

Gratitude For Grace

1 Timothy 1:12-17

Pastor John Miller

I want to read the passage (verses 12-17), and then we're going to go back and unpack it together. Follow with me beginning in verse 12. Paul says, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; 13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. 17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

I want you to back up to verse 11. Paul says, "According to the glorious gospel," notice that statement, "of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust." Beginning about verse 3, of chapter 1, down to verse 11, Paul had been warning Timothy that false teachers needed to be dealt with. He charged Timothy to deal with false teachers. These false teachers were legalists and were teaching the law. They really didn't know what they believed or what they were teaching. They were legalistic, teaching the law, and Paul told him to confront them. Go back with me. I just want to have you peek at it rather than me try to relate it. In 1 Timothy 1:3 it says, "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine," so that's what Paul was doing. He was charging Timothy to stand up to the false teachers and command that they teach no other doctrine. He began to describe the false teachers and the legalism that they were promulgating in the teaching that they were into.

Then, come down to verse 11. Paul talks about "...the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust." So, he's warning them about the false teachers, and he comes to the end of that section and mentions in verse 11 two things: the glorious gospel, and the fact that it was committed to his trust. When Paul mentions the gospel, he thinks of the glory of the gospel, the power of the gospel, the wonder of the gospel. I love what Paul said in Romans 1, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek," or Gentile. Paul gloried in the gospel, and he calls it here the "glorious gospel."

What happens now in verses 12-17 is that Paul has a parenthesis. This is a parenthetical section. It's a pause. Some see it kind of like a little detour because Paul mentions the gospel and then, as I said in verse 11, he also mentions that it was "committed to my trust." The concept there is that God had given the gospel to Paul to guard, protect, and proclaim. The same thing is true of us. The gospel is a sacred trust. God has given it to us to guard and protect. That's why in the book of Jude, "...earnestly contend for the faith which was once," and

for all, “delivered unto the saints.” There’s no messing with the gospel. You can’t add to it, take away from it, dilute it, or water it down. We need to preach the gospel, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He rose from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that sinners can be saved by faith in Jesus Christ. The gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; and salvation comes through faith in believing, trusting, and putting your faith in what Christ did. That’s the gospel. Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. By grace alone—not by works—by faith alone—not by works—and by Christ alone—not by my good deeds or my righteous acts.

Paul had been given this as a trust—this glorious gospel—and so have we. What happened was as Paul began to think about what the gospel did in his life, and that God saved him by the gospel and by His grace, not by law which he had been talking about in the previous verses, but God saved Paul by His grace through the gospel, and we are to preach that gospel. So, what he does is a little detour when he starts talking about himself, where he begins to describe his personal relationship with the gospel and its saving power in his life. This is very autobiographical as Paul begins to describe himself. He uses a lot of personal pronouns, and I like to break this section up (verses 12-17) with four points.

The first point is that Paul was thankful for God’s grace in his present life. We are actually going to see Paul’s life: present, past, as a pattern, and then he breaks forth into praise or doxology at the end of the section. Note in verse 12 Paul’s present relationship to the grace of God and to the gospel of Jesus Christ. He says, “And I thank Christ Jesus,” emphasizing that He is the Mashiach, the Messiah; Jesus, meaning that He is the Savior; and Lord, meaning that He is God. “...who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.”

There are three things that Paul is thankful for in verse 12. First of all, I want you to note that he’s thankful. You know, if you’ve been redeemed, if you’ve been forgiven, if you’ve been saved by the grace of God, you should be thankful. Amen? If God has forgiven your sins, and this is a real fitting passage tonight, by the way, for communion because we’re doing this to remember Jesus died for us and we’ve been forgiven. If you have been forgiven, if you have a graced heart, you should be thankful. By the way, the word “thank” is tied in with the concept of thinking, so when we think about God’s grace and God’s mercy, our salvation, and what He’s done for us, we respond in thanksgiving. Everything we do is a thanksgiving, worship, and praise to God. I want to encourage you tonight to give thanks to the Lord for His grace and for the power of the gospel in your own life.

