

True God

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Date: 16 March 2014

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[0 : 01] Just as a bit of an aside, I encourage you to look at the blog this week. It's something which is printed in the bulletin every Sunday. And one of you folks corrected me after my sermon last Sunday, and I said I would mention it.

And so the way I mentioned it was I wrote about it in the blog. So I encourage you to read the blog. So this, about seven or eight months ago, my son Jesse and his wife Cavi were expecting a baby. They live in London, Ontario, where they don't know anybody. Well, they know people, but they didn't know anybody well enough that they thought they could just drop their daughter, Charlotte, off at the last second, maybe for all night or maybe for a couple of days, depending on how the pregnancy went.

And so my wife went down to London, Ontario, to be there, to be able to look after the baby when the baby came. And babies, of course, don't just sort of come on schedule.

And so Louise ended up being there for 19 days. It's the longest time in our married life that we've ever been apart. And now if, now this is just an if, it didn't happen, okay?

[1 : 08] But if, on day 18, I had gotten a call from the police in the city of London, Ontario, and they told me that my wife had been arrested, I would have thought to myself, there obviously is some type of mistake or misunderstanding.

Because I know my wife, I know her heart, I know her character, I know how she lives and how she acts, and I know that there could not possibly be anything that she would do that would be so wrong that would require her to be arrested.

So obviously something else has to be going on because I know my wife. And that would just be it. It would be like an unshakable part of me that I would just know my wife.

And there must be a good explanation for what's happening. I mention this because the way the book of Revelation is written, it's written in a very, very interesting way.

We're preaching through the book of Revelation, and we're doing a chapter a week. And we're about, I don't know if you sort of noticed it, but when Nora began reading it, she mentioned one of the things that she read was that the last judgments are about to come.

[2 : 21] And so if you go back later on, maybe as part of your discipline this week, and you read chapters 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 of the book of Revelation, you see that there's going to be lots of judgments.

In fact, there's going to be two passages that talk about hell before we get to heaven. And so it's almost as if God said, okay, we're going to get into these last sort of lessons or teaching on very, very hard doctrines for modern Canadians.

But before we do, let's just in a sense have a bit of a gut check and just ask ourselves, do we know who God is? Do we trust him? Are we willing to trust who he is and what his character is like and what he's done for us so that as we read chapter 16 and 17 and 18 and 19 and 20 and 21, before we get to chapter 22, we can say, well, there's going to be maybe some things in here that we have a hard time understanding.

There's going to be things in here which we stretch, that stretch us. But I know who God is and I know what he's like and I know what he does for us. And just as if I was to have got that phone call from the police, I would just, okay, whatever's going on, I know Louise.

I know that there has to be a very good reason for this. She had very, very good reasons for whatever's gone on. And so that's sort of the flow of the text. And the way it works is that this sort of fundamental teaching on God, reminding us of who God is, is given in the form of a hymn sung by the church triumphant, the redeemed, before the throne of God in a picture of immense glory and splendor.

[4 : 07] So if you have your Bibles, you're going to need, we're going to need our Bibles because we're going to keep looking at Revelation chapter 15. There are some extra Bibles up there and there's also some more over there with Owen at the door. I forgot to bring my Bible this morning, so I'm in fact using one of the Bibles which are down there.

But before we do that, up on the screen, if you could put that up now, Andrew, I've given an essentially literal translation of the hymn and I'd like us to say it together.

So it's going to be a little bit different from some of your Bibles because it's essentially literal. But please join with me in saying this great hymn. Great and your deeds, Lord God Almighty, just and true are your ways, King of nations.

Who will not fear and glorify your name? For you alone are holy, for all nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.

Great and amazing, great and amazing are you, Lord, the God, the Almighty. Now some of us, we look at a hymn like that, great and amazing are your deeds, Lord, the God, the Almighty.

[5 : 24] Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations. Who will not fear and glorify your name? For you alone are holy, for all the nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.

And for a lot of us, inwardly we go yada, yada, yada, yada. Yeah, we know all that type of stuff. It's like sort of normal type of Christian stuff. But the fact of the matter is that this hymn speaks very, very deeply into several types of misconceptions that we have about God that we're not even really aware of that we have as misconceptions.

