

Timothy... Keep the Charge

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1 Timothy 6, would you turn there, please. We're coming to this end of the book and, um, we have something of a doxology here. We'll look at that in a moment, but I just read quickly and we'll leave a lot of things out, but here Paul is talk about, um, well, Beautifying the Bride is the title we've given to the exposition of this book and Paul is instructing Timothy how to get things in order, the fashion and the function of the church so that she might be the beautiful bride of Christ, that we might be the beautiful bride of Christ that God has called us to be and all the different things he's mentioned here and you have to remind yourself that this is a letter. It was an actual letter, a personal letter written to a person, Paul to Timothy, but it is inspired truth for all ages. Uh, but you, you must never lose the fact that it's a letter so it flows like a letter. In other words, it's not neatly organized necessarily into certain compartments. It's like you would do if you were writing a letter to a beloved one, you'd just talk about different things as they came to your heart and mind.

So, uh, he talks about a lot of things. He's giving lots of instructions to Timothy about false teacher and false teachers, um, he talks about prayer in the church, things we should pray for and, uh, I, I really, the context of the next one, I think, really is important in view of Timothy's natural timidity, that he's probably carries more insecurity than the average guy because he had women in the church who were getting out of line who decided they knew what was right, they knew how to run things and do things, and so Paul addresses how to keep the ladies where they need to be, and by the way, in an immature church, women will control it and run it if they're allowed to. Now notice I said immature. Uh, women are mostly led more than men, that means they have strengths men don't have but they have weaknesses in contrast to men also and, uh, I've seen it over and over and over again where carnal, Paul calls them silly women, cause trouble.

Well, he, anyway, Paul tells Timothy, "Make sure you get all of that back in line." Then he deals with leadership, he deals with pastor elders, and he deals with deacons, and this great strong emphasis on character trait and true calling is brought out there. Uh, he talks about the centerpiece of God's glory is the local church. Uh, chapter 4, he, he, he rebukes, uh, false teaching again. Uh, last part of chapter 4, he deals with worldliness versus godliness and how godliness is of greatest profit, of course. Um, he deals with genders in the church, how you deal with older men and younger men, older women and younger women in the church. Then he deals with widows particularly and how to care for them.

Um, he deals again with women and some of the problems they can cause sometimes. Then he deals with honoring pastors. He deals with slaves. Uh, first part of verse 6 he deals with the propensity of some to try to cause factions and divisions, "We have our group and we're going in this direction. Well, we have our group, we're going in that direction." No, you're not, you're going the way the elders direct under the word of God. That's the only way to keep unity in the church. And then now we come to this final aspect and he deals with riches and wealth and he'll hit on that again, but now we come to this, uh, last third of, uh, chapter 6 and he's talked about, "Timothy, don't quit." And now we come to verses 12 through 16 of chapter 6.

Let's read it together. Um, I'm sorry, 13 through 16, not 12. I've got it both ways in my notes, 13 through 16. Paul writes,

13 I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, 14 that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus 15 which He will bring about at the proper time--He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, to whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.

Now I believe verses 13 through 16 all contain this extolling and exaltation of God. We call it a doxology. It's a statement of praise to God. But it's interesting, it's a doxology with a personal charge to Timothy woven in there and so that's why it's difficult for me to unpack and if I should unpack it. So it's a doxology with a charge woven in there, and it's a charge to Timothy, the man who's functioning as pastor of the local church at Ephesus but it's a charge to all pastors today and to all Christians today. It applies to all of us.

So I, I think we would be good to keep in mind when we see a doxology like this in Scripture there's, uh, three things about it. 1. It pleases God. It's good to praise God according to who he is. Matter of fact, it's not only good, it's essential. It pleases God to extol him for who he is. Secondly, it motivates Timothy or pastors. Pastors need to be reminded the awesomeness, the wonder, the glory of this one they serve, the King of kings and Lord of lords. And thirdly, not only does it please God and that it motivates Timothy and pastors, it motivates the rest of us. And so as we go through this together, I want to remind you that, uh, we're about something worth giving our all to. We're about something bigger than the ends of this world and the ends of time and that's what a doxology does, it takes us out of this temporal, fallen, corrupted realm, it's not gonna last, and helps us to wrap our hearts and minds around and to treasure again the glorious eternal God that we belong to and to whom we serve.

