

# Eat this Book

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[ 0 : 01 ] Father, some of us today might feel like weeds, and some of us might feel like wheat. Some of us, Father, might be worried by this parable of Jesus.

Some of us, Father, might be very excited at the possibility of being gathered into his barn. Father, we ask that your Holy Spirit would gently but deeply fall upon us.

And, Father, today may you deliver us from any hardness of heart, soften our heart, soften our mind and our will, so that we will be responsive to you speaking to us, to you speaking deep within us.

We ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit would move and work upon us to make us good soil, where your word will come into our lives and bear much fruit to your glory.

And all this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son, and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. What advice would a monk give to pastors in terms of how to do their job?

[ 1 : 11 ] Before I was in this church, I looked after four little country parishes, about two hours. Well, one of them would have been about a two-hour drive from here.

I looked after a tiny little church in Eganville and an even smaller church in Clontarf, a small church in Tremor, and a small church in Killaloo. From the names of some of them, you can tell the ethnicity of the original European settlers that came into the region.

And in that neck of the woods, and neck of the woods is an appropriate description up there, there happened to be a place where there were several monks who lived a semi-reclusive life devoted to prayer.

And I was the regional dean for several years. That's a sort of Anglicanese term. I was responsible for gathering Anglican clergy in the region for a monthly meeting.

And occasionally, I would bring in somebody to speak to us. And I, through a friend, had contact with this semi-reclusive monk who had a great name for a monk.

[ 2 : 15 ] His name was Father Wilde. He was the Wilde monk. And I think if you're going to be a monk, having a last name like Wilde is just so fantastic.

Anyway, he agreed to come and speak to this group of Anglican clergy. And I told him he could speak on whatever he wanted to speak on. And he actually gave a very, very interesting talk. In fact, I've always remembered part of what he said that day. I'll just share it with you. It has nothing to do with the sermon, but it's really cool. He said that part of the problem for Christians and for everybody is that we always have voices in our head.

Not just schizophrenics, but all of us talk to ourselves. And things go on in our minds. And he said the hard part for us to figure out is, out of all the words that are going on in our heads, which of them are actually from God?

Because if we believe that there is a God who does exist and who lives and who speaks, who's spoken to us through the Bible, then it makes sense that sometimes he would speak directly words to us that we should act on.

[ 3 : 20 ] And I've always remembered that. And that led him into his one piece of advice. He said if God ever, for some reason, made him the rector of a parish, the head pastor of a parish, what he would try to do every Sunday is he would try to teach the congregation how to pray.

I mean, I guess this is exactly what you'd think a monk would want us to do, a monk who spent many, many, many, many hours every week in prayer by himself. But he said he would try to teach the congregation how to read the Bible and how to pray, how to pray the Bible.

And so I don't know how well I do that every week, but I'm going to try to do that a little bit today in this very, very interesting passage which Nora read for us just a few moments ago.

So if you would turn in your Bibles to Revelation chapter 10, once again, if you've forgotten your Bible, we always have extra Bibles here at the front, which you're welcome to use. You can leave it

afterwards or you can take it home as a gift from us to you.

And there's always some there. And if we run out of them, I think we have extras. And somebody can find you extras if we ever run out of the ones at the front. And in our day and age, we're most used to people who talk about the book of Revelation talking about it in terms of trying to figure out what if North Korea is the Antichrist or the Pope is the Antichrist or, you know, what about Russia? [ 4 : 40 ] Is that Gog and Magog? And what about China? And that's what we're sort of most used to. But there's actually a very, very long tradition that the book of Revelation is the source of imagery for meditation and prayer.

And that's sort of been forgotten by a lot of the church, the modern, postmodern church of the West. And this text of Revelation 10 is a very appropriate place to think a little bit about prayer, especially because in the flow of the book, it has a very, very interesting sort of flow.

If you're a guest here this morning, you might not know. But in this church, what we do is as often as possible, we try to preach through books of the Bible. And so we're going through the book of Revelation. And, you know, in the flow of this book, there's been these series of judgments called, led by trumpets.

And there were four trumpets that we looked at two weeks ago, and then there was another chapter. And last week was really, it was very, very technicolor. It's this image of demons emerging and, in a sense, completely and utterly destroying many of the people who are most devoted to them.

