

The Glory of God - our Focus

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[0:00] The glory of God. The glory of God. It's a recurring theme throughout the word of God.

! We read that the heavens declare his glory, the works of his hands, the spectacular works and wonders of creation. It just shouts out his glory. The majesty of creation reveals the majesty of his majesty, the creator, his power, his glory. It's all around about in the macro and in the micro, in the heavens and in the cells of life. We see the wonder, the glory of God. And God's glory impacts his creation. And that means you and me too, as those creatures that he has made. And I'll put it to you, three things about the glory that I've noticed in the word of God. Three things, there's much more you could say. But number one is, be changed for his glory. Be changed for his glory. We see that in 2 Corinthians 3, verse 18. It says, but we all with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Beholding as in a kind of hazy reflection, the glory of the Lord. We changed into that same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Changed for his glory.

We can be changed for his glory. God's Spirit changes people, even now, even today. The same Spirit that hovered over that place that was nothing and made everything. The Spirit of God changes people. And it's been said that God loves you just as you are. You can come just as you are, but he loves you too much to leave you that way. He changes us. He makes us more and more from glory to glory to glory to glory. He's changing us day by day, moment by moment. And there's a changing that the glory makes, the Spirit of God makes. Now, today we see a trend in the church where it's shaped by, it's defined by the culture or the Spirit of the age. Where a church is consumer driven, it's accommodating with the ways of the world.

But our Lord doesn't want us to accommodate to the ways of the world. He wants us to accommodate to the ways of his Spirit, to the ways of his Spirit. He wants us to be changed from glory to glory, to glory, to glory. Changed in heading in his direction. He doesn't want the Spirit of the world to set our direction for life. He wants his Spirit to set that direction for our lives. That we be changed as his will is from glory to glory. And it's a glorious change that happens when someone trusts Christ as Lord and Saviour. There's a wonderful conversion.

[3:34] That's the ultimate change, isn't it? That wonderful change that is a conversion of a soul from the state of being lost to the state of being saved. Something that we can know today. That brings God glory. It brings God great glory to see people saved, to see souls changed, to see people saved and disciplined. So firstly, being changed for his glory.

Another aspect is being channels for his glory. Being channels for his glory. Turn to 2 Corinthians 4. God delights to use human vessels to be glorified in and through. It's been said that each one of us is made up of trillions of atoms. Heaps and heaps of cells working together to keep us alive. There's a mass of cells inside your skull that sends trillions of small electrical signals every second. Every time you think, you move, you breathe, you look without thinking, it just happens. It's a wonder. There's some amazing creeks that's in this very place right now. Amazing people. Amazing creations of Almighty God.

And the wonder of it too is that each one of us that know him can be channels for his glory. Channels for his glory. I know there's a song in here. Channels only in our songbook. Channels only. I'll just flick there. Channels only. Blessed Master, but with all thy wondrous power flowing through us, thou canst use us every day and every hour. Just a channel. Just a channel. That's all we can be. Channels. But think of what? Wonder. The glory of God can be channeled through our lives. As we read in 2 Corinthians 4 verses 6 and 7, for it says, For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of

God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. Channels. Vessels.

Earthen, yet filled with the very glorious glory. The very power. The excellency of the power that is of God. And the context of 2 Corinthians 4 is talking in the context of some whose minds are blinded so they cannot see the light of the glorious gospel. There is many who do not have that experience, that reception of the glory, that knowledge of Christ. Their eyes are blinded but they cannot see. And yet we see here how God delights to use human vessels for his glory. In all of our frailty, in all of our weakness, as just earthen vessels, as just vessels of clay, as just earthenware pots, he fills us still with his glory. And that's where the excellency is, not in ourselves but in him. And it goes on in 2 Corinthians 4 verse 16 to 18, for which cause we faint not. The context there is of trials and trepidation and tribulation. We faint not that our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal but the things which are not seen are eternal. The context there is of, you can read 2 Corinthians 4 of the context around these verses is of suffering, is of tribulation, of trial. But even in such things we can give him glory. Even in your lives, when you go through those very tough times, the glory can shine even stronger, even brighter. Through your joys, through your pains, through your suffering. God's glory can be manifest. And that's the true motive for our life, for our service. That each of us can be channels, channels only, channels of his glory. Channels for his glory. We read in Matthew 5 verses 14 and 16.

Ye are the light of the world, a city that cannot be hid, a city that is set on a hill. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel or a container, but they put it on a candlestick. They put it so it can be seen. That it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Let your light so shine before men. Friends, it's telling us to be channels. To be channels. To be changed and to be channels. To be lights. As a light, as a city on a hill, can be seen from far away. That we in our life, in our workplaces, in our day by day, we can shine the light of the Gospel by our testimony, through our witness.