Paul is thankful for three things. Let’s look at it in verse 12. First, that our Lord Jesus Christ has enabled me. I love that concept. He has enabled me. The idea there is that God had called and equipped Paul. Now, you can look at it in two aspects: 1) to live the Christian life, and 2) to serve the Lord. I remember as a young Christian having people say, “I don’t think I can be a Christian. It’s too hard. I can’t be good enough. I can’t be holy enough,” and “The Christian life is just too difficult for me.” My answer is yes, that’s true. It’s impossible. The Christian life is impossible to be lived in your own power, in your own strength, under your own energy; so if you’re here tonight, and you’ve been trying to be a Christian, stop trying to be a Christian. You

say, "Did Pastor just say that?" Yes, I did. This isn't what used to be called the passivist mentality where you just let go and let God, but it is actively saying to God, "I need You. I want to yield to You. I want to surrender to You. I want You to fill me with Your Spirit."

I remember a crisis moment in my early Christian years, too, where I concluded, "I can't live the Christian life." I kept stumbling and falling. I went home one night and knelt by my bed (I was still living at home with my parents) and said, "God, if You don't do it, it won't get done." I was serious. "God, I can't live the Christian life if You don't help me, if You don't give me the ability. If You don't give me the strength, I can't do this." That was the turning point in my Christian life. I began to sense God's power and God's strength and God's energy. Now, it's something that has to be an ongoing commitment and surrender. It doesn't happen just once. Every day, throughout the day, you gotta say, "Lord, help me to resist temptation. Help me to show love and Your grace to others. Help me to have a hunger for Your Word. Help me to live the Christian life. Help me to have thoughts that are pleasing to You and words that honor You." When it comes to the Christian life, I believe that God enables us. That's what that word means. Some translations actually have "strengthens me" or "gives me the power."

How about Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Now, "all things" there is in the context of God's purpose and plan and calling for my life. It doesn't mean I can jump over the Empire State Building or I can fly without an airplane, but I can do all the things that God has called me to do. I believe that this principle is biblical that God's calling is God's enabling. If God has called you, God will enable you. It also applies, very, very fittingly and perhaps even more so in the context, to your ministry—what God has called you to do. A lot of people ask me, "How do I know what God's called me to do?" Well, God will give you the ability. God will give you a gift. Somebody comes and says, "God's called me to sing." "Let me hear you sing. No. God has not called you to sing." "Well, yes He has! Really, God's called me to sing." "Well, if He did, then I think He would give you a voice. He has not called you to torture the body of Christ, He's called you to bless the body of Christ; and you will bless the church by not singing, okay? At least, just make a joyful noise unto the Lord with everyone else." I mean, if God's called you, God will give you the gift.

How do I know if God's called me to teach the Bible? Well, then, God will give you a gift and an ability to teach the Bible. How do I know if God's called me to teach children's ministry? Well, God will give you not only the gift to teach children, but He'll give you a love for children. If He hasn't given you a love for children, then you ought not to be in the children's ministry. I like to think of this as God's enabling, that God strengthens me. By the way, verse 12 in the Greek starts with the word "thanks," "Thanks I have to our Lord Jesus Christ who hath strengthened me." In the Greek, as I've mentioned many times, the first word in the sentence is there for emphasis. It indicates it's emphatic, so Paul was thankful that God enabled him.

The second thing he was thankful for was that God "counted me faithful," again, in light of his ministry. Now, this obviously is a reference to that God knew He could trust Paul. The word "faithful" there means that He could trust me, that He could commit the gospel to me, and that I would be faithful. Do you know what God requires of you? That you simply be faithful, that you

be trustworthy. Some render that statement there “trustworthy,” that you not proselyte the gospel, that you not use it for your own glory or advancement, that you don’t preach the gospel for gain but that you do it for the glory of God. So, I was enabled by God—given the strength and the ability—and that He counted me faithful.

The third thing that Paul says he’s thankful for (and we should be, too), He put me into the ministry. Paul might be thinking of his apostolic ministry, his preaching ministry, but he did use an interesting word for “ministry” in the Greek. It’s the word that we get our word “deacon” from. The word *diakonia*. It’s a more general concept, and it just means service. When we use the word “minister,” that word actually means “servant.” It’s not a person that’s above others and others serve, but it’s a person that’s under others and that they serve those people. The word “deacon,” by the way, the word that’s translated from the Greek, actually carries the idea of through dust. It has the idea of moving rapidly and stirring up dust, which is a pretty bizarre concept. It means that you’re busy serving. You’re so busy serving that you’re stirring up dust. You’re just running here, running there, you’re just so busy that the dust is just kind of flying all over because you’re just so busy moving around serving the Lord. The conveyed idea for us is that He called me into service. He called me into ministry. It could be that Paul was thinking of his preaching and gospel ministry in context, but I want to make something perfectly clear—every Christian is a minister. You may not be called to stand in a pulpit. You may not be in full-time Christian vocational work, but you are called to the ministry. Wherever God has put you, that is your ministry, and you need to do it faithfully and share the gospel there. We’re all called to be servants and minister.