Now, I'll give you an example of the first one. The first one is this, that it's very, very easy for us to drifting to believing that God exists to meet my needs.

That whoever God is, that God exists, the main characteristic of God is that God meets my needs. And it's a very, very simple way to turn God into something like a genie, where we rub the lamp and he does what we want. And rather than having God be God, we're God, because God exists to meet my needs.

[6 : 40] Now, we, of course, if we say something so blatant, most Christians, at least, will say that that can't possibly be correct. It's actually a very, very common theme, although put in different forms in a lot of contemporary spirituality in Canada.

And because it's a very common theme in contemporary spirituality in Canada, and we breathe that cultural air, it's something that we breathe it. I'll give you an illustration. And it shows where there's a very, very fine line between having great faith and actually living as if God exists to meet our needs. Two and a half years ago, we walked away from, because as a matter of conscience, we felt that we, to fulfill our mission to make disciples, gripped by the gospel, living to bring glory to God, we felt we had to separate from the Anglican Church of Canada.

And as part of that meant we had to walk away from our property. Now, many, many people leading up to this told us, told me, that we would have a building very, very soon.

And I'm not stepping on any toes. It's a very, very fine line to know the difference between when we have great faith and when we're slipping into thinking that God exists to meet our needs. In fact, I had people tell me that they didn't understand why we were going to take a two-year lease, because God was going to provide a building for us, and then we'd have to break the lease.

[8 : 13] Now, it's been two and a half years since we walked away from our building, and actually, it's not as if we have any particular building in mind or in sight.

In fact, at a human level, we're a million, a million and a half dollars away from being able to afford a building in downtown. Like, for us to have a building, it would require for God to perform a miracle for us.

And when we walked away from our building, it wasn't as if we were sitting on two, three, four, five million dollars, and we could just go out and buy a building. We had very, very little money. We walked away from most of our assets and most of our property.

We had very, very little money. But, you see, it's very, very easy to... I'm not trying to say anything about any particular person, because part of the Christian life is having a sense that God is going to provide in a particular way and having faith for that.

But it's also very easy to actually operate under the sense that God exists to meet my needs. And we think that God's a very, very good God, and that when he doesn't meet our needs right away, then what happens is he owes us.

[9 : 22] And the way we think about God is that God is a really good God, and when he owes us, when he's in our debt, he'll pay up when we need it.

And it's very, very... And so why wouldn't God be in our debt and owe us because of our willingness to walk away from hundreds of thousands and more of assets?

Why wouldn't he be in our debt? You see, it's very, very easy to slip into understanding faith in the context of God existing to meet our needs.

But it's almost as if there's a Christian form of slipping into it that's no different than that book, *The Secret*, or *Power of Positive Thinking*, or a whole lot of other types of contemporary spirituality which really exist within the framework that God exists to meet my needs.

And that's why sometimes we as Christians, when we have crisis of faith, the crisis of faith that we have is that the God who exists to meet our needs isn't meeting our needs, and so we don't understand why he's let us down.

[10 : 40] But this hymn, which is said by the church triumphant in heaven, this hymn says, Note at the very, very beginning of the psalm, actually here's how I'd like to summarize it, if you could put it up to the first point.

The true and living God exists. He is great and amazing, the Lord, the Almighty. The true and living God exists. He is great and amazing, the Lord, the Almighty.

In most English translations, because it's not very grammatical, they change the way that God is referred to in this hymn. Like in my version, the ESV, it says, Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord, God, the Almighty.

But in the original language, it says, Lord, the God, the Almighty. Not very good English, but it's really trying to emphasize this aspect of Lord, the God, the Almighty.

And it's trying to communicate the idea that God is the one, there is a God that does exist, and he sets the frame of references. He's the one who determines what's going to happen.

[12 : 07] He's the center, he's the beginning, he's the end, he's sovereign, he's immense, he's all-powerful, and he is Lord.

And everybody else is creature, is subject, and he is the Lord, and he is the God, and he is the Almighty. He's the one who sets all of the frame of reference.

