

Louis the fourteenth is remembered as perhaps the greatest ruler that France ever had. He assumed the throne at the young age of 4 and ruled for 72 years. A 72 year reign is the record not only in France but in all of modern European history. During his reign, Louis 14th accomplished many good things. He reorganized the French financial system and promoted industry and the economy. He built the magnificent palace of Versailles. Whenever an example of an absolute monarch is sought, Louis 14th is usually offered by historians. He gave himself the name Louis the Great - and he boasted *L'etat c'est moi - I am the state.*

Now not everything that Louis 14th did was good for his country. His pride and arrogance took a serious toll. But we can only imagine today the impact that his death would have had on his nation. Here was a king who had ruled for 72 years - most of the people would have never remembered another ruler. What was the nation going to do now that their king had passed on? The cathedral was packed with standing room only while thousands of others stood by the windows just to hear a word or two of the service. Louis had planned the ceremony of his funeral down to the minutest degree. His coffin was located at the front of great cathedral. And in a final statement of arrogance, he had ordered all of the lights dimmed with one large candle casting its light on his casket - symbolizing himself to be the light of the nation of France.

But the court priest named Massillon put the entire situation into perspective as he rose to lead the king's funeral service. As he walked up to the podium, he paused to snuff out that lone candle. And then he turned and proclaimed in a commanding voice - *Only God is Great.*

Those 4 brief words stunned the crowd that had gathered for a moment. But then the truth began to sink in. Here was a man who had claimed to be great. But he was now dead - he had gone the way of all men. But there was one who remained alive and sovereign over his universe. He was the Lord - majestic in glory. God alone deserves the title of being great.

A person will never be in a position to have a proper perspective on life until that person has seen and experienced the majesty of God in his or her life.

\*Seeing the Majestic Lord expands a person's horizons into uncharted waters.

\*Seeing the Majestic Lord dwarfs a person before the realization of God's infinite power.

\*Seeing the majestic Lord brings a renewed confidence in life.

\*Seeing the majestic Lord floods the soul with joy and peace.

\*It's no wonder that Moses and the Israelites, having just experienced the power of God parting the

Red Sea at just the appropriate time and then causing that wall of water to crash back down just in the nick of time, were celebrating their triumph - and having sung about the Saving Lord and the Warrior Lord, it shouldn't surprise us in the least that the 3rd picture that is revealed of God was that of the Majestic Lord - READ Exodus 15:6,7.

6. *"Your right hand, O LORD, was majestic in power. Your right hand, O LORD, shattered the enemy. 7 In the greatness of your majesty you threw down those who opposed you. You unleashed your burning anger; it consumed them like stubble.*

Our English word Majesty comes from the Latin term which means *greatness*. So when we speak of the Majesty of God, we are talking about his greatness, his grandeur, his immensity, his vastness.

Frankly, of all the messages that I prepare, this type of sermon is one of the most difficult. I feel like the church leader named Gregory who lived at the beginning of the middle ages who wrote in one of his books, *Almost everything said of God is unworthy, for the very reason that it is capable of being said.* I feel so inadequate to say anything that would even approximate the majesty of Almighty God.

We are such limited creatures. No matter how many years we have lived, our experiences are limited. I have been on every continent except for Antarctica, but have seen relatively few places in the world. There are so many wonders on this globe that God has created that even the most diligent explorer only experiences a fraction of them. And there are so many parts of the universe that we haven't experienced at all - the deepest depths of the oceans, the highest heights of the mountains, the vast expanses of space.

And even more limited than our experiences are our words for we can never fully express even what we see. I can drink in the exquisite beauty of a rare flower, but I can never fully express that beauty in words to you. No matter how carefully I describe that flower, you are not going to picture in your minds the exact same flower that I have seen. Now how much more difficult is it to speak of the majesty of Almighty God. No one has even seen the fullness of God's being. No one has experienced God fully. God is a spirit. He is an infinite spirit that is greater than all of space. It is impossible to ever see or experience the fullness of God's being. So as limiting as it is to describe an exquisite flower that we have seen, how much more impossible is it to speak of a majestic God who is impossible to see. And if it is impossible to totally put into words something that we understand very well, how much more impossible is it to describe an infinite God who is beyond our comprehension. So in attempting to speak of the Majestic Lord, I must begin by admitting that I'm in no way claiming to even begin to approach the fullness of His greatness.

But in God's grace and mercy, He allows us to just catch a glimpse of a part of His majesty through the

mighty acts of his power.

\*the lightening that He hurls down from the heavens that splits apart great trees like toothpicks and deafens our ears with its mighty roar.

\*The gigantic meteors that threaten to doom our race if they would collide with our earth that God tosses about in outer space like a baseball in the hands of a 10 year old.

