

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

A Resurrection Hymn

Scripture: 1 Timothy 3:16

Code: 80-81

I don't know if you're aware of it or not, but in American tradition, Easter music runs a far second from Christmas music. We think of Christmas and Easter as the two great sort of quasi-religious holidays in our country. We can hardly count the music that is written around the Christmas season and the Christmas theme. But when it comes to Easter music, it's much more limited.

Perhaps the most familiar traditional Easter song goes like this, "Put on your Easter bonnet, with all the frills upon it, and you'll be the grandest lady in the Easter parade."

And as if that's not enough of musical genius, there is another classical Easter expression that says, "Here comes Peter Cottontail, hopping down the bunny trail. Hippety, hoppity, Easter's on its way."

Well, so much for the world's Easter hymnology. Thankfully, we don't have to sing those trite songs. We could sing Beethoven's and Wordsworth's great hymn, "Alleluia, Alleluia, hearts to heaven and voices raised, sing to God a hymn of gladness, sing to God a hymn of praise. He who on the cross as Savior for the world's salvation bled, Jesus Christ the King of Glory now is risen from the dead. Now the iron bars are broken. Christ, from death to life, is born. Glorious life and life immortal on this resurrection morn. Christ has triumphed and we conquer by his mighty enterprise. We with Him to life eternal by his resurrection rise."

Or we could sing Charles Wesley's masterful hymn as we did earlier. "Christ the Lord is risen today, sons of men and angels say. Raise your joys and triumphs high. Sing ye heavens and earth reply. Lives again our glorious King where all death is now thy sting, dying once He all doth save where thy victory, oh grave. Love's redeeming work is done. Fought the fight, the battle won. Death in vain forbids Him rise. Christ has opened paradise."

We could sing Christian Gellert's rich lyrics, "Jesus lives and so shall I. Death! Thy sting is gone forever. He, for me, hath deigned to die lives the bands of death to sever. He shall raise me from the dust. Jesus is my hope and trust."

But beyond all of these, there is another Easter song. I want it to be the substance of our message today. You'll find it in your Bible in 1 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 16. Here is an Easter song and by the spirit of God, through the Apostle Paul and sung by the early church, though in English it loses some of the lyric and some of the lilt of the Greek. It nonetheless puts us in touch with maybe the first

Easter song, the first Resurrection hymn.

Listen to its words, 1 Timothy 3:16, "He who was revealed in the flesh was vindicated in the spirit, beheld by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world taken up in glory." Simple yet profound. This hymn stands, as it were, above all other hymns. Six lines affirming the centrality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ even though the word resurrection doesn't appear. It is still the resurrection that is the essence of the hymn and the heart of the Christian faith.

This hymn has a prelude to it. The prelude is at the beginning of verse 16. It says this, "And by common confession, great is the mystery of Godliness." That phrase "common confession" in some Bibles is translated without controversy. It is a Greek word homoleguminous, from which we get homo, which means the same. And it means to say the same.

And so what it says is everyone says the same thing. All of us agree. There is no debate here. There is no controversy here. Everyone affirms this. It is beyond all question, all discussion and all query. The whole redeemed church confesses this is true. It is the unanimous conviction of all believers. Here is a truth that every Christian on the face of the earth who has ever lived will confidently confess.

You say, "Well, what is it?" It is this: great is the mystery of Godliness. Every Christian who lives, has lived or ever will live will affirm the truthfulness of that statement. It is common confession to all true Christians. Great is the mystery of Godliness. If you don't say that, you're not a Christian. If you don't believe that, you're not a Christian.

Now, that is a cry, in some ways. May well have been a cry that Christians gave back and forth when they greeted one another. "Great is the mystery of Godliness." Maybe they even began a worship service, "Great is the mystery of Godliness."

It is recorded for us in Acts chapter 19 that in the city of Ephesus where they worshipped Diana, the Celtic cry of the pagan worshippers was, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians. Great is Diana of the Ephesians." And the cry of the Christian is, "Great is the mystery of Godliness."

You say, "Well, I'd like to cry that but I'm not sure what it means." Well, what is it? What is the mystery of Godliness? The very word in this resurrection hymn tells you. The first word is the word He. The mystery of Godliness is not a doctrine. The mystery of Godliness is not a creed. The mystery of Godliness is not a theology, it is not a principle. The mystery of Godliness is a person. It is He. Great is the mystery of Godliness.

