so much anxiety I'd be on tranquilizers. If I felt I by my techniques or the capability of my preaching or the cleverness of my invitation was able to save people from hell, I would feel guilty for every person I couldn't convince. I'd be a case. But I don't believe that. I believe the Bible teaches that God is sovereign and my responsibility is not to convince people to change their human will and come to Christ but my responsibility is to give the Word of God faithfully and the sovereign act of a gracious God will redeem those that He sets His love upon. God's in charge.

I'll tell you something else. If I thought God wasn't sovereign in my life and that I was responsible to make sure my life turned out right by controlling all my circumstances, I'd be a rough guy to live with. I mean, if I believed I had to manipulate my life to get it the way it had to be, I'd really be hard to get along with. But you know what I believe? I believe God's in control of everything in my life and that He's moving me down a path and all I want to do is be faithful to Him. And every time I hit something that I didn't expect and say, "What in the world is this happening?" I just say God's sovereign, this is wonderful, I'm just going to wait and see what He's doing. I would make the world's worst Arminian. I

would be...I would be probably in a mental institution feeling responsible to control everything or else I'd be the worst despot the world has ever seen...manipulating everybody.

I don't feel I have to do that. I don't feel the Kingdom is built by human manipulation. I don't feel people are saved because of my ability to convince their human mind and move their human will. And I don't believe that if I go out and run into trouble I created it and now I'm in it and God is up there saying, "Well, MacArthur, boy, I didn't want you to do that...and now you're there and how are you going to get out of it?" I would rather get into a mess and have God say, "Right on schedule. I know why you're there. I know how you're going to get out." Thank You, Lord. That's the way to live. God is sovereign. He's the King over all those kinging and the Lord over all those lording and the only potentate. He's totally in charge of everything and that's the way it has to be. And what a comforting truth. I love it says in Isaiah 46:11, "I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass, I have purposed it, I will also do it." And God said I'm going to make you into the image of His Son and He's doing it. Those who don't believe that, those who don't live by that truth are going to find themselves in despair, they're going to find themselves in worry, they're going to find themselves in fear, they're going to find themselves in anxiety when things don't go right. And I watch it happen all the time...people's lives cracking up all over. I personally believe that much of the anxiety of the Christian church, much of its constant preoccupation with counseling and everybody wanting their problem instantly solved is really the legacy of insipient Arminianism that has infested itself into the church where people actually believe that they've got to control everything instead of letting God do that.

Genesis 50:20, you remember that great statement? You meant it for evil, God meant it for good...isn't that good? You meant it for evil, God meant it for good. Courage in the spiritual duty, willingness to face any danger, an unwillingness to compromise, boldness in the cause of Christ is based on your theology. And if you believe in the preserving power of God and if you believe in the promised plan of God and if you believe that in the midst of everything God is totally happy and calm and content and if you believe that God is sovereign and controls everything then you can pursue your ministry with all your heart.

And that's why this doxology is so wonderful here. Because he want's Timothy to know the God he's serving. And then he says this, attribute number five, verse 16, "Who only has immortality...who only has immortality." What does that mean? This is the eternity of God. Or as some theologians would prefer, the eternality of God, that is that God is eternal. Again we go back to the emperor cult and the first century was fashionable to treat dead Roman emperors as if they were immortal. But only God is immortal. He doesn't mean only God is immortal in the sense that no man will live forever, he means only God is immortal in the sense that God is inherently immortal. You're immortal because God gave you immortality. God is immortal because He's immortal in His nature. All that He created to live forever will live forever because He gave them eternal life, God Himself possesses eternal life, no one gave it to Him. He only has immortality.

Immortality means, it's a marvelous word, it means deathless. It's the word athanasia. There's another word that's sometimes used to speak of a similar idea and that's the word aphtharsia which mens incorruptibility. It's not that word. It's the word for deathlessness. It means God is incapable of death. He's incapable of dying. He has a quality of life that is utterly unending. And He is the only one who has that. He is not simply noncorruptible, which doesn't necessarily say how long He'll last, He is unending. And He cannot perish, He cannot die. And we have endless life because e gave it to us. Psalm 36, the psalmist says in verse 9, "For with You is the fountain of life, life comes out of You, we have it because You gave it to us. You alone possess it." Isaiah 40:28 says, "The everlasting God." And Daniel said, "I praise...in Daniel 4:34...I praised and honored HIm who lives forever whose dominion is an everlasting dominion." God who lives forever.