\*the storms that carry winds over 100 miles per hour that drive pieces of hay into the wooden sides of barns like nails.

\*the earthquakes that split apart the ground and cause bridges and buildings to collapse. We have in recent days seen several major earthquakes a month in Haiti, in Chile, in Mexico and Southern California, in China, in Afghanistan, the volcanic eruptions in Iceland. It's interesting that Jesus predicted an increase in earthquakes prior to his coming in the Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24.

\*When we see the mighty power of God as evidenced in what He has created, we begin to see just a glimpse of the greatness of his majesty.

\*Moses and the Israelites had just experienced an evidence of God's majesty. Now we have heard the story of the parting of the Red Sea and seen it illustrated as Charlton Heston portrayed Moses in the Ten Commandments movie so many times that it is easy for us to lose the wonder of this miracle that God performed.

\*They tell me that a cubic foot of water weighs about 62 pounds. This doesn't sound like a formidable force especially since water by its very nature is easily penetrated. But we have to remember that water in nature always runs downhill. So the force of a river is determined not only by the cubic feet of water in it, but also by the amount of feet that it has dropped from its source. If a river begins in a highland or mountainous region, all of those cubic feet of water contained in it combine to multiply the force down in the lowlands. The water of the great lakes, for instance, has such a force that when only a tiny fraction of it is harnessed at Niagara Falls it has the power to generate electricity for a good part of the Eastern Coast of our country.

\*I had the privilege of water skiing in the Mississippi River once in my life. When I was a youngster, my family was visiting friends in Keokuk, Iowa who had a speedboat. They invited us to go for a ride on the great Mississippi and finally asked me if I wanted to do some water skiing. Of course, I jumped at the chance. After I had skied for as long as my arms would last, I motioned that I had enough and then I let go of the rope. The boat then went just a little ways up stream to turn it around to come and pick me up. I relaxed a little bit, bobbing in the river with my lifejacket on, enjoying some of the scenery. And then I turned to look up

the river for the boat. To my amazement, it was nowhere to be seen. Then I looked to the shoreline - and it looked like I was riding in a car down the highway. The river's current was so strong and I was moving down it so fast that in the short time it took the speedboat to go just a little ways up river and turn around, I had shot around an bend and was well on my way to New Orleans. I can remember my relief as I saw the boat skimming along the water to catch up with me so that I could be rescued. I tried to imagine the power that would be needed to hold back that current of water. There was an earthquake a couple of centuries ago that eyewitnesses said did turn the course of the Mississippi River upstream for a short period of time. But short of that kind of act of God, I don't believe any human power that we have would be able to reverse that force.

Now I admit that the Red Sea is not the Mississippi River. But the force of its flow of water would be very formidable indeed. And when the number of Israelites who crossed over is considered the miracle that God performed is even more amazing. It has been calculated that for 3-4 million Israelites to cross the Red Sea in one night, the Red Sea would have to be split open for a width of between 1 and 2 miles depending upon how quickly they crossed.

And God splitting apart the Red Sea for the Israelites to cross was just half of the miracle, wasn't it? No sooner had God caused the cloud that separated the Egyptians from the Israelites to lift than Pharaoh saw his intended slaves on the other side of the river bed. He immediately ordered his soldiers to rush across after them, little realizing that he was dooming them to a watery grave. At first, the Israelites must have been panic-stricken. Their awe of the Red Sea separating before them would have naturally given way to their fear of the Egyptian chariots creeping up on them. But then when the wheels began to fall off of the chariots, they must have begun to sense God's divine plan. Just in the nick of time, those waters that had been held back by the hand of God came crashing down upon those Egyptian soldiers. I am sure that a shout of joy rose from the Israelite community that drowned out the roar of the rushing waters. What an awesome display of divine power!

We can understand how Moses and the Israelites having just experienced God's power in performing this great miracle would be overwhelmed with the greatness of God's majesty.

Now we need to experience the majesty of God in our lives for when we do, our lives will be changed forever. And it is not as if the majesty of God is not evident all around us all of the time. The problem that we have as human beings is that we have a tendency to get into ruts in life. We like to say that we are in a groove, and a groove can be good. We all are creatures of habit, and some habits are good. But we must remember that a rut is just a deep groove. How often our grooves become ruts in life. And when a person

is in a rut, he only sees 2 barren walls beside him - he loses perspective on life. Every day we witness miracle after miracle.

