

**1st Timothy 1: 17; “The King Invisible and Wise”, Sermon # 10 in the series –
“To Honor God in the Church”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on
June 22nd, 2014, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

We are continuing to look at this doxology given to us by the Apostle Paul. Doxa – The word for glory – is a short hymn or verse of declarative praise. When one speaks or sings a doxology, he is speaking or singing praise to God for His glorious Attributes. I am trying to show you the importance of declarative praise in order that each of us will begin to engage in it. It is not enough to simply know of the Attributes of God. We must have hearts filled with exuberant praise, which will then break forth from our lips, and thus God will be honored by us. It will require the Spirit’s help to even begin to do this. Last week I set before you the first 2 Attributes mentioned in verse 17 – That God is an Eternal King, and that He is Immortal. We looked at Joshua 6, Psalm 47, and Psalm 29. We saw how the children of Israel marched around the walls of Jericho, and then at Joshua’s command they shouted, and the walls fell flat. We saw that God is a great King over all the nations and that someday His truth will triumph in the earth. “In the City of our God, in the midst of His temple God will establish His lovingkindness, and praising God shall be the portion of God’s people for many generations to come, when He shall establish these great things for her. We saw that the voice of the Lord is strong enough to accomplish all of these great things and we saw how important it is to praise God while we have our being. Psalm 115, verse 17 says: “The dead do not praise the Lord, nor any who go down into silence.” “But we will bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore.” Now this afternoon we will consider and praise God that He is Invisible and Wise.

This is the 3rd Attribute – Our Great Eternal and Immortal Eternal King is Invisible.

It must seem an unfortunate thing in the minds of many unbelievers that God is Invisible. Fallen human nature thinks that seeing is believing, and if we could just see God, that then we would believe and obey Him. But when we turn to Deuteronomy 4, verses 9-19 we find Moses warning the people that there is a danger in thinking that we have to see. “Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life.” “And teach them to your children and your grandchildren, especially concerning the day you stood before the Lord your God in Horeb, when the Lord said to me, ‘Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.’” “Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the midst of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness.” “And the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of the fire.” “You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; you only heard a voice.” “So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.” “And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that you might observe them in the land which you cross over to possess.” “Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure: the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any animal that is on the earth or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, the likeness of any fish that is in the water beneath the earth.” “And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the Lord your God has given to all the people under the whole heaven as a heritage.”

You can see from these words that God wanted them to worship Him as Spirit, and He wanted them to worship Him in spirit and in Truth. And He would have each of us worship Him in just this way as well; in spirit and in Truth. They saw no form that day when God revealed Himself, because God is invisible in His essence. “Blessed are they who have not seen and yet believe,” the Risen Christ says to Thomas. God is a jealous God. He will have no other gods before Him. He detests graven images, or likenesses of Himself; things made and devised by man’s hands. “God is Spirit, and He is seeking people to worship Him in spirit and truth,” Jesus says in John 4: 23 and 24. His being invisible to our eyes shows us the absolute necessity of saving faith to pray to Him, to serve Him in obedience when we are alone, as well as when we are with other people. We become hypocrites when we forget that God does not always see us; and when we think that somehow He is not always present.

Now the very best of believers can struggle with the Invisibility of God; during trials especially. Job did. I would like you to turn with me over to Job Chapter 9, verse 11. Here we find Job saying, “If He goes by me, I do not see Him, if He moves past, I do not perceive Him.” It is indeed a great difficulty to a believer that when they are suffering that they cannot see their Great God and Savior. Joseph Caryl in his exposition of this verse says: “Few (Christians) know when God is nigh, or when he is a far off, what His going away means, or what His comings means.” “But when He cometh to the Saints, they know He commeth; and when He hideth or departeth from them, they know His hidings and departures.” “Hence their joys and overflowings of comfort, when He manifests his presence; and hence their bitter complainings and crying after Him, where He seems to absent Himself and hide His face.” “Yet this text hath a truth in it, in reference to the inward and spiritual, as well as the outward and providential dealings of God, that sometimes, He goeth by us, and we see Him not; He passeth on also, and we perceive Him not.” “Hence we should learn that God is invisible in His essence, and incomprehensible in many of His actions.” “Man’s eye cannot see Him: Man’s understanding cannot comprehend what He doth.” (End of quote)

Look with me over at Job Chapter 23, verse 1. Here Job says: “Even today my complaint is bitter; my hand is listless because of my groaning.” “Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come to His seat!” “I would present my case before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments.” “I would know the words which He would answer me, and understand what He would say to me.” “Would He contend with me with His great power?” “No!” “But He would take note of me.” “There the upright could reason with Him, and I would be delivered forever from my Judge.” “Look I go forward, but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; when He works on the left hand, I cannot behold Him; when He turns to the right hand, I cannot see Him.” You can see can you not my brethren, how hard pressed Job was by this trial of losing all his children, all his possessions, and his health as well. You can see how overwhelmed he was that his own friends and his own wife could not understand that this had not happened to him because of His sin. Job just wanted to find the Lord, to present His case to the great King; to fill His mouth with arguments, and then have God answer him. But God was invisible. What Job had failed to reckon with is that God was indeed so very near to him that He was writing down all of His words to preserve them forever in the Scriptures, and was tenderly considering Job for good during all of his trial.

