

The Lord God Omnipotent Reigns

Revelation 19:6

**A sermon preached by Calvin Warpula
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Good morning and God bless you. Today is the first Sunday in a brand new year, 2011. This is only the second day of this brand new year. We all survived 2010. God blessed us throughout the year. Remember last week's sermon? When you are asked, "How are you?" say "Blessed." Or, "All is well." God lives and reigns. "All is well."

What is the most important fact of your life? What is the very center of your being?

Some might say, "My home." That's a good answer because home is so precious to us but there is something far more important than our homes and families.

Someone else may answer, "My work." Now, work is important. God made us to be productive and creative. But, work is not the most important factor in life.

What is the most important fact of your life? There's only one answer that's right. It's God. Everything else in this world is so temporary. Everything else in this world is passing away.

Our text today is from the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, the 19th chapter, verse 6: "Hallelujah, for our Lord God Almighty reigns."

Revelation is the only book in the Bible that specifically promises a blessing to those that read the book and heed its contents. Yet it is probably the least read book of the N.T. This chapter is unique in that this is the only place in the N.T. that the word, "Hallelujah," occurs and it is here four times. The word, "Hallelujah," literally means, "Praise the Lord." The Greek word is the same as the English, Hallelujah. In fact, 'Hallelujah' is pronounced the same in every language on earth. The word is composed of two words, "Hallel," which means "praise" and "Jah" which is a form of the name of God, Jehovah. Thus, "Praise the Lord."

Revelation is a book written to encourage saints to be faithful to God, no matter what. Terrible times are pictured in the book. The symbols themselves are bizarre, grotesque and frightening. The main message of the

book is that God will win in the end. No matter how powerful all the evils of the universe are, no matter how many saints Satan hurts or even kills, no matter how bleak the times may seem, God is in control and he will win in the end.

The British have a saying that they can lose every battle, just so they win the last one. In 1836, the Texas army under the leadership of Gen. Sam Houston lost battle after battle to the Mexicans but they won the most important one, the last one at San Jacinto. God will win the last one. At the end of the book, the false prophet, the infernal political system that warred against God, the demons, the angels of Satan, all the evil men and women of the earth, and Satan himself are destroyed forever. Beginning in chapter 17 forward, the God demonstrates his power that leads to final victory. John writes this book to encourage the believers that God's will and way will win in the end.

Our text today says, "The Lord God omnipotent reigns." Some translations say, "The Lord God almighty reigns." God reigns. God is in control. Nothing happens without his permission. There is no power greater than our God.

That has always been true. There has never been a time when God was not almighty. God is almighty even when it does not appear like it. God is almighty even when we are weak, unfaithful, and prone to sin. God is almighty even when it appears to us that evil has the upper hand. God is almighty even when his saints are suffering like they do in the book of Revelation. God is almighty all the time, everywhere, without exception.

In chapter four of Revelation, before anything about the future in the book unfolds, God is sitting on the throne. God has always been sitting on the throne of the universe. Listen to these beautiful words of how David about 1000 years before Revelation praised God. I'm reading from I Chronicles 29:10-13: [read the text]

Another passage that speaks of God's reign and rule forever is Psalm 97. Hear these stirring words: [read].

What this text means is that at this point in Revelation God is actualizing and demonstrating his power. He held his power in reserve until this time. Now he begins to openly show his power and strength.

You recognize that this expression, "the Lord our God omnipotent reigns" is the crescendo of George Handel's, "The Messiah." I love to listen to the Messiah. I feel like shouting when this expression, the "Hallelujah Chorus," is shouted again and again. When "The Messiah" first played in London in 1747, the audience was so emotionally stirred by this exuberant expression of praise that everybody stood up, even the king. Now it is a

tradition that when “The Hallelujah Chorus” is sung that we all stand up in reverence and honor for our God.

What does this mean for our lives today when we say that “the Lord our God omnipotent reigns”?

God reigns. He reigned yesterday. He reigns today. He reigns tomorrow. He reigns forever.

What does this mean in practical terms for our lives now?

Because God reigns, these things are certain. . . .

I. The Liberation of Life—we are free to live

A. Release from petty worries

These are little things that upset the mind. We brood over them and they destroy all peace. Robert Browning said, “‘Tis' the looking downward that makes one dizzy.”