Just a very, very simple little sort of imaginary experiment. I get it from the C.S. Lewis, second C.S. Lewis space fantasy fiction called *Voyage to Venus*.

And imagine that God was to show up here in some way that we could sense. Obviously not in all his glory it would unmake us, but imagine that God was to show up here. Isn't it sort of natural for us to think that when God shows up here, that up is still up, down is still down, and all of the terms of reference that suit us are the terms of reference by which God will appear to us.

But why should we think that? C.S. Lewis does it very, very brilliantly in the book *The Voyage of Venus*, is that when an angel appears, one of the things which is profoundly disorienting to him, and he talks about it very well in good fiction, is that he gets the sense that the angel has a different vertical than the room.

[13 : 36] And the angel is greater than him, and so he feels like he's off balance, because he knows what vertical is, but the angel isn't at that same type of vertical, and it feels as if the entire room is tilting.

And it's very, very upsetting to have your normal terms of reference completely and utterly upset. But isn't that a true insight about what it would be like for us to meet the living God?

Why is it that the living God would have to fit in to our terms of reference, our sense of what's up and what's down, our sense of space and time and distance? Wouldn't he, if he really does exist, and he is Lord, the God, the Almighty, we would be the ones who would have a sense that our frame of reference was out of whack, and that somehow or another, we were meeting the true frame of reference, the true up, the true down, and it would be very, very unsettling for us.

So the Bible here in this psalm is saying, beware of thinking that God exists to meet our needs. Now some of you might be saying, George, I mean, what you're talking about is very oppressive.

It's really the way, it's the way a lot of religion talks, George. It's this sense that somehow or another that God is so immense, it's a crushing type of sense to think of God being so completely and utterly immense, and just, in a sense, almost like willy-nilly, just changing our terms of reference and our sense of up and our sense of down.

[15 : 19] Like, George, that's a crushing type of idea, not a liberating idea. But here, as in all the way through this psalm, the cross changes everything.

If you look back at verse 3, notice how the song is introduced. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying.

And so that when all the way through this song, as they're singing it, it's the song of the Lamb. It's the song of the Lamb who was slain. It's all, in a sense, sung from the perspective of the cross, because the cross changes everything, even our understanding of God being Lord, the God, the Almighty.

Why is it that the cross particularly changes this? What it is, is that the cross, it is, in fact, true that God meets our needs.

But the first and greatest need that he meets is a need that, on one hand, sometimes we have a sense that it is our greatest need, but a lot of times we live in denial of it.

[16 : 30] But our true and greatest need is to be restored to a relationship with our Creator and our Sustainer and the end of all things. Our true and deepest need is to be restored and reconciled to Lord, the God, the Almighty.

That is our true and deepest need. And the story of the Lamb who was slain, the story of the cross, is the story of God doing what we could not do, that we could not reconcile ourselves to him, and that God saw that we could not and could never leave ourselves to fix ourselves, to reconcile ourselves to him, that everything that we touch would be bent, at least slightly, if not a lot.

And so God, seeing our great need, sends his Son to die upon the cross as a pure and utter act of love and mercy and grace. And he makes peace.

He provides the means, by Jesus' death upon the cross, that we can have peace with God by putting our faith and trust in Jesus. And so the very, very heart of the Song of the Lamb is that our true and deepest need, deeper need than money, deeper need than health, deeper need than strength, deeper need than power, deeper need than warmth, that our deepest need, a need that goes on till all eternity, is to be reconciled to the living God.

And God provides for us at the point of our deepest and truest and, in fact, an eternal need by the death of his Son upon the cross. And so in light of that, can't we also trust him to order and deal with our true deepest needs rather than our wants?

[18 : 20] The cross changes everything. And so it is, as we're gripped by the gospel, as we're gripped by the sense of what it is that Jesus accomplishes for us on the cross, that we're freed up to understand that God is Lord, the God, the Almighty, in a way that does not crush us, that does not completely obliterate us.

So what's the significance of the doctrine? The significance of the doctrine is that it invites us to adore God. As we're gripped by the gospel, we understand, as we're gripped by what Jesus does for us on the cross, we're invited to understand that we were made to adore God.