This is Paul’s present and he was thankful for that, but then Paul mentions his past in the first part of verse 13. He says, “Who was before a blasphemer,” now, this is the reason why Paul was so thankful for the gospel and for what it had done in his own life—enabling him, counting him faithful, and putting him in the ministry—because in his past he was (before, past tense) a blasphemer, a persecutor, and King James has “injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.” Notice these three things about Paul’s sinful past before he was converted. I was a blasphemer. The word “blasphemer” means slander, and it has the idea of actually slandering God or slandering men. The word is used both ways. If you say bad things about God, you’re blaspheming God. If you say bad things about people, you’re slandering people. Now, Paul was a religious Jew. He was a Pharisee. He was orthodox in his Judaism, so he’s probably not talking about the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which we know to be the God of our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ. He’s probably alluding to his reconverted days when he hated Jesus. Yes, Paul, who was at this time Saul, hated Christ; and we’re going to see that in the text. He was the leader of the Hate Christ Club on his high school campus. He hated Christians, and he hated Christ.

Remember when Paul was saved on the road to Damascus and the Lord spoke from heaven, “Why do you persecute Me?” “Who art thou, Lord, that I might serve thee.” “I am Jesus whom you persecute.” He was going after Christians because of his hatred for Christ, and he thought he was doing the Lord a service. Paul was a blasphemer, and he was a persecutor. We know that he hated Christians. He was making savage of the church. When Paul got saved he came

to church, and all the Christians ran out of the church! “Ahhhhh! Saul’s here!” They thought that they would be arrested. He’s kind of like Casper the Friendly Ghost, no one wanted to be around him, you know. He walks into church, “Ahhhhh!” People freak out and all go running. Finally, Barnabas got ahold of Paul and brought him. He said, “Now, look, calm down. He really truly got saved. He’s a Christian. He’s not here to arrest you. He’s not going to throw you in prison. He’s one of us now.” He had to talk everybody down, mellow them out, and get them to accept him because he was so hostile and so violent.

I know that many of us tonight have had sinful pasts, some worse than others. If we had a sin testimony service, we would be freaked out by who you’re sitting next to right now. You might be sitting next to a mass murderer or something like that, some really wicked person, but saved by the grace of God. “And such were some of you: but ye are washed,” and now you’re forgiven. You can imagine, I don’t think any of us were actually killing Christians. Paul could’ve stood up in a church service and said, “Yeah, I used to kill Christians, but God saved me by His grace.” People would go, “Wow!” We love testimonies, too. By the way, testimonies are powerful. Testimonies can be used by God—what you were, what God has done in your life, and what you’ve become. Very simply, your past, your present, what God is going to do in your life, and God’s doing in your life.

Paul says, “Look, I was a blasphemer, and I was a persecutor.” Then it says, “...and injurious,” an interesting translation of that word. It actually means that he liked to hurt people. We would actually use the word “bully.” He actually took great pleasure in beating people up. Think about that. No wonder Paul was amazed by the grace of God. He was like John Newton who wrote the hymn “Amazing Grace,” How sweet the sound/that saved a wretch like me/I once was lost, but now am found/Was blind but now I see. So, I was a blasphemer, I was a persecutor, and I hurt people. I used to kill people.

Remember when Stephen was being stoned? The people stoning Stephen laid down their coats by the foot of a man named Saul, and Paul said, “I consented unto their death.” He says, “...but I obtained mercy,” and there’s the change. So, his present, he was enabled, he was faithful, and he was put into the ministry. His past, he was “...a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy,” so God showed mercy on Saul of Tarsus, and God shows mercy on us by His grace, “Because I did it ignorantly in unbelief,” which is interesting. He was religious. He was zealous, and he was sincere; but he was sincerely wrong. A lot of people today think that as long as you are sincere, God will approve; but you have to be right. You can be sincerely wrong or deceived, and he was sincerely wrong and deceived.

