

# We Serve a Big God

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[0:00] 1 Timothy chapter 6, and we're reading tonight verses 6 through 16. 1 Timothy chapter 6, and we're reading tonight verses 6 through 16.

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1 Timothy chapter 7, and we're reading tonight verses 7 through 16. whom no one has seen or can see, to him be honor and might forever.

Amen. Does anyone here have bad habits? You don't have to raise your hands. I do, and we all do, I think.

[2:05] And one way to get rid of a bad habit is to replace it with something else. Because you don't need something not to do, or you don't just need something not to do, you need something to do in its place.

And this can be a good or a bad thing. Sometimes it's a bad thing. If you're addicted to cocaine, and one day you wake up, that's a bad habit, and one day you wake up and you realize you're destroying your life, and you decide to quit, and you decide to replace cocaine with running, not something healthy, it's a positive place to channel your energy.

So every time you have a craving for drugs, you go and you run. Eventually those cravings begin to diminish. They start to go away. But your love of running grows.

And grows. And soon you've turned into an avid runner. You're running every day. You're training for and running 5Ks, and then half marathons and marathons.

Running consumes your time and energy and attention. And pretty soon you can't live without it.

Now, you've broken your bad habit. And you've given yourself something positive in its place.

[3:26] But in many ways, you still haven't fixed the problem. You're still addicted. This time it's to running, instead of to cocaine. Now, you've just replaced one addiction with another.

Albeit, it's a more socially acceptable addiction. But you've still just exchanged one problem for another. And if you have a sinful habit, it's not enough just to exchange it for another habit.

You need to replace them with godliness. Your replacement pursuit for your sin cannot just be another self-satisfying pleasure.

It must be God. And so when Paul tells Timothy to flee these things, to flee sin, to flee the love of money, he doesn't just say flee the love of money and replace it with some other idol to set on your heart.

No, he says, instead of that, pursue godliness. Pursue holiness. Pursue faith, love, endurance, and gentleness.

[4:34] You see, we need to exchange our addiction for sin with a desire for God and His glory. And then we'll see real life change.

And that is how Paul advises us. He gives us also along the way some powerful motivation for doing that. And we want to see what we're to do. You must. He's got lots of imperatives, lots of commands here in this passage.

We're going to look at verses 11-16. Do this. Do this. Flee. Pursue. Fight. Take hold. Keep the good commandment.

Do, do, do. But he also gives him a vision of God. Who God is that motivates him to a life of holiness.

So we'll see what we must do. But we also tonight want to see a vision of God that will motivate us to do these things. And his first command comes in verse 11. The first thing you must do, Timothy, you, man of God, flee from all this.

[5:32] And he's just gotten done talking about the love of money. And he addresses the man of God. It's a stark contrast. He goes from talking in verse 10 to those who have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

But you, you must be very different, Timothy, you man of God. That title, man of God, doesn't just mean a godly man. It was a title for servants of the Lord.

Messengers of His. Kings. Prophets. It's used that way in the Old Testament. It's the title given to Moses and Samuel and David and Elijah and Lysha and other messengers of God.

And so it's particularly directed to Timothy, God's servant, the man of God. The leaders of the church particularly being exhorted here.

But the things that he calls them to are things that we're all called to do. And when we remember that Timothy, the man of God, was to set an example for the believers. Remember, set an example.

[6:29] Chapter 4 and verse 12. In speech and life and love and faith and in purity. We see that though these directions are given to Timothy, the man of God, they are for all of us. That we might be holy followers of our God as well.

Yes, pastors, leaders in the church must do these things and set an example in them so that you may do them as well. And so what are these things?

Flee these things. The ruinous, dangerous, ensnaring, tempting trap, the idol of the heart, of the love of money. Those who pursue that will plunge themselves into destruction.

They will pierce themselves with many griefs. It can even cause you to leave the faith. No wonder Paul says, flee! Run away from these things. Don't toy with the love of money.

Don't play with the temptation. Run! Get away from it. Flee from this wickedness. The word is literally used in the New Testament of literal running.