And it allowed us to really look a lot about what is the nature of evil and the demonic and what do we give our lives to. And it was a series of six, two chapters of six very stark types of images.

[ 6 : 03 ] And what we have here in this chapter as we begin to read it is there's an interlude. There's a pause. Those of you who have seen the X-Men movies, this is a great help.

And at one time, I was going to try to get a film clip up here. This is going to come up again. And so maybe sometime I'll get a film clip. If you've never seen what Dr. X can do, you can have a scene like in a cafeteria or something like that.

And the fight's about to burst out and somebody starts to throw their pop at somebody. And then you can see the pop in the air and then everything freezes. Everybody completely freezes.

And it's as if, in the midst of it freezing, those whom he wants can walk amongst the still people. It's as if time suspends for them. And it's almost as if they step outside of time and then they can talk to each other about what's going on or what has to be done.

And then the spell or whatever is lifted and the pop continues to fly. The fist moves. All of that happens. And that's exactly the type of thing which is happening here in the book of Revelation.

[ 7 : 04 ] We have this series of thunders and six very powerful different images of judgment. And then all of a sudden, there's this interlude that in the midst of it all, it's as if all of these things just freeze.

And God says something to John. And by saying something to John, he's saying something to those who've given their lives to Jesus. It's an interlude, a pause, where God, in images and in other ways, speaks to us.

So, Revelation 10. Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud with a rainbow over his head.

And his face was like the sun and his legs like pillars of fire. He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land.

And he called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring. And when he called out, the seven thunders sounded. And just sort of pause here for a second.

[ 8 : 20 ] One of the things we're going to really discover, which is going to make me surprised us, is how practical the book of Revelation is. And right off the bat, it's going to be doing something very practical.

But we have to sort of understand something about the image. There's a little boy who comes to this church many weeks, most weeks. And he's like this tall. I don't know, maybe this tall.

Like tiny. And for at least like the last three months, sometimes after the service, he comes up to me. And he looks at me like this. And he says, I'm bigger than you.

I'm bigger than you. And it's very cute. I mean, here he is down here. And he has to look way up at me. And he says, I'm bigger than you. And so on one hand, we could well imagine that this little kid could go to the seaside.

And if the sea was still, he could put one foot on the land and one foot in the ocean. And that's not the image at all that the Bible is trying to portray.

[ 9 : 20 ] What the Bible is trying to portray is immensity. Is immensity. And solidity.

And a type of finality. And a type of depth and weight and deepness.

It's picturing something, a being that is so completely and utterly huge. That it's not just that his one foot is touching the land and the other foot is touching the sea.

But it's as if his foot is planted on the land like a conqueror who claims the land. And it's like the other foot is in the sea as one whose foot is claiming the sea.

That it somehow now owns or controls the sea. And in a few moments, or if you remember when Nora read, and the whole image of his reaching his right hand up to heaven, it's as if he is an immense being.

[ 10 : 19 ] An immense being. Astride the earth, the dry land, the sea, and even the heavens. He is completely and utterly immense.

And one of the things that happens if you read through the book of Revelation is that there's a constant shyness about portraying God. You might remember, if you go back and read Revelation chapter 4, which is a vision of God in heaven, you actually never see God.

All you see are colors and a throne. And then the reaction of people around God on the throne. And so it is here that the image, while on one level it's an image of an angel, it's not an image of God, but the language of the sun, the rainbow, the cloud, it's an image of glory, of shining, of brightness, of protection.

It's images which are often used of God to show that this is a mighty angel, that he's God's representative, and no matter how immense he is, that God is far more immense.

That God is far more sovereign, far deeper, far, just far more. It's part of the shyness of how Revelation portrays God.

[ 11 : 33 ] Just as later on, when you hear the voice, in the original language, actually what it does is it uses the plural for the voice, to show that the voice that speaks is God. And it makes no sense grammatically in English.

So in English they translate it as if it's singular. But in the original language, it isn't voices, it's a plural connected to the singular. And there's no English grammar that works properly.

But it's all helping to show that there's this immensity, that even the voice, when it speaks, it's like thunder. It's something which, actually, it's like if you go near a very heavy machine, if you go very near Niagara Falls, and it's almost as if you feel the sound pulsating inside your body.