Now I., well, by the way, I've entitled this, "Timothy... Keep the Charge." Timothy, keep the charge. Alright, I., is the charge. Let's look at the charge and we're gonna have to pull this out of two different verses because, in my opinion, he weaves the doxology around the charge. Now look at it if you, if you will in verse 13, "I charge you in the presence of

God," now jump down to verse 14, "that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach." Now that's basically the charge, "I charge you that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach."

Now the word "charge" in verse 13 has the idea of a command. He could've said, "I command you." Uh, he could've said, "I order you." But I agree with the New American Standard translators that "charge" is just really fitting in this context, "I charge you," because he's writing to a person he has authority over. He could command him to do anything but the closeness maybe "charge" is better, it has all the same emphasis without some of the maybe coldness of "command" or "order." And again, the charge begins in 13, it continues on in verse 14.

Then he says, "I charge you that you keep the," and here's an interesting word, "the commandment." Interesting. Paul says, Paul says, "You, you keep the commandment," and be honest, um, all the scholars and translators struggle with that right there because it has varying meanings depending on the context, at least that word does in which it is used. One thing he's not saying here, "I'm not saying to you, keep this new law I've given you." Paul is not saying to Timothy, "Okay, you have the 10 Commandments, now I'm gonna give you number 11. It's a new one." It's not an add-on to the law. Some of our good friends are in so-called Christian denominations that teach that the New Testament is just a new set of laws you keep and you gotta keep this law and you gotta keep this law and you've gotta be baptized, and you've gotta do this and you've gotta do that, and, and you check off those 8 or 10 things and you're pretty comfortable you might get to heaven one day. That's not what he's saying. He's not saying there's a new law or a new list of laws or a new commandment whereby you have to observe to get into heaven. Matter of fact, W. E. Vines in his, um, commentary on this said it's really the idea of a religious precept. "Timothy, I've given you a new concept, if you will, a new precept that overrules everything else."

Just a little background on this and, boy, I, I don't want you to get too tangled up here, okay? So promise me when I mention this, you don't get too tangled up on it, alright? Mark 10:5, Jesus is dealing with divorce and, um, Moses had allowed the Hebrew men, the Israeli men to divorce their wives if they would, if he would, if they would give their wives a certificate of divorce and they're asking Jesus about that. He said, "You gotta understand something, that's not the way God designed it to be. That's not the way it's supposed to work but because of you Israelite men, you're so carnal, you're so sinful, you're so immoral that you've so abandoned God's original law of one man and one woman for one lifetime, unless there's death of one of the two, that Moses allowed this certificate of divorce to prevent still greater evil." In other words, women in this day left without a husband were really destitute. I mean, many of them would perish. And if they were just left out there and, and not given a certificate of divorce, no other man could take them. That would be adultery in their definitions. But my point being Moses gave them a new precept. It wasn't an absolute law, it's not the new way it's supposed to work but in a fallen wicked world sometimes the dominoes of evil fall so far you have to fix something in a way that might not be God's best but it's just where we find ourselves.

Thank God we're under grace, amen, because the, the idea of the original intent has been marred and marred and marred again.

So anyway, here's my point: when, when, when, when Jesus said, "This is why Moses gave you this commandment," Jesus was not saying, "This is a new part of Canon. This is absolute moral law now." That's not what he's saying. He means, "This is a new precept in the present context to prevent this worse evil that's happening to these ladies because you committed evil against them." It's not, maybe not a good parallel but, um, the idea of killing someone in self-defense, that's not God's idea. God does not want us killing people, but in an evil world, in certain circumstances you may have to do so to protect yourself or your family. So in a fallen world, it doesn't all fall into perfect, precise black and white all the time. There is some gray here and there.