We move now to the third aspect of Paul’s testimony, from his present, from his past, and now to his life as a pattern. This is the crux of the passage (end of verse 13 to verse 16), “I obtained mercy.” God did not give Saul what he deserved. God showed mercy to him, so God’s love and grace and mercy, “because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.” Then he says, “And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant,” (verse 14) and it resulted in my life in “faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.” When he speaks about the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have mercy (mentioned in verse 13) and grace (mentioned in verse 14). Mercy is God not giving us what

we deserve. Grace is God giving us what we don't deserve, and it all comes to us because of God's love. When God is merciful and gracious, it's because He's a God of love. This word he uses in verse 14, "exceeding abundant," means a great overflowing. It's kind of like the Niagara Falls.

I have never been to the Niagara Falls, and I hear that it's unbelievable to witness. Think of all that water just dumping over the Niagara Falls and how long that water has been going, you know? Isn't that amazing? That's a picture of the grace of God. Grace upon grace, the Bible says, so God's grace cannot be exhausted. God's grace cannot be depleted. God's grace is like the Niagara Falls and beyond—it's infinite, it's eternal. God's grace is greater than all of our sin. No matter how deep your sin, God's grace is greater still. As you study this passage tonight, you're reminded that there is no sin or sinner too far gone that can't be forgiven and transformed and changed by the grace of God. Isn't that an amazing thought? God's grace can change anybody, and Paul's going to use himself as an example here, kind of a prototype or proof that if God can save me, God can save anyone. He kind of stood as the trophy of God's grace and an example to encourage us that God can save anyone. So, I had this overflowing, this overabundance of the grace of God, that resulted in my life in bringing about "...faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." You have mercy, grace, faith, and you have love, Paul's faith and love.

Then he comes to "This is a faithful saying," in verse 15. That's a phrase that is found only in the pastoral epistles—1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. It appears five times (we'll look at them as we go through them), but it appears here in 1 Timothy 1:15, 1 Timothy 3:1, 1 Timothy 4:9, 2 Timothy 2:11, and Titus 3:8, this statement of, "This is a faithful saying." What does that statement mean? It means that this is a statement that is true. This is a statement that you can take to the bank. This is a statement that you can bank your life upon. It's rock solid. It's true. Notice what he says, "and worthy of all acceptation," or acceptance. It's important that you not only stand on it, you believe and accept it as true. Here's the statement, "that Christ Jesus came into the world to," do what? "save sinners," isn't that awesome?

Now, if you're a sinner, and you are, that should be music to your ears, "...that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;" then Paul makes this amazing statement, "of whom I am chief." "Huh, me Chief Big Sinner." Interesting in English, chief means number one, numero uno. "I'm the biggest sinner of the bunch!" You think, How could that be? Because he was religious and hated Christians, and he persecuted Christ, so Paul says...and, this is not hyperbole. It's hard for me to grasp and understand, but this Paul had such an amazing concept of the grace of God because he knew the depths of his sin. Do you know why we have a shallow Christianity today and we don't value God's grace the way we do? Because we have a shallow view of sin. We have this idea, "You know, we're really pretty good. We're not that bad." It was because he understood how great of a sinner he really was.

In 1 Corinthians 15:9 Paul said, "For I am the least of the apostles." In Ephesians 3:8 he said, "...who am less than the least of all saints," and now he says, "I am the chief of sinners." "Paul had a self-esteem problem," some would say today. "No, Paul, don't put yourself down! Look in

the mirror and tell yourself how wonderful you are!" I've heard preachers tell people that. Now, it's important that you understand God loves you and that you're forgiven. Remember Sunday morning in Romans 8 I emphasized your position in Christ? That's unchanging, and you need to stand in that. I believe that the Bible teaches that we are sinners saved by grace.

There's been a movement in the church for as long as I've been around (and that's a long time) that say, "Well, you know what? You're not to think of yourself still as a sinner, if you're a Christian," but that's not biblical. We're sinners saved by grace. "Aren't we saints?" Yes, we are positionally, but we still have a sin nature. It has not been eradicated. It's been put out of business, but it comes back into business, occasionally. Have you noticed that? When you're not getting your way or somebody wrongs you or you're on the freeway and it's crowded or someone takes cuts, it's like, "Whooooah." That old sinful nature comes back, so we're still sinners saved by God's grace.