[7:30] It's not just a figurative word. It literally means run. You all know what it is to run. If I thought it was appropriate, I'd get down, run down the aisle and you wouldn't be very impressed because I'm not that fast.

But that's the idea. You run! You've got to move. You've got to get away from these things. Now, I think it is used a bit figuratively here. We're to turn our hearts to flee from the love of money.

Love isn't exactly something you can run from physically. But sometimes the physical and the figurative go together. You think of Joseph fleeing from Potiphar's wife.

She laid hold of his garment. And what did he do? He left his garment and he ran. And turning from sin, fleeing from sin was both literal, running, getting away from her and figurative.

He's turning away from his sin. You get the picture of a... Or get this picture for a moment in your mind. The picture of a U.S. citizen. And they're in a foreign country.

[8:26] They've been falsely accused of a crime in that country. And they know that the police are corrupt, the prisons are corrupt, and the judicial system is corrupt.

And if they're caught, they'll never make it home to see the United States again. Such a person is going to run. They're going to flee from what is behind them so that they can avoid getting in such trouble.

I hope we are that motivated. Sin is not to be trifled with. Whether it's the love of money or as Paul will later write to Timothy in his second letter, flee the evil desires of youth, we are not to play with it. Not to negotiate with sin. We are not to think it over and see what might happen. We're to get away from it as quickly as possible. You wouldn't stop to negotiate with that corrupt police force and the corrupt courts in that country because you know what would happen.

There would be no negotiation. You would be taken captive. You're going to run. And so when the temptation comes, you feel that love of money rising down. The temptation comes to fudge on your tax returns so that your refund will be a little bit bigger.

[9:38] Or when it comes to slack off on the job and still take home the paycheck. Or when the temptation comes to get some quick, easy money even if the deal is a little bit shady.

Or to cut corners in your business and offer something inferior for the same or an inflated price when the temptation comes to neglect your family so that you can make more money.

The thing to do is not to mull it over. I wonder if I should do that. Think about it. Maybe try it a few times and see how it goes. See how it works. See how this works out for us.

No, you run. You flee. You banish that thought as soon as it enters your mind. You tell the person who suggests it to you to get lost or to never say something like that to you again. Flee.

Run. Get away. Maybe it's one of those evil desires of youth that you need to be fleeing. The temptation comes to be inflated with pride because of your most recent success that everyone is congratulating you on.

[10:43] Don't give that pride one second on the throne of your heart. Kick it away. Have nothing to do with it. Run from such a temptation. When the temptation comes to lust in your heart, don't indulge that thought.

If you take hot coals in your lap, you're going to be burned. So immediately, look the other way. Change the channel. Shut down the internet. Get up and walk or run out of the room if you have to. Whatever the sin, the answer is to flee. Run as if your life depended on it because it does. The wages of sin is death.

It will not bring joy. It will not bring pleasure. It will not bring happiness. It will bring pain and suffering. And who of you here is going to flee towards pain and suffering intentionally?

Oh, I like to suffer. I like pain. And so I'm going to run to pain. But you know that's what you do when you flee to your sin. And when you pursue that, instead of pursuing these other things that we'll talk about, you're running into pain and suffering and eventually to death.

[11:51] And if you don't flee from sin now, you will flee from God one day in the day of judgment. You'll try to flee. But to no avail, Revelation 20, verse 11, Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it.

And earth and sky fled from His presence. And there was no place for them. There'll be no escaping in that day. So the time to flee from your sin is now. But Paul doesn't just tell us to flee.

He gives us something to pursue. And he doesn't give us just some empty, pointless pursuit, another vain idol to set on the throne of our hearts. No, he gives us God. And tells us to pursue God.

And as you, man of God, flee from all this and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance. And gentleness. You remember our U.S. citizen.

He's fleeing the false accusation in the foreign country and the corrupt police and courts and so on. Eventually, he's going to get tired of running. He's going to run out of energy. He's going to get caught. Unless, unless he's in a city with a U.S. embassy.