Well, you've already gone too far on this. You're thinking too much about it. All I wanted to point out was the word "commandment" doesn't mean a new law every time, it means a new viewpoint, a new precept. Well, what's this new precept he's talking about? Well, the word "commandment" Paul uses in 1 Timothy 6, uh, verse 13 means, "I've given you this new idea, this new gospel precept." That's the real, true, final precept, the gospel truth. You see, the gospel now that it has come to us, the gospel fulfills all law and all commandments and it supersedes all law and all commandments. "So Timothy, keep that commandment, the new gospel truth. That's what you must embrace. That's what you must defend." That's what you must hold to no matter what because everything and I, I love the phrase in the, in the New American Standard in the book of Hebrews where it talks about the great ceremonial laws of Israel and then the writer to the, the Hebrew Christians says, "And now those are obsolete." Not that they were wrong, they've been fulfilled in Christ and in the gospel. So now we no longer look to commandments, we no longer look to laws to find our forgiveness, our cleansing, and to find a right standing before the holy God. No, that now comes and it's only ever come through the gospel. "So Timothy, hold this. Hold to the gospel truth. I charge you that you keep the commandment, you keep this gospel truth."

Now he adds strength to it in verse 14. This is continuing of the charge, "Not only hold to the gospel truth, this new precept I've taught you," he says also in verse 14, "and that you do it without stain or reproach." Now that adds strength to the command and, um, again, this, this is a word, the word "stain" can be translated "spot," has, has varying shades of meaning depending on the context in the New Testament. I'm convinced here, like in many places, it doesn't mean you just got a spot on you as you were traveling along, it means a set-in stain. Now you ladies know very well the difference between a little splatter that will come off and a ground-in stain. There's a real difference and I think that's what he's talking about here. Uh, he's talking about gospel doctrine and gospel truth, you must hold to it and never veer from it. That makes perfect sense because he's talked so much about the false teachers and the false teachings that are constantly coming into the church. "So Timothy, you don't be misled by any of this. I mean, don't walk over there and step in it to where your message and the doctrine you hold now becomes soiled."

Actually it's the idea of it's now defiled because, by the way, all good gospel teachers and all good gospel preachers can look back over their ministries and find some spots here and there. Uh, not long ago the esteemed Dr. John MacArthur, author, the author of the MacArthur Study Bible and many books that most of us are familiar with, he had explained some things in the exposition of some sermons that he probably shouldn't explained exactly that way and it was early in his ministry and as time goes on, I mean, the, the, the balance of his work clearly shows he's not within a million miles of heresy or false teacher, but some people dug up those old old notes and found a spot or two and tried to say he's a false teacher. That's ridiculous. Please don't go dig up some of my earliest expositions. They're dalmatian in style, there are spots on them. And as you grow and as you learn, you clean those things up but that's not a set-in ground-in stain, it was a spot along the way and that's the idea that, um, Paul told Timothy when he talked about elders who sin. He said the elder in the Greek literally means this who continues in sin. Not a spot. If all the elders couldn't sin, we'd all need to resign right now. But anyone who has this pattern of life that's obvious he has a defilement or a stain, he's to be dealt with. He said, "Reprove that person in the presence of all that the rest may be fearful of sinning."

He said, "Now Timothy, do this. I command you, hold to the gospel truth, keep sound doctrine," as Jude said, "the doctrine," listen, "that was once," listen to me, "once for all delivered to the saints." That means, brothers and sisters, the gospel has not changed and cannot change. All these guys are to come up with a new twist, sometimes they just say, "We're just, we're just playing with the methods a little bit," but methods matter when the message is the gospel. You gotta be careful that we don't change what God's established once and for all as the only thing that will save men's souls. "So Timothy, hold to that and do it without tripping up and falling into some of these traps of these false teachers whereby you might be embracing or teaching something that is defiled or stained in its nature. Stay true to the pure gospel."

And then he uses the word "reproach, without stain or reproach." We've seen this word before. It's the same word that was used for the qualification of an elder, that he had to be a man above reproach. It doesn't mean a man above sin, there's no such a man except for Jesus Christ, but it means he does not have a pattern of behavior that's observable to all that clearly is obviously out of line with purity and honoring of God. Now I don't think in any way this particular text is talking about Timothy's personal moral character. Paul has dealt with that already and he's dealt with it in, in, in some extent, uh, but in the context here, I think he's only talking about the gospel and gospel integrity and purity here, excuse me, here.

Now here's what I would like to say, though, concerning personal moral character and sound doctrine. It seems like you'll find throughout the Scriptures and it's certainly been my experience, that personal immorality and false doctrine seem to always run together. When you find guys who begin to veer off from the gospel truth, they begin to flirt and embrace over and over new trends, new ways, new styles, so much so that it begins to flavor what the gospel even is, it's not unusual to find moral failure in their lives. I'm not saying that is an absolute, I'm just saying those go together and, matter of fact, Paul

points that out and the New Testament says that in many different ways, that these men are involved in immoralities and their doctrine of Christ and the gospel is marred and defiled also.