And that's what's being portrayed. And here's the first practical thing, and I have to apologize for the poor grammar. I did it on Friday to try to meet a deadline, and afterwards I was thinking I should have changed the wording. But I'll show you the wording so you can fill in the thing.

Here's the first, and I'll tell you in a minute why it's so practical. Grow in me a humble, trusting knowledge of how incomparably immense and sovereign the living God truly is.

[ 12 : 45 ] Grow in me a humble, trusting knowledge of how incomparably immense and sovereign the living God truly is. It should really have been a prayer. The grammar is sort of sketchy.

I apologize for it. I needed a little bit more editing. I'll tell you in a moment how I would turn it into a prayer to make it better grammar. But here's the thing. Some of you who have been going to the church for about nine or ten years, you might remember that there was a time in our congregation when a multimillionaire attended, and his name was Tom.

He's passed away, so I can say his name. His name was Tom. And he didn't look like a multimillionaire. If you saw him, he just looked like an older guy, just wearing sort of older clothes, sit at the back of the church very quiet.

But he was a multimillionaire. And, you know, I've always thought he died about a year before we began our legal problems that culminated with us having to walk away from the building.

And I've often thought how, in an odd way, it was very kind of God to have Tom die at that time.

[ 13 : 51 ] I mean, I hope it was kind to Tom, but it was also kind to us, because it would have been very, very easy for us while we were in trouble, and even now maybe, you know, wanting to get rental space or buy something.

I mean, like Tom owned the property where the LCBO is, right over there. He owned that property. He sold that property. It used to be an empty lot just eight years ago or whatever.

He owned that property. I mean, if things had worked out a little bit different, I mean, we might have all as a congregation said, Tom, okay, we need to pray to God for him to help us. But inwardly, we're hoping that Tom is listening in to the conversation, because Tom could just give us that land, and it would hardly make a dent in his wealth.

And in fact, it would have made it very easy for us not to try to trust in God's providence, but Tom's providence. Because, you see, as it became, most people in the congregation didn't necessarily know that Tom.

I knew that he was wealthy. I also knew that he had a very, very wise policy of not tithing to us, because that would completely make everything crazy for our budgets.

[15:07] And so he gave a very modest amount. He was generous, but very, very modest in his amounts. And, you see, we would have always been aware of who the wealthiest person in the room was whenever we talked about an issue.

And here's where it's very, here's, you see, here's where grow in me a humble, trusting knowledge of how incomparably immense and sovereign the living God truly is. That, like, a lot of us struggle with, you know, maybe we have a problem right now.

We have a problem in our family. Maybe we're struggling with anxiety. Maybe we have a problem with our work. And here's the thing is, that what happens, and you've heard me talk about this before with Revelation.

I haven't talked about it for a few weeks. But part of what Revelation wants us to get into is just understand and pray into us how big God is. And most of us live most of our lives as if God is small and people are big.

As if God is small and institutions are big. As if God is small and I am big. As if God is small and money is big. As if God is small and my problems are big.

[16:19] And that's how most of us live our lives. And often, a lot of the self-help literature which people read is to try to understand how big I am compared to my problems.

And how big I am compared to my boss. And how big I am compared to my wife or my kids. And the Bible, I mean, the thing is, you know, that might work for us for a while.

Well, that might work for us for a while. But you know what? It doesn't really work. All that does is create a whole new level of anxiety.

It creates a whole new level of us looking at the world from the perspective of threats. Of other people who seem to maybe be faster, smarter, stronger, younger, better looking, better connected, more money, you know, better heritage, better future, better mentors.

And it creates a competitive world that actually just feeds anxiety. And the book of Revelation is trying to help us to understand, to pray out to God, grow in me a humble, trusting knowledge of how incomparably immense and sovereign the living God truly is.

[17:30] So we as a congregation, when we gather at our vestry, who is the richest person in the room? It's God. Who's the wisest person in the room? It's God. Who's the strongest, most powerful, most compassionate, most loving person in the room as we make that decision?

It's God. As I try to figure out things, maybe with my family or, you know, in my marriage or, you know, with other types of things that go on or any type of anxiety that I have or dealing with my bishop or whatever it is, not that I have problems in all those areas.