Who is He? The word mystery means to reveal what was hidden, to unfold what was not disclosed. Godliness means holiness. In whom was perfect holiness revealed? Jesus Christ. He is the mystery

of Godliness. He is holiness revealed. The secret, the veiling of God's holiness, was revealed in Jesus Christ.

Christianity, then, is not a system of ceremonies. Christianity is not trust in a creed. It is not just belief in a system of doctrines or theology. It is not a plan for how to do good deeds. Christianity is the affirmation by common confession that God, Holy God, perfect God, righteous God, came into the world revealed in a person. That's the heart of Christianity.

Great megain the Greek. Great is the truth that Holy God is revealed. That is Christianity. That is the most astonishing thing in all the realm of religious truth that God should become a man. That Holy God, that Godliness, as borne by God, would be revealed, manifest, unveiled, demonstrated in a person. He is that person.

We are here on this resurrection day to sing this hymn with Paul, with Timothy, with the early church about the fact that Jesus is God revealed. He is the mystery of Godliness unfolded.

And the testimony to that truth is given in this six line hymn. Each of these lines proves this confession to be true. It is one thing to say that Holy God is revealed in Jesus and great is that revelation, it's something else to verify it. And so the Holy Spirit has written a hymn of verification, a hymn of attestation, a hymn of evidence, a hymn of proof that indeed He is the secret of holiness unveiled.

Line one: He who was revealed in the flesh. He who was revealed in the flesh. Simply stated, beloved, the evidence that Jesus Christ was God in a human body is obvious if you look at his life. The mystery of Godliness was revealed through human flesh. It was apparently in the way He was born of a virgin. It was apparent in the way He lived an absolutely sinless, perfect life.

It was apparent in the amazing and astounding and unbelievably profound timeless words which came out of his lips. It was apparent because of the inexplicable grandeur and power of the works which He did, including raising the dead. It was apparent from the amazing knowledge which allowed Him to say, "You don't need to tell me what's in the heart of a man. I know what's in his heart. I can see it. I can hear his unspoken words. I can feel his unspoken emotions and I can see his unspoken thoughts."

Jesus Christ in the flesh was God manifest. Even the people around said never a man spake like this man. There was no way to explain His words. There was no way to explain His works other than He was God. The word revealed funarowain the Greek. It means to make visible. And what that tells us is that Jesus Christ was not created but that He preexisted. He always was the second member of the Trinity but took on flesh. He was made visible.

Prior to that He was invisible. He was the second member of the invisible God -- the Trinity. And this simple, profound statement presupposes His preexistence. God, who already existed, became revealed or made visible in his human flesh. Jesus Christ then made the invisible Holy God who is transcended spirit visible in human form. In the form of the man, Jesus God, the Holy One appeared.

In John chapter 1, "In the beginning was the word," speaking of Jesus Christ. "And the word was with God and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God." Verse 14. "And the word became flesh and dwelt among us. And we beheld His glory." We could see it. "And we could see that it was the glory of God, full of grace and full of truth." We could see it.

In Romans chapter 1, the Apostle Paul speaking again of the same great thing. He says that, "God sent his son, born of a descendent of David, according to the flesh." God comes into the world in a Jewish body as a descendent of David that He might be the true king.

In Galatians, Paul says in chapter 4 in verse 4, "When the fullness of time came, God sent forth His son, born of a woman. The Son was already there. He sent Him forth to be born through the body of a woman and born under the law and order that He might redeem those that were under the law." He came to redeem men. God sent His son into human form. That is at the very, very first point of Christian theology.

In the book of Hebrews chapter 1, it says, "He is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of God's nature." Jesus Christ, by His own life in the flesh, revealed that He was the mystery of Godliness. Look at His life. Look at His words. Look at His works, the things He did. Follow the pattern of His living from His birth to His death and you will see there's no other explanation than that this is God. This is God.

Even a Centurion, a pagan Roman, watching Him die says, "Truly, this was the Son of God." There is no other explanation for His life. The divine revelation offers no clearer evidence than the life of Christ to anyone who is watching to know that He was God.

H.R. Brawley's hymn is fitting. He titled it, "The Great God of Heaven has Come Down to Earth." These are its lyrics, "The word and the bliss of the Godhead remaining. Yet in flesh comes to suffer the keenest of pains. He is that He was and forever shall be but becomes that He was not for you and for me. God, Holy God, revealed in flesh to die for the sins of man. What condescending grace, what compassion, what mercy.