We often criticize the Israelites because they so often took these great miracles of God for granted. I mean for 40 years the Israelites had the miracle of waking up every morning in the desert to manna on the ground to eat but they soon got over the wonder of it and began to complain that all they had to eat every day was this manna. But lest we be too critical of them, we must remember that human nature hasn't changed through the centuries. Every day, we witness a life sustaining miracle. The sun rises in the morning - right on time every day. It's not a minute late or a minute early. It is so consistent that our meteorologist can tell us the sun will rise this morning at 6:49 am and set at 8:33 pm. And that sun stays between 91 and 94 million miles from the earth. 1 million miles closer and we would burn up; 1 million miles farther and we would freeze to death. That sun maintains a temperature of 11,000 degrees Fahrenheit. Again, a thousand degrees hotter and we would burn up; a thousand degrees cooler and we would freeze. And that sun continues to pour out its energy upon the earth, 54,000 horsepower for every man, woman and child continuously. We receive only 2 billionths of the energy that the sun produces - but it is just the right amount to sustain life. If it were any more or less, we could not survive. And every day, this miracle occurs. But how often do we wake up in the morning, yank down the shade disgruntled at the sunlight that has interrupted our sleep, go through the motions of getting ready for work, drive to work pulling down the visor impatiently because that dumb sunlight is in our eyes again, never thinking about the miracle that is occurring that is sustaining our life, never giving credit to the majesty of the Lord who created this complex, life-sustaining machine that we call the universe. The Psalmist wrote that *The Heavens declare the glory of God*. When we look into the heavens, we should see the Majestic Lord. But how many times do we see nothing but the pressures of our daily schedules? It is not that the majesty of the Lord isn't there; it is that we are not seeing it as we should.

The Israelites had the same problem that we have. You would think that having experienced the God who split apart the Red Sea, they would never again shrink back into the mundane of life. You would think that having experienced the God who split apart the Red Sea, they would continuously live in a daily walk of intimate fellowship with this Majestic Lord. But such was not the case. In fact, this very chapter that begins with the pictures of the Saving, Warrior, Majestic Lord ends with the Israelites grumbling because they were thirsty. It was only 3 days later. 3 days after they saw God split apart the Red Sea they grumbled against God because some water that they found was bitter. God could separate a great Sea, but He couldn't provide fresh water for them. You see, they had settled back into the routine of living very quickly, and they

had forgotten about the Majestic Lord.

How often do we follow the same pattern? How often do we fail to see and experience the Majesty and greatness of God all around us?

In many ways, the difference between a person who lives a fulfilling life making an eternal impact upon this world and a person who just puts in time here on the earth is found in whether that person continuously sees a Majestic Lord or not.

I conclude this morning with the illustration of such a man who saw the Majestic Lord and never was the same again. His name was John. John was a young lad who wasn't feeling very well one Sunday morning. So he asked his parents if he could stay home and not go to church. Now John didn't like church very much at this time in his life - he thought it was boring. But it was boring because he really didn't know God. So he wasn't coming to worship the Lord, but just to see his friends. So John looked for any excuse that he could to stay home from church - and he found it this morning in a supposed sore throat that he had. But after the family was gone to church and he was all alone in the house, John found that he suddenly felt better and was more bored than he thought he would be. So John became to roam about the house, trying to find something to occupy his time. John lived before TV and computers and video games. He happened into his father's library and picked up a book with no apparent title on its leather cover. John opened it at random and found immediately that it was a Bible. He was just about to put it back down, when his eyes focused on the verse found in 1 Timothy 1:17 - *Now unto the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever.* John couldn't take his eyes off that verse. Was that who God really was? The king, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God?

All morning, John pondered that verse. It was a far more profound sermon than he would have ever heard at church. He became profoundly aware of his own sinful condition and confessed his sins to God. And he committed his life to give honor and glory to this only being in the universe who was worthy of it. Throughout his life, when anybody asked John of the time when he was converted, he pointed back to that Sunday morning - when he was all alone in his house. We have a tendency to think, how could young John be saved from a verse that we consider to be a doxology? Well, John saw for the first time the Majestic Lord - and his life was never again the same.

John went on to study as hard as he could so that he could glorify this Majestic Lord. By the time he was 13, John was fluent in Latin, Greek and Hebrew. And John would become the great philosopher that our country has ever produced. But more importantly for the eternal kingdom of God, John would also become the preacher and theologian who would lead our nation in its greatest spiritual revival. Whenever Jonathan

Edwards rose to preach, he never tried to coerce people into the kingdom of God through pragmatic methods, nor did he just lay guilt trips on people, but he rather pointed them to the Majestic Lord - because he knew by experience that if anyone ever really sees the great, Majestic Lord of the Bible who created all things and who continually sustains all things by the very word of his power, that person will never be the same again.

Have you experienced the Majestic Lord in your life this morning? Of all that I have said this morning, perhaps the most amazing is this Majestic God desires an intimate, personal relationship with his creatures. The One who is in charge of the universe is concerned for you as a person. He has sent his one and only Son into this world so that we can be reconciled to him. Have you experienced the power of the Majestic Lord in your life? Do you have a personal relationship with him this morning?