So they kinda go together, personal immorality and false doctrine, and, um, also, see, since he's already dealt with that aspect very thoroughly, I don't think it's being talked about at this point, and he's talking about the commandment. That'd be the third thing: the gospel truth. Alright, now the main thing Timothy is to keep the main thing, the main thing. "I charge you, let not any stain or reproach be on you in this race, Timothy, holding strong to the gospel truth," as Jude said, "which was once for all delivered to the saints." Is it not amazing that in this day that generally speaking Baptists and Evangelicals are drawn to those teachers who are clever and creative and relevant to the world instead of being drawn to those preachers who are rigidly committed to maintain gospel truth. It's an indictment on the shallowness and worldliness and carnality of the church today.

Well, that is the charge, now we're gonna go to point 2 which I struggle with the wording here. Let me say that upfront but I'm calling it the doxology behind the charge. I struggle because a doxology is worthy of being articulated and proclaimed and gloried over all by itself just with no add of, um, a, a, a teaching to it. Just the glory of God and a man may take this text and just pull out these glorious statements of God and just preach on that and I'm not saying that's wrong but that's not the context. In the, in the midst of this glorious doxology, he weaves in here, "Now Timothy, keep the charge." So what's Paul's point? Paul's point is, "When you consider our God as I extol Him in this doxology, this statement of praise, then, Timothy, that outta motivate you to stay faithful to the end." That's what he's saying, "Stay faithful to this God because look how glorious He is."

Now I'm just gonna unpack this a phrase at a time and we'll look at it together as behind the charge that he's given Timothy is this glorious doxology that extols our God and therefore motivates Timothy and us to stay the course for the glory of God. Verse 13 he says, "I charge you in the presence of God," and here's the first phrase, "who gives life to all things. Timothy, do you not realize you serve the God who's the source of life?" But the scholars tell us the older manuscripts use a little bit different phrase here that means he's the God who preserves the life of all things. He's not only the giver of life, he's the preserver of life. He has the power in his hands to hold life or to take life away. "It is God's present preserving power that keeps you, Timothy, and that strengthens you." I believe that's where he's going.

He's the one who gave life to the first creation. Remind yourselves God's involved in two creations: he has the first creation when he made the heavens and the earth and he made Adam and Eve and placed them on the earth in the garden of Eden, and so the first creation is centered around the first Adam who sinned and fell, and then the Bible talks about a new creation God is doing which centers around the second Adam, Jesus Christ, and that one's just now getting going. God's right now beginning to build that second creation by saving those who believe in Jesus Christ and they're added to the new family that now exists in local churches and one day in the eternal state all that will be left is the new creation. But in the first creation, that's what we're talking about now, what did God

do? Genesis 2:7, "Then the LORD God formed man of the dust of the earth," notice, "and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." The element of life came forth from God and animated the first creation, here specifically, man. And God sustains that life until he gives the order that it be removed. The Bible says he has the keys, it's in Revelation, he has the keys of death and Hades. Jesus himself holds the keys of life and death for time and for eternity.

So he's writing to Timothy and he weaves in this charge. He says, "Timothy, remind yourself, do you not understand afresh that this God we serve is the God who has the power of life and death and, Timothy, He is sustaining you in this work. Keep faithful. The immovable One, the all-powerful One who holds you, who sustains you, who on command can remove the life of any of those who disturb you, Timothy, or persecute you, it's all in His hands, Timothy. So keep the charge. Don't back up. Don't slack off." And again, we remind ourselves the text, this text and other texts bears out that Timothy may have been the kind of guy that would pout, maybe that's a little too much, but at least be tempted to give up, throw in the towel. "It's not gonna work. They don't like me. Nobody listens. Nobody wants my message." And so maybe Paul's laying on this strong doxology to undergird him evermore. "No, you stay at it, son."

