

The Glory of God the Almighty Incarnate
12-19-2021

There are two statements in Scripture we dare not lose in our day, no matter what our personal, cultural, or congregational circumstances may be. The first you have heard before, many times over the last year:

John 17:3 (ESV) *And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*

Knowing God, knowing Him personally, powerfully, faithfully, not as we human beings want to imagine Him through the filter of our own sinful pride and selfishness but as He reveals Himself, this is the fundamental pursuit by which a human being comes into the grace of eternal life. We must know God experientially, intimately, intentionally if death is to have no hold on us and we are to live forever in the presence of His glory.

This experiential, personal knowledge of God which gives eternal life comes through two means: the word of God revealed and the Word of God incarnate. We come to know God through His self-revelation in the Bible and through His self-revelation in Jesus Christ. The power that enables us to see and understand and embrace and love God's self-revelation is the power of the Holy Spirit at work in those whom God chooses to lead to faith.

If, then, we are to know God unto eternal life, it is imperative that we come to know God accurately, as He intends to be known. We have to become devoted students of God. This means becoming disciplined and disciplined students of sound doctrine. Herein lies the second statement of Scripture we should hear with eager ears and embrace with enthusiastic spirit, mind, and will:

Titus 2:1 (ESV) *But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.*

Paul instructs Titus in pastoral ministry and sets this standard for him: "teach what accords with sound doctrine." In his second letter to Pastor Timothy, Paul reminds Timothy of the challenges he will face in ministry in the days to come:

2 Timothy 4:1-5 (ESV) *¹ I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: ² preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. ³ For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. ⁵ As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*

No one has to look that closely or that hard to see that many, even in the church among those who call themselves "Christian," many have abandoned God's self-revelation preferring to make

themselves their own spiritual authority, following a religion and spirituality of their own creation and thus embracing the worst kind of idolatry.

What we need today, what we need for eternity, is a return to the sound doctrine, the accurate understanding of God's self-revelation and its impact for our lives in this day. We intend to address this need in the church and the world in the New Year systematically at Cornerstone, and we'll be saying more about that a little later on. For now, for this season of Advent, and in the coming days, Christmas, we are focusing on understanding God's revelation of Himself in Christ who is the glory of God incarnate, God become man, the glory of Spirit in a physical body.

We've turned to God's own words in Revelation 1:8 to guide us in this Advent reflection.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

We have seen in these words the **eternality** of Christ, the **immanence** of Christ, the **return** of Christ, and this morning, the infinite power, the **omnipotence** of Christ. All that God is, Christ is. If God identifies Himself as the Lord Almighty, the all-powerful One, the omnipotent One, then knowing Christ is all that God is because Jesus is God, then we expect Christ in Whom we have put our faith and confidence to be omnipotent, almighty, as well.

So, what does it mean that God is almighty? What does it mean that God is omnipotent, all-powerful? Simply put it means that God is fully able to do all that He wills to do. A.W. Tozer, in his book *The Knowledge of the Holy*, begins to grasp the omnipotence of God this way. He writes,

"God has power."

Now, we know this. We know that God has power, first of all, because if God were powerless, He wouldn't be God at all. Like an idol, God without power would be meaningless. We know God has power because He demonstrated that power in creation. He demonstrates that power not only in creating creation but in daily sustaining the creation that He created.

We see God's power in His handiwork, in His sovereign rule over creation, in the daily providence of His provision. We see God's power in salvation, in His ability to move a lost sinner from selfish pursuits to surrendered worship and obedience. We know God has power. But Tozer continues,

Since God is also infinite, whatever He has must be without limit; therefore God has limitless power. He is omnipotent.

That's what omnipotent means. That's what it means for God to be Almighty. He has limitless power.

Let's go back to Tozer.

We see further that God the self-existent Creator is the source of all the power there is, and since a source must be at least equal to anything that emanates from it, God is of necessity equal to all the power there is, and that is to say again that He is omnipotent," all-mighty.

Do you know what this means, that God is omnipotent, the self-sustaining source of all power that exists? "Since God has at His command all the power in the universe, the LORD God omnipotent can do anything as easily as anything else. All His acts are done without effort. He expends no energy that must be replenished. His self-sufficiency makes it unnecessary for Him to look outside of Himself for a renewal of strength. All the power to do all that he will to do lies in undiminished fullness in His own infinite being." God is not a battery in need of regular recharging. God is Himself the essence of all power that exists.

There is nothing that can stop God from doing anything and everything He wills! Because He is infinite, limitless power, God may give power to whomever He chooses with surrendering the least iota of His power. He gives but He does not give away.

No lie of the enemy regarding the power of evil ever measures up to the all surpassing power of the Almighty. No grandiose boasting of arrogant and sinful humanity praising the achievements of our own efforts can come close to approximating the full measure of the ability, capacity, or power of God! No discouragement or frustration, no obstacle or hindrance, no defeat or downfall can pose a real obstruction to the power of God to accomplish fully all that He will in time and space. All the power that exists in a finite, created world cannot add up to the infinite, limitless, unbounded, unhindered, unobstructed, unending, undiminished power of the omnipotent God, the Lord Almighty.