And we are invited to ask God to teach us and help us to adore him. Andrew, if you could put up the prayer. It's this, that we can pray, Dear God, in light of the gospel, please help me to learn to adore you day by day.

Dear God, in light of the gospel, please help me to learn to adore you day by day. You see, religion, spirituality wants to tell us that we don't have to think about confession.

And religion wants us to think that it's as if the most important part of prayer is saying we're sorry to God over and over and over and over again. But the deep teaching of the scripture is that we were made to adore God, to enjoy him forever.

[19 : 51] And that, in fact, in the classic understanding of the five moments of prayer, adoration, confession, thanksgiving, intercession, and petition, that the confession part of the prayer should really be the shortest.

That we should ask the Holy Spirit to convict us of those particular sins which most have a grip on us and that we're most ashamed of and that we're afraid to bring to the light.

But that the heart of our prayer should be to ask God to grow in our ability to adore him, to praise him for who he is in and of himself. That we should grow in thanksgiving and thanking God for what it is that he has done for us.

So what is it that this great hymn of praise, great and amazing are your deeds, Lord, the God, the Almighty, just and true are your ways, O King of the nations.

Who shall not fear and glorify your name? For you alone are holy, for all the nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.

[21 : 06] It's an invitation for us to understand what Jesus has done for us on the cross, to understand that God does not exist to meet our needs because he is Lord, but he meets our deepest need.

And if he knows and meets our deepest needs, he is Lord. Can he not meet our other needs? And the invitation is to adore. Now some of you might say, George, I remember, I've been looking around at the section, you know, it's very helpful, George, you said, let's have the Bible open and you've been talking and I've been listening, I've been looking at the Bible and I also remember what Nora said, but George, you're sort of dodging over the biggie, right?

I think a week or two ago, didn't you talk about when there's an elephant in the room, you should talk about the elephant? But George, you know, look at that, look how it begins. It's all about wrath and anger. Like, George, that Revelation 15, it shows part of the problem that I have with the Christian understanding of God, that the Christian God seems to be an angry God and he's always angry.

George, don't you think it's better to understand that God is beyond good and evil? I mean, I've had many, I've talked to many, many people in coffee shops and in other places who will tell me that they have a problem with the Christian God because he's judgmental and angry and the God that they worship is a God beyond good and evil and so this text doesn't sort of invite us to understand that God is beyond good and evil.

Well, let's look at it. Before we do, Andrew, could you put the hymn up and let's say it together again? I've been saying it myself and it's actually, I get confused when I try to read it because I've memorized it. So why don't you say it out loud?

[22 : 45] I'll start it, you say it and I won't confuse you. Great and amazing. That's the hymn.

Now if you have your Bibles, it does talk about wrath. It does talk about wrath. Look at verse one. Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues which are the last.

For with them, the wrath of God is finished. And look towards the end in verse seven. And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever.

A person who's connected to the parish. By the way, you know, I mention movies and TV shows. I have to be a little bit careful. Because I mention it doesn't mean that I'm saying you should go out and watch it, okay?

Some of you might have, I know there was one. I remember once I mentioned something about Children of Men, the movie The Children of Men. And I had a person say that after a few minutes of watching it, they had to turn it off.

[24 : 09] They can't imagine the way I would ever watch such movies. But some of you have heard me. I've used The Walking Dead occasionally as a sermon illustration in the book of Revelation.

And in fact, I think there's a lot of sermon illustrations from the TV series The Walking Dead. And I'm going to say this, but I'm not encouraging you to watch it, okay? But The Walking Dead is about zombies and the end of the world or near the end of the world.

And so somebody from the parish, they decided to try watching some of The Walking Dead. And after about five minutes, they turned it off because it was pretty gruesome and unsettling.

And so they told me about it. And I said, well, you know, in some ways, the first five or ten minutes of The Walking Dead, the first series, it's in some ways the worst part of the whole series.

And if you get over it, you know, maybe you'll end up liking it. Maybe you won't. That's fine. And so they decided to try it, to watch a whole episode, just to see if it wasn't quite as bad after the first ten minutes.

[25 : 15] And then this is what the person told me. They said, you know, at first it's really unsettling, but then they realized that the zombies aren't evil. They're just like animals trying to eat us.