Paul said, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." I want you to know why Jesus came into the world. First of all, let me back up a little bit before that again. Notice that He came into the world. Now, you know that and I know that, but we need to make this clear. He came into the world, which what does that indicate? That He pre-existed Bethlehem. What does the Bible say in the gospel of John 1:1? "In the beginning was the Word," that Word is a reference to Jesus, "and the Word was with God," face-to-face with God the Father, "and the Word was God." Then, if you jump down to verse 14, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1:1 teaches that He is the eternal Word, "In the beginning was the Word," that He's the personal Word, "and the Word was with God," He was with the Father face-to-face, that He's the divine Word, "and the Word was God." Verse 14 tells us that He's the incarnate Word. All that is contained in this statement that Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners.

When Jesus came and was born in Bethlehem, He was the eternal God. He came into the world through the womb of the virgin Mary, and He took on humanity—not sinful humanity. He took on full, sinless humanity. Why did He come into this world? Notice what it doesn't say: Christ Jesus came into the world to be a good example—He was, but that isn't His primary purpose; Christ Jesus came into the world to teach us—He did, but that's not the primary purpose for which He came; Christ Jesus came into the world to start a new religious movement called Christianity—well, that happened, but that's not why He came. Do you know the primary reason that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" was that "whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

This Christmas...fall is in the air and I love that, and Christmas is coming. When you celebrate Christ at Christmas, remember that the one purpose for Christ coming into the world was to save sinners—not to save good people, not to make bad people better, but to save us by His grace, to give us new life, to regenerate us by the Holy Spirit. Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3, "You have to be born again to see the kingdom of God." The gospel is here in this "faithful

saying...that Christ Jesus came into the world,” and the reason He came was “to save sinners.” By the way, that’s everyone. We like to water that down, “Well, we’re not really sinners. We’re just fall-shorters or we just have mistakes or we just have bad things in our lives.” No, we are sinful. The problem in the world today is the heart of man. Someone said, “The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart.” It’s desperately wicked, and only God can change it.

I love the simplicity and the profundity of this statement, “that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” and then Paul’s humility, “of whom I am chief.” You’re not going to really appreciate God’s salvation unless you appreciate how far down you were. Think for a moment about the pit that you lived in. Think about the darkness, the emptiness. Think about the sin that you loved, the sin that you lived in, and the fact that God came in His grace, reached down and lifted you up, and washed you. He set your feet on a Rock and put a new song in your heart. It may have happened many years ago, but you still should be thankful for that—that God would save a wretch like me.

Notice also Paul says, “Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first,” again, this is his personal testimony, “Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering,” and here’s our word, “for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.” Notice you believe and the results are life everlasting. This is the statement if I were to paraphrase in verse 16, if I were to do the John Miller translation, it would be kind of like this, “My salvation is an example to others that God can save anybody.” Isn’t that cool? He’s saying, “I am a prototype.” Sometimes people say, “Well, I can’t be a Christian because I’m so bad. I can’t come to Christ because you don’t know what I’ve done, the horrible things that I’ve done and the thoughts I’ve had or the sins I’ve committed or how wicked I’ve been.” There’s no sin too great. There’s no pit too deep. There’s no life too lost. There’s no one beyond reach. God can save anyone, and that’s what Paul is saying, “My life is a pattern,” hypotyposis, a type, a picture.

Tonight when we take this bread, it’s a pattern, a picture, of the body of Christ broken for our sins. The cup is a representation of the blood of Christ in the New Covenant, a picture of His blood shed for us. Paul said, “He’s taken me a persecutor and made me a preacher. He’s taken me a murderer and He’s made me a minister.” Isn’t that amazing what God can do to change your life? That’s one of the things that is amazing to see the power of the gospel. He can take a drunkard, a wife beater, a liar, a stealer, an adulterer, and a fornicator, and He can change them from the inside out, create a new person, “...old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” What a glorious picture that is, and it’s by believing on Him (verse 16) that we have “life everlasting.” Eternal life starts the moment we are saved.