[12:57] U.S. embassy is American soil, even if it's in a foreign country. And so he's fleeing to get away from these false accusations and he's running for something. He has a goal.

He has something to get to. He's got the embassy. He's running. He's running. He's running. He finally sees it and he gets there just in time to be given refuge and safety from the false accusers. And so Paul doesn't leave Timothy or us to run in circles from sin until we're exhausted. He gives us something to pursue. Righteousness and godliness. A manner of life conducted according to God's ways, not ours.

A life informed by His Word. A lamp to our feet. A light to our path. A life of godliness. Being like God. He is holy. And so we must be holy.

We've already considered back in chapter 4 the pursuit of godliness. Training for godliness. Being disciplined and studying His Word.

[13:59] Reading it in prayer. And meeting together with God's people. And fellowshiping with them. And hearing His Word preached. All of these things are part of training for godliness. Pursue these things and you won't be so taken up with the sin that you were thinking about.

Sin will begin to lose its luster as you pursue God and you see His glory. And He wants to be more like Him. Sin less and less important. Flee your sin and pursue godliness and holiness or righteousness and godliness.

And then faith and love. A pair of Christian graces. You all know what faith in Christ is. To trust in Him. To hope in Him. And the only way to live a life of righteousness is through faith in Christ.

Faith that's a gift from God and yet something we still must pursue. Something that we must be seeking to have strengthened. as we see God work. As we see Him keep His promises and answer our prayers our faith grows.

As we find forgiveness afresh when we do sin our faith grows. And as our faith in a great God grows our love for Him grows. And our love for His people grows. And we begin giving ourselves to love for God expressed in our worship to Him.

[15:09] What we do here on the Lord's Day. And each day of the week. Honoring God. Because we love Him. And then showing that love to His people. You know if you're caught up in loving a

great and glorious God and in serving His people then you'll be far less likely to be tempted to sin against that God and to sin against His people.

Pursue faith and love. Patience and gentleness. Or endurance and gentleness. When we're wronged.

When our brothers and sisters in Christ don't live up to our expectations. We will need these things. It will require both patience and gentleness within. And all of these things will be found only in Christ.

In other words, fleeing from our sin is fleeing to Christ. It's there that we'll find righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience and gentleness.

And you won't find them if you're not in Christ. So if you are in Christ tonight, if He is your hope, if your faith is in Him tonight, thank Him for it. Praise Him for it.

[16 : 15] That He's given you that faith. That He's helping you in these things that you're pursuing. And if you claim to be a follower of Christ tonight and you're not pursuing these things, it's time to take a look and say, Lord, why am I indulging my sin instead of pursuing You?

Serving You? Loving You? And if you're not in Christ, then you need to be awakened. Your sin will land you in hell.

In eternal punishment. Destruction. I don't know a clear way to say it. It will kill you. And not just a short physical death. A death that you'll live for all of eternity.

Suffering. And so you must flee that sin and run to Christ and find there salvation. But Paul's not done.

He's going to tell Timothy more about how he can pursue these things. There's fighting to be done. There's laying hold of to be done. There's keeping to be done. He starts with fighting the good faith.

[17 : 15] In verse 12, fight the good fight of faith. It's a good fight because it's for Christ and His kingdom. You're in a contest. A match with this world.

And by God's grace, we must prevail. It's athletic imagery here. Earlier, he told Timothy to fight the good fight and it was more of battle, war imagery. Here, it's a little bit more athletic.

You get the picture of a boxing match or fight. Boxing is probably one of my least favorite sports.

And I know very little about it. But that's the imagery that we have here.

And so, it's a helpful image, I think. We're to be fighting with our sin and with the world. The world, the flesh, and the devil are enemies.

And if you go and stand in a boxing ring, I don't know much, I know a little bit though, you go and stand in a boxing ring and the bell rings, if you just stand there, you can get destroyed.

[18 : 12] You can get pummeled. You're going to be killed maybe, even, if you just stand there. And let your opponent beat up on you. And so, Paul doesn't say, hey Timothy, just go be in the world.