"It isn't just His works, it isn't just His word that prove He is God. It is His love, his compassion, His humiliation. The fact that He would stoop to redeem sinners but speaks of a kind of grace and love

and mercy that is at a level that we cannot comprehend." The hymn says, "Proof enough is available in that He was revealed in the flesh."

But there's a second line to the hymn. It is this: "He was vindicated in the spirit." What does this mean? Now, remember Jesus made all the claims to being God. He said if you've seen me, you've seen the Father. He said, "I and the Father are one." He said, "You can't condemn me for what I do on the Sabbath; I am Lord of the Sabbath."

He said, "If I wish, I can call down all the heavenly hosts to my aid." Which means I am commander in chief of them all, a role reserved for deity.

Jesus, over and over again in His life said He was God one way or another. He said, "Before Abraham was, I am." He said, "My kingdom is not of this world." Those great claims to deity were vindicated. They were justified by the spirit.

You say, "How? How did the Holy Spirit affirm them? How did the Holy Spirit confirm them? How did the Holy Spirit remove any question about whether or not they were just claims? How did He do that?"

Romans chapter 1 again. And it says very simply in verse 4 that He was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Holy Spirit, the spirit of holiness. When the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead, the Holy Spirit was therefore saying He is who He claimed to be, the sinless God in human form. His incredible, perfect, sinless life revealed He was God.

But not everybody could see that life. Not everybody was close to Him. Not everybody was around when He lived. Perhaps not everybody was finally and fully convinced having varying degrees of personal evidence. And so the Holy Spirit came along and confirmed all those claims by raising Jesus from the dead. He demonstrated a vindication of every claim Jesus ever made.

You have to remember that while Jesus was living a perfect life and some believed, there were people who were condemning Him and condemning Him and condemning Him at a rapid and pervasive rate. Finally, it got into the cross and He died under a cloud of sin and guilt. Hanging on the cross in the middle of two criminals, He was identified with criminals as a criminal. He was treated by the Romans as a insurrectionist and a rebel, a rabble-rouser, a troublemaker and one who wouldn't bow the knee to Cesar. He was treated by the Jews as a heretic and a blasphemer and one who would have overturned the purity of their religion.

Not only did He have that artificial guilt put upon Him but He had put upon Him the real sin of all the world and so He died under the weight of the sentence of sin. He died in a cloud of condemnation

and not all understood His perfect holiness. And so the Holy Spirit raised Him from the dead which removed forever the cloud. Jesus' resurrection was the declaration by the Holy Spirit that He was righteous. When the father said twice, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," the Spirit affirmed it by raising Him from the dead.

What it says in Romans 1:4, the word declared. He was declared to be the Son of God, declared to be the mystery of Godliness, declared to be God in human flesh, declared to be Holiness Incarnate. It says He was declared to be so by the resurrection. Now, the word declared is horidzoin the Greek from which we get the word "horizon". Horizon has a very clear definition. Horizon means the clear line between earth and sky, the clear boundary between earth and sky. That is the horizon. It is very clear.

So the Spirit of God, in raising Jesus from the dead, drew a clear line, marking out or distinguishing that this human life was indeed the mystery of Godliness, Holiness Incarnate, God in flesh. Sin kills and sin kills permanently and sin damns to hell. But Jesus rose from the dead because He had no sin of his own. He was raised to demonstrate His absolute perfect sinlessness.

The words of Theodosia Garrison, "Look at the glory of the resurrection in a fresh way; listen to them. We doubted our God in secret. We scoffed in the marketplace. We held our hearts from His keeping. We held our eyes from His face. We looked to the ways of our fathers, denying where they denied. And we said, as He passed by, He is stilled at last. A man is crucified. But now I give you certain news to bid a world rejoice. You may crush truth to silence. You may cry above His voice. You may close your ears before Him lest you tremble at the word. But late or soon, by night or noon, the living truth is heard."

Further she says, "We buried our God in darkness. In secret and all affright, we crept on a path of silent spherical things in the night. We buried our God in terror, after the fashion of men, as we said each one, 'The deed is done.' And the grave is closed again.

"But now I give you certain news to spread by land and sea. You may scourge truth naked, you may nail Him to the tree. You may roll the stone above it and seal it priestly wise but against the morn, unnamed newborn, the living truth will rise." And He did. And He did because the Spirit was giving testimony through the mystery of Godliness.