And the ultimate objective for every believer is to glorify God. And that's in every situation. It's like you clock on and clock off, or you kind of keep some time keeping that fits with the kind of religious agenda of attending a meeting or not. But it's at all times, in every way, in every capacity. As we read in 1 Corinthians 10, verse 31, it says, Whatsoever you do, whatsoever you do, do all, do all to the glory of God. Amen.

[9:46] Whatsoever you do. That means 24-7, 365. It means all the time, brothers and sisters. Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. This is something that's non-negotiable. It's not something that can be altered. It's a biblical principle. And the Word of God is that bedrock foundation, that refreshing message, that timeless message that we build our lives upon.

And it's our privilege, it's our duty to bring glory, bring glory to our Lord. Bring glory unto Him. It's our desire to minister, to serve in our everyday, in our everyday walk of life.

You know, when I'm down in the workplace, that I'm conscious of that. That we're conscious of that. That we're channels. We're channels. People are watching us. We're living letters as it reads. We are watched and noticed. We're the claim to be saved. That we are channels for His glory. So we want to magnify our Lord. We want to bring Him glory through our everyday life. And reflect His glory so that others may see that shining testimony. That our lives can be lived in a pursuit for the glory of God.

Earthen vessels. Friends, it's not about us. It's not about us or credentials we can claim. It's not about our ambitions, our goals, our reputation, our popularity, our aspirations, our personal happiness. We're vessels for His glory. We're channels for Him. He wants to use you for His glory. That ultimately, it's not anything to do with us. In fact, half the time, it's despite us that He uses these available vessels. It's about being available. It's about being useful in His hand. And the goal of Christian testimony, of ministry, is to glorify God.

Glorify God. Is this our aim? I pray that it can be your aim. Individually, each one. And corporately, together, to glorify God. To glorify God, what does it mean? It means to make Him preeminent.

[12:07] Him preeminent. That Christ would have the preeminence. That He would be the one who is sent to stage and that it means that in all things, He is the one that we seek to please. And we point people to Him. We see the great testimony of men and women of God through history who have served Him. Men like David Livingstone. David Livingstone, who laboured in the continent of Africa, in great privation, in great suffering, in great sacrifice. And this is what David Livingstone wrote. He said, people talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called a sacrifice? Which is simply acknowledging a great debt we owe to our God, which we can never repay. Is that a sacrifice which brings its own reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious destiny?

It is emphatically no sacrifice. Rather, it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering, danger, forgoing the common conveniences of this life. These may make us pause and cause the spirit to waver and the soul to sink, but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing compared with the glory which shall later be revealed in and through us. I never made a sacrifice.

Of this we ought not to talk when we remember the great sacrifice which he made, who left his father's throne on high to give himself for us. It's not a sacrifice. Whatever you might neglect or put aside to do something, to be something, to give something to God, it's not a sacrifice. It's our privilege to serve, to be his. It's been well stated that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. The chief end of man to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

Friends, give him glory. Give him glory. Give him glory. Through your words, through your work, through your worship, through your witness, give him glory. Give him glory. Give him glory through your life, through your faith. Give him glory through your stewardship.

Stewardship, someone has put as the proper management of one's resources for the glory of God. Let your resources be placed at his disposal. God has placed in our trust a measure of time, a unique set of talents and sufficient resources to carry out his will for each of our lives.

[15:08] Our tasks as faithful stewards is to maintain those blessings in order to bring maximum glory to his name. Use your life. Use your soul, your mind, your spirit to his glory. Your resources.

I know I've heard of some talk about my car is for his glory. You know, if someone needs a car, well let them have it. Let them use it. You know, there's folk that need lifts. We want to be available to give people lifts. Because it's not our car, it's his car.

Ultimately, it's his property. Everything that we have, it ought to be at his disposal for his glory. So give him glory. Give him glory through your difficulties, through your relationships, through your families, through the way that your parents.

It touches on every aspect of our lives, the glory of God. Whatsoever you do, that means absolutely everything that you do. Give him glory through your times, through your talent, through your treasures. Let it be for his glory.

We need to follow the Lord's mandate. We need to follow the Lord's mandate of seeking after God. To want to be at his disposal, to be used of him. Another David, David Brainerd. David Brainerd was a missionary to the American Indians.

[16:35] He died at the ripe old age of 29. David Brainerd poured out his life as an offering unto our God. He was a young man, intensely committed to God.

He said, Brainerd once said to Jonathan Edwards, he said, I do not go to heaven to be advanced, but to give honour to God. It is no matter where I shall be stationed in heaven, whether I have a high seat or a low seat there, my heaven is to please God and glorify him and give all to him and be wholly devoted to his glory.

My heaven is to please God and glorify him and give all to him and be wholly devoted to his glory. What a witness. What a witness. God's glory.

God's glory. It should touch every aspect of your life and mine. Every department of our life. Every choice that we make. Even in the day by day things.