Don't go home and say, oh, George has problems with all those things. Please pray for me all the time. I need your prayers. But it's so easy for anxiety, for other things to come up in my life because I think God is small.

As soon as I say that, I know, okay, theologically I can't say that. Okay, that can't be right. But at an existential level, sorry, a big word, at a level of my habits, at the level of my feelings, at the level of my emotions, at the level of my images, at the level of my planning, at the level of my budget, at the level of how I go about my day, time after time after time, I live in a world, you and I live in a world, that tends to think of God, if you think of him at all, as being very, very small and smaller than the other person or the other people in the room.

And one of the most practical things that we can begin to do is to understand how big God is. See, here's how I should have done it.

[18:59] I should have said, turned it into a prayer. Living God, please grow in me a humble, trusting knowledge of how incomparably immense and sovereign you truly are.

Wouldn't that be a wonderful prayer for you to pray every day? Wouldn't that be a wonderful prayer for you or I to think of as we're dealing with a situation, whether it's a situation of success or a situation of a problem?

To say, Living God, please grow in me. As I think about this situation, as I think about the conversation, as I think about this course, as I think about my, whatever it is, Living God, please grow in me a humble, trusting knowledge of how incomparably immense and sovereign you truly are.

Now, some of you might say, George, if that's the case, how come it is that God doesn't often seem to help me? George, I've done some of those types of things, and it doesn't seem as if God helps me.

It just doesn't seem like he does help me. Well, let's see what the next text, it actually says, it continues to sort of develop this theme.

[ 20 : 11 ] Remember, this is an interlude, and the interlude is that there's all, there's just like demons and plagues that have just come, and after this, there's going to be this very, very puzzling part of an interlude which talks about how hated Christian witnesses, and then there's going to be sort of a summary statement, and then we go into these three chapters of a repicturing of Christian theology in terms of imagery and demonic, and like it just struggles.

In fact, in two weeks' time, we get this image of a whole birth of Jesus, of the devil as a dragon waiting for the baby to come out of Mary's womb so that the dragon can eat the baby.

I jokingly said I was going to do it as my Christmas Eve sermon so I could give children nightmares for years to come.

It's a completely different type of Christmas pageant, a demon about to eat the baby, and then we go into other plagues. So this is an interlude where God's speaking to us, and he's speaking to John, but by speaking to John, he's speaking to you and me.

Let's go back to verse 3. Go back to verse 2. He had a little scroll open in his hand, and he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land and called out with a loud voice like a lion roaring.

[ 21 : 38 ] Think of that. I saw David Crowder sing once live, and he has a song about roaring. Anyway, every time I see that, I can just picture him, the way he sings that song.

It's a very good song. When he called out, the seven thunders sounded, and when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down.

And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay, but that in the days of the trumpet called to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants, the prophets.

And we'll just sort of pause there for a second. Remember I said how the imagery is trying to capture the immensity of God?

And here, if you notice how God is described, it tries to capture the immensity of God, why it is so appropriate for us to pray that God would give us a humble, trusting knowledge of how incomparably immense and sovereign the living God truly is.

[ 22 : 59 ] Because, you know, look how it is. Verse 6, He who, to him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, the sea and what is in it.

And that's how God's described. And here, if you put up the next point, Andrew, here's what this text is trying to describe. Grow in me a humble, trusting knowledge that only the eternal God, who alone has created all things, speaks with finality, authority, and power.

Grow in me a humble, trusting knowledge that only the eternal God, who alone has created all things, speaks with finality, authority, and power.

Now, here's the problem. Remember I said, why is it that God doesn't seem to help us as much? Well, that's a very interesting question. And part of it is that, you know, often when we think we're asking God a question, if we look at the text, we see that the text is actually asking us to understand a whole range of things about ourselves.

[ 24 : 15 ] So, like, take this verse where God speaks, and because it portrays God as eternal and the creator, it means that he has a context to know about me and speak to me that's just bigger than mine, that's smarter and wiser than mine.

Like, you know, if we see a parent with a kid, or with children, and if we see that that parent's view is that the child should be able to determine what they eat every day, and completely and utterly determine everything about their lives, and they merely just say that they want something and they get it, we'd say that parent is spoiling the child.