But this, my dear brethren, is where faith, saving faith, is so essential to your hoping in God, and your honoring God and praising God in all of your trials. Listen to what Job says in the very next verse, verse 10 – “But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.” “My foot has held fast to His steps; I have kept His way and not turned aside.” “I have not departed from the commandment of His lips.” “I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.” How was Job able to make this tremendous statement of faith at this lowest point in his life? Well turn with me over to Hebrew 11: 24-27. “By faith,

Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command." "By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward." "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fear the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible." This is how Moses endured, and this is how Job endured – "as seeing Him who is invisible". By faith Moses left Egypt, did not fear the wrath of the king, suffered affliction with the people of God, refused the passing pleasures of sin, esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt—all this he endured by seeing Him who is invisible.

Now this "seeing Him" is faith itself, which sets before our mind's eye everything that we can of His written word, and our experience of His providential leading to ourselves. Turn with me over to Psalm 16, verse 8. David is speaking of himself, and also of the Lord Jesus prophetically, and he says – "I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved." Is he able to see the Lord with physical eyes? No, but by faith he does see. Christ was not able to see the Father with physical eyes and yet he trusted in Him implicitly. He set every remembrance of His Father and His Father's love and His Father's will before His eyes. Therefore He was able to suffer and endure to end, on the cross, all of His sufferings on our behalf. And the result of all of this, of Christ "seeing" the invisible Father by faith, and David's "seeing" the invisible Christ by faith, was exuberant praise – "Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will rest in hope." "For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption." And verse 11 – "You will show me the path of life." "In your presence is fullness of joy." Ask yourself right now: "Is the reason that I do not engage more in declarative praise because I do not set the Lord before me in this most practical spiritual way, by faith?" "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4: 13) If you would begin to "see Him who is invisible" (that is, to have and exercise saving faith), you must look to Jesus. "He is the image of the image of the invisible God", as it says in Colossians 1: 15. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Image of the Invisible God, God the Father, He who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. 1st Timothy 6, verse 15 says: "He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power." "Amen". No man can see God in any sense of that word except through Jesus Christ our Lord, He who is King of kings and Lord of lords. He is invisible to your eyes now, but someday shall be revealed in all of His glory. Therefore, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

But the 4th Attribute which Paul would have us to declare with praise is that God alone is Wise.

"Now to God alone who is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever." "Amen." The reason that Paul expresses himself in this way is because God alone is the author of all true wisdom. Usually wisdom is something to be sought for and given to men, but in God, wisdom is one of His Essential Perfections. Our God cannot act inconsistent with Himself. He is infinite in wisdom, He is perfect in wisdom. His wisdom consists in perfect knowledge and in the best way to use that knowledge. He knows Himself perfectly; knows what He intends to do in all of time; what will best glorify Himself. "Known unto God from eternity are all His works." Known unto Him from all eternity are all His works from the beginning of the world. By His wisdom He made the earth, the sun, and all of the stars, and He guides their motions in perfect order. "All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth." "No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, what have you done?" (Daniel 4: 35) It was God's wisdom personified that sent Jesus into the

world. The world by its wisdom did not come to know God, so God was well-pleased by the foolishness of the gospel preached, to save those who will believe in Him. Jesus was born in lowly circumstances; He was raised in obscurity, He was obedient to His parents, He was the friend of sinners. He gained the victory over sin and death by submission to His Father's will. He is building His Church with the weak and despised people of the world. The foolishness of God is wiser than men; the weakness of God is stronger than men. God chooses to use things the world would scoff at, to accomplish His purposes.

Christ's death on the cross, Paul's preaching, people who were of little note and seemingly insignificant in their abilities in the eyes of the world, God will use. Christ is the wisdom and the power of God. He will use the chief persecutor of His people to become His chief exhibit of His power to save. He in and by the use of His wisdom overturns the expectations and the false conceptions of men. The Apostle Paul's words and example are still being used to the salvation of countless millions of souls in all the world, over many generations. God is wise in how He saves and how He uses men. He is wise in how He leads them, and preserves them, and grows them up in their faith. 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! Will you not begin to declare God's praises today? Begin in your heart and speak of God's glory in His Attributes; His wisdom in how He works His purposes, and who knows? Many people around you may see and fear and trust in the invisible God.