

Introduction

I didn't have a story about Titus last week, and several of you brought it to my attention. So I am going to start off with Titus this morning. I marvel to watch him develop. Only a few months ago one of his great delights and biggest accomplishments was to knock things down. I would place these stack-able plastic cups one upon another making a tower and the moment he saw my tower the power of Titus was put on display. He would come and knock it down. But now Titus is moving more in the direction of construction, even putting things back where they belong. He loves balls. Everywhere he goes he points to the balls he sees. If he sees a circle, he says, "Ba! Ba!" And he throws balls. When he sees a basketball goal he wants to go to where it is and throw the ball. He is sometimes quite impressive because the ball actually travels forward. But on Labor Day he showed us his newest accomplishment—he can kick balls. It gives him so much delight to kick a ball that he shrieks with delight.

God made humans to exert power, and we begin delighting in using that power from our earliest days. As we grow through the years we move from destruction to construction and from one level to the next of using the combination of strength and wisdom to do amazing things. In this way we reflect God, because God is powerful and he uses his power to do great and amazing things. In our study of David's song of praise to our great God in Psalm 139, we have meditated upon God's omniscience and on his omnipresence. This morning we turn to his omnipotence.

[Read Scripture and Pray]

The cry that will resonate from the hearts of those who are reconciled to God is to know him. If we want to know God, it is vital that we understand something of the power of God. The late James Boice wrote, "If we do not understand that God is all-powerful, we do not have a right understanding of God at all; we are thinking of some other being. If God is not all-powerful, there must be some power or powers greater than God."

So we need to know as clearly as we can that God is omnipotent. And David helps out significantly, showing us in verses 13-16 of his song of praise the omnipotence of God. The word consists of two parts. "Omni" means all or without limits; and potent means strong or powerful. God is all-powerful. When we use the word omnipotent, we must exercise care in how we understand it. We do not mean, for example, that God can do what is logically absurd like create a circle that is also a square. That is a logical contradiction. In addition, ascribing omnipotence to God does not imply that he could create a boulder so heavy he could not lift it. Moreover, we are not suggesting that God has the power to sin or to cease existing. So we do not mean that God's omnipotence is absolute.

The accurate understanding and expression of God's omnipotence is that he is all-powerful. He possesses unsurpassable strength. It is a power that is qualified or limited by the boundary of God's own desire. God can do anything he wants to do. Nothing he wants to do is too difficult for him. He has power over all things and nothing has power over him.

The biblical word is "Almighty" as in Revelation 1:8 which reads: "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." R. C. Sproul describes such power this way: "God has absolute power over his creation. He rules creation; the creation does not rule Him. God has the entire universe under his control. There are no horses that run too

fast for Him to catch them, no elephants too heavy for Him to lift, and no rocks too big for Him to move.”(One Holy Passion, 126)

The almighty power of God is beyond our comprehension. Ephesians 3:20 says that He “is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think.” In Matthew 19 Jesus said, “with man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” Now, what we have seen in the 139th Psalm is that David is extolling the greatness of God in personal terms. He is making the incomprehensible understandable by applying the truth of God’s infinity to what it means in personal relation to him. God is omniscient. He knows everything about me. God is omnipresent. There is not anywhere I could go and God not be there. And now God is omnipotent. He made every part of me. I want to look at these verses in two parts. First, we will focus upon God’s work. Second, we will turn to David’s worship.

I. God’s Work.

A. David attributes every part of who he is to God. In these verses as a whole we notice a number of different aspects of David’s being.

In each of the verses he refers to himself with the pronouns me or I. These are general references to himself. He is ascribing the whole of himself to the work of God.

But each of these verses also contains a reference to a particular aspect of who he is. In verse 13 David specifies his “inward parts.” The Hebrew word is actually KIDNEYS. And the idea is not strictly of the inward organs but also of the inner being where thoughts and emotions take place. It is what we usually refer to when we make reference to the mind or heart of man. Psalm 7:9 points out that God judges people by testing their “hearts and kidneys.” So David is considering more than physiology here but also the deepest and immaterial parts of our being.

In verse 14 David references his soul. His soul knows very well that God’s works are wonderful, for God even made him with a soul to recognize and relate to God. Again here is a deep and immaterial part of who David is.

In verse 15 David points to his frame or his bones. He is moving from inmost parts outward now to his physiology.

In verse 16 he moves even further to the days he would live. If you are reading from the KJ translation, you will notice the word members instead of days. It is the mention of continuance later in that verse that leads most modern translations to interpret the verse as referring to the days I live as opposed to members of my body.