And then verse 13, "and of Christ Jesus who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate." This confession that Jesus now testifies was a true and a faithful confession, and this, this also includes not only was he faithful in a confession, it likewise it means he was faithful to the commission. He made the confession before Pontius Pilate but in his life he lived out perfectly the commission of his Father's will for his life. If you don't live out your confession in your lifestyle, then your confession, of course, is a fraud. Well, Jesus was no fraud. He made the confession. He lived the commission. Jesus is our example. He faced the most severe persecution and he remained faithful to his confession and to his office. John 17:4 Jesus said, "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do." "I've accomplished the work. I fulfilled the commission You've given Me to do."

Pilate was the governor Jesus went before who had him crucified, and governor Pilate under the sovereignty of God in that day, held in his hand the power of life and death and Jesus faced him and without flinching, knowing it would cost him his life, gave the good confession. We see it in Matthew 27:11, "Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor questioned Him, saying, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' And Jesus said to him, 'It is as you say.'" "Yes, I am." Now Pilate knew that Jesus meant more than I'm just King of the Jews because Jesus was more than just King of the Jews. He is King of the Jews but more than that, he's the one true King of the one true kingdom and thus Jesus was in effect saying, "Pilate, you've been demoted. The King is here. No, no, Pilate, the real King is here." He didn't back up. He gave the good confession. Our Lord kept the good confession and the good commission the Lord gave him to the very end, and so the point is, writing this to Timothy in this context, "Timothy, so must we. He's our example. He lived this out before us. We must stay faithful to the end also." You see, Jesus is the King of conquest. He vanquishes all who oppose him. He's the great finisher, the victor, and he was faithful to his confession and the commission the Father gave him.

Well, another phrase here down in verse 14, uh, wrapped around this charge, last part of verse 14, "until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Timothy, stay faithful to the charge now with no set-in stains or real reproachable elements in your character, in your doctrine and in your teaching until the Lord returns." You see, he is the returning Lord. Have you forgotten that? He is the returning Lord. He went away that he might come again. He's going to appear to all of us. Our commission, Timothy's commission, my commission, your commission is, in effect, until the Lord comes again. That's the point he's making.

1 Corinthians 15:58 in the context of the end times and the resurrection, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord." Can I charge you, Grace Life Church of the Shoals, can I charge you afresh and anew? Be always abounding in the work of the Lord knowing that that toil, other toils may be in vain but that toil is not in vain. Mom, what are you toiling about today? Dad, what are you toiling over today? Young person, what are you toiling to accomplish today? Make sure the centerpiece of your life and purpose is the work of the Lord. "Brother Jeff, what exactly does that mean?" Well, you know what I'm gonna say. It's super super easy. It's faithfulness to God's work in your local church. God wouldn't leave you out there to just wander around, you know, you go walk the TBA Trail and you kinda get in a communion with God, "What is God telling me to do?" And you finally get this wavelength in. You know what that is? That's stupid superstition. This book has told us what we're to do. God has centered his work around local churches whereby you function under the authority of Scripture as guided and overseen by God-called pastors, and you pour your life into that, and by the way, you have to do that. There's no option. So you'd better find the best and godliest church you can find if you're gonna give your all to it.

"Be faithful in this toil, Timothy, because it's not in vain." We toil not in vain and we toil for God in a godless world until the toil is turned to endless joy at his appearing. That's what he's saying to Timothy. I'll be honest with you, I've been pastoring a few years now, it's not all joy but I can tell you this, I'll just say this because a lot of pastors listen to our broadcast, I'm telling you if you'll stay faithful, seasons will come of great joy. Great joy. Once the sheep start outnumbering the goats in the church, the joy factor begins to increase. Now every time now and then a sheep can act, act kind of goatish, kind of goaty, and they grow goatees. Not really. If you've got one, I don't really mean that, mean that.

Well, another phrase here in verse 15 as he extols God in this doxology as a motivation to keep Timothy energized and steadfast and finish strong, verse 15, "which He will bring about at the proper time." In other words, Jesus is coming back at the proper time. You wouldn't want Jesus to come back in your time. No, he's coming back at the proper time, the Father's time.