Just stand there and you'll be okay, man of God. He says, go fight. Go fight. You're going to have to have some kind of good footwork. A lot of boxing is about, it's not just about your hands, it's about where your feet are.

You're going to have to know how to duck and dodge and move and dance and do whatever they do that I don't understand. But you're going to have to get away from the enemy's attacks. You're going to have to use your hands to defend.

You've got to block the blows so that they don't land. But you also have to be on the offense. If you've got to land some blows of your own, you've got to throw some knockout punches at sin. You can't just sit back and think that you're going to coast through life and be okay.

Sin is after you. The devil is after you. And knowing that, you had better be after it. You can't just sit back and expect to be okay. You've got to fight. If you want to pursue these things, it's not just going to be a walk in the park.

[19 : 15] It's not going to be like picking dandelions. That's not pursuing anything. You've got to chase after it. You've got to pursue it. You're going to have to fight to get it. And that's not going to be a popular message.

We like walks in the park. We like ease. We like things to be served up to us on a platter without any effort on our part. Or with very little effort. And so John Calvin says, carelessness and self-indulgence arise from this cause.

That the greater part wish to serve Christ at ease. And as if it were a pastime where Christ calls all His servants to warfare. We would like it to be like a walk in the park or 18 holes of golf or whatever

it is that you enjoy to relax.

It would be nice if the Christian life was all like that. And there will be times of rest and ease and refreshment and joy. Thank God for them. But the picture we're given is that it's warfare.

It's battle. It's a boxing match. We're going to have to go all 12 rounds? Anyway, however many rounds it is. I think it's 12. Who knows something about 12 rounds of boxing?

[20 : 26] Doesn't matter. Anyway, you're going to have to go to the end. You fight until it's finished. Until the enemy is destroyed. And so He says, Fight the good fight of faith.

Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called. When you're tempted to sin, you remember that the wages of sin is death, but you've been called to something much better. The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Lay hold of it. Even now while you live in this sin-cursed, dying world, you can lay hold of the certainty and hope you have of eternal life. It's certain because it's been purchased for us by the work of Christ.

It's that to which we have been called. And we know that God accomplishes what He calls us to do. 1 Thessalonians 5.24 The one who calls you is faithful and He will do it.

And so though we're not yet partakers of eternal life, we will be and we can lay hold of that truth. Eternal life is ours in Christ. We will be with Him forever. And so when you're tempted to trifle with some foolish, passing, fleeting sin because of the temporary pleasure it might bring, then flee from it.

[21 : 39] And remember that you have something much better that will last forever. Eternal life. And then He says, it's not necessarily when you made your good confession, it's just and.

Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called. And you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. Another place we can flee when we're tempted to sin is the profession of faith that we've made.

Paul sends Timothy back to that confession of faith. And it could be a couple of things. It might be when he was baptized. The profession of faith that he made at that point. It might be his ordination when he was ordained to the ministry which has already been referred to.

I tend to think it's his ordination, but in some ways it doesn't matter. Either one. He would have had to confess his faith in Christ, his willingness to follow and to serve his Savior Jesus.

And both of those professions would have been made in the presence of many witnesses. And so Paul sends Timothy back to that. You remember the confession you made.

[22 : 43] And we can be challenged to the same thing. Even if you haven't been ordained. You can remember your baptism. That you have professed faith in Christ.

You've said that I am a follower of Christ and I will follow Him and I will obey Him. And I will seek to love Him and to serve Him all of my days. And you did that in front of witnesses.

I witnessed some of your baptisms. Not very many of them, but some of them I witnessed. And a lot of these people sitting around you witnessed your baptism. Would they be able to say now without reservation that you continue to walk in the truth?

When you're tempted to sin, come back to your baptism and be challenged to live up to your confession of faith that you made. You made that profession. Are you living by it? And the last exhortation to Timothy is to, in the sight of God, he says, I charge you in the sight of God and in the sight of Jesus Christ, verse 14, to keep this command without spot or blame.