But they're not evil. They're just like animals. And then they were able to watch it. In fact, it started to become a bit gripping trying to imagine what it would be like to live in a post-apocalyptic world. Now, here's my point. And I'm not trying to say that people who are telling me that they worship a god beyond good and evil are in a sense worshipping zombies. But notice the movement that you

watch it.

It's profoundly unsettling because you think the zombies are evil. But then you realize that they're not evil. They're just like animals. Not good or evil.

And then you can watch it. The Bible, this, remember the great hymn here is, Great and amazing are your deeds.

[26 : 25] Lord, the God, the Almighty, just and true are your ways, O King of the nations. Who shall not fear and glorify your name?

For you alone are holy. For all the nations will come and worship you. For your righteous acts have been revealed. Notice in there, what's this fundamental claim about the living God?

It's going to be very, very important for us to be able to ask ourselves whether we can sing this hymn and affirm this hymn as we're reading chapters 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22 of the book of Revelation.

And it's that last part of verse 3. Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations. And the very, very last one, for your righteous acts have been revealed.

Here's what the scripture text is affirming. The second point, the true and living God is only good and fair and just. The true and living God is only good and fair and just.

[27 : 37] The problem we have with Roth language is that we easily see angry people that we know. We immediately think when we see the passage about God's Roth, we easily think of road rage.

We think of something that we see where a person becomes completely and utterly anger driven. Maybe we have a father or a mother where we had an aunt or an uncle or a grandparent who would lose it and when they went angry it was as if a switch went off and they just completely and utterly lost it.

Their anger becomes in a sense uncontrolled and it becomes completely and utterly irrational. I don't want to get into a debate about spanking but I've had people tell me that one of the reasons they don't spank their children is that they have a fear that if they allow themselves to do something like that they won't stop because they have a sense of the amount of anger within them that once they let that out even a tiny little bit that anger will just go and go and go and go and go and so for many of us we understand how easily anger is connected to hatred and how easily that anger is connected to losing it and how easily anger is completely and utterly separate from any type of right or wrong I'm not making this up just before Christmas I got hit I was driving very slowly down my street and I got hit by a car a car one of my neighbors backed out of her driveway and she banged into my car and I was angry but she was angry at me she thought it was my fault that I was driving on the road and that she backed into me well I wasn't laughing but and you see we're so familiar with this idea that anger is completely and utterly separate from right and wrong and that's in a sense where our imagination immediately goes but what is it that the hymn says great and amazing are your deeds

Lord the God the Almighty just and true are your ways O King of the nations who shall not fear and glorify your name for you alone are holy for all the nations will come and worship you for your righteous acts have been revealed the fact of the matter is is that there is a proper for us to have a complete and utter indifference to injustice is not a sign that we've matured as human beings for us to have a complete and utter indifference to horrible evil is not a sign that we have become more mature as human beings and the fact of the matter is that what the Bible presents of God is he is Lord he is the God he is the Almighty and it means that his goodness is always good that his truth is always true that his justice is always just his mercy is always merciful that nothing can stop God from being good nothing can cause him to lose it nothing can cause him to turn from a correct perception that something is evil to moving into hatred that nothing can stop

God from being loved and being good and being true and being just he never loses it he's never anger driven he's always the same and in fact I think that for many people remember I said to you once that whenever somebody says they're an atheist we should ask them what is the God that you don't believe in because maybe after they've explained what the God is that they don't believe in we agree with them and we don't believe in that God either I think for many people when they say that they worship a God beyond good and evil they don't really mean it what they're actually trying to articulate is the Christian God not a God who's indifferent to right and wrong but a God who never is anger driven who never loses it who's always himself because he's Lord the God the Almighty who's always loved and never stops being loved but who's always good and never stops being

good who's always true and never stops being true nothing can bang him away from being true and just and that ultimately without realizing it what they're actually articulating is a longing and yearning for the God who's described in the Bible it's a very hard sell to convince of that but that's you see the glory of this hymn great and amazing are your deeds