Surely the parent has to say a diet of lollipops is not sufficient for healthy growth. That, you know, occasionally you have to eat vegetables or meat or, you know, or whole grains or something like that.

And we understand that the parent is supposed to have a wider, broader, deeper context for living than the child, and so that the parent's obligation for a young child is to speak into that and not obviously to ignore the child's wishes and treat the child as if they're completely clueless, but to understand the child, to notice maybe what the child is allergic to or what seems to cause them irritations, and also just to understand basic things about diet and time and everything and to act into it.

And so the portrayal here, when we said, when we prayed, give me a humble, trusting knowledge that only the eternal God, who alone has created all things, speaks with finality, authority, and power. That's what the text is inviting us to meditate upon.

[ 25 : 52 ] That at a fundamental level, that God is not just looking at me for me and my desires and my ambitions at this moment. He's looking at me from the moment of my conception to the moment of my death and into all eternity.

And that's what this text is inviting us to understand about the words in the speaking of God. And it's also challenging us to understand something else about all of this.

You see, because here's what a lot of us want with how God should speak. When I'm in trouble, what I really hope, I know that intellectually I can't say this.

Theologically, it's improper. I'm not talking about what I can write on a theology exam. I'm talking about what goes actually on between the ears, what actually goes on in the heart, what actually goes on in the will.

And what I hope is that as I pray, God will speak to this person and say, shut up. And to this person, listen to George. And to this person, give him a second chance.

[ 26 : 53 ] I've already given him a second chance. Give him another chance. And he'll speak to another person and say, and you, you have to start at, you have to give him this stuff. And you do this. And that's what we want God to do.

Or maybe I'm just far more wicked than the rest of you. But, you see, that's what we want God to do. That's, you know, when we're in trouble, we want God to speak to a whole pile of people with sonality, authority, and power.

And we also even want him to do that to us a little bit because, you know, maybe we acknowledge that we shouldn't be so snippy with our wife. We shouldn't be so, so driven with, driven to, with greed. Or we shouldn't be so consumed with envy.

Or we shouldn't be so completely and utterly consumed with bitterness and memory. So we'd sort of like God to speak into those things that I happen to find inconvenient and bad and wrong and speak to me in such a way that it goes, whoa, and it just takes that all away.

But then if I am honest, I would like him to be silent the rest of the time so I can do what I want. Or am I the only wicked and evil person here in the room?

[ 27 : 58 ] See, that's what we want. We don't actually really want an eternal God who alone has created all things who speaks with finality, authority, and power. We sort of do sometimes and other times we don't.

You see, here's the thing, is at the end of the day we want to be able to say what we think matters. You know, in, in, if, you know, a lot of people when they're trying to sort out God, they don't realize that on one level they need to recuse themselves.

I hope I've said the word correctly. Like if a case went before a judge and, and it turned out that either the judge or maybe the judge's spouse had a direct input into that particular thing.

I don't know, maybe it was a case about oil, you know, something to do with oil prices or something, and the judge's husband worked in the oil industry, then that judge should recuse themselves from the judgment because they'd be, have to be worried about having a biased opinion.

And, and yet often when it is, and we come to thinking about God, we don't realize that on one level we have a very biased opinion. Because on one level I would like God to speak all those direct things to all those other people and to me and my problems that I have determined are my

problems, but the rest of the time I don't want him to do any of those things in my life.

[ 29 : 10 ] And so it makes it hard for me even to read the Bible and see it. And it's hard for me to honestly assess it and listen into it. Remember earlier on in the beginning, you probably don't remember, I prayed the beginning of the sermon that God would not harden our hearts but soften our hearts, that our hearts would be open to the truth that he will speak to our minds and hearts and wills, that we would be good soil, that his word will come into our lives and bear fruit for his glory.

And so, you know, I should have written it this way, I should have said, eternal God, who alone has created all things, please grow in me a humble, trusting knowledge that you speak with finality, authority, and power.

Isn't that a good prayer to pray? Eternal God, who alone has created all things, I'm remembering before God that he's eternal and he's created all things.

Eternal God, who alone has created all things, please grow in me a humble, trusting knowledge that you speak with finality, authority, and power. Now, some of you might say, George, that's very, very interesting, but, you know, surely it's the case that people have abused scripture and abused religion for their own power and advancement.