The third line in the hymn is yet a third line of evidence. He was not only revealed in the flesh, evidence enough of the mystery of Godliness. Vindicated in the spirit, evidence enough of the mystery of Godliness. But He was beheld by angels." Beheld by angels -- to what does this refer? Angels had, frankly, been infrequent visitors in His life.

Do you remember that in Matthew 26:53 and 54, He said, "If I wanted, I could have called legions of angels?" But He chose and was willing to live and die without angelic intervention. Only two times during His life did angels come. Once in his temptation when Satan had tempted Him 40 days they came and ministered to Him. Once again at the garden, when He was tempted, an angel came and strengthened Him. Those are the only two recorded times that angels gave any attendance to Christ.

But now, all of the sudden, in connection with the resurrection, He was beheld by angels. The first line of the hymn took us to the cross. The second line of the hymn took us through the resurrection. And the third line, "Beheld, thy angels," takes us after the resurrection.

What does He have in mind? What does He have in mind? Someone suggested maybe He had in mind when Jesus' body was in the grave, His spirit descended into the pit, according to 1 Peter 3:19 and 22, where demons, fallen angels are bound. And He showed up at the party the fallen angels were holding for a crucified Savior. And in the middle of their celebration that He was dead, He arrived. And He was beheld by fallen angels. But I don't think that's the intent of this text.

Though it is true that they experienced His presence during the time that His body was in the grave, His spirit alive went into that place and announced the triumph that was about to come into resurrection to those fallen angels. That's not what we have in mind here. I think it's something beyond that.

The beheld is the word harao. It means also to watch and to witness. And it must refer to the holy angels. He was seen and witnessed by the angels in His resurrection. Surely the holy angels were collected around that tomb. Surely they were watching with whatever capacity they have to see this.

You say, "Why do you say that?" Because 1 Peter 1 says that they have a craving and a longing to look into the matters of salvation, to understand them, to see them. And this is the climax of redemptive history. And you can believe that the angelic host was watching.

You also even have the opportunity to meet some of the angels. Do you remember in Hebrews 1:6 and when it says that when God brought Christ into the world, it says let all the angels of God worship Him. When He was born, the angels were poised, weren't they? And they were in heaven and what were they saying? Hosanna. They were singing the praises -- or saying, literally, the praises of the King born.

And as Hebrews 1:6 says, at His birth, all the angels worshipped Him. You can be sure that at His resurrection they were all collected ready to worship when He came out of that grave. But there's more than that. There was some special angels chosen for some very, very special participation in the resurrection. One angel rolled the stone away. Two angels sat on the palette where His body was: one at His feet and one at His head after He was already gone.

The angels were around the scene. And it is recorded that the angel said, "He is not here." What? "He is risen." And so you can add to the testimony of Christ Himself in his incarnate life and the testimony of the spirit of God through the resurrection, the testimony of holy angels. And it is angelic testimony that He is not here. He is risen. He is alive. He is gone. He does not occupy the grave.

And you can be certain that there was celebration among the angels. After all, if they rejoiced, according to Luke 15, over the salvation of one soul, you can only imagine what heaven was like when Jesus came out of the grave. The unbelievable rejoicing and celebration of the whole population of angels.

And they said, "He's not here. He is risen." And you have the testimony of holy, angelic angels; the testimony of fallen demons in a pit would be meaningless. Holy angels confirmed the glory of Christ. Holy angels affirmed the mystery of Godliness. Holy angels would sing with the church, "Great is the mystery of Godliness." Angels who witnessed the creation; angels who witnessed the giving of the law; angels who witnessed the birth of Christ; angels who will witness the Second Coming, glory and establishment of the Kingdom. Those angels were there at the resurrection, some few with special duties.

Holy creatures they are. Permanently holy, forever holy, devoted to God. They worship God night and day, all the time, forever. They were there to give testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Men may have been confused, the angels weren't.

As I read in John 20, the disciples didn't fully understand; the angels did. And they might have identified with a familiar hymn, if it went like this, "Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace. Hail the Son of Righteousness. Light and life to all He brings, risen with healing in His wings. Mild He lays his glory by, born that man no more may die. Risen to raise the sons of earth. Risen to give them second birth. Hark the herald angels sing. Glory to the risen King."

There's a fourth line in the hymn that takes the testimony one step further. The fourth line says, "Proclaimed among the nations." After the death of Jesus Christ, the disciples folded their tents. They were said, cowardly, disappointed, fearful, scattered, helpless, weaklings. They were left with severe doubt, major depression thinking their Messiah, their leader, the one they loved, was dead.