Jesus says for us to come to him and receive rest (Matt. 11:28-30). We can walk and not be weary (Isa. 40:30-31). The very hairs of our head are numbered. God cares about the sparrows, and how much more valuable are we than the birds? (Matt. 10:30-31).

The Bible says, “Cast all your anxieties upon him because he cares for you.” (I Pet. 5:7). Life is spelled with a big “if” in the center, but with God we can be released from stress and worry to freely live.

As you begin each day, take five minutes every morning to think on this. Read God's word every day. A daily Bible reading guide is enclosed in the bulletin. “Meditate on the law of God both day and night” (Psa. 1:2).

B. Release from fears

As humans we are afraid. We face the fear of self, others, the past, the present, the future, sickness, death and poverty. But the words “fear not” are found throughout the Bible. Someone said that there are 365 “fear nots” in the Bible, one for each day of the week. Jesus speaks in the first chapter of Revelation [read 1:17-18]. Here we are not to be afraid of life because “he lives.” We are not to be afraid of death because “he was dead.” We are not to be afraid of eternity because “he is alive forevermore.”

Here are the eight basic fears of humans. Each one of them is answered by the Lord. Notice:

Death---answered by "I am with you."
The unknown—answered by "I know everything."
Man—answered by "My power is far greater than any man."
Being forsaken—answered by "I will never leave you or forsake you."
Past failures—answered by "I will forgive you."
Being in the minority—answered by "I will stand with you."
Doing right—answered by "I will give you strength." We never walk alone. When God gave people responsibilities in the Bible, like he did to Moses and later Joshua, he often said to them, "I will help you. I will be with you."
The future—answered by "nothing ever catches me by surprise."

Because of his trust in the Lord and the power and strength of God, Daniel could lay down in the lions' den and go to sleep. Peter was imprisoned, guarded by soldiers, and facing imminent death the next morning, but he went to sleep because he trusted in God to deliver him. Paul rejoiced in the Lord in prison. He sang hymns and prayed at midnight in the innermost prison.

The fact of "the Lord" makes all the difference in the world. Notice Psalm 37:

"Trust in the Lord", v. 3
"Delight yourself in the Lord," v. 5
"Commit your way unto the Lord," v. 5
""Rest in the Lord," v. 7
"Wait on the Lord," v. 34.

"The Lord" makes all the difference in the world. In the N.T., this expression "in the Lord" is found some 200 times. That's the power, arena and hope of our lives. The greatest power in the entire world is the realization that God is near. God says, "I'll be with you always,"---today, tomorrow, in the hospital, in disappointment, in embarrassment, at all times, in all places, always.

Hear these words from Isa. 41:10---[read]. Again, listen to the promises of God in Isa. 43:1-3a---[read]

C. Release from self-contempt

Sometimes we are probed by self-condemnation, inward repressions and conflicts. Jesus comes to us and brings us hope. He says to us when we are burdened with our sinful failures: "Go your way, and sin no more." He

says, “You are a son of the God of heaven—up, on your feet. You have a life to live, things to enjoy and tasks to fulfill.”

In the midst of my depression, Jesus assures me: “I am valuable; I am worthwhile, I am important to God, I mean something to God.”

Jesus assures me that he died for me, that he lives for me that he listens for me, that he is coming for me, and that he will take care of me. .

Yes, because the Lord our God omnipotent reigns we are free to live. We are released from petty worries, we are released from fears, and we are released from self-contempt.

Secondly, because the Lord our God omnipotent reigns, we are assured of. .

II. The Doom of Sin

A. Revelation shows the fall of evil and the victory of Christ

In the book of Revelation the church of God and the forces of pagan Rome are locked in a death grapple. The mailed fist of Nero and Domitian are smashing the saints. The mailed fist of Nero and Domitian are smashing the saints. The book is filled with blood, smoke, fire and martyrdom. Rome, as the second Babylon, is the mother of evil, drunk with the blood of the saints, and laughing at the crushed, mangled, and battered church. Domitian, the emperor, has ordered that he be addressed as “Our Lord and God.”

What will John now write? He himself is in exile on the penal island of Patmos, forty-five miles off the coast in the Aegean Sea. Let's look over John's shoulder as he writes. Will he write, “The battle is lost, our cause is ruined, there is nothing left but to sue for mercy”? No. He writes of the fall of Babylon. Hallelujah! Babylon has fallen. Why does all this take place? Because the Lord our God omnipotent is actualizing his rule on the earth. The Lord our God omnipotent reigns.