It's very interesting. I had two things happen to me yesterday, separated, obviously, by a few hours. Most Saturday mornings I go to a Starbucks to try to finish my sermon and there was a fellow who was there that I've attempted to have.

[ 30 : 44 ] He's a very regular fellow at this particular one and I attempted to have a bit of a just say hi to him. I've had two other interactions with him where he was sort of mildly hostile to me and I thought, if I see him all the time, I try to be friendly again and say hi and he immediately said, what are you doing?

He knew what I was doing. I mean, I had my Bible open and he knew I was a Christian. He said, what are you doing? And I said, well, I'm working on my sermon for tomorrow. He said, ah, social engineering with a very loud voice, by the way.

In fact, actually, it was a very interesting challenge for me to, because I, gosh, I, okay, I ended up having this conversation where he was low level hostility towards me with a very, very loud voice on the complete diagonal side from the Starbucks so that the whole restaurant could hear.

This was a very good lesson for me when he finally was quiet for me to ask, is God bigger than this guy in this room? Can I grow in a humble, trusty knowledge that God is the biggest guy in this room and that it's not me, thank you?

Anyway, and, you know, he was, you know, very, very direct. It's all just social engineering. That's all it is. It's just you manipulating people and Christians manipulating people to get them to do the types of things that you want them to do.

[ 32 : 03 ] That's all it's about. And I kept trying to say, stammer, this was not one of my great moments, okay, in terms of witnessing in a Starbucks. I kept trying to, all I could say to him over and over and over again is, I'd love to sit down with you sometime and have a coffee and talk about it.

I said it about three times and he would just shout over me, you know, in terms of what the, you know, the Bible is and it's just social engineering. He didn't shout but he was very loud.

Everybody in the restaurant knew and I was trying to focus on him but I knew everybody was looking at the two of us in the Starbucks. And, but like, here, look again at verse 7. Look again at verse 7.

But in the, sorry, maybe up to, verse 6, and swore by him who lives forever and ever who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it and the sea and what is in it that there would be no more delay.

But then the day of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled just as he announced to his servants, the prophets. Now, in the original language, you can sort of maybe get an idea about this but it becomes far more clear in the original language.

[ 33 : 13 ] The word fulfilled is actually a word which is regularly throughout the book of Revelation and it's a telos word in terms of end. And the book of Revelation regularly talks about something which is sort of lost to the modern mind or the postmodern mind.

The end idea of a telos or an end of something moving towards something. That things aren't just like at the very, very heart of the modern and postmodern imagination is the image of evolution. And on one level, the image of evolution, the inappropriate one is we want to try to think that there's some type of inevitable progress to the better. But really, that's always misunderstanding evolution

because at the very heart of it is just chance.

Pure and complete and utter chance. Time and chance creates everything that there is. And so, and even in science and scientific explanation, they want to get away from the language of purpose and look at causality.

They don't want to look at the idea that there's something from the future drawing things to itself or that things are moving towards a purpose which is determined by something other than the human being.

[ 34 : 25 ] We just want to look at causality. But the book of Revelation, sorry, that was a bit of a philosophical aside. I hope I didn't lose you with that. Sorry. This idea that there's a purpose, that there's an end.

And so, it says here in the text that in the day of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled. It's talking about this idea that God is bringing things to an end and that this end will be a fulfillment, that what the end was for will be accomplished.

And then the word announced is actually the exact same word that's used throughout the rest of the New Testament for proclaiming the gospel. It's evangelon. It's a word of evangelism.

And it's the same as used in the book of Acts when it's talking about Jesus. It's the same word. It's the same basic idea. Hidden in English but very present in the original language.

And maybe if you get familiar with reading the Bible, you might start to realize that often that word announced has an idea of proclaiming of good news. And the good news is just never Canada is, you know, last night was number two in medal count in the Winter Olympics.

[ 35 : 36 ] That's not the good news. It's always about Jesus, about who he is and what he's done. Here's, if you put up the next point, it's this. Grow in me a humble trusting knowledge that the person and work of Jesus is central to the end God has unfailingly willed.