Scholars point out the word "time" here is actually a plural. In other words, God's doing things according to the times. God had something he was doing at this time and then he

changed and he was doing something different at this time, then he changed and then there came the time of all times when Jesus came, went to the cross, purchased the children, sealed their redemption, and then the gospel began to be preached and local churches were established and that's what the Bible calls the last days. In other words, we're in the last epoch of time before God returns in Jesus Christ. This is it. You and I are in the last days and God's done everything according to its proper time. God's got everything on schedule. "Timothy, He's coming when it's right. You stay faithful until He gets here." That's what we must do, stay faithful until he gets here. "God knows what He's doing, Timothy. Timothy, your struggle is not unnoticed and His return is not being delayed." We do not speak like pagans who in coarse unbelief as recorded in 2 Peter 3:4 said, "Where is the promise of His coming?" We trust God's perfect timing.

"So you, Timothy, you do the next thing." Have you heard me say that before? If you're troubled, you're distressed, you have anxiety, you don't know what to do, you do the next thing. Ladies, that means if it's past noon, you get supper ready for the glory of God. Amen? If you've gotten supper ready and you're anxious and you don't know what to do, then you get ready for bed. That's the next thing. You get up in the morning and you seek God in a quiet time, you devote yourself to him and you go work faithfully like unto the Lord, the Bible says that's the next thing. You keep doing the next thing for God until he returns. And by the way, when it comes Sunday, you get to God's church. That's the next thing.

I know there are some dear brothers and sisters who should not be here and they're concerned about the virus, I respect that, I support them, but there's a few of the brethren, I might just go, [knocking sound], and when they answer the door say, "Where have you been? Because I know you've been to the ball park, I know you've been to the restaurant, I know you've been to Walmart." Shall I say more? You do what you're commissioned to do until Jesus comes back.

"Timothy, don't quit. Keep the charge. Stay faithful. And He's gonna come and return at the proper time. He's not forgotten about you." And when he returns, brothers and sisters, we will be relieved of the toil of our duty at that perfect time and we will then move into the glory of worshiping him forever personally with glorified bodies.

Then he continues on in this doxology. We're in verse 15, he says, "He who is the blessed and only Sovereign." Blessed means he and he alone is the one blessed of the Father. You could say approved of the Father. Jesus is the one approved of God the Father in both his person and in his work. Matthew 17:5, Jesus is transfigured and Moses and Elijah appear. The Bible says, "While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud and said, 'This is My beloved Son,' you could say, "My blessed One, My One and only, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" Because remember, Peter said, "Well, let's make a, a little tabernacle for Elijah, a little one for Moses and one for Jesus," and the Father said, "Whoa, whoa, time out. You, you're very, you're very mistaken. Moses is rightfully honored and esteemed as a great lawgiver and prophet. Elijah properly honored and esteemed as the great prophet of the Old Testament. But they're nothing compared to this One. He's different. He's My blessed One, My

beloved Son. He's One to whom Moses and Elijah bow down in worship. Timothy, do you not understand? He's the One we serve. This blessed One. The One true Son of the living God. The One and only. The blessed of the Father. The One, the only One approved of the Father and accepted of the Father. We serve such a One." You might say, "Well, pastor, if Christ was the only One approved of and the only One accepted, what about us?" And you can only be accepted in Christ. You're accepted if you're in him, if you've believed on him, if he's your Lord and if he's your Savior.

So we serve such a one. We cannot quit. We must keep the charge, the true gospel, and press on. Then he says in verse 15 not only the, the one blessed by the "only Sovereign." You know what the word "sovereign" means, it means "great authority or might." It can be translated "potentate." It's where the Roman Catholic Church gets its idea of the pope from which is a very very very bad idea. And we always say we love our Catholic friends but the theology of the Catholic Church is wrong because how does the verse say it here? "He is the blessed and only Potentate." There is no other head of the church other than Jesus Christ. There are pastor/teachers in the church, there are those in the office of deacon in the church, there are members in the church but there's only one Potentate, one Almighty Sovereign and that's Jesus Christ. Christ has all authority, he has all might and this is both inherent in him. For example, when, when he said in John 8:58, "Before Abraham was born, I am." Before Abraham. Now see the Jews highly esteem father Abraham and for Jesus to say, "I'm before," which means, "I'm greater, I'm the source of Abraham. That means in my inherent being is sovereignty, supremacy. I am God."

So, so his sovereignty is inherent in him but it's also a sovereignty that he achieves. Sometimes we talk about, uh, back in the old days when absolute monarchs ruled countries and one, one monarchy would use his armed forces and, and destroy another and reclaim the land, and he'd say, "Now I'm Sovereign over all of this new land," because he achieved it. Well, Jesus has also achieved sovereignty.

