If you have your Bible with you open up to one of the easiest books of the Bible to find, the book of Revelation, the 1st chapter and I am going to be reading a little differently from how you have heard this Scripture read before, beginning with verse 5 but our emphasis will come from vs. 8. I will be reading from the King James Version.

**5**And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

**6**And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

**7**Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

Start: And from Jesus Christ… I am Alpha and Omega, comma, the beginning and the ending, comma, sayeth the Lord, comma, which is, comma and which was comma, and which is to come, comma, the Almighty, Period.

May the Lord add His blessing to the reading and the hearing of His Holy Word.

Let us pray.

God’s punctuation. The apocalyptic literature called Revelation is exactly that, it is a revelation, a message, a divine letter from this incarcerated exile named John on the island of Patmos who has been incarcerated because he loved God too much. And he is writing to the churches and the communities of faith who have placed Christ as the center of their joy and their direction and he lays down in the first chapter what Christ has done in the past, and what Christ is doing in the present and what Christ will do in the future. He states in vs. 5 and 6 where his authority comes from, and then in verse 7 the future revelatory action, but it is verse 8 that concerns me this morning.

The way that it reads is I am alfa and omega, comma, the beginning and the ending, comma etc. And it goes on. God is alfa and omega. I know that there are some of us who are members of organizations that use the terms alfa and omega as part of our names. But I am here to tell you that there is only one alfa and omega, God is the beginning and the ending, God is the creator and the sustainer, the conclusion of our being, he is the sculptor who has created our souls and the seamstress who has patterned our hearts with the innate needs to seek out our savior Jesus. It is God who allowed 2 parts hydrogen and one part oxygen to fall in love with each other and when they consummated their relationship they gave birth to a child named water.

It is God who etched the valleys and built up every mountain, and so because God has so much power, there are only certain punctuations that we are allowed to use in our lives. It is imperative that we understand that we only have limited power as human beings. And so as human beings created by God we are limited and we must recognize that we can only use certain types of punctuation marks that spiritually connect with our growth and our development.

One type of punctuation that you need to know about is the question mark and that is the hook with a dot under it. Then there is the colon, that is a dot with another dot under it, then there is the semi-colon. A dot, with another dot under it with a tail on it, then there is the comma, that is a dot with a tail on it. The next type of punctuation is the most powerful in all of grammar, it is the easiest to write but it has more power than any other type of punctuation. That is the period. And that is just a dot, that is all, nothing more, after the period there is no more. But there is another type that I want you to know about it because I really like it. That is an exclamation mark. That is a line with a dot under it.

Now the question mark, you know it, it’s the hook with a dot under it. It is an unanswered statement, or an interrogative expression. It signifies an unknown. And God allows us to use that punctuation. Especially when every child is born there is a question mark after their name because it does not yet appear what they shall be and we have no right to put a period after any child’s name, no matter where they are born or where they come from, because only God has the right to write a period. Now some of you are missing me so let me break this down so that you can see what I am saying.

Even in a relationship you need to put a question mark there. When we are young and foolish we enter a relationship thinking the person is Prince Charming or the queen of your life, but then you find out it was Freddy Kruger and the wicked witch of the West, because you didn’t put that question mark there when you were starting off. For the storms of life can transform and change the way you view things. But I believe that our history helps us to understand the question mark even better.

Over the history of our nation it has been our habit to put a period after certain people in our society. Long ago when we came unto this land we put a period after the names of the native american’s because this land was useful to us. We then put a period after those kissed by nature’s sun and said they cannot rise to certain areas of our society. These perspectives continue, and maybe now we are putting a period after the name of those whose religion is not our own. But God has a different way of looking at things. Every time we try to put a period and try to put someone’s human capacity down to a certain level God will send strange and interesting people to change and transform that period, so God instead of sending a flood and sending thunder, a Secretary of State and then a President who would transform that reality, he would send a Tiger to break down barriers, He would send a race car driver named Hamilton to make people think twice. God said, I am the only one who can write a period, for I am the alpha and omega. I am the beginning and the ending.