The command, likely a summary of all that's expected of him. Maybe right in this passage or perhaps the whole letter. Or really all that's expected of him from God as it's summarized for us in the Scriptures.

[24 : 00] We can confine it to this letter and say the good command. Remember to not tolerate false teaching. To live according to God's law. To avoid shipwrecking your faith at all costs. To fulfill your particular role in the church.

To train for godliness. To pursue righteousness. To flee from sin. To have nothing to do with the love of money. Keep all of these things, this good commandment, without spot and without blame. Remember, the man of God is to be blameless. He is to be above reproach. That's our word. And he's to be spotless. Spotless. Spotless.

That means sinless. You say, we're not perfectionists, Paul. We don't believe that you can be perfect this side of glory. And so, don't call us to be spotless.

Well, don't let your view of sanctification stop you from aiming at spotlessness. From aiming at sinlessness. Just because we won't get there in this life doesn't mean that we're not supposed to aim for it.

[25:08] We are. He says, keep the commandment without spot. And Peter writes in 2 Peter 3.14, So then, dear friends, since you're looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace within.

That's the goal. You say, well, we'll never get there. I don't care. That's the goal. That's what you aim for. That's what you strive for. True. You won't ever get there until you're to glory, but that is our goal.

We're to be like Christ. Are we not? And was He not? Spotless, blameless, the perfect sacrifice. Flee from sin, Timothy. Flee from sin, dear people, and pursue God.

And in order to do that, Paul gives us a glorious view in these verses of God. He calls Timothy, he calls us to keep that charge in the sight of God.

Verse 13, who gives life to everything. And in the sight of Christ Jesus, who, while testifying before Pontius Pilate, made the good confession, I charge you, keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in His own time.

[26:23] God, the blessed and only ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who is alone and mortal and who lives in unapproachable light whom no one has seen or can see. To Him be honor and might forever.

Amen. You see, Paul get caught up in the glory of who God is. And that's going to motivate us or it should motivate us to holiness.

And I want to challenge us tonight. I need this challenge. In order to pursue godliness, you have to be convinced that God is worth pursuing. You say, well, of course God's worth pursuing.

He's God. We believe all the things that we've been hearing on Sunday mornings about God. He's certainly worth pursuing. He's glorious. We should be like Him. And we shouldn't sin. And Pastor John has challenged us.

We say we believe these things about God. Is it affecting the way we live? And what Paul does here is he gives us a big view of God. And I think that if, at least personally, if my view of God was really this big, then sin and all its pleasures that so easily entangle me would really be much smaller.

[27:38] But I don't think my view of God is big enough. To flee from the pleasures of sin and to run after God, you must be taken with the glory of the High and Exalted One.

And people that aren't enthralled with the person and work of Christ won't be excited to run after Him. They'll be content to remain in their sin. We may never say something like this, but sometimes the way we live looks like we think, well, sure, sin might bring death, but this business of pursuing godliness almost looks like a different kind of death to me.

So I'm going to stick with my sin. Your lives ever look that way? Your heart ever look that way? God is not so great.

I would rather go on sinning than pursue godliness. That's what we say with our lives. We would never say such a thing with our lips, but the way we live.

My view of God is much too small. And here is a large view of God to correct our perspective. God is the giver of life, Paul says.

[28:49] And when I continue in my sin, I'm forgetting that it's God who is the one who made me and gives life to me and to all things. Were it not for God, I wouldn't have breath in my lungs right now to be alive to try to enjoy my sin that I'm wanting to pursue.

If all men would simply acknowledge that God is the giver of life, then they would be compelled to give that life in service and obedience to the God who gave it to them. God gave me my life.

It's not mine to use as I please. It's to be used in service for Him. And yet, my view of God is not big enough.

I don't remember that He gave me my life. And so it's too easy to shake my fist in His face. And say, no, I'm going to sin against you. I don't care about your rules, God, because I'm more important.

God's the giver of life. We must remember Him as such. We must believe that He is. And live like He is. And then He points us to Christ's confession before Pontius Pilate.