Revelation 5:1-5, "I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?' And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able," they couldn't achieve it, "to open the book or to look into it." By the way, those seals are the, is the title deed of the world and the title deed of men's souls. Verse 4, "Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it; and one of the elders said to me, 'Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome," he's achieved it, "so as to open the book and its seven seals.'" He achieved it. He won the victory. He completed the conquest, that conquest which was assigned to him of the Father to save the children and bring them all safely home. Revelation 5:9 reminds us, "And they sang a new song, 'Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased," past tense verb, excuse me, "purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.'" He has inherent sovereignty. He has achieved sovereignty.

So by virtue of his very person and by virtue of his perfect work, he is in every way the one and only Sovereign. "Timothy, it is He that we serve. It is for Him that we labor. He gave us life and breath and it is for Him that we live and breathe. He suffered and died for us to purchase our redemption and we are now His prize possession and we serve Him as glad and loyal subjects. Timothy, keep the charge. You can't stop now. Grasp afresh who it is we belong to and who it is we serve." Well, the Apostle Paul is penning this letter and he seems like he, he got stuck on the glories of God and can't get off. By the way, that's a good place to get stuck.

He continues in verse 15, "the King of kings and the Lord of lords." There are kings and there are lords both in the earth and in the spirit realm, but wherever there are any kings and wherever there are any lords, he is the King of those kings and he is the Lord of those lords. Even Satan himself who is the greatest if the angels and angels have might greater than any of us, any mortal human being has, yet Satan himself has to come and bow in complete submission to the Lord God Almighty.

We see a glimpse of this in Luke 22:31. Jesus says to Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat." Remember in the book of Job that Satan had to come and get permission from God to afflict Job. The Bible so lays out this truth that Martin Luther, the great Reformer, said that the devil is God's devil. It doesn't mean he's of God, it doesn't mean he's not evil, it's just that he can't do anything that Almighty God does not prescribe and allow.

He's King of kings and he's Lord of lords. There's no one that can possibly stay his hand. He's, he is greatest of all. He has authority and power over all. He wields the divine scepter of omnipotence over heaven and earth and nothing can stay his hand. "This, Timothy, is the Christ we serve." We are his people, his ekklesia, his called out local churches. We are his servants. "Keep the charge, Timothy. We can't quit now."

Well, verse 16, "who alone possesses immortality." "Paul, you got something else to say about God's greatness and glory?" "Yeah," he said, "I'm not done. He possesses immortality." You see, immortality is something that is inherent in him. All other immortal beings are given their immortality by him but only he possesses immortality. Nothing's eternal but him unless he gives some immortality to some of his creatures, and praise God he does, he gives it to us, his children.

He is imperishable by nature and he gives to us, his children, this glorious imperishable nature. You see, you have now in you – listen to me – you have the germ, the seed of immortality and one day God's gonna strip all the mortal off and he's gonna energize the immortality in you and you'll be glorified and be like Jesus and live forever.

1 Corinthians 15:53-54, "For this perishable," this present body we're housed in, "must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'" And all of this is because of our vital union to him. He is immortality. He is true

life. He is eternal life. As John said in John 5:25-27, "Truly, truly, I say to you," Jesus is being quoted here, "an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself," that means Jesus in his Incarnate state carried with him the divine eternal life, and verse 27, "He gave Him," Jesus, "authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man."

Jesus in his Incarnate state has eternal life, immortality. So now, friends, immortality dwells in a human being, Jesus Christ. Aren't you glad he's the first of many brethren? In other words, we're gonna be like him. Not in authority, we don't, we're not Mormons, we don't become gods with him, but we are like him in that we share his eternal immortality.

Well, 16, verse 16, he "dwells in unapproachable life, light, rather, whom no man has seen or can see." His very being is of such transcendent glory that animating from his being is such pure and holy light that mortal eyes cannot be allowed to see it. If they do see it, they will perish instantly.

Exodus 33:20-22 God says to Moses, "But He said, 'You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!' Then the LORD said, 'Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock; and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by.'" "Moses, you don't understand. You might get a glimpse of My back but that's all you can handle. My glory is that brilliant, that powerful, that all-consuming."