That's what the text is saying. Grow in me a humble trusting knowledge that the person and work of Jesus is central to the end God has unfailingly willed.

Now, how does this fit in with my friend's concern? I'm calling him my friend. My friend's concern about social engineering. You see, the fact is that for a lot of us when we think of God and we think of the immensity of God, we naturally think of God being big as a zero-sum game.

See, what we're doing, you know what a zero-sum game is? For those of us who are really old, remember when there were these things in playgrounds called teeter-totters or seesaws? Young people who've just grown up with helmets and hockey pads just to walk everywhere.

There used to be a time when people were crazy and parents didn't care if their kids had concussions and all that stuff and they had tall slides without proper armrests and things called teeter-totters.

[ 36 : 53 ] It was a piece of wood on a balance on a piece of metal and one kid would get on one end and the other kid would get on the other end. One kid goes up, the other goes down and back and forward and kids could have fun doing such completely and utterly unsafe things back in the day.

And so, but for a lot of us, because you see, really, we live in a world where we think that God is small and therefore, if God is small, other things are big and we want to be really big and we think of it, we think in terms of if somebody else gets bigger than me then I'm actually getting smaller and that's a bad thing and we see the world in a zero-sum way, as a teeter-totter, seesaw type of way and so, when we hear of God getting immense, we worry that we're getting small and there's good reasons for people to worry about that.

There's no denying that there have been ways of portraying the Christian faith which make it look as if God getting big means that you are an itty-bitty little person who shouldn't think about this, this is for matters bigger than you and you just need to suffer and somehow we never notice that the person speaking that doesn't seem they have to suffer because somehow or another that gets blinded to us and religions like Islam, it almost seems as God gets greater and greater and greater that the individual and the person seems to matter littler and littler and littler and so, you know, it's not only projection but the way that religion often is portrayed it's a very valid thing for people to worry that this talk about God getting bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger is going to mean that I get smaller and smaller and smaller until I'm squashed but this language of fulfilled and of the gospel language of announcing turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 8 2 Corinthians chapter 8 and we're going to look at verses 8 and 9 2 Corinthians chapter 8 verses 8 and 9 and this is you see the fact of the matter is is that the gospel changes everything what is

Islam does not have a savior it has law and submission a lot of religion a lot of Christianity is just mere religion which just merely has rituals and laws and rules and that's all it has and it's lost sight of the savior but the very very heart there is no there's no fulfilling of God's will apart from the person work of Jesus there's no end of God apart from the person work of Jesus there's no immensity of God without the person work of Jesus there's no finality to God's word without the person and the work of Jesus the gospel changes everything and look at this beautiful way here about how the gospel is portrayed for what it is that Jesus does first on the cross verse 8 of 2 Corinthians chapter 8 I say this not as a command but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine verse 9 good verse to memorize for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor so that you by his poverty might become rich for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor so that you by his poverty might become rich the very very heart of whatever unfailing end that God has willed at the very central of his purposes is the person the work of Jesus and he came and made himself poor and you can't be any poorer than dead I helped my daughter very one of my daughters and her husband move they had to move and they'd just been married a very short period of time they have hardly any stuff that can be moved like in a couple of trips in a minivan and I cheered them all up afterwards I said you know we should take a picture of this and in 10 years time you can try to take a picture of all the stuff you're going to owe in 10 years time own compared to this stuff and then I said of course eventually you get so old you move into a senior's residence and you're back down to this amount of stuff that sits in a minivan and then you die and in the casket you have just as much money as Bill Gates the father of the fellow said thank you for cheering me up pastor that was a very encouraging word [ 41 : 34 ] I have the gift of encouragement as you discover week in and week out but here's the thing is that you can't get any poorer than dead Jesus came to die he came to die that I might be rich in the father's love and in his eternal purpose the gospel changes everything I would rephrase this as a prayer by saying dear God please grow in me a humble trusting knowledge that the person and work of Jesus is central to the end you unfailingly will dear God please grow in me a humble trusting knowledge that the person and work of Jesus is central to the end you unfailingly will I see by my time I should let's just look at these last few verses very very slow just in closing turn back to Revelation chapter 10