[29:57] He's calling us to these things in the sight of God who gives life to all and in the sight of Jesus Christ. When He was testifying before Pilate, gave the good confession. And what was that good confession?

Well, Pilate said, are you the King of the Jews? And he says, I am. It is as you say, I'm the King of the Jews. But he expands on it in John's Gospel. We get a little bit more of Christ's confession before Pilate.

And Jesus says in John 18, My kingdom is not of this world. But now My kingdom is from another place. You were right in saying, I am a King. In fact, for this reason I was born.

And for this I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to Me. And you know what? When I sin, when you sin, we're believing the lie that Christ came to destroy. He came to proclaim the truth. And when we sin, we're trampling on that truth. I'm forgetting the great suffering that Christ underwent on my behalf to establish His kingdom.

[31:01] He is a King. And I'm forgetting. You know, in some senses, it was Jesus' confession before Pilate that was the grounds of His execution.

That He was a King. And so He was an insurrectionist. And so He's put to death for it. And I've made a profession of faith in this Christ.

And I claim to be a member of that kingdom that Jesus suffered and died to purchase. And yet, I live as a citizen of the kingdom of the world.

Do you remember what Jesus came to do? He came to establish a kingdom. The kingdom of heaven. A kingdom that's not of this world. And I say that I'm a part of that kingdom. And then I go out from these doors and live as though I'm not a member of His kingdom, but rather a member of the kingdom of the world.

Satan's kingdom. Jesus came to destroy Satan by what He did. And I'm going to listen to that deceiver? That father of lies?

[32:02] I think my view of Jesus is too small. He's a King. He's Lord. He suffered. He suffered for me that I might follow Him.

My profession cost me a little pleasure, maybe a little mocking at the hands of my enemies. Jesus cost him his life. So how can I then go back to my old sinful ways?

Is my view of Christ really that small that I think I can live however I want for the one who is willing to die for me? Have you forgotten the glorious sight, the Savior crowned, that we just sang of?

Keep that sight before you. Remember that He died to purchase you. That He died to save you. He didn't die so that you go and follow Satan still. And I think we often forget that He's coming again.

Jesus, who made the good confession, He's coming again. Keep this command until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in His own time.

[33:06] When I sin, when you sin, we forget that God will return. Christ will come back. God will reveal Him in the last day and He will judge. I forget that I'll be held accountable on that day.

And that if I've proved by my life I'm not really a follower of Christ at all, I'll face eternal punishment. All for a little pleasure of sin. When we fail to flee from sin, we forget also that God is the great ruler. You see it in verse 15. God will reveal Christ in His own time. God, the blessed God, the blessed and only ruler, King of kings and Lord of lords.

When we don't run from our sin like we should, we forget who is on the throne. We're worshipping ourselves or our desires, our love of money.

We're acting as though we believe somehow that Satan is still the real power. We'll serve Him thinking that He'll deliver the promised pleasure. But though Satan has some power, God is the one who rules over all, including Satan.

[34:17] I was struck with this just this afternoon in looking over this. That when I sin, I'm believing the lies of Satan rather than the promises of God and His Word.

That's unfathomable to me. You put that decision down on paper and it's a no-brainer. God, obviously I'm going to believe God. I'm going to believe His promises.

But do you know that when we give in to sin and temptation, we're believing the lie of the devil over the promise of God. The one who is ruling over all. Maybe we don't think He's actually powerful enough to deliver us from that temptation.

Actually powerful enough to bring good out of this situation where we can see only bad. We're doubting God. But He's the only great ruler. The blessed and the only ruler.

He's the one that has all power to do things according to His Word to fulfill His promise. And yet I go and sin as though I don't believe His promises.

[35:21] I break His law instead of following Him. God is the great ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, and we are to follow Him. We are to submit to Him. I think this comes home in other ways

to us.

When we're tempted to despair and complain at the kings and the lords all around us in the earth, we despair because we have a teacher that just isn't fair.