The closing, in verse 17, is Paul’s praise. We have Paul’s present. We have Paul’s past. We have Paul’s conversion as a pattern, and then lastly (verse 17) we have Paul’s closing praise. I have to confess, I want to sing this as I read that verse. I’ve been singing it backstage and up in my office before church. There’s a song we used to have in the Jesus People days, and I shouldn’t even say that because I want to start breaking into song. Maybe we’ll learn it sometime, but verse 17 is a song. He’s singing. He’s praising the Lord. When he thinks about what God had called him and God had forgiven him and God had equipped him, God had

showed him mercy and God had forgiven all of his sins, he can't help but just stop in closing here and just breaks forth into praise. It's a doxology. "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

I want you to notice the descriptions that Paul uses concerning God. It starts with "the King eternal." There's some argument as to whether he's specifically referring to God the Father or Jesus Christ. Does it really matter? They're both divine. I like to think of it as God the Father, but it also perfectly fits in with Jesus Christ. This statement, by the way, is unique. It only appears here in the New Testament, "unto the King eternal." What is it trying to convey? It's conveying the sovereignty of God, specifically over all of history and over the ages. Some render that "King of the Ages." He is the Sovereign King of all the periods of time of man. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords, that He's sovereign and rules over everything, "unto the King eternal." By the way, that is an attribute of God, the eternality of God.

The second statement about God in his worship and praise (and true worship is worshipping God) is that He is immortal. That means He's not going to decay. If you've been out of high school for 50 years and you look at your high school picture...I heard about somebody that went to their 50th high school reunion. Is anyone even alive anymore? You're the only one there blowing your little party whistle. Nobody's even there. I went to my 25th and didn't recognize anybody! People say, "Hey, John! Remember me?" "No, no." "Yeah." "You sure you're not just trying to pull my leg here?" "No." People...we're talking, messed up. It sad. Needless to say, I haven't gone back to any of those high school reunions because they're depressing. I'm sure people thought I was messed up, too. God doesn't decay. He doesn't deteriorate. God is immortal.

God is invisible. The Bible declares that He's spiritual in His essence that He's not material. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." By the way, this contradicts the Mormon's teaching on the nature of God. They think that He's actually physically corporal—He has hands, feet, and eyes; that He's a glorified man in heaven. But, no. God is eternal, He's immortal, and He is invisible. Then, I love this statement, "the only wise God." Some translations omit the word "wise" and have rendered that "only God." There's the discrepancy about some of the manuscripts that it appears, but it does appear in some of the manuscripts. Either way, it's fine. Notice the fact, "the only wise God." The word "only" indicates His uniqueness. I love to think about the uniqueness of God. Do you know that there's no one like Him? One of the statements I love when we're singing praise (and we've gotta wrap this up because we're going to do that and serve communion) is to think of Jesus and think, There's no One like You. There's no one even close to Him. There's no one like Jesus.

Years ago, I just looked up in Webster's dictionary the word unique: one of a kind, having no equal. I love that. Jesus is genuinely, authentically unique. He's one of a kind; He has no equal. He's the "only God," this is monotheistic in its statement. There is only one God. There aren't many other gods, and He's "the only wise God," which means He's the only God who knows everything. He is omniscient. He knows everything. He's eternal and He's incorruptible.

He's invisible. He is "only", unique, and He's wise. He's all-knowing, and what are we to do? Give Him honor—recognize Him, that He's most precious—and glory. Our lives and our words and our actions should reflect, honor, and glorify Him. For how long? Forever and ever and everyone said, "Amen."

We're going to pray and enter into a time of worship to this King eternal, immortal, invisible, this only wise God; and we want to give Him honor and glory, right now and forever. Amen? I encourage you to put your phone, your Bible and notes, everything aside, and really set your heart upon Him at this time and worship Him with all your heart. Humble your heart before Him. Give Him thanks for His grace, for His mercy. Do you know that God saved you by His grace? You could write your own testimony like Paul did. This is what I was, this is God came to me and showed me mercy. This is what He's called me to, this is what He's done for me. I'm the biggest sinner, yet God has come to me and saved me by His grace. Communion is for sinners. Salvation is for sinners. Jesus said, "...for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," that's you and me. We're saved by God's grace, and communion is a reminder of that.