From first to last God has written the days that would be for him even before there was one. So from the inside out and from the first to the last God power has operated to make David and give to him reason and thought, emotion and sense, body and soul, time and experience, and even the recognition of God’s wonderful works. This is what is most important about human beings. The world places its great attention on the surface, how one appears. But in David’s psalm of praise to God for his power to make him, he is not fixated on appearance as man sees. He is rather in awe of the creation as a whole that here is woven together mind and heart and soul and a body and a plan for living and recognizing God.

I am reminded of the thoughts of Samuel when he was sent by the Lord to anoint one of the sons of Jesse as the next king of Israel. When Eliab arrived, Samuel looked on him and thought, “Surely, the

Lord's anointed is before him." But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance but the Lord looks on the heart."

I also call to mind Peter's counsel to wives; it is appropriate for men as well. "Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious." The truest beauty and marvel of any human being is not what we look like or how we dress or the physique we display. The true marvel of humanity is that we were made body and soul to be able to know God and radiate his glory, his character, from our inner parts, from our heart and soul through our frame in days that we live out one-by-one.

B. Now, while David mentions all these different parts that make up his being, he also describes the skill by which God worked in order to accomplish the marvel of his being. He says, "YOU FORMED my inward being." Think of the power required to create inner being. This is mind, will, emotions, thoughts, and all such. It is incredible. God has done this!

But not only did he use his power to form, he also applied skill in his work of making David. "You knitted me together in my mother's womb." Knitting and babies used to go hand in hand. When families had more time to sit around and anticipate the birth of a new baby, mothers, grandmothers, aunts and sisters would busy themselves to knit items for the new arrival—blankets, socks, etc. But David thinks of God knitting him, of skillfully weaving him together. Oh the complexity only omnipotence could accomplish to knit together emotion and rationality and sensory perception and thought and recognition of God himself! David goes to this thought from his recognition that darkness is as light to the Lord. So it is that in the darkness of a mother's womb God is working at his highest level of accomplishment and artistry.

There is an expression in these words of an intimate personal connection. The Lord exercises meticulous attention to the tiniest details of David's inmost being, of his most intimate self. While yet in the womb of his mother, the Lord is watching over him and carefully crocheting him together.

David declares to the Lord, he understands that he is fearfully and wonderfully made. Fearfully and wonderfully give a sense of the sacredness of human life. As human beings rightly reverence God, we rightly reverence the life that he has made in his image. Human life should be revered not as anything coming close to God but as bearing God's image.

David sees the work of God in making him as the prime example of God's wonderful works since he is made in the image of God. Nevertheless, he is just one example of MANY wonderful things he has done.

The marvelous and wonderful works of God declare his omnipotence. Just think of the universe itself. Do you know how far it is from where we are to the nearest star? If we were to adopt a scale in which an inch equals a million miles, how far do you think it would be to the nearest star? Do you think 100 ft? 300 ft? 500 ft? Try again. How about 450 miles! And that is just the nearest star! How about the farthest one we know? The immensity of the known universe is so vast it is incomprehensible, but sometimes it helps just to try to get an idea because then things start to come into focus better about how huge the universe is and therefore how much power was involved in speaking light and expanse and planets and stars into existence. And then the final and culminating

act of creation was that God took counsel together in his three persons and determined to make a human being in his own image and after his likeness. As vast and astounding as is the universe, there is one planet which can support human life. And so we say with David in Psalm 8, "When I look at your heavens the work of your fingers, the moon and stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him?"

The vastness of all creation is astounding! And yet God is mindful of man—not because of our size in reference to all creation but because of what he made. He made humans in his own image. He made the sun and the moon and the stars. But he formed my inward parts. He knit me together in my mother's womb. I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are his works! My soul knows it very well.

This psalm helps us see the absolute ghastliness of abortion. It is murder. It is the refusal to regard the sacredness of human life. It is human interference in the wonderful, meticulous, and glorious work of God. We need to feel afresh the horror of the holocaust and we need to know as a society that God is not willing to overlook this atrocity. Our hearts should be heavy with the guilt of this nation. And we should as we have the opportunity lift up our voices for these who cannot and even more for the sake of our Father, whose handiwork is being assaulted.

