

Giving the Lord the Honor Due him

1 Timothy 1:17

Text Introduction: Paul concludes the first major portion of his epistle with a word of praise in which he ascribes honor and glory to God because of his worthiness and self-revelation for exercising certain of his attributes in his wise governing of creation.

In short, Paul offers a doxology (“word of praise”) praising God for certain attributes and for his wise government of creation. This praise is connected to what has gone on before, which gives us a clue to the meaning and significance of this doxology.

Sermon Introduction: One thing God and Britney Spears have in common: they’ve both gotten a lot of bad press in the last few years. Britney has gotten bad press for her bad behavior (and for forgetting to wear underwear!) while God has gotten bad press in the form of several books written denying his existence and describing how belief in him “poisons everything.”

Give God some good press! [Do this because...]

I. God rules and he rules in wisdom.

A. God is referred to as King in the OT and rules through Christ in the NT.

1. This phrase can mean “eternal king” or “king of the ages.”
2. **Jeremiah 10:10** But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth will tremble, And the nations will not be able to endure His indignation.
3. God is an everlasting king, but he is also a king who rules in every age, past present and future.

B. God rules in wisdom.

1. When the KJV says, “The only wise,” it is not saying that God is the only one with wisdom, only that we must recognize that God’s wisdom surpasses our own. God renders our wisdom foolish and even his foolishness is wiser than our wisdom.
2. God’s wisdom seems foolishness to us because we see it through the foolishness of our own wisdom which is insufficient (cf. **1 Cor. 1:18-21**).
3. **Romans 11:33** Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out!

II. God guarantees his word and lives forever to make certain it comes to pass.

A. God is “eternal” which signifies that he lives in every age and he is “immortal” which signifies that he is “not perishable,” that is, not subject to destruction; he is “immortal, imperishable, and incorruptible.”

1. These attributes not only signify that he lives forever, but also that he does not change. (cf. **Romans 1:23** “...the glory of the incorruptible God...”)
2. This means not only that his character does not change, but also that his promises do not change nor does he change in his commitment to those promises.

B. God’s covenant promises are grounded in his eternal nature.

1. **Hebrews 6:13-14** For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, ¹⁴ saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.”
2. **Romans 16:25-27** Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began ²⁶ but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith -- ²⁷ to God, alone wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

III. God works but he works unseen.

- A. The word “invisible” does not simply mean that one is unable to see him with the eyes, but carries the idea of unseen.
1. **1 Timothy 6:15-16** the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom *be* honor and everlasting power. Amen.
 2. This does not mean that we cannot perceive him, though many times his workings are hidden even to those of faith.
 3. **Job 23:8-11** "Look, I go forward, but He is not *there*, And backward, but I cannot perceive Him; ⁹ When He works on the left hand, I cannot behold *Him*; When He turns to the right hand, I cannot see *Him*. ¹⁰ But He knows the way that I take; *When* He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold. ¹¹ My foot has held fast to His steps; I have kept His way and not turned aside.
- B. God manifests himself as he chooses to whom he chooses and when he chooses.
1. **John 14:21** He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."
 2. God has revealed himself perfectly in Jesus Christ; the Incarnation is how the unseen God is seen by us.
 3. **John 1:14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

IV. God is worthy of honor because of who he is and what he has done.

- A. God is the “only God”; he alone is God and he is the only true God.
1. **Psalms 115:1-8** speaks of the idols of the heathen who have mouths but cannot speak, eyes but cannot see, ears but do not hear, hands but do not handle, and feet but they do not walk nor do they mumble through their throat.
 2. It is interesting that here God is pictured as having none of those things and yet he speaks, he sees, he works, and he rules.
 3. That is because he is the one true God; there is no other.
- B. The word “honor” refers to the respect and honor that one is worth or has earned.
1. This word (in verbal form) is used in the phrase “honor your parents,” a phrase which means to give them the respect that is due them because they are your parents.
 2. With reference to God, it talks refers to our giving God what is due him in terms of respect, worship, and praise, such that we ascribe honor to him.
 3. We not only recognize these things about him, we acknowledge that such things are true of him and we live as if they are true. We also speak these things about him so that h is glorified before others.

V. God has revealed himself and his glory through Jesus Christ to save us from our sin and its judgment.

- A. The “glory” of God is the manifestation of his person; the revelation of himself. When used like this in a doxology, it refers to one of two desires:
1. That God continue to display his glory and reveal himself
 2. That praise continually be given in response to God’s revelation of himself.
- B. This is not asking for something to be given to God, it is an acknowledgement of something already present. It is active acknowledgement and extolling and proclaiming what is there.
1. This is a statement expressing the way things are: God is full of glory.
 2. We must acknowledge this to God in worship, prayer, and praise and proclaim it to the world in preaching, testimony, proclamation, and evangelism.
- C. The “amen” is not only Paul’s affirmation of what he has written, it is a call for readers to acknowledge, affirm, and participate in this praise as well.

Conclusion: Theology leads to worship and service (or it should).

Many people say things like, “I don’t need to know about theology, just tell me what to do.” Well, the Bible is full of theology because it is a book not just about how to live your life, but about God, it reveals God (I might also point out that it contains theological “jargon,” words like justification, sanctification, revelation, etc.).

C. S. Lewis addressed those people who simply want to know, “How will Christianity improve my life?” by writing,

Frankly, I find it hard to sympathize with this state of mind. ... Foolish preachers, by always telling you how much Christianity will help you and how good it is for society, have actually led you to forget that Christianity is not a patent medicine. If Christianity is untrue then no honest man will want to believe it, however helpful it might be; if it is true, every honest person will want to believe it, even if it gives him no help at all.

Let this theological statement do as it intends: drive you to prayer and worship. Then let that prayer and worship live in you as you serve and evangelize and walk in faith.