Keep in mind, "omnipotence is not a name given to the sum of all power, but an attribute of the personal God whom we Christians believe to be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and of all who believe on Him to life eternal." We can name Hoover Dam as a source of great power but that does not make a concrete obstruction that harnesses the flow of water and translates it into electrical energy anything more than a feat of intellectual and mechanical engineering. To name God the Almighty is not simply to call Him the greatest dynamo that exists. To name God the Almighty is to embrace an attribute of His divine personhood. It is a point to which we human persons can and must relate to our personal Creator.

When a cell in the body is to gain nutrients carried to it in the blood stream, cells must have receptors, molecules to which other nutrient molecules attach and are absorbed into the cell. God's attributes function toward us like receptors, specially identified components of God's being that allow finite human creation to connect with the infinite Spirit who is God.

When we hear in faith that God is the Almighty, that He is by nature and action limitless in His ability to accomplish His will, we take comfort in Him and we seek His will for us, for that will that we seek of His is guaranteed. What is not His will comes with no such guarantee, but all that God wills comes with the guarantee of His ability to bring it to pass.

Charles Hodge wrote of God's omnipotence. He said, "The simple idea of the omnipotence of God, that He can do without effort, and by a volition, whatever He wills, is the highest conceivable idea of power, and is that which is clearly presented in the Scriptures."

God's omnipotence, His "almightiness," is His unlimited authority and ability to bring into existence or cause to happen what He wills. We see evidence of God's limitless power throughout the pages of Scripture. You cannot miss His power as He speaks and where once there was a formless and dark void there comes light, and life, and abundance, and promise, and blessing.

You see the limitless power of God to accomplish His will when barren 90 year old Sara and her 99 year old husband have a child in fulfilment of God's promise. You see the omnipotence of God when God through Joseph who is sold into slavery by his brothers, saves those same brothers from starvation and famine decades later, turning what they meant for evil into the good God always intended.

You see the omnipotence of God in the ten plagues through which God set His people free from slavery in Egypt, in the parting of the Red Sea, in the provision of manna and quail, and clothes that did not wear out in the desert. You see the power of God when He condenses all that He is into a baby and lays Himself in a manger in preparation for a cross and death for us all. You see the unlimited power of God when the death of one infinitely innocent perfect God-man suffices for all the sin of the whole world.

The English word, *Almighty*, is used 56 times in the Bible. Never once is it used of anyone but God. He alone is omnipotent. God alone is all-powerful. The word for our fourth Advent candle this year is *pantokrator*. It means "all powerful." It is used 10 times in the New Testament. Paul uses it once in 2 Corinthians at the end of a verse he is quoting from the Old Testament. The other nine occasions where the word for "almighty" is used are in the Revelation.

In Revelation 1:8, "Almighty" is God's self-identification.

In Revelation 4:8, "almighty is the testimony of angels.

In Revelation 11:17, "Almighty" is the praise of the people of God.

In Revelation 15:3, "Almighty" is the song of the triumphant church.

In Revelation 16:7, "Almighty" is the affirmation of sacrifice and worship.

In Revelation 16:14, "Almighty" is evil's only expectation!

In Revelation 19:6, "Almighty" is the exaltation of the redeemed.

In Revelation 19:15, "Almighty" is the righteousness of wrath against the nations.

And in Revelation 21:22, "Almighty" is the eternal security and future home of all who put their faith in and entrust their lives to the Savior, Jesus Christ!

There are things that God cannot do. He cannot will or do anything that would deny His own character. God cannot lie. He cannot deceive. He cannot make a promise He has no intention of keeping. He cannot offer you forgiveness He doesn't mean to bestow. God cannot deny Himself. He cannot mislead you into believing He is other than He is. God cannot be tempted with evil, nor does He tempt anyone with evil. He cannot cease to exist, or cease to be God, and act in any

way that is not absolutely consistent with any of His attributes.

Millard Erickson points out that there are three elements that must be present if we are going to accomplish an ethical action. He says,

There must be knowledge of what is to be done, the will to do it, and the ability to do what we have purposed

Now, we sometimes fail to have all three elements at the same time. We may not know what to do. We may not have the will to do what is required. We may not have the ability to do what we know and want to do. But not so with God. Three factors of God's nature always come together to produce the correct action: he is infinitely wise, so that He always knows what to do; He is infinitely good, and thus He always chooses to do the right; He is infinitely powerful, and therefore is infinitely capable of doing what He wills to do.

Are you wondering, given your personal history in sin and rebellion if God has the power to forgive you? He had the power to plan for your forgiveness, to become man and die for your forgiveness, to accept as an act of will the work of Christ on the cross for your forgiveness. God has the will and the want and has done the work, the power for forgiveness is all there.

Are you wondering whether God has the power to change your life? Can He make you a new creation? Can He give you a new hope and keep you on a new path? Jesus said, "Behold, I make all things new." What He wills He has the power to do. The most stubborn human nature must yield to the omnipotence of our kind and loving God incarnate in Jesus Christ our Savior.

Can He lead you? He can! Can He help you? He can! Can He "restore the years the locusts have eaten? He can! Can He deliver you from slavery to fear of death? He can. Can He release you from bondage to addiction? The Almighty can! Jesus can! The Incarnate Glory of the Lord Almighty can?

Can He rebuild His church? He can! Can He turn a pandemic meant for evil into a blessing for good? He can! There is nothing God the Almighty wills that He cannot do. So, Cornerstone, in this Advent season, let us seek together the will of God, for what He wills He will do because He can do all He wills.

Let's pray.