I read this about Johann Sebastian Bach. He said, All music should have no other end and aim than the glory of God and the soul's refreshment.

[17:49] Where this is not remembered, there is no real music but only a devilish hubba. And Bach used to put on his compositions, JJ or Jesus Juva, which means Jesus help me.

And he ended them with SDG. Soli dia gratia. Which means to God alone the praise. To God alone the praise. He dedicated his music to the glory of God.

God, what a testimony of the man back. Changed. Be changed for his glory. Be channels. Be channels for his glory. And thirdly, be a church for his glory.

To be a church for his glory. What is the purpose of God's church? How is it meant to operate? What is it that God wants for his church? What is the church supposed to be and to do?

It's God's glory. It's God's glory. That's why we're here. It's God's glory that is the church's top priority. The glory of God. The glory of God. That should be our driving force, our goal.

[18:55] God's glory should set the course and the direction for our ministry. It should be the compass, the blueprint, the road map. God's glory. God's glory. Psalm 29, 1 and 2.

Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty. Give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty. Give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

That's why we hear church. That's what church is here for. To worship and exalt Him. To praise Him. To glorify Him. To lift Him up. To honour His name for the praise of His glory. As the ultimate goal of what we're about. What we are. What we do. He is the King of glory. The King of glory. It's all due unto Him. It's all due unto Calvary. It's all due unto His bleeding and dying and rising.

And coming again. It's Him and Him alone. To whom is all the glory due. And we seek the glory of God. We seek the grace of God. And our burden is to give the Lord glory. The purpose of the church is not the entertainment of people. The purpose of our worship is God's glory. God's glory.

That is what we want manifest and evident and front stage, front and centre. The glory. The glory of God.

[20:33] And exalt Him. Exalt Him as a people. Psalm 57.5 it says, Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens. Let thy glory be above all the earth. Exalt the Lord. We're called to be a people who exalt Him.

And in how we do church. Our concern is for His kingdom. For His glory. For transformed lives by His glory. To be that authentic people. Pleasing God. In everything that we do.

Giving glory is our primary objective. It is what the church is for. The assembly of channels. Of changed vessels. Of glory filled temples. Gathering together in human beings.

Getting together. Getting together. To manifest His glory. As a corporate people. And what we need to do is to align everything that we do. With His glory. With that commitment to glorifying God. That there's an alignment as it were.

That everything is measured by this. That everything that we do can be to His glory. For His glory. And we look at our church. We think, how can it be so? How can it be so?

[21:55] That our church will be sold out to that excellence. That excellence that He wants us to have.

Not that we're polished in performing or that it's all about some kind of entertaining razzmatazz. But that everything that we do has an excellence to it.

So that whether it's your responsibility to clean the carpet. You clean it excellently. Whether it's your responsibility to serve in the kitchen.

You're going to clean. You're going to serve in that kitchen excellently. Whether you're a deacon.

You're going to be an excellent deacon. Whether you're an elder. You're going to be an excellent elder. Whether you're singing. You're going to sing with excellence.

That's what we want to sing. When we're praying. We want to pray with excellence. It's been said of excellence. If it bears His name. It's worth our best.

[22:57] If it bears His name. It's worth our best. We want to do that. Which we do with an excellence. Not to claim credit. But because we want to honour our God. We want to honour Him.

In our discipleship as a church. That we want to see disciples made for the glory of God. In those final marching orders. That God sent His disciples to make disciples.

Discipleship is something important. It's something that's always been the very heartbeat of our Lord. We want to see disciples made. And disciples nourished. Disciples growing. And making disciples themselves. That there will be that wonderful glory. In the discipling of others in our church. That as a church we'll see a separation.

That God is seeking to establish a holy church. There will be a glory in that. That as we aspire to being those people called out.

[24:01] Called unto Him. That there will be a glory that will come from that. Not a holier than thou. Looking down our noses. But that there will be something. The attractiveness.

The beauty of His holiness. The beauty of His holiness. That's what we want to see. And it's all for His glory. And then even in our adversity. Even in our adversity as we read.

In 2 Corinthians 4. In the context. You can read it more fully later. But the context is even in. When we're pressed. When we're troubled.

When we're shaken. That we will still stand strong. For His glory. Even in our adversity. There was an old time preacher. A blind preacher called George Matheson. George Matheson.

He went to be with the Lord. And before he passed away. He said this. This well-known blind preacher said this. He said. My God. I have never thanked Thee for my thorn.

[24:55] I have thanked Thee a thousand times for my roses. But not once for my thorn. I have been looking forward to a world. Where I shall get compensation for my cross.

But I have never thought of my cross as itself. A present glory. Teach me the glory of my cross. Teach me the value of my thorn. Show me that I've climbed to Thee by the path of pain.

Show me that my tears have made my rainbows. In 2 Corinthians 12.10 it says. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities. In reproaches. In necessities.

In persecutions. In distresses