The period is reserved only for the master, the period can only be written by the one who has full authority, who is omnipresent, and omniscient. But the next punctuation that I want you to know about is the colon and the semi-colon. Two dots and one with a tail.

This is an indication of a pause the colon, in preparation for a list to follow, you use it when you are preparing to talk about the goodness of God. If God has been good to you, if God delivered you one time, you cannot just use your perspective of looking at things historically and say that God does not operate in the present. You have to use a colon in reference to your testimony. If you say that God is able, don’t stop there. Say God is able colon, to calm the raging sea, say God is able colon, to transform my life, if God delivered you one time, God can do it again, and again, and again, and again, use this punctuation when you are testifying. It baffles me that we can trust everyone and anyone else except God. We can remember what other people did for us, but if God did something for us we place it in the past and we canonize it and keep it there and do not allow it to touch our hearts in the present nor look for it in the future. As a matter of fact we need to embrace the mystery of God.

We can trust anyone else, we can go to a restaurant and trust a waiter that we don’t know, and tell him what we like to eat, go into a kitchen where we have never been to, and he will speak to a chef that we have never met, and he will put ingredients into a bowl that we have not inspected, they will stir up everything in that bowl and bring out a plate and we will say uhm, isn’t that good. Then we will give our credit card to somebody we didn’t even do a background check on, they will go into a room and punch some numbers and bring out a receipt and we will sign it.

When we are sick, we will then go to a doctor and the doctor will write a prescription that we can’t even read. And then we will take it to a pharmacist and he will go back into a room we have never been to and put some pills into a bottle, slap some tape on it with writing and say here you go.

Well, I say, if you can trust a waiter you don’t know, if you can trust a chef you don’t know, if you can trust a doctor that you don’t know, if you can trust a pharmacist that you don’t know, then why can we not trust the God who created us. We have to embrace the mystery of God.

So the colon gives us the testimony of God’s faithfulness in our lives, but the semi-colon gives us the representation of a statement, it tells us that something is about to happen, you use it when you want to say: I’m not done yet. Isaiah understood this punctuation. Because he says those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, no, don’t put a period there, that’s a semi-colon, wait, because I’m not done yet. Because after you renew your strength they shall then mount up with wings like eagles, don't put a period there wait a minute semi-colon I’m not done yet, they shall run, comma, take a pause, and not be weary, semi-colon, I’m not done yet, they shall walk, comma, and not faint, period.

Learn to use the semi-colon. Ah, but let me tell you about the punctuation that I really like. That's the comma. I love the comma I believe that we should have comma theology, not common theology. This punctuation is used when people try to write you off, when people try to tell you, you will go no further. When people try to hurt you when you have been wounded in the house of a friend, you need to know how to use a comma. Because a comma says that God is not through with me. I just have to take a rest and a pause for a moment. And I believe that when we look at the story of Moses we are looking at comma theology, because Pharoah was trying to take out all of the Hebrew boys and he thought he had power because he was God's king. He said I can write a period after the name of all of those boys, I'm in charge here. But God said hold up there, now wait a moment, I'm Alpha and Omega, I'm going to put a comma right there and I am going to bring up a little baby Moses in a basket and allow him to go on down the river so that he will grow up in the house of Pharoah and Pharoah will unwittingly educate the one who will liberate the Hebrews.

So as Moses grows some people think he has a period after his name because he committed murder.

Now based on our ideology and theology we would write some people off, but when God saw that Moses was angry and that he killed someone he took his name down and he said I can use that boy, so God uses Moses and said I am going to send you to Pharoah and say let my people go. So he goes to Pharoah and says, let my people go. Then Pharoah says, hold up how are you going to come up in here and tell me to let your people go. Don't you know who I am? Don't you know me, I am Pharoah, I got this thing. And so Moses says I come in the name of the Lord who says let my people go. And Pharoah said No, I can't do that.