Revelation 10 let's just look very quickly in closing at the last few verses verses 8 through 11 and here's what it says then the voice that I heard from heaven spoke to me again saying go take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land so I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll and he said to me take it take and eat it it will make your stomach bitter but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey and I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it it was sweet as honey in my mouth but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter and I was told you must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings here's how I would summarize this point Andrew give me a humble trusting knowledge of the Bible God's word written as I read it and memorize it give me a humble trusting knowledge of the Bible

God's word written as I read it and memorize it it should be an and not an and and and I I'm going to change it into a prayer in a few moments it's talking about the very words of God and it's not and it's basically it's it's telling us to eat the word and we eat the word by reading the Bible and by memorizing it and and it's telling us that as we as we and it's very interesting to think of the whole progression because remember it begins with the first point about growing in us a humble growing me a humble trusting knowledge of how incomparably immense and sovereign you truly are and then the text moves us to say grow in me grow eternal God who alone has created all things please grow in me a humble trusting knowledge that you speak with finality authority and power and then it sort of moves us to say dear God please grow in me a humble trusting knowledge that the personal work of Jesus is central to the end you unfailingly will and then in that context we now come to grow in me dear God please grow in me a humble trusting knowledge of your word written the Bible as I read it and memorize it dear God please grow in me a humble trusting knowledge of your word written the Bible as I read it and memorize it and as we read and memorize the Bible mindful of the immensity of God and it helps to keep pushing us to understand the immensity of God the immensity of grace the centrality of the gospel how the gospel changes everything as it grips us as the gospel grips us it changes everything and here we see that it's going to change our

expectations that as the Bible comes into us there's going to be a mixture of bitterness and sweetness the constant challenge to the Christianity in the postmodern or modern West is to invent a form of Christianity which is only sweet and that will take its hipster version it'll take its soccer mom version it'll take its immigrant version it'll take its old money version it will take its athletic version it'll take its charismatic version its Catholic version its evangelical version but there's a constant pressure in the modern and postmodern West to try to conceive of a Christianity which is only sweet and this text is saying as we read the Bible and memorize it the word will be sweet to us but there will be some bitterness and upsetness in our stomach well what does that mean well because you see as the word comes into us it's going to challenge us it's going to challenge us like it did today why is it that I want

God to speak with finality and power to tell other people to shut up but I don't want it to speak into my life in a whole lot of ways why is it I want it to speak into finality maybe with that bank or that that loan officer about money but I don't want the word to speak into my life about money why is it like and it's going to tell us that maybe rather than that that fellow who tried to embarrass me in front of the Starbucks that rather than viewing him as an enemy I should view him as a friend like that you see what I mean like that even that that would happen to me that in fact it's changing and transforming my expectations it's teaching me to understand that there's going to be a type of suffering that might befall me as a Christian which comes from the sweetness of the word of God that there's going to be times at night where I am upset and anxious and as Philippians tell me that's an invitation for me to pray into it and to pray into understanding the immensity of God and the finality of his word and trust in it just

[ 47 : 31 ] I don't have my bulletin up here today but if you look in the bulletin every week I provide something in the bulletin there's something called going deeper which is a way this week it's like looking at Ezekiel and Psalm 29 and 1 Peter 4 to give you some background to help we understand Revelation 10 and there's another thing in there called growing in grace which tries to show us a Bible verse so we can memorize every week it tries to turn part of the text into a prayer today I could do no better than use a prayer that Cramner wrote almost 600 years ago it's called the second colic for Advent couldn't do any better than that I just thought I'll let Cramner speak and some attitudes and it's all part of how we get the word into our lives let's stand let's pray living God please grow in me please grow in each person who is here a humble trusting knowledge of how incomparably immense and sovereign you truly are eternal

God who alone has created all things please grow in me and please grow in us a humble trusting knowledge that you speak with finality authority and power dear God please grow in me and please grow in us a humble trusting knowledge that the person and work of Jesus is central to the end you unfailingly will we thank you father that as you become more immense in our lives we do not become smaller we become more human we become more free we can have more courage and more perseverance and more patience father grow in me grow in us a humble trusting knowledge of your immensity and of the immensity of grace dear God please grow in me and please grow in us a humble trusting knowledge of your word written the Bible as we read it and memorize it together and we ask this in the name of Jesus Amen