[32 : 08] Lord the God the Almighty just and true are your ways O King of the nations who shall not fear and glorify your name for you alone are holy for all the nations will come and worship you for your righteous acts have been revealed this beautiful hymn that captures and holds all of these things together and once again once again the cross changes everything that's how we're to understand the wrath of God in this particular case I've used this analogy before it's a very very good analogy but if all of a sudden God was to show up in this room and I was to be completely and utterly frozen in this particular moment right here and then all of you are given an ability to understand things the way angels understand and all of a sudden on that screen you see everything that's gone on in my mind in my life from the moment of my conception to now and just from the moment of my conception to now and you hear and you see articulated and envisioned the grudges that I've held on to how I think about people maybe how I've thought about you maybe a time that I've been angry at you and you were to see that go on and on and on flat screen after screen after screen after screen and you are like an angel and you can take a whole lifetime over 50 years of me doing this every week every month every day every single thing and it goes on and on and on and as it goes on and on and on if you are not numbed you will be increasingly horrified at George you will go from saying how on earth could George be up there as a pastor to saying how on earth could George be married to how on earth could George ever stand and look a single one of you in the eyes and you would be angry at me and you would think

George has gotten away with far too much and you are imperfect not perfect like God and the wonder of the cross is that after all of that is revealed on the screen Jesus comes and taps me on the shoulder I just want there is no crack too small in this place that I would wish I couldn't be in because such a revelation would unmake me and would unmake you and the message of the gospel is that God comes up Jesus comes up he taps me in the shoulders and say George I'll take all of that on myself for you and all of the wrath and anger and disappointment and demand for justice that you in the room would feel Jesus says I will bear that on my shoulders and in my person because it will unmake you George and I love you and that's what Jesus does for us on the cross God is both just and true but his profound righteous act the profound revelation of the glory of God read John's gospel the profound highest revelation of the glory of God is the death of Jesus upon the cross our wrath on him in my place condemned he stood here's the doctrine of God being just and true here's what it invites us to do in light of the gospel as we're gripped by the gospel we understand the need for Jesus to form our conscience and how we live our lives dear God in light of the gospel please guide my conscience and my walk dear God in light of the gospel please guide my conscience and my walk some of you we move to the next point to the sound of crying children some of you might be saying

George I'm really and I just I'm going to have to just do three points not the four points and I'll have to do this last one a little bit quickly George you know I'm really worried when people get this sense of God forming their conscience and God forming how they walk and live their lives in this sense that God is just and true and righteous George I'm really concerned because it's really easy to go very quickly from that to believing that God is somehow on our side he's with our tribe like look at Putin in Russia and look at how the orthodox church it's almost like the orthodox church is his lap dog encouraging him to do these bad things George think of how it's been often in the United States hasn't often the evangelical church appeared to be a lap dog to the U.S. military like George isn't it really easy from going to thinking that things are just and true like this to somehow or another that he's our God and George that's why it's not like so much

George that I want to get rid of the idea that God is good but isn't it better to understand that God is everywhere like isn't that sort of a protection against that to think that God is everywhere that he's in everything that he is everything doesn't that help to try to protect us from this type of parochialism that and tribal animosity that comes along with the goodness of God to think of God as being everywhere in everything that he is everything now part of it is that when people say that to me I don't always know how a gentle way to say it but what they're expressing is a human problem that in fact cultures that have believed that God is everywhere and in everything aren't necessarily characterized by having no armies and living in peace with people and never doing any acts of

violence that what they are capturing in fact is a human problem it's not a Christian problem it's a human problem and it's a human problem that's profoundly addressed in this hymn

[38 : 34] Andrew if you could put the hymn up again and I'll start it and you folks say it so I don't mess up my memory from what the word I don't mess you up by using my memory with what the words are because I can't see the screen say it with great and amazing notice notice all the way through this song if you leave it up notice something very very interesting great and amazing are your deeds oh Lord God the almighty just and true are your ways oh king of the nations who will not fear oh Lord and glorify your name you alone are holy all nations will come and worship you for your righteous acts have been revealed here's the thing if you could just put it up