David continues. The process of his being made takes place in the depths of the earth. It occurs out of sight in the deepest darkness from a human perspective. And yet the work that is done there by God is described as intricate weaving. The language stresses several things. For one thing, there is intricacy. The human being is complex. Think of the various minerals and chemical substances, hormones and such but also the blood, the lungs, the skeleton, the eyes, ears, nose. Think then of the weaving together of body with mind and brain. God has performed a masterful weaving job.

Finally, David exults that God knew him before he was even conceived. And even at that time he wrote in a book every one of the days that were planned for him before there was even one. By his power God makes the man and by that same power he plans, he ordains a life for the man. He is sovereign over the process of our formation and he is sovereign over our destination. According to His omnipotence, he governs our days.

God is a planner. He plans for a purpose. When he directed Moses to oversee the construction of the tabernacle and all the furnishings in it, he was meticulous and detailed. He had a plan and a purpose for the tabernacle and he took utmost interest in that plan being followed. Over and over in the last chapters of the book of Exodus you read this line: "as the Lord had commanded Moses." Each time the point is to say that Moses followed the directions God had given him. If God was meticulous about the tabernacle which gives an image of heaven, don't you know he was meticulous in his forming of you?

And think of this. This human being God so meticulously formed was a fallen creature. David confessed in Psalm 51 that he was brought forth in iniquity and conceived in sin. He was a vile sinner from conception, but that does not change the fact that God's weaving him together stands astonishing. But now think on the power required to bring about another birth—the new birth. It is brought about in the unseen place as well, and it is just as astonishing. As Jesus said, "the wind blows where it wishes and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." If anyone is in Christ," writes Paul, "he is a new creation, the old is passed away; behold the new has come." And if God's meticulous formation and intricate weaving are true of the old man, how much more of the new. If you are in Christ, this is

your hope to pursue godliness and holiness. The omnipotent power of God has remade you to see the kingdom of heaven, to refuse to live according to the flesh, to keep in step with the Spirit.

Now think how this astonishing reality is true in the case of Jesus, the God man, the word made flesh. He was skillfully knit together in the womb of a Nazarene virgin. He had a body like ours—glorious in its constitution. And yet that body and soul conceived of the Holy Spirit was without sin. And it was that body that was heinously destroyed in our place so that we could have new birth, redemption, forgiveness, and eternal hope.

II. David's Worship

Really all of the psalm, and all of this part of the psalm consists of praise to God. Every affirmation of God's work is praise to him. But worship is explicit when in verse 14 David spells it out. "I praise you!" he says, and he declares, "Wonderful are your works."

Every human owes God the same praise as David gave him. It is sinful to be dissatisfied with how God made you. God is the omnipotent giver. And it is a joyful thing to delight in what he has done. It is not because David was greater in appearance than others. He wasn't the one who seemed kingly to Samuel. But he was one who loved God. The skill and artistry thoughtfully engaged in making you came from the heart and design of God. Embrace it and worship him.

Not only should we praise him for how he has made us but also how he carries us through time, bringing about the days that were written in his book. God is almighty, and he is not done working. He is still at work. And his goal is to make those who are the called according to his purpose into the beautiful and glorious likeness of his son Jesus Christ. It is not a physical likeness but a character likeness. God does not look upon the outward appearance, but he looks upon the heart. That is where the new birth and the power of the Spirit of God are restoring in the worshipers of God the beautiful likeness of himself. Praise God for that wonderful work!

And be sure that you can trust him. To worship God is to trust him. If you are unwilling to trust God in the everyday of life, you are refusing to worship him. He is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all we can ask or think. Things are impossible with man but not with God. He has the knowledge and the presence and the power to accomplish what he knows is best for those whom he loves. And the power of God shines most brilliantly in the midst of difficulties and challenges. He uses challenges, hardships, afflictions, trials, and so on to display his power and to bring us good.

Conclusion

I close with a final point of meditation on the omnipotence of God and the human being. The greatest work of divine omnipotence was not only bringing his own son into human flesh. It was also overseeing the events of human history that at just the right time, his own rebellious creatures would unite to murder that Son so that at that same instant God would pour out his righteous wrath on that Son and he would die in the place of sinners whom he came to redeem. But that is not all. Omnipotence was at work then raising that Son from the dead. And because he was raised by the almighty power of God, we can live in hope of a great and glorious future with an even greater body than we have now.

Philippians 3:20-21

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Think much on the power of God. Think how great and how majestic. Understand that his power is your hope for the future but also your hope in the present. For if Christ is in you, so is his power for living. For greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. His power is what assures you that he is able to cause all things to work together for good for those who are the called according to his purpose.