How in the world could they go from that attitude to proclaiming Him among the nations? The thing that turned them around was what? The resurrection. The resurrection. After his resurrection, He appeared. You can see the scene reminded by the text we read earlier this morning. There came Peter and John and faith began to well up in John's heart. "He's not here. And look at the grave clothes. Could it be a resurrection?"

And then there was Mary. And she heard Him say, "Mary."

And she said, "Rabboni." And she knew He was alive. And then that night there was the upper room and He was there. And then a week later He was there again so Thomas could see.

And He said, "Touch me and see that it is I." And they knew and they believed. And then there Galilee and in Galilee there was the appearance to 500 at one time. And the confidence began to grow and grow. And in Galilee He made them breakfast and He confirmed His resurrection to them. And He spoke to them. And He re-commissioned Peter. And He discussed what John would do. And they knew He lived. And they knew He lived.

And they were instantaneously transformed into powerful preachers. And they went roaring back into the city of Jerusalem, praising God, preaching Christ. And they tried to stop them and silence them. They went to the temple and they did it. They went everywhere and did it. They turned the whole city upside down. They grabbed them and they took them in as prisoners and they told them, "Don't do that again." And they went out and did it all the more and counted themselves joyful to be worthy to suffer for the risen Christ.

If there was no resurrection, they never would have proclaimed Him among the nations. They would have gone away and they would have died in unbelievable disappointment. If some fools come along and say they stole His body, they never would have died as martyrs, as most of them did, for a stolen body. Give them more credit than that.

They would never pull off a hoax and then die for it. If someone pulls off a hoax, it is to make money. It is not to become deprived and rejected and hated and despised and martyred. The very fact that they went to all the world and preached the gospel as Jesus told them to, the very fact that they went and made disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them all things whatsoever I have commanded you, the very fact that they did that is indication enough that they had seen the risen Christ.

They had seen Him. And they had touched Him. And they had eaten with Him. And they had walked with Him. And so when you hear that marvelous line, "Proclaimed among the nations," it's full of resurrection truth. They never would have preached his name. They never would have proclaimed His name. They never would have lived to die had He not risen from the grave.

And so Jesus Himself through His life said, "Great is the mystery of Godliness."

The Holy Spirit, through his resurrection, says, "Great is the mystery of Godliness."

The angels join in as they watch Him rise and say, "Great is the mystery of Godliness."

And here come the apostles, once disappointed, and now highly motivated to give their life for the risen Christ and they say, "We will proclaim Him among the nations, suffering whatever may come for His sake." Such proclamation speaks of confidence in resurrection.

George Frideric Handel wrote the words to a great hymn that speaks of proclaiming the risen Christ. It might be a hymn the apostles could well sing. "Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son. Endless is the victory, thou or death hast won. Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away, kept the folded grave clothes where the body lay. Lead His church with gladness; hymns of triumph sing. For her Lord now liveth and death has lost its sting."

Oswald Smith wrote a hymn that says, "He rose triumphantly in power and majesty. The Savior rose, no more to die. Oh let us now proclaim the glory of His name and tell to all He lives today."

Those transformed disciples who went out preaching Jesus Christ among the nations, who were persecuted, imprisoned and martyred for their faith, confirmed that Jesus indeed is the mystery of Godliness. He is God revealed.

The fifth line of this resurrection hymn says, "Believed on in the world." And what has it been through all the preaching of the apostles down to now that ultimately convinces people that Jesus Christ is who He claimed to be? It is the fact that they believe in His resurrection. How can one be saved if you confess with your mouth? Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart -- Romans 10:9 and 10 -- that God has what? Raised Him from the dead. That's the heart of the Christian message.

When the apostles went out day of Pentecost, first sermon after the resurrection, Peter preaches the resurrection. And He preaches that Jesus, whom you killed, is alive. And the people were devastated and 3,000 believed. The evidence was overwhelming. The evidence was overwhelming. Empty tomb, grave clothes, testimony of transformed apostles. No other explanation. And they believed.

In Acts chapter 4, 5,000 believed. And now the whole city of Jerusalem is being overturned. And then they begin to move out and more believe and more believe and more believe. And all over the world, they begin to believe. And the message goes into Samaria and they believe. And then the message goes to a gentile named Cornelius and he believes. And then the message begins to go out of that very land of Palestine and it begins to move with the Apostle Paul and everywhere he goes they believe, and they believe, and they believe, and they believe, and they believe, and they believe, and they believe, and they believe, and they believe. Why did they believe? Because the evidence of the resurrection is so absolutely overwhelming.

