

DOXOLOGIES

SERMON #4: IMMORTAL, INVISIBLE, HONOR AND DOMINION [1 Tim. 1:17; 6:15b-16]

Doxologies: To him be glory....

1 Tim. 1:17 - To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

1 Tim. 6:15b-16 - He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

Introduction

One book, two doxologies. Context is especially important. What is going on in the text? Why insert a doxology? New dynamics, new descriptions, new reasons for ascribing glory. New words—King, Sovereign, King of kings, Lord of lords, immortal, invisible, honor, eternal dominion.

How do you read something new? Can you take a moment to be impressed? Must you immediately begin to think of parallel texts? Are you exploring explanations before experiencing the exhilaration? What kind of God do we serve? What are the implications? Who are we?

Text and Context

The first doxology follows Paul's description of his former, pre-Christian life. He incredibly worked against Christ and yet found mercy. He was a ringleader in the opposition, yet chosen by God. The text is worthy of study, rich, profound. Can I see myself? Can I be equally impressed with what God has done, who God is?

The second doxology, the charge to Timothy depends on who God is. We must study, try to understand. In an introductory comment, I only note that God's charge to us also comes forth from God's identity. Until we see God, we will struggle with how to live for him.

1 Tim. 1:17 - To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Who is king of your life?

The "King of ages." We think we are kings. Kings of our own castles. In charge of our own lives. In charge of our families, churches, businesses... We want to control, decide. We want to lead; we are not good followers. Your leadership style and ability are determined by your followship style and ability. We struggle with discipleship. We seek self-discipline rather than God's discipline. We would teach self and one another rather than listening to God.

Example: I want to respond to God "unhesitatingly."

We already observed that the first doxology follows Paul's description of his former life of opposition to the gospel. His response 30 years later, I know who is King. I know the King of ages, the King of the eons. He is over all things, he created time.

He is eternal. Paul's word is immortal (*aphthartos*, incorruptible, not subject to decay). Beyond this world. This word is less about time and more about substance. God's nature is not affected by time. His existence cannot begin and end.

He is invisible (*aoratos*, not seen).

He alone is God.

Doxology. Honor (*time*, preciousness, value) and glory forever.

1 Tim. 6:15b-16 - He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

Who is in charge of your life, Sovereign, King, Lord, eternal dominion?

What do you understand in the words, sovereign, dominion? We do not want to be dominated. We do not want to be tamed, docile, peaceable, meek, humble. This doxology is incredibly rich.

Blessed, *makarios*, internal characteristic, happiness, depending on who God is by nature, not on external factors. We are reminded of the Beatitudes. God exists in blessedness by definition. "Blessed be God" may be more recognition than any idea that we can give God something and thus bless him.

Sovereign, King of kings, Lord of Lords. What do you see? What does this mean to you? How you make decisions in life?

Immortality. The only one having immortality (*athanasia*, deathlessness). We have a different word, not the word of 1 Timothy 1. God is not touched by death. This is our normal understanding of immortality.

Dwells in unapproachable light. What is this? Eye surgery, the light is incredible, it burns, it hurts, it overwhelms, one wants to turn away. Have you had this experience? Wow, that is the brightest light, no wait, there is a brighter light. One cannot get any closer. We underestimate light. We take it for granted in daily life, we hear that Jesus is the light of the world, that we are light, that our lights should shine, we hardly understand.

No one has seen, can see. Paradox, tremendous light and no one can see. Invisible, that was the word in the first doxology.

Doxology. Here is no specific mention of glory. To him be honor (*time*) and eternal dominion (*kratos*, power, strength). Eternal is the normal word (*aionios*).

Conclusion

Who do you honor with your life? Who receives honor in the way you live? What do others see? Who is glorified? Who do people talk about? This is not Sundays. This is not in your church role. This is not a segment of life. This is entirety, this is not calling attention to self, not calling attention to others, not calling attention to human examples, not calling attention. "I knew a man..." But it is all about GOD!

Your salvation is all about God. You respond, yes; but the power is from the King of kings and Lord of lords. He saves those with biblical faith, the faith that we studied two weeks ago, obedient faith, faithfully obedient. Obeying God does not make it about us. Obeying God makes it about God.

Your sustenance, being sustained, stabilized, firm, this also is about God. This is not about your attendance, your activity, this is about your recognition of God. Daily followers.

See God. Depend on God. Come to God. Live close to God. Honor God. Respect God.

Some of you with faith need to let go and let your faith obey the Sovereign God.

Some of you who have begun the faith journey have tried to do it on your own, it is time for God. To him be eternal dominion, in MY life, right now, from this moment forward. Will you admit that?