Do you remember Psalm 90? I believe it is, right at the beginning of the Psalm, "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hast formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God...even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God." Habakkuk 1:12, "Are You not from everlasting, O Lord my God? Are You not from everlasting?" Why did Habakkuk say that? Because he couldn't figure out what was going on in history...that's exactly why. He watched the bitter and hasty Chaldeans, God said they're going to come over and wipe out Israel. And he grabs his head and says, "God how could You ever destroy Your people using a worse nation? You want to chasten Your people, how can You use that nation, they're worse than Your people? And how could You violate Your covenant of love to Your people and why don't You bring a revival to Your people? You're sovereign." And he's very confused about history and so he says, "But You are the everlasting God," and what he's doing is he's reminding himself that God is bigger than history, that He was here before history, as we know it, He'll be here after history as we know it, He is suprahistorical. He's eternal. And what a comfort that is that no matter what happens in this little moment of time, God surpasses that. God is everlasting. What a comfort. Outside time...uneffected by death, eternally alive beyond the influence of sin, beyond the influence of circumstances, beyond the influence of men or demons...nothing in time affects God...nothing in space affects God. He is supra history. He is the deathless one, the eternal one.

And so, as we sort of piddle around in this earth and get ourselves into all kinds of problems and wonder how we ever got in and if we'll ever get out, we remember that we have the deathless one who is the eternal God who is infinitely beyond history available to us. The God we have is the God who possesses eternity, is the God who has planned history, the God who is beyond our circumstances and yet understands our circumstances. Isn't it wonderful to have the eternal God? And to have the promise that the eternal God has given eternity to you as a gift? Wow!

What kind of God do you have? Can you go out and do your spiritual duty? If you really understand God you can because you understand that you have a God who preserves and restores life. You

have a God who has planned for your vindication in the glorious shining forth of Jesus Christ. You have a God who is never discontent, never worried, never anxious, never perturbed, perfectly calm, perfectly happy with everything going on because He controls it. You have a God who is absolutely sovereign. He is in charge of everything. No one can stay His hand and no one can ford his purpose and everything fits into that. And you have a God who is way beyond history and absolutely deathless who will never die, who will always be there, always be there, always be there to sustain all that you need.

And then finally, the last attribute, the holiness of God...the holiness of God. Not only does He have immortality but listen to this, "He dwells in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man has seen nor can see," stop at that point.

God is beyond us. He's unapproachable. He dwells in the light which no man can approach unto. Kind of recall Psalm 104:2 where the psalmist says God covers Himself with light as with a garment. He is blazing glory..blazing glory. You remember in Exodus when Moses in chapters 33 and 34 saw the shining forth of the Shekinah of God. Do you remember when he said, "Show me Thy glory," and God let him see a glimpse of the glory of God? And then God said to him, "No man can see My face and...what?...and live." The writer of Hebrews says, "Our God is a consuming fire." If you ever got close to the fullness of His presence you'd go up in a cinder.

The idea of God as blazing light is referencing His holiness. He consumes anything that is unholy in His presence if He comes that close. God is a holy God. God is apart from sin and separate from sinners. God does not sin, God cannot sin. Absolute eternal perfection. In fact, I love the statement of Exodus 15:11, "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like Thee? Glorious in holiness." And that associates His glory with His holiness...glorious in holiness.

In that wonderful second chapter of 1 Samuel, you remember Hannah's beautiful prophetic prayer, verse 2, "There is none holy like the Lord. There is none holy like the Lord." He is holy.

And you know something? Because He's holy, listen to this, He is inaccessible to man. He is inaccessible. He lives in an atmosphere of purity. He lives in an atmosphere of holiness. He lives in an atmosphere that is transcendent. He lives in an atmosphere that is spotless, far too holy for mortals to ever enter.