I was home by myself and it was morning and I had moved my study to the den on the couch because I keep my bedroom at about 20 below zero in the night and it's hard to study, and that study of mine is on the same air conditioner unit with my bedroom so I move into the den and I've got these big plate-glass windows and if you notice that the, the, the fall sunshine has an intensity to it that's unique? Have you noticed that? It kind of comes from a different horizontal or a more horizontal plane and sometimes when you're driving in, in, in, in the, in the fall of the year, it's just piercing. But I'm sitting there and it was just un, you just couldn't help it, there was this brilliant brightness coming through the window over my shoulder and I'm studying this text, his unapproachable light. And so I just kinda moved my head very slowly and I could tell the sun was almost in my eyesight and real quick I glanced at it and I couldn't see for five minutes. Just piercing light. The sun is but a tiny speck of reflection of his unapproachable light.

"Timothy, do you understand the God you serve? Timothy, grasp afresh who it is we serve. Keep the charge, Timothy. Keep on keeping on." Grace Life Church, all of you sitting here, do you understand anything about the God we serve, this God of unapproachable light?

Revelation 21 reminds us that in heaven when we get there, in heaven there will be no need of the sun. The Bible says there'll be no need of the sun or the moon because God has illumined it and the Lamb is the lamp therein. When God pulls back the veil, when he's banished heaven and earth, can I chase this rabbit for a moment? Everybody's talking

about fixing the earth. Fix the earth. Fix the earth. Fix the earth. Fix the earth. Fix the earth. God's gonna throw it away. The present heavens and the earth will pass away in a roar, the Bible says. So be a little skeptical about all these movements in Christianity that fix this, fix this, justice here, justice here, fix that, fix that. Certainly we're for those things but those things have to be kept in their proper perspective and balance as children of God. Satan's the god of this world and I'm not real keen on making Satan a better world, or a better world for Satan, I should say. There's a balance in this. Don't misunderstand your pastor. I vote for people that I think will do the best for our country according to the dictates of this book. Sometimes I vote for somebody that I don't want to vote for but I go by the policies and the positions and who they answer to, what their platform says because I don't, have you figured it out that it seems like, I don't want to be judgmental here but it seems like most politicians lie. So I go by who's gonna hold their feet to the fire, who have they obligated themselves to, who have they committed, "I'll support these principles." That's who I, I, I, I try to vote for.

So I am about helping the world be a better place but when Jesus returns, he's gonna say, "I'm not into fixing that stuff, I'm only a part of what I've been recreating, the new creation, and I'm gonna take my new creation people and I'm gonna create a new heaven and I'm gonna create a new earth, and we're gonna all dwell there," and there, and, and, and at that point when he gets it all together, the sun, the moon, the stars, and every twinkling thing that exists will rush away and say, "We're not needed because the unapproachable brilliance and holiness of God will illumine everything."

"Timothy, do you understand the God we serve? The One of unapproachable light and glory?" 1 Corinthians 15 says when we get in that new state, our new body is going to be powerful, spirituable, spiritual rather, and imperishable. Our glorified bodies, by the way, will be fitted with new eyes, eyes that can look on the glories, the unapproachable illumination of God and not melt away. You know what happens when you get saved? God puts a little bit of a contact in there and you start being able to see stuff you didn't see before. You see through a glass dimly, it's not super-clear yet but the preachers start preaching and all of a sudden something starts happening in your heart, in your mind and in your understanding and you begin to perceive a different world that you're a part of separate from this old, physical, material, temporal, corrupted, passing away world. Aren't you glad for that new contact? One day we'll have all new eyes. We'll see it all the way that it really is. You see, you know what the word "revelation" means? Unveiling. It's all right there, you just can't see it but one day there's going to be [whoosh] glorious unveiling of God in all of his light and glory.

What's the point of the text? "Timothy, have you thought about this lately? I know, Timothy, you're a little bit timid. I know your stomach gets in knots and you need to drink a little wine for your stomach because you, your stomach stays torn up because you're worried and you're anxiety-prone and you feel like it's not worth it. Timothy, keep the charge. Don't stop. Don't quit. This is the God to whom we belong. This is the one whose church we work to build. Keep the charge."

Last phrase of verse 16. By the way, everything we've seen in verse 13 down to the last phrase of verse 16 is one sentence. It just runs on and on. Then he says, "To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen." Grasp afresh, church, who it is we serve and keep the charge.