So God says let me show you something. I am going to send you plague after plague after plague and Pharoah says you all get on out of here, you need to leave right now. I don't know what happened as I use my sanctified imagination, I don't know if someone was whispering in his ear saying: you are God's chosen leader you shouldn't let the Hebrew children go, you are the one in charge, you are the one who knows how to write grammar, go ahead and write a period on those Israelites. And so Pharoah gets it in his mind and in his heart that he needs to stop the Israelites and the Israelites are trying to get out of Egypt and they have Pharoah's army behind them and the mountains to the east, and the west. They come to a red sea.

They think there is a period there, and God says I can put a comma in the midst of the Red Sea, and so the Israelites go on to the other side they begin to cross and Pharoah says I can take them out, I am about to put a period of them and when they get to the middle of the sea God says: Period (close hands) that's it, there is no more Pharoah, because only God can write a period.

So we must learn that only God can write a period. And if we are going to grow and develop we must teach our young people that only God can write a period. Because if they begin to understand that they can live beyond their capacity then this world will be a different place, Yes, they need to know that if they can play basketball, then they can get an A in physics. If you have a wicked jump shot, then you can bust out science and mathematics. Surely you all don't believe me, so let me break it down so that you can understand what I am trying to say.

If you can take a spherical object called a basketball that is 33 inches in circumference and bounce it down a court that has the spatial dimensions of being 92 feet long by 54 feet wide and taking that spherical object that has a circumference of 33 inches bounce it roughly 5 to 6 times every 3 or 4 seconds moving roughly 7 to 8 miles an hour down the spatial dimensions of a court that is 92 feet long and 54 feet wide and then jump roughly 40 inches vertically 7 feet horizontally up to a basket that is 10 feet high and dunk it, you are physics in motion.

But, if you have allowed the world to put a period next to your name, you will always live up to the expectations of what the world has given you and not what God intends for you. For God said, I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the ending, and I believe that when I leave this place, that when they have my funeral I hope they will say some nice things, but when they get to the part, when they say earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, I hope I sit up and say, don't put a period there. Just say comma, because I will be in my father's house, just say comma where every day is Sunday, just say comma because I will be rejoicing with my Lord.

I believe that on that day of Calvary when they hung my Savior on the cross and they stretched him wide, that the devil and death thought they had the correct grammar, when they tried to put a period next to the name of Jesus.

I believe on Friday night they had a party, because now the Savior was dead, on Saturday they had a block party, but early on Sunday morning, early on Sunday morning, the grave began to rumble, early on Sunday morning before the rooster crowed, early on Sunday morning while dew was still on the leaves Jesus got up with all power and said: Comma, I am the Alpha and the Omega, comma, I am the light of the world, comma, I have all power in my hands.

We need to know that only God has the right to write a period. There is one more thing that I need to tell you about. Then I can take my seat. There is one other punctuation that I like. That is the exclamation mark. That is a line with a dot under it. That is the only punctuation you can use if you are really excited about what God has done for you. If God hasn't done anything for you, don't use it, but if you know that people have tried to write you off then you have an exclamation mark testimony, if you have been through many toils dangers and snares you have an exclamation mark. I know that some don't come out of this tradition. Sometimes we have mistakenly said that when we move to exclamation mark praise that it is emotive and demonstrative behavior, but I’m just here this afternoon trying to make sense of what happened on Easter morning, if what happened on Easter morning doesn’t deserve an exclamation point shout, then what does.

This type of praise does not lack intellectual rigor. There is a theological narrative wrapped up in the exclamation mark. You see I could stand up here and say that Jesus is the ontological beginning that gives us existential understanding that moves us to eschatological hope, but it is much easier to say: Thank you Jesus. And put an exclamation mark right there. When the world tries to write you off, when you go back to your cities, back to your hamlets, and just say comma, comma, comma, comma.