And there's no way I'll be able to get through this class because she's just not a fair teacher. That teacher is a lord in some senses. He's the master of that class.

But you know what? God is the Lord of lords. And He is over that teacher. Or if it's your boss at work, I just, I cannot, I can't handle it. I can't, I can't, it's not fair.

It's not right. God is Lord over Him too. You see, our view of God is so small. We get in these situations and we start to think, I can't, we can't do this.

[36 : 21] But we forget that God is ruler. And then we think about, oh, the president. Oh. Oh, what will happen if this person becomes president? Or this person?

Or this person? Oh, I might as well just, I might as well just move to another country. Or we worry about what's happening in turmoil all around the world because of foolish, stupid leaders that are on the throne destroying their own countries and seeking to destroy us.

And we begin to worry. You know what? We need to flee from that sin. From worrying, wringing our hands, despairing at the things we see.

Whether it's on the small level in your school or at your work or on a big level, those who rule nations. We need to remember that God is the King of kings.

And the Lord of lords, literally He's the King of those who are kings. He's the King of those who act as lords or the Lord of lords. He rules over them.

[37 : 28] And if we would just keep that before us, if our view of God was as big as the Scripture's view of God, we'd be much less likely to worry, much less likely to fear and wring our hands in despair over what's going to come.

All these kings and rulers rule at God's command. He is the one that gives them authority. He sets them up. He can take them down. And so we need not fear. And this glorious God is, verse 16, immortal.

Who alone is immortal. He cannot die. He will live forever. And so when temporary problems assail us and we face suffering and pain, let us remember that these things are short-lived, but our God is forever.

And though He alone is immortal in Himself, He grants to us that immortality. Do you know that in the resurrection, mortality will clothe itself with immortality?

And death will be swallowed up in victory. And death will have no victory or sting for us. And so when we get overwhelmed to the point of, again, worry and despair with our momentary light afflictions, we're forgetting the eternal weight of glory that far outweighs them all.

[38 : 47] We're forgetting the eternal God that we serve, who's called us to eternal life, that there's something much better. And God who is eternal will deliver it.

And the glory is that we will be like Him. When we see Jesus, 1 John 3, 2, when He appears, we shall be like Him. For we shall see Him as He is.

We'll have glorious resurrection in mortal bodies like Jesus does. When we see Him as He is. And so don't fall into the temptation of sin.

You know what comes right after that verse? In 1 John 3, 2, when it says, when He appears, we'll be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Then verse 3, everyone who has this hope doesn't say, well, I can just wait until I get to glory.

Because one day I'll see Him and I'll be like Him. And so until then, I don't need to worry about sin. I can sin, and I know that one day I'll be like Jesus. Is that the one who has the hope of being like Jesus one day does?

[39 : 47] No. Everyone who has this hope purifies himself. Just as He is pure. He flees from these sins and He pursues righteousness. Because we know that one day we will be like Him.

We don't continue in our sin. We flee from it. And pursue purity. Well, this big God dwells in unapproachable light.

He is unseen and unseeable. We don't have time to delve into the background for this imagery, but we heard a little of it this morning. Light, an indicator of God's holiness, His glory.

It speaks of our infinite unworthiness to even approach Him. Think about this with me for a moment. God, this great God that we've talked about, that Paul's painted a picture of.

He is alone and mortal. And He dwells in unapproachable light. He is unseen and unseeable. And yet, the God who dwells in unapproachable light, holy, perfect, glorious, also dwells in us by His Spirit.

[40:59] Now that's remarkable. Because God is a holy God. And God cannot tolerate sin. God is everything that we heard about this morning. And yet, He comes by His Spirit.

And He dwells in us, fallen, sinful creatures. 1 Corinthians 3.16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives, dwells in you?

Just as God dwells in unapproachable light, He dwells in us by His Spirit. What? The glorious, holy God is dwelling in me right this moment?

Surely, I'm not remembering that. When I sin, when I flee into, I'm taking the glorious God with me into my sin.