Andrew the true and living God is a who not a what and he is the high creator and intimate sustainer the true and living God is a who not a what and he is the high creator and intimate sustainer you see why is it that we think when it comes to God that being an it or a what is higher if if a if a young young woman is dating a fellow and she starts to think that he's treating her like an it like a thing like a what does that make the young woman love the fellow more does that make the young woman say oh I just want to get so close to Bobby he treats me like a thing he treats me like an it he treats me like a what like that doesn't inspire love it never makes any young woman want to grow closer to a young man to be treated like a thing doesn't work in marriage either if Louise starts to think that I'm treating her like a dishwasher it does not create intimacy and romance it creates a confrontation designed to help us reconnect which it should guys remember often when women confront it's because they want to reconnect okay there's a free relationship lesson for you right there women usually confront to reconnect us guys can sometimes just blow our top okay forgetting about reconnecting but we have to anyway so here's the thing it's rarely in relationships viewed as a better thing to be viewed as a what and it a thing but why is it then that we think that somehow a God who's a what and it or a thing is somehow higher great and amazing are your deeds Lord the God the Almighty just and true are your ways O King of the nations who shall not fear and glorify your name for you alone are holy for all the nations will come and worship you for your righteous acts have been revealed God is revealed as a person he is revealed as a who not as a what or an it but at the same time he is he is completely and utterly separate from us which means that he's the transcendent creator that that's what this is trying to capture for us that God is completely and utterly separate from us and completely and utterly different from us and that's why we can have a relationship with him because he's not us I don't have a relationship with my image in the mirror like that's sad God is different and yet at the same time the teaching of the doctrine when it's when the scriptures are saying that that he is the Lord the God the Almighty it's saying that he is the creator of all things and he sustains all things in a sense he means that that God is is not only closer to us than we think that he's closer to us than we are to ourselves because we are bent and broken and separate and and not in perfect relationship with ourselves that as as as many Christians have said over the years in a sense

God is closer to I am than my breath is to me that's how close God is to me as the intimate sustainer of all things and once again the cross changes everything because on the cross Jesus does not die for humanity he doesn't die for white people or black people he doesn't die for old people or young people he doesn't die for rich people or poor people he dies for me he dies for you he dies for you and me as if you or I are the only person who exists he does not die for me or you as an abstraction that earlier analogy I gave as if God was to do that and put everything down there that's what he dies for for me and he does it for you as well he dies knowing my name and knowing your name he dies for you he dies for me he takes my place he takes your place as an act of intimate substitution for the real you not the imaginary you but the real you and that's why this doctrine invites us as we're gripped by the gospel to say dear God in light of the gospel please help me to not only know about you but also know you if you could put it up dear God in light of the gospel please help me not only to not only know about you but also know you let's stand we not only accept the gospel but we're gripped by the gospel the gospel is a story of grace it's about what God does unmerited for us with his son's death upon the cross and it is something unmerited that he does for us on the cross that as we enter into the gospel as it enters into us as we're gripped by it it creates an opportunity for us to be pushed and pulled and shaped and drawn towards adoration to be pushed and pulled and drawn to allowing God to shape our conscience and how we live our lives to be pushed and pulled and drawn and shaped in terms of the desire to know God and to be known by him to have within it a cry of our heart for an intimacy with our creator for which we were

created not just adoring him but intimacy with him and it comes as we respond to the gospel and as we're gripped by the gospel let's bow our heads in prayer Father some of us are wanting to be gripped by the gospel for the first time some of us maybe Father have wandered far and need to be gripped by the gospel again and all of us

[46 : 39] Father need to be gripped by the gospel we ask Father that your Holy Spirit would gently fall upon us but deeply fall upon us turn our hearts towards Jesus his sacrifice upon the cross for us and what he accomplishes for us to reconcile us to you and to restore us to you Father fan in the flame within us such a desire to come to Jesus in humble repentance and trust that he becomes our living savior our reconciler our peacemaker and Father we ask that you would make us disciples so gripped by the gospel so gripped by what Jesus has done for us on the cross that we desire to live for your glory fan in the flame within us a desire to adore you fan in the flame within us a desire to know about you and to know you fan in the flame within us a desire to have our consciences and our daily walk formed by you and this we ask in the name of Jesus your son and our savior amen