I say to you, people who deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ have not studied it, have not studied the account of Scripture. Or two, they rejected it because they refused to accept the implications of it. When you see these liberals who come along and deny the resurrection of Christ, that has absolutely nothing to do with theology. That has nothing to do with their great skills to deal with Scripture. That has to do with their desire to live an immoral, Godless life, to continue in their sin without any accountability to a Holy God that's going to make demands on the way they live. They refuse to accept that and so they will deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a moral issue. It is a moral issue.

The evidence is absolutely overwhelming. Everywhere they went they people believed. It's still going on even today. And you know something? The human heart cries out for that. Nobody wants to look at death as a black end, as eternal nothingness. The human heart hungers for life after death. And it's only offered in Christ. It's a message people want to hear. It doesn't run contrary to the desire of the heart. The heart longs for justice. The heart longs for a better world, a better life, equity, fairness, hope, the elimination of sin and pain. The human heart longs for that.

In World War I, they found a body of an unknown soldier. And in his pocket was a poem he had written. "If it be all for naught, for nothingness, at last, why does God make the world so fair? Why spill this golden splendor out across the western hills and light the silver lamp of eve? Why give me eyes to see and soul to love so strong and deep? Then with a pang, this brightness stabs me through and wakes within rebellious voice to cry against all death? Why set this hunger for eternity to gnaw my heartstrings through if death ends all? If death ends all then evil must be good, wrong must be right and beauty, ugliness. God is a Judas who betrays his Son and with a kiss, damns all the world to hell if Christ does not rise."

The human heart screams that there must be a resurrection. All this can't be meaningless. And there is, and I believe and you believe and people in the world have been believing ever since the message was preached. And there's an old gospel song we have sung through the years. "I serve a risen Savior. He's in the world today. I know that He is living no matter what men say. I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer. And just the time I need Him, He's always near. He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today. He walks with me, He talks with me along life's narrow way. He lives, He lives, salvation to impart. And if you ask me how I know He lives, He lives within my heart."

Faith. Belief. The testimony to the risen Christ given by believers is added to the testimony of the apostles, the testimony of the angels, the testimony of the Holy Spirit, the testimony of Christ Himself. There's a final testimony; the last line. And that's a testimony of God the Father taken up in glory. That's the climax of the hymn.

This refers, in part, to His ascension in Acts 1:9 to 11. It says He was taken up to heaven in clouds. But it's not so much just looking at his ascension as an event. It really is looking at Hebrews -- the concept in Hebrews. Where it says when He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

It's looking at the fact that God, in Philippians 2, has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow.

It's looking at Hebrews chapter 2, which talks about the fact that Jesus Christ has been exalted and lifted up to the right hand of God the Father. And it says He is crowned with glory and honor.

It looks at the thought of Hebrews chapter 8 verse 1 which says He has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens.

Chapter 12 of Hebrews verse 2, Jesus the author, perfecter of our faith, sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. See, it's picturing the fact that God exalted Him. And God exalted Him because His work was perfect. So God says, "Yes, this is the mystery of Godliness. Great is Jesus Christ. Great is Jesus Christ. I, Holy God the Father, affirm it by exalting Him to my right hand and giving Him the kingdoms of this world. And I, Holy God, am writing my own hymn for all of you to sing to Christ."

This is how it goes, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Sing it now, sing it then and sing it forever." The very heart of Christianity reduced to a hymn -- an Easter hymn. The incarnate life of Christ confirms He is the mystery of Godliness. The resurrection by the Holy Spirit confirms He is the mystery of Godliness. The experience and testimony of holy angels confirms it. The preaching of apostles confirms it. The believing of sinners confirms it. And the exaltation by God confirms it.

And we say it -- say it with me, "Great is the mystery of Godliness." Say it with me, "Great is the mystery of Godliness." Yes, Jesus Christ, who is the heart of our faith, the one to whom we give all praise. Let's pray.

Father, we have been awed by the majesty of this six-line hymn which exalts Christ. That is why we have gathered, to lift Him up. We hear the testimony so powerful amassed to affirm that great confession of all Christians that holiness, Holy God, was revealed in human form in our Lord Jesus Christ. We confess it. We confess it with joy on this resurrection day. Amen.

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