

God Almighty

A Core Commitment

*Mark 14:*³⁵ *He, Jesus, went a little farther, fell to the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.* ³⁶ *And he said, "Abba, Father! All things are possible for you. Take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, not what I will, but what you will."*

Jesus is in the garden of Gethsemane contemplating His coming death, the crucifixion HE knows awaits Him. He feels the horror of what is to come intensely, and seeks His Father, committing Himself into the Father's hands.

And what is the conviction that is at the forefront of Jesus' mind in this hour?

That the Father is God Almighty, for whom all things are possible. It is the presupposition of Jesus' prayer, just as it underlies His trust.

HE gives Himself to the Father's will, praying 'not my will, but yours be done', not only because the Father is good and loves Him, but because the Father is almighty and will achieve His good purpose for Him.

And the Lord Jesus did not only trust God's almighty power for His own life.

He trusted it for the success of His mission.

When the rich young ruler, the kind of person any leader of a popular movement would want as his follower, turned away from Jesus because the cost of following Jesus seemed too great

And when the disciples wondered in response whether anyone could be saved

*Mark 10:*²⁷ *Looking at them, Jesus said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God, because all things are possible with God."*

Jesus knew His mission would succeed, that He would have followers on the terms He had declared, leaving all to follow Him

That people ensnared in their love of money, of their idols, would be saved, because God is almighty, all things are possible for Him

And it wasn't an abstract conviction about some distant impersonal force

It was a core conviction, at the heart of His relationship with His Father, a conviction on which He staked everything, a conviction shared by Jesus' followers, by those who have believed in Him

This is what we believe – that God is almighty

And God has taught this about Himself from the beginning and throughout His dealings with His people.

Genesis 1, where all is brought into being by God's word, exactly as HE willed it, without opposition or frustration, is the declaration that the LORD is the only God, the almighty sovereign over all that is.

When 90 year old Sarah laughed at the promise that she would have a son the Lord says

¹³ *But the LORD asked Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Can I really have a baby when I'm old?'"* ¹⁴ *Is anything impossible for the LORD? At the appointed time I will come back to you, and in about a year she will have a son.*

And Isaac was born a year later.

When Jeremiah is stunned by God telling Him to buy land in the nation under judgment because God has promised that the people would return, God says - *Is anything too difficult for me?*

²⁶ *The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ²⁷ “Look, I am the LORD, the God over every creature. Is anything too difficult for me?*

And in seventy years the Israelites returned to Jerusalem from their exile in Babylon.

When Mary asks of the promise of a son

Luke 1: ³⁴ Mary asked the angel, “How can this be, since I have not had sexual relations with a man?”

³⁵ *The angel replied to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.*

³⁶ ³⁷ *For nothing will be impossible with God.”*

And she gives birth, a virgin birth, to Jesus the Son of God

Whose trust in the garden in God’s almighty power to fulfill His good purposes for His Son through the death that is the Father’s will is vindicated in His resurrection and the exaltation,

Whose trust in God’s power to save has been vindicated over and over again through the centuries as the gospel word has been seen in life after life to be the power of God to save.

All things are possible for our God. He is almighty

This is what we believe

In fact, drawing on Abraham’s experience Paul characterises Christian faith in Romans 4 [vv. 11-25] as faith in the almighty God, for whom nothing is impossible, who gives

*Romans 4: ¹⁷ As it is written: **I have made you the father of many nations**—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, the one who gives life to the dead and calls things into existence that do not exist.*

We believe in One God, almighty

So let’s think through what it means to confess God as almighty, to say our trust is in the almighty God.

We need to do that for we are so far from being almighty ourselves that we don’t naturally grasp what it means for God to be almighty

Our experience of power, of might, is of the limitations of our power

We can’t make the sunrise ten minutes later when we want to sleep in.

Can’t stop ourselves coughing when we have Covid, can’t even get through to Centrelink or Telstra when we want.

Our power is limited, and different to God’s

We tire

When we exert ourselves we need time to recover

We rely on others to help us get things done

But God never tires, never needs down time to recover, needs no-one’s help

Relating to the almighty God

WE have to learn what it is to relate to the almighty God from the almighty God Himself, from His word

And here there are two things to grasp.