You say, "What about the vision of God?" What about Matthew 5:8 where it says in the Beatitudes...and I know you're familiar with it...let me read it to you just so you have the exact words, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall...what?...see God." That's a partial vision. That's a partial vision. It cannot be a complete vision for we could never fully see God and live. First Corinthians 13:12, "We now see in a glass darkly but then face to face." Will we really see God face to face? No, it's a partial vision. First John 3 alludes to the vision of God. "We shall see Him, we know that when

He shall appear we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is." And again that vision of God is really the vision of Christ. No man could ever see God and live. They would be instantaneously and forever consumed.

But what's the relationship to this text? God is unapproachable. No man has ever seen His full glory. No man ever will see His full glory. You say, "What about in heaven?" I don't believe in heaven we'll ever see it. In heaven we'll never see it. We may see a portion of it. We will certainly see a greater portion of it than we have ever...than anyone has ever seen in this world, but we won't see the full blazing eternal immense glory of God.

You say, "What's the point of celebrating this utter otherness? What's the point of bringing out in this doxology that God is so holy He's unapproachable?" I'll tell you what it is. God is so holy He never makes...what...mistakes. Never makes errors. Never misjudgments. He always does exactly what is right, exactly what is perfect and if something is wrong it isn't Him, it's us. He tolerates no sin in His presence, that's another implication of this. And He deals with sin. And He will one day end sin and be vindicated in holiness with a holy people.

Jesus prayed in John 17:11, "Holy Father." He is called the Holy One in Isaiah 43:14. He is holy. Because He is holy He never errs, He never makes a mistake. Because He is holy He hates sin and He will some day destroy it. Because He is holy He will chasten sin. He tolerates no sin in His presence.

I'll tell you, it's a wonderful thing for me to know I have a holy God. And when I go out and represent Him and serve Him in whatever ministry He's given to me or given to you, we can know that whatever He leads us into He won't make a mistake. He'll never do anything that's wrong. And that anyone who persecutes us, anyone who speaks evil against us, anyone who distracts against His Kingdom is going to some day feel His vengeance, true? And certainly those who mock His name and deny Him will never enter His presence. What a God we serve. What a God we serve. And it's the knowledge of that God that can equip us to our spiritual duty.

Is it any wonder the doxology ends with a refrain of praise? Look at the end of verse 16, and you don't even need to explain this. "To whom be...what?...honor and eternal power," is what it says in the text. Amen. Amen means let it be, affirmation. Honor is respect. The word kratos means dominion...dominion. Let it be, he says. O God, we praise You, we respect You, we grant You the dominion of which You are so worthy.

Who is our God? Preserver, promiser, the blessed one, the sovereign one, the holy one. And if we understand God to be who He is we can understand that there is great encouragement in these words of Hebrews 13:6, listen to them. "The Lord...oh, it starts at verse 6...so that we may boldly say...did you get that?...so that we may boldly say the Lord is my helper." The Lord who is preserver,

promiser, the blessed one, the sovereign one, the holy one, the Lord is my helper. And then he says this, "I will not fear what man shall do unto me." Isn't that good? That's the sum of it. I'll not fear what man shall do unto me. Why? Because I know my God. The solemn call to duty motivated by an understanding of who our God is. Let's bow in prayer.

Father, we have just reveled in the truth of this text and You have so filled my heart with this in these past days. And it's just been mulled over in my mind and now brought to fruition in the message of the evening. And yet, Lord, not a small grain of sand has been expressed in comparison to the numberless...numberless implications of this vast truth. Father, forgive us for even thinking small as we've tried to think big but thank You for stretching us. And help us to approach our spiritual duty with a full understanding as much is as possible within us of who it is who is our God. We bless You, O God. We honor You with respect and adoration and admiration. We affirm Your eternal power and dominion. And we say with all our hearts amen...amen to what we have learned in this brief time tonight. Make us to be among the faithful while others are proving unfaithful. Make us to be among those who rightly represent You among those who so wrongly name Your name. And help us, Lord, with eagerness to do our spiritual duty with little thought for anything other than the wonderful joy of serving such a glorious God because of the work in us through Jesus Christ and the Spirit whom He has sent. In the Savior's name we pray. Amen.

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