

# For His Pleasure May 26, 2019

## Introduction: The Creator God

- Our text for this morning is Revelation 4:11
- I want to tell you about our dog, Lippy. We adopted her. It was our choice. We didn't need her. In other words, we are no less "complete" without her. But she pleases us. She blesses us. We decide how to raise her. We chose her leash, her collar, her food, and her fence. We own her. She sleeps on our bed, usually right between Donna and me.
- It may sound almost sacrilegious to say, but God does not need us. God is no less God without us. Yet he decided to create the world and he created us...because he wanted to!!
- Revelation 4:11 - *Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created. (ESV)*  
*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. (KJV)*
- Discuss some of the attributes of God (all of these are easy to defend biblically):
  - Aseity - God is self-existent and self-sufficient and has no need of human beings or creation.
  - Blessedness - God delights fully in himself and in all that reflects his character.
  - Freedom - God does whatever he pleases.
  - Eternity - God has always existed, having no beginning and no end, and experiencing no succession of moments.
  - Goodness - God is the final standard of all good, and all he is and does is worthy of approval.
  - Righteousness - God is the final standard of all that is right, and he always acts in accordance with what is right.
  - Omnipotence/Sovereignty - God is able to do all his holy will.
  - Love - God eternally gives of himself to others. All he does he does in love for his people!
- The attributes of God are like the many facets of a beautiful diamond. God is all of these things at the same time.
- Some of these attributes (and there are many more) surprise or even shock us when we hear them, because we are trying to force God into a human mold.
- But God is in a category all his own. In Psalm 50:21 God rebukes the wicked by saying "*In your imagination you thought I was like you.*" But he's not. He is holy. He is all together good.
- We and everything else are created. God is the creator. God is the great determiner of all things. As creator, he does what he pleases.

## Our arrogance in challenging God

- Back to the text. This is why God is worthy to receive glory, honor, and power. He didn't need to create the world or us. He did it for his own pleasure.
- Yet we humans make it a habit of questioning and challenging our creator!

- How arrogant of human beings when they sit in judgment of God!! An example - Richard Dawkins, in his book *The God Delusion*, is famous for this quote: **“The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.”**
- If I could challenge Dawkins, I’d ask “By what standard are you making these claims about God? If there is no God and, therefore, no ultimate source of truth, who sets the standard anyway?”
- Perhaps the Dawkins quote is one of the more edgy, in your face, fist-waving challenges of God’s rightful authority over the universe. But, as I said a minute ago, we humans make it a habit of questioning our creator. How do we do this? One way to frame the answer is to use the 3 categories of adoration expressed in Revelation 4:11. In other words, We try to steal his glory, honor, and power.

### **Glory** (Greek Doxa) pronounced DOX-ah

- Means splendor or brightness. Think of Jesus at the transfiguration when *“his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.”* Matthew 17:2
- But there is more to this word. Embedded in the meaning is the quality of excellence, and because God is excellent, this means his judgment and his rules are excellent, perfect, glorious, pure. His view of things is flawless, “shining like the sun and white as light.”
- On the other hand, our view of things, our judgment, is flawed and nowhere near pure.
- Isaiah 55:6-9 -
  - 6 *“Seek the LORD while he may be found;*
  - call upon him while he is near;*
  - 7 *let the wicked forsake his way,*
  - and the unrighteous man his thoughts;*
  - let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him,*
  - and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*
  - 8 *For my thoughts are not your thoughts,*
  - neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.*
  - 9 *For as the heavens are higher than the earth,*
  - so are my ways higher than your ways*
  - and my thoughts than your thoughts.*
- We frequently question God’s thoughts and ways as made clear in his word. I am often shocked by the opinions expressed in social media, yes by unbelievers, but often by those who profess belief as Christians. Just a few of the current controversies:
  - Defending a woman’s right to abortion even though God’s word, and even science and reason, all make it clear a baby in the womb is a human. God says “Thou shall not murder.”
  - Redefining marriage in ways other than the biblical ethic of one man, one woman covenanted together for life. Instead our culture celebrates homosexual unions and glorifies the homosexual lifestyle.

- Promiscuity. Choosing to have children out of wedlock.
- Making a mockery of God's design of two genders, male and female. Our popular culture sees gender on a spectrum, and they distinguish between the body, a person's gender identity, and a person's gender expression. By last count at least 17 genders and as high as 63 genders have been identified.
- Paul, in Romans 1, says this about God's glory and man's sinful tendencies:  
*21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.*
- It was true 2000 years ago when Paul penned these words, and it's still true today. We steal God's glory by ignoring God's standards and setting up our own idols.
- Because God's judgment and God's ways are supreme, he is worthy to receive *all* the glory!