Surely, I'm forgetting that He dwells not only in unapproachable light, and so I must be holy as He is holy, but I'm forgetting that He dwells in me and that I take Him with me when I sin, when I'm tempted to give in to those temptations that come.

[42:10] Surely, I have much too small a view of God and His holiness when I live in such an unholy way. And then, the catechism question that many of our children could answer, can you see God?

No, I cannot see God, but He always sees me. He is unseen and unseeable. And though we will see Christ face to face one day, I think the Scripture reveals to us we will not see God the Father face to face, for no man can see Him and live.

We will see the glory of God in Christ. But to look upon the face of the Father, I don't think, is a privilege that will be ours. And we won't think of it that way as though we're being some privilege withheld from us.

Not at all, because we will be in the presence of the glorious Christ. But He is unseen. And now, we can't see Him except with the eyes of faith. But one day, we will see Jesus.

But until then, He sees us. He sees you right now. Right this moment. He sees you when nobody else is in the room.

[43:20] And you think that you're getting away with whatever you're getting away with. He sees you then. Just because we can't see Him, it doesn't mean that He isn't there. He is there and He is watching.

And I think that we forget that when we sin. This big view of God that He's everywhere. God can keep His eyes on all of you at the same time. And not just the however many of you there are here tonight, but the millions and millions and millions of people all over the world.

He sees. Oh, it's a big God. And so when we pursue our sin, we're forgetting that God's eyes on us and we're fleeing from God.

It's backwards, isn't it? What we're told here we must do is to flee from our sin and flee to God. But all too often, we flee away from God and to our sin.

We get it flipped on its head when we forget who God is. We forget how big He is and how great He is. This big God should be a powerful reminder and motivator for us to, instead of fleeing to our sin, to flee to God.

[44:35] And then, what's left for Paul except to praise Him. To Him be honor and might forever. Amen. To worship and to ascribe to Him the honor and might that is due His name is what we must do.

How sad would it be for us tonight? We're going to sing in a moment. Hymn 35, it's immortal, invisible, God only wise, enlightened, inaccessible, all hid from our eyes. Do you hear 1 Timothy in it?

The most blessed, the blessed ruler, the most glorious, the ancient of days, almighty victorious, thy great name we praise. We're going to sing that in a moment. We're going to take praise on our lips. And worship God.

We're going to ascribe honor and might to Him. How sad would it be for us to do that? And then to walk out of here and to forget what a great God He is.

And walk out of here right back into our sin. We're going to walk out of here into our homes and into our schools. Just a week of school left and you get tomorrow off.

[45:36] You're almost there. You'll make it by God's grace. But you're going to walk back into your schools and into your workplace. And into your neighborhoods and your homes. And are you

going to take a big view of God with you?

Are you just going to take His name on your lips while we sing? And then walk out these doors and forget about Him. And live as though you're not a member of Christ's kingdom. Live as though God's eye isn't on you.

Live as though God isn't on the throne. Always worried. Always wondering. Live as though this life is all there is, forgetting that there's eternal life to be had.

May God help us to walk out the door in every day to wake up with a big picture of God in our heads. You want a summary of tonight's message? It's, we serve a big God.

That's pretty basic. But that's what Paul's saying here. We serve a big God. And so serve Him.

Remember this. When God looks that big to you, doesn't the foolish, fleeting pleasure of sin begin to get very small?

[ 46 : 41 ] And we think, why did I ever trifle with it in the first place? And you know that that temptation's going to come again. And so be ready next time. Be ready with your view of God and His holiness.

And seek to be holy as He is holy. Trusting in Him. Remember, faith is one of the things we must pursue. You can't do it on your own strength. Go from here asking God to help you to remember that He's a big God.

Pursue righteousness and godliness until sin is a distant memory. If you need more help for this, ask for it. Don't let your shame or your pride keep you from getting help.

Be willing to admit that God isn't big enough in your thinking to elevate Him to His proper place and seek that help. God isn't big enough in my thinking.

So may He make Himself glorious in our sight and may we see Him as such and may we live like we believe He is a big God. Well, may God help us.