Firstly, that God being almighty is both threat and hope, terror and comfort – and so the most important thing is to make sure we are at peace with the almighty God, are among those for whom His power is comfort and hope

And secondly, that Trusting that our God is almighty is, along with a conviction of His love and faithfulness, one of the Foundations of the way believers experience the world, finding expression in almost every part of our lives.

God almighty – Threat and hope, terror and comfort.

Firstly, God being almighty is both threat and hope, terror and comfort because all opposition to the almighty God is doomed to failure

Consider two history changing events

First – the exodus of Israel from Egypt, celebrated still today by the Jewish people in the Passover.

You know the story

On the one hand there is Pharaoh, the wealthiest and most powerful ruler of his day

With an army, a cabinet and public service, a whole university of advisers and magicians,

With More personal power than any prime minister, than any iron ore magnate or tech billionaire

A ruler made wealthy by his enslaved workforce, the children of Israel

And then there are two blokes, Moses and Aaron – one of whom has spent the last forty years avoiding people and looking after sheep – and they are told by God to go to this powerful Pharaoh and tell him to let God's people go to worship Him

To just rock up and say – hand over control of your wealth producing asset to us

Pharaoh's reaction is predictable

Exodus 5:² But Pharaoh responded, "Who is the LORD that I should obey him by letting Israel go? I don't know the LORD, and besides, I will not let Israel go."

And to let the Israelites know that he, not God, is the power in the land Pharaoh makes their work a lot harder – they are told they have to gather their own straw for the bricks, but still produce the same amount of bricks or be punished.

Now what do Moses and Aaron do?

Engage in the tactics of other liberation movements?

Organise to gain public support by demonstrations and a publicity campaign; perhaps start guerrilla violence to get Pharaoh and to the negotiating table

Or perhaps Give up, discouraged by their own obvious powerlessness, and leave the people in slavery?

That's not how the story goes, is it.

The LORD tells Moses He is determined to free the Israelites from Egyptian slavery

Exodus 7:² You must say whatever I command you; then Aaron your brother must declare it to Pharaoh so that he will let the Israelites go from his land. ³ But I will harden Pharaoh's heart and multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. ⁴ Pharaoh will not listen to you, but I will put my hand into Egypt and bring the military divisions of my people the Israelites out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment.

God says He will do what He has said He will do, and what no one else had done. Free a whole people – hundreds of thousands of men, women and children – from enslavement to the most powerful nation on earth at the time

More – he will actually use Pharaoh's stubbornness v. 3, Pharaoh's determination not to let the LORD rule in Egypt, to achieve His purpose and reveal His greatness.

And that is what God did

Himself, alone – no one helped Him

He freed Israel by sending the ten plagues on Egypt, displaying His irresistible power and humbling the Egyptians – by frogs, gnats, flies, and then judgements of increasing severity as Pharaoh resisted – death of livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness and then the death of the firstborn. And even then He has not put forth the full measure of His might.

As the LORD said to Pharaoh before the seventh plague

Exodus 9: ¹⁵ By now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague, and you would have been obliterated from the earth. ¹⁶ However, I have let you live for this purpose: to show you my power and to make my name known on the whole earth.

Pharaoh's resistance to the almighty God was useless – and worse than useless. Destructive to his people, and deadly to himself when he perished in the Red sea while trying to pursue the Israelites, [Ex. 14:30]

If you want, like Pharaoh, to defy God by not doing what He has commanded – God's power is terrifying. It means you can't negotiate with God – reach some kind of compromise; can't prevent or resist Him doing what He says He will do; can't escape His sentence.

God's almighty power is a threat to all those who want to say, when called to obey, 'I don't know the LORD', I don't have to listen to Him

But for the Israelites?

God's almighty power is Hope when they were humanly speaking hopeless – hope of freedom and plenty, of security and peace

Comfort, when Pharaoh's anger and malice threatened them.

Victory, when God used the means by which He had saved them – the crossing of the sea – to destroy the Egyptian army

And remember, we are talking about an event remembered still every year by those who are direct descendants of those enslaved brick makers.

God's power is real in the world.