### **Honor** (Greek time) pronounced tee-MAY

- Has to do with the value we place on someone or something. God is to be honored because he is the Creator. He is perfect. He is the final standard for all that is good, and he always acts in accordance with what is right. He is altogether holy and good.
- We dishonor God when we think that our own righteousness, our own "honorable" behavior, instead of his saving grace, can earn us salvation and eternal life.
- In a recent Lifeway survey of Americans, 69% said they believe most people are basically good, even though they might sin once in a while. But that's not what the Bible says!
- Listen to Romans 3:10-12 -  
*10 as it is written:  
 "None is righteous, no, not one;  
 11 no one understands;  
 no one seeks for God.  
 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;  
 no one does good,  
 not even one."*
- We are so messed up, it's inaccurate to say that our choice to believe was our own. Listen to Ephesians 2:4-5 -  
*4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—*

- A frequent metaphor is used to illustrate salvation, that of a life preserver. We were drowning in our sins and God, in his mercy, just when we are about to go down for good, throws us a life preserver. We reach out and grab it, and so we are saved.
- Let me ask you...can dead people grab life preservers? It would be more accurate, scripturally, to say we drowned and we were laying dead on the bottom, but God pulled us up from the bottom and breathed life into us.
- Back to the verses in Ephesians...dead people can't make choices! Even our ability to believe is a gift from God. Why did he do this for us? Because he wanted to! It's his pleasure to do so! That's the good news in this sermon. God saved us, not because of anything good or beautiful in us, but simply because it pleased him to save us!!!
- Because God and God's grace alone saves us, he is worthy to receive *all* the honor!

**Power** (Greek *dunamis*) pronounced DOO-nam-is

- This, of course, has to do with strength, ability, but especially the power residing in a person or thing by virtue of its nature.
- God is omnipotent. His will is supreme, and he can quell any rebellion or any challenge to his power.
- God grants us freedom in our choices, but true believers in their hearts, souls, and minds pray "Thy will, not my will, be done."
- We frequently resist his will, even though it is foolish for us to do so.
- Recall the story of the ancient ruler of Babylon, King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:
  - God punished the apostate tribe of Judah by appointing the Babylonians to take them captive.
  - Even though he was a pagan monarch, God seemed to favor King Nebuchadnezzar. He allowed him to witness miracles involving Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (interpreting dreams, being delivered from the fiery furnace).
  - But Nebuchadnezzar was proud. He built Babylon to the point that it's famous hanging gardens have been deemed one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. It was an amazing city. Nebuchadnezzar's image was everywhere and his name was inscribed on the bricks that made the huge wall that surrounded the city.
  - Through a dream interpreted by Daniel, God revealed to Nebuchadnezzar that God would bring him low, causing him to suffer from insanity for 7 years.
  - About a year after Daniel made this prediction, Nebuchadnezzar was standing on his roof overlooking the city and he said to himself "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?" At that moment Nebuchadnezzar was struck by God with insanity. "He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws."
  - At the end of the seven year period predicted by Daniel his sanity returned as quickly as it had left him. Here is Nebuchadnezzar's testimony recorded in Daniel 4:34-37:

*34 At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and*

honored him who lives forever, for **his dominion is an everlasting dominion,**  
and **his kingdom endures from generation to generation;**

35 all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,  
and **he does according to his will among the host of heaven**  
and **among the inhabitants of the earth;**

and **none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"**

36 At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me. My counselors and my lords sought me, and I was established in my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me. 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

- Nebuchadnezzar could have been very upset with God for taking so much away from him.
- Whenever anyone in the Bible went head to head with God, God always won. Job, Jacob, Elijah, Isaiah and dozens of others discovered that his dominion is an everlasting dominion.
- This story and the conclusions reached by King Nebuchadnezzar remind me of these familiar words in Philippians 2:12-13: *"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."*
- When we grumble and complain, are we not telling God that he's making a mistake for allowing difficulties into our lives? Are we not, in essence, trying to steal his dominion?
- We cooperate with God, "with fear and trembling," because he will have his way no matter what. Why? Because it pleases him to do so!
- He is worthy to receive all the power!!

## Conclusion

- I'll read Revelation 4:11 again: *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. (KJV)*
- Jesus said, in Matthew 11:6 *"Blessed is the one who is not offended in me."*
- It is indeed a blessing not to be offended by God's rightful claims over his creation and our lives.
  - If we allow him all glory, by not resisting his commands and the way he has ordered the universe;
  - if we allow him all honor, by realizing our salvation is 100% due to him and 0% due to us;
  - and if we allow him all power by not resisting or regretting his will in our lives **it will go well for us.** Not only in the here and now, but for all eternity!
- One last thought. Romans 8:28 says "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those **who are called according to his purpose.**" It's his purpose, his will, his pleasure that matter. And we are the beneficiaries if we love him!!