Rome was destroyed, but the church of God marches on for 1500 years now past the demise and ruin of Rome. Rome is gone, Domitian is gone, but the church of the Lord Jesus marches on and on.

B. The power of darkness is broken by Christ

Some today want to speak of the Christian faith as passé, as if the power of Christ and the church is no more in our modern age. No way!

Look at Jesus. When the 70 returned they proclaimed, “Master, we have proved it. The demons are subject to us.” Jesus replied, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” The power is broken.

Jesus calmly stood before his accusers. He faced Herod, Pilate, and the Jewish authorities and the mobs. But God was with him. The Lord our God omnipotent reigns.

Jesus conquers evil. He said, “I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.”

C. God is winning and will win the victory

We must fight the spiritual battles before us because our God is with us. We will be hurt by evil. Pain is real. God is winning and will win the victory. That's the overwhelming message of the book of Revelation. Our Lord God omnipotent reigns.

D. A simple recipe for victory

When you wake up every morning, and before you get out of bed, say this prayer: “Lord, I am nothing. You are everything. Take your power and rule in my heart. Help me to overcome _____ [here name what is troubling you] with your power. Guide me in every step I take today.”

At the end of the day, thank God for victory. Ask God's forgiveness for relying on self. Decide to begin anew.

Repeat the above as often as necessary.

Because the Lord our God omnipotent reigns we are liberated to live and sin is doomed.

Because the Lord our God omnipotent reigns, there is comfort in sorrow.

III. Comfort in Sorrow

A. God is “king of the flood” (Psa. 29:10). The flood destroyed. All human hopes are lost. But God is king of the flood.

B. God gives meaning, purpose and grace in the midst of the floods of life

In Jesus' story of the two houses, one built on the sand and the other on the rock, the “rains, winds and floods” beat upon both houses. The storms of life seek to wreck our happiness, our plans, our dreams, our hopes

and our desires. But God reigns and he can give meaning, purpose and grace.

On one occasion, the disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee when a storm came up. The disciples were fearful of losing their lives, but Jesus was asleep in the boat. They shook him and yelled, “Master, wake up. Save us or we perish.” Jesus calmed the storm. Jesus was greater than the storm. “No water can swallow the ship where lies the master of ocean and earth and skies.” (Mark 4:40). He can calm all the storms of our life, too.

Once there was a flood of despair and death called Calvary. It was an ugly place of bitterness, shame and sorrow. Where is God when it hurts? Is he asleep? Is he away? Is he dead? Even Jesus cried out in the agony of dying for sinners, “My God, my God why have you forsaken me?” What was God doing? He was ruling even in the grim cross. Out of that cross God brought salvation to us. If God can transform the cross of Jesus, then surely he can make any cross that we bear shine with glory.

C. Jesus is Lord even over death

Someday your heart will stop beating. Your lungs will stop breathing. Your ears will stop hearing. Your eyes will stop seeing. Death will come. Are you a frightened child in the presence of death?

I hope even then you can say with faith and confidence, “The Lord our God omnipotent reigns.”

When life is kind, tender, smiling, and you hear the singing of the birds and smell the flowers of the earth, I hope you'll say, “The Lord our God omnipotent reigns.”

When the night is dark, and you are far from home, and the deep waters threaten your soul, I hope that you can cry out, “The Lord our God omnipotent reigns.” Say it loudly, not weakly or uncertainly, “The Lord our God omnipotent reigns.”

Jesus our Lord told us all that we need to know about death. “I once was dead, but behold, I am alive forevermore.” “Thanks be to God. He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me.”

“Hallelujah! The Lord our God the omnipotent reigns”

Today God is king.

Today he stands at the door of your heart and knocks gently. What will your answer be?

Will you say, “Go away; leave me alone”? Or, will you say, “Blessed Jesus, come into my heart. Come into my life and reign. My heart shall be your throne. Come, Lord Jesus.”

Today, invite Jesus into your heart by obeying the gospel of Jesus. Come, while we stand and sing.

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This message is built around the main points of a sermon by James Stewart in his book, The Gates of New Life (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972), pp. 11-20.