Secondly, consider the death and resurrection of Jesus.

In Jesus' death it looks like the people who are opposed to Jesus, who like Pharaoh don't want to know the LORD by recognizing His Son, have the power

They have the power of the institution – the Jewish council

They have the power of the mob crying crucify

They have the power of the Roman state

It is the power of lies and hatred, the power of the Devil [Heb. 2:14], The power of death

And they use that power to put an innocent Jesus to death

And in that moment the weakness of Jesus, the weakness of God – seems plain for all to see

Born a man, He is able to suffer and be be killed

And he offers no resistance as He is betrayed and abused – a weakness from which His followers flee

On the cross His weakness is mocked by His enemies ‘Save yourself’ they cry

And then he experiences the weakness of death, of the tomb – and the dead are completely powerless

And it isn’t just the Son’s weakness on display on the cross.

It is the Father’s – here is the beloved Son, whom He has affirmed in His baptism and on the mountain, who has done His work

And God seems unable to rescue Him, Him whom He loves – God is exposed as powerless to protect and keep His Son, as weak

But the story doesn’t end there.

Jesus doesn’t stay dead. God raises Him from the dead

He Reverses both the verdict and the sentence of human power.

The son is seen to be righteous, and He lives

And the resurrection is not just a belated rescue, God bringing a happy ending to a wicked human action outside His control, outsmarting His opponents in the end

Their disobedience, their hatred and lies, their embrace of death, is revealed as serving God’s purpose.

As the apostles teach from the beginning, and demonstrate from the Old Testament, Jesus

Acts 2:²³ Though he was delivered up according to God’s determined plan and foreknowledge, you used lawless people to nail him to a cross and kill him.

It was God’s will Jesus die that way. The powerful did

Acts 4:²⁷ “For, in fact, in this city both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, assembled together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed,²⁸ to do whatever your hand and your will had predestined to take place.

Their rebellion carried out God’s will and exalted the Jesus they rejected as God’s victorious saving King

And the extent of that victory was cosmic. On the cross the evil powers that seek to resist God’s rule throughout the world were disarmed and disgraced.

Colossians 2:¹⁴ He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us, and has taken it away by nailing it to the cross.¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and disgraced them publicly; he triumphed over them in him.

By His death He has destroyed, says the writer of Hebrews,

Hebrews 2:¹⁴ Now since the children have flesh and blood in common, Jesus also shared in these, so that through his death he might destroy the one holding the power of death—that is, the devil—¹⁵ and free those who were held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death.

Think of the power displayed in the death and resurrection of Jesus

Power to raise the dead

Power to carry out a plan revealed in promises and prophecies made hundreds of years before

Power that uses the malice and hatred of His enemies, them doing their worst, to do His good will

A power that wins even in weakness [1 Cor. 1:23-25]

Who can resist that power?

A power so great that Sin never succeeds in its aim of putting the disobedient outside God's rule, serving instead to demonstrate God's rule over all.

Remember – the resurrection is not an idea, but An event

An event with real consequences – the gospel going to the nations, the Spirit poured out, the church born, and judgment made certain

If you want to resist God – the death and resurrection of Jesus should terrify you

You Don't escape God's rule by defying God

And you cannot console yourself in rebellion by claiming this God not good

For this is the Resurrection of one who is good and merciful, who relieved suffering, who is bringing through that death a day when suffering will be no more, one who will bring a judgement which will remove injustice and death from the world

God's power is terror and threat to those who want to continue to disobey Him

But for His people, those who confess the crucified Jesus is Lord

It is comfort and hope

For in Jesus' resurrection God's almighty power is Power that can raise the dead

Power that can reverse the world's judgement on our lives

Power that can make defeat victory

Power that can turn evil to good

Power that can forgive and give new life

The key question – what will it be for you? terror or hope, fear or comfort?

Are you defying or at peace with the almighty God?

Think it through

If, like Pharaoh, you are determined to keep God out of your life, your life will end like Pharaoh in the misery and destruction defying the almighty God brings

You cannot defeat or frustrate or get away from the God who can raise the dead

But it need not end that way if you will do what Pharaoh could not bring Himself to do, change your mind about who is in charge

And say the crucified Jesus is Lord of God's creation, of your life – and not you

And trust Him who died for your sins on that cross in obedience to the Father's gracious will to forgive you.

HE will forgive all who call on Him, that is ask Him for forgiveness and to become one of His people

You can do that now

Or you can find out more by talking with a Christian friend, or joining us to explore Christianity

But if you are at peace with the almighty God through believing the gospel of His Son that He has died for our sins and risen again, how does that effect the way you live?

how should trust in the almighty God be seen in the lives of believers?

It should effect every part of our lives – how, for example, we experience creation, how we pray, how we share the gospel, but I want to talk about just two areas of life – the way we experience opposition and disappointment, and the way we experience death

The way we experience opposition and disappointment

All of us experience at some time opposition from and being disappointed by others.

It could be at work, or in our families, or even at church

People fail in their commitments, don't live up to their promises, don't return our love.

They can mock us and seek to frustrate us.

What does someone who trusts that the Lord their God is almighty do when they encounter such opposition and disappointment?

Let's think of Joseph. He experienced from his brothers hatred and cruelty – selling him into slavery as the more profitable alternative to killing him.

And that hurt – torn away from his family and familiar surroundings, and then left at the mercy of people who did not care for him, sought to use him, and would lie about him like Potiphar's wife.

But when he finally met his brothers, when they were in his power – he did not exact revenge, he didn't even try and make their life miserable by snide asides and constantly bringing their failure up.

When he first met them he comforted them vv. 4-5

Genesis 45:⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Please, come near me," and they came near. "I am Joseph, your brother," he said, "the one you sold into Egypt. ⁵ And now don't be grieved or angry with yourselves for selling me here, because God sent me ahead of you to preserve life. ⁶ For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there will be five more years without ploughing or harvesting. ⁷ God sent me ahead of you to establish you as a remnant within the land and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. ⁸ Therefore it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household, and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Why could he do that?

He was confident God was in control – of his whole history, including their decisions

God sent me ahead of you he told them v. 5, v. 7

God was in control to work good – to keep v.7 you alive by a great deliverance

So confident is he that it is the almighty God's will that is the final cause of all things he can say v. 8

⁸ Therefore it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household, and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

HE was confident that His good, faithful God was in charge of all things, and could recognise God's good purpose in all those painful things that had happened to him

And so was freed from hatred and anger, bitterness and a desire for revenge.

And it was his settled outlook

When many years later their consciousness of guilt meant they feared that at the death of their father Jacob Joseph would exact a long nursed revenge

Genesis 50: ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? ²⁰ You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result—the survival of many people. ²¹ Therefore don't be afraid. I will take care of you and your children." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Hear v. 20

²⁰ You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result—the survival of many people

He doesn't minimize - He acknowledges their intent was evil.

But he knew the almighty living God was in charge, executing His plans. So He could leave God to deal with them according to His purpose for them, while He was freed by His trust in the sovereign rule of the almighty God in all things to be the generous and kind person v. 21, the person who sustained God's people, that God wanted him to be

And we have a promise that tells us Joseph's response to opposition and disappointment should be our own. Speaking to believers Paul writes

Romans 8: ²⁸ We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified.

All things serve God's good purposes for us for our God is almighty and rules all things.

So confessing God is almighty and trusting His promise

When we face setbacks, and life doesn't work out as we want

Our marriage is not the perfect one we desired

Our career doesn't progress as we would like, or we are sidelined at work for our views

OR even when something we deeply desire, like children; or our children loving us and respecting us, does not happen

We won't give in to bitterness and anger, we won't be grumbling and complaining

We will trust the almighty God who governs all things, even the wills of evil people, is working it for our good, to make us like His Son Jesus and to bring us to what He has promised

So in the sadness we will still have thankfulness, and be freed like Joseph to love as God would have us even those who disappoint us, freed to live like His child

Or when we are

Wounded by the words of one who loves us,

Or misunderstood and misrepresented by our friends – and doesn't that hurt

Or When we are frustrated by the imperfection of the love of our Christian brothers and sisters, or the way they seem to have failed us

[or even frustrated by the length of sermons!]

We will reason that God has permitted that for our good

And we won't seek to return hurtful words with hurtful words

Won't seek to be cold and distant until they show they are sorry

We will be freed to keep living as God would have us – forbearing, forgiving, and putting on love, testing even hurtful words to see if in them God is helping us grow in godliness by showing us our sin

For we know their words and actions can't derail our almighty Father's good purpose for us, but serve it

The way we experience death

Just as all of us experience disappointment and opposition, so all of us experience death. How is trusting that our heavenly Father is almighty show in the way believers experience the death of those they love, and their own death.

Although it is out of fashion believers will accept our death, and the death of those we love, as from His hand. As Job says

Job 1:²¹ saying:

*Naked I came from my mother's womb,
and naked I will leave this life.*

The LORD gives, and the LORD takes away.

Blessed be the name of the LORD.

We will know that none of us lives one day more or less than the almighty God wills, for as the Psalmist writes

*Psalm 139:¹⁶ Your eyes saw me when I was formless;
all my days were written in your book and planned
before a single one of them began.*

That doesn't make us fatalistic. We will examine the causes of death and seek to reduce preventable deaths.

But it does mean that In our grief, we will still know our loving God is in charge

And humbling ourselves under the mighty God's hand we will be spared the bitterness of those who think they have a right to a certain number of years and are somehow cheated by an earlier than average death of a loved one

And we will be saved from hatred of those whose omissions and oversights as frail and fallible people may have contributed to their death – those can be acknowledged but knowing our good almighty God had the ultimate choice in whether we live or die, and that HE works all things for good for those who love Him, we are able to forgive and even comfort those who are confronted with their failures, and be grateful for those who have cared even in our loss

And knowing God is almighty means that we ourselves who have His promise of life in Christ can Die with a sure hope. As we see in Christ, death does not stop the Father for whom all things are possible from keeping His word.

And so we can be confident with Paul that to depart and be with Christ, will be better by far

Philippians 1:²³ I am torn between the two. I long to depart and be with Christ—which is far better—

Can look forward to the crown of righteousness promised to all who have loved our Lord's appearing

2 Timothy 4:⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸There is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me, but to all those who have loved his appearing.

And won't that confident hope be a comfort to those who love us

We believe in God almighty

There is much profit and encouragement from thinking through our confession of God as almighty - in every area of our lives

Yes, it will raise questions - like

How are we to think of unanswered prayer?

Or why does evil continue in the world?

Or even why aren't all saved?

Those are good questions to ask and grapple with, for they will take you to Scripture to learn more of God and His ways

But in seeking answers to those questions, just as in grappling with the disappointments and trials of life, you will not grow in your knowledge of God by denying or minimizing what is so clearly taught in Scripture, both in the great events of our salvation and in the words of our Lord

Our God is almighty, all things are possible for Him and nothing is too hard for Him

That confession is inseparable from Christian faith, a precious comfort in our trials, a cause for confidence in entrusting our lives to Him, and of praise for the certain victory of His Saviour the Lord Jesus

Does your faith, seen in the way you experience life, match your confession?

You believe in God almighty – do you trust Him to do exactly and all that He has promised?

Or is your faith limited to thinking God can only do what you think you is possible, the solutions to problems you can see, the ways you think He could or should work?

Is it Limited by your fears?

Is their unbelief, seen in a grumbling and complaining heart, that you need to repent of?

As well as praying that we would grow in knowledge of God's love Paul also prays this in Ephesians

Ephesians 1: ¹⁸I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the mighty working of his strength. ²⁰He exercised this power in Christ by raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavens— ²¹far above every ruler and authority, power and dominion, and every title given, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

Isn't that a good prayer to pray for yourself and each other

That we would know the immeasurable greatness of the power of almighty God, the power that raised the Lord Jesus from the dead and exalted Him over all

And that we would grow in that knowledge so that we live confidently in all things the lives of those who rely on the promises of the almighty God.

No one will get to heaven to heaven and complain they trusted God too much.

Do you experience life as one who confesses that the good God, the One God, Father, Son and Spirit, is almighty – and believes it with all your heart?

Perhaps you could encourage each other in that over morning tea.