

1 TIMOTHY 6:13-16

INTRODUCTION

Now Paul gave a couple of massive incentives to Timothy to help him be a man of God. He told Timothy that God was watching him and that He was powerful and that Jesus Christ is his great example. Jesus Christ is an example of a man of God who remained faithful to his calling and fought the good fight of the faith in spite of strong opposition (v12-13). It seems that when Paul focuses upon God and Christ he then can't help himself from extolling and praising God for his greatness. This is what he does here with this wonderful doxology, but in doing so I'm sure Paul wanted to encourage Timothy to remember that as he fights this battle (v 12) he has God on his side and his God is invincible.

It is equally important for us that if we are going to be men and women of God who will flee from temptation and sin and pursue righteousness and fight the good fight and remain faithful to God in spite of opposition then we must keep a clear picture in our minds of the being and greatness of God. Now notice the terms that are used here.

1. GOD IS POWERFUL (v 13)

Paul reminds Timothy of the power of God by reminding him that He is the One who gives life to everything. You have to be powerful to be able to do that. He is the creator of everything. He is the one who sustains and protects life and He is the One who raises the dead to life, as an examination of the life of Jesus will clearly show us (Luke 7:11-17 & John 11:1-16). It is this assurance that God is powerful and gives life to everything that enabled the Lord Jesus to make his good confession before Pilate with great confidence.

Pilate had the power or so it seemed to put Jesus to death but Jesus could make his good confession knowing that even if he was sentenced to death and even if he did die he would be raised to life again because God is powerful and gives life to everything. This was the sort of assurance that young Timothy needed, if he was going to be able to stand up against the false teachers and if he was going to maintain the fight for the faith then He needed to know that God is powerful and that power is demonstrated in the fact that he gives life to everything.

Therefore who can harm Timothy? No one can, unless the all-powerful God allows it to happen for his own purposes. We need that same encouragement to go on and maintain the faith. In days when it seems that the only churches that are growing are the ones that teach doctrines that are contrary to the truth, then it is so easy to be won over to other more appealing doctrines. We need to know that our God is powerful and gives life to everything and therefore that is true of spiritual as well as physical life.

We cannot give spiritual life to anyone no matter what method or technique we use, we simply must maintain the true faith and seek God who is powerful to bring true spiritual life into dead souls. We need to resist doctrines that put the emphasis for spiritual life upon man or methods or techniques or systems. To go down that line is to desert the faith and is to fail to acknowledge that God is powerful

2. GOD IS KING OF KINGS (v 15)

Every word of this verse is full of meaning and exalts God to his rightful place as the transcendent and incomparable great God. He is described as the blessed God and the word that is used here is not the normal word for blessed but it basically means to be happy in a very full and rich sense. Wayne Grudem in his systematic theology defines blessedness like this. "God's blessedness means that God delights fully in himself and in all that reflects his character." God's blessedness is connected to his own person as the focus of all that is worthy of joy and delight. God is perfectly

happy, content and fulfilled in himself and God's blessedness describes his lack of unhappiness, frustration and anxiety. God is content He is at peace, satisfied and perfectly joyful.

While it is true that He is pleased with some things and not pleased with other things nothing actually can or does alter his heavenly blessedness. But how does this truth about God motivate Timothy and hopefully us to be men and women of God? Well Timothy reflects God's blessedness when he does what pleases him. God is happy and content and pleased with righteousness and therefore when Timothy lives righteously he is reflecting something of God's blessedness. God is pleased when the true faith is maintained and again doing so is reflecting God's blessedness within our world.

God is not only blessed but He is also the only Ruler, the King of all Kings and the Lord of all Lords. The word 'Ruler' has been translated as sovereign in some versions and the root word means 'power' and the idea here is that God is the only Ruler because He rules with power. He has absolute power to put into effect His rule.

He is the only Ruler, O there are many others who actually think they are rulers and there are many other gods that are worshipped as rulers but actually there is only one Ruler for only God has the power to do whatever He pleases, He has no rivals whatsoever. Now this is again a great assurance to Timothy as he battles for the truth at Ephesus. Ephesus was a city that had Emperor worship at its heart, The Emperor was the god of the society in which Timothy lived, but Timothy is assured that not even the power of the Emperor was a match for God, for God was the King over all Emperors. The church at Ephesus was facing increasing pressure to follow false doctrines, the temptation was great and the task of standing against the tide was difficult but what an assurance for the church to know that their God was absolutely and totally in control. He had power to do whatever He wished and desired.

Timothy and the church can be at peace no matter what pressure they face or what trials they go through for their God is a God totally at peace with himself and all those who are united to him through Christ can also share this peace. Paul spoke of having learnt to be content in every situation, (Philippians 4:11) such things are only possible because God is blessed and allows us to share in his blessedness through Christ.

Why should Timothy or the church be anxious as they contend for the faith, God is King, He is never caught by surprise by the attacks of his enemies he is never frustrated in bringing his plans to pass, he is in total control therefore Timothy and the church should not to worry, or compromise or fudge or manipulate to achieve their goals. Timothy and the church knew that their tasks of defending the faith did not depend upon their wisdom or skill of argument or their ability to communicate, for God is King. The application for us today is an important one.

One reason I think why many churches are prepared to give up good doctrine for other more convenient doctrines is because of what appears to be the relative lack of success in gospel preaching today. It is true that few people seem to get saved and therefore some churches believing that they should see people being saved move away from the preaching of the gospel to other more manipulative methods in order to get results.

Is our God not the only Ruler, Is He not able to convert people without us having to water down his message or use some other manipulative method to get converts? When we don't see conversions then it is right to ask why? Is the church under the judgment of God, if so then we need to repent and then maybe God by his grace and mercy might visit us again with salvation blessing. Repent yes but do not go after another gospel, for our God is king of kings and Lord of Lords. He is all-powerful and nothing can hinder his plans or thwart his purposes.

3. GOD IS ETERNAL & HOLY (v 16)

God alone is immortal that phrase “alone” describes God’s eternal nature. The term literally read ‘who alone possesses immortality’ God is inherently immortal. God has created Angels and men and they will exist forever but their immortality comes from God, mankind is only immortal because that is how God in his wisdom has decided it to be. If God had of decided that death was the end then that would have been the end but we are immortal because God has decreed it that way. The word that is translated ‘immortal’ means deathless, God has an unending quality of life, he is incapable of dying, and He always has been and always will be. The encouragement that this is to Timothy and the church is that God is not affected by world affairs. He is eternal and is timeless, no matter what happens to Timothy or the church in their short time on earth their God is not affected by the frustrations and restraints of time. He is not affected by the limitations of ageing which affects us all for He is immortal.

But God is also holy. In this age of familiarity with God it is well to remember that he is Holy. While it is true that God is a loving heavenly Father to his children he also lives in unapproachable light. This is a way of saying that God is transcendent he is totally beyond us. He is as Martin Luther called him ‘the hidden God.’ Had God chosen not to reveal himself then we simply would have no knowledge of Him and we would not be able to know him personally. The imagery of God as light is a very fitting one for it expresses his purity. He is totally separate from sin and therefore because man is a sinner God is totally inaccessible to mankind. He lives in an atmosphere of absolute purity far too holy for mortals like us ever to enter.

How can mankind then come into God’s presence? Well you know the answer to that; it is only through Jesus Christ. Jesus came into this world in order to pay the price for our sin; He came to bridge the gap created by the holiness of God between God and man. Jesus being God is pure and spotless but he took upon himself the impurity of his people and the righteousness and purity of Christ is transferred to those who come to Christ and trust in him as their sin bearer and Saviour.

Therefore we who are Christians can approach God in all his holiness because we are made holy in God’s sight through Christ. Of course we still sin but the calls in the New Testament to be holy because God is holy (1 Peter 1:16) is a call to put into practice our new nature which has been given to us by God as a result of our acceptance of Christ’s work on the cross on our behalf.

We should be increasingly becoming more and more holy in our living so that others will see something of the holiness of God in us. Now the encouragement that this is to Timothy and the church is that God never makes mistakes because he is holy he always acts in holy ways he always does the right thing. He never makes wrong judgements or acts out of malice or revenge. His holiness of course does mean that although in this world it seems as if these false teachers get away with their sin and they may be allowed to continue to cause havoc in the church, one day they will face God and will be judged rightly by Him. That judgment will occur because they will be measured against the holiness of God.

It is no wonder that this doxology ends with a refrain of praise to God who alone is worthy of honour and praise. Nothing motivates a man of God more than a true understanding of the greatness of our God. If we are going to be the people of God that we are suppose to be then we need again and again to ponder the greatness of our God and live out the truths of His greatness within this pagan world of ours. I trust that God will warm our hearts and open our eyes to catch a fresh glimpse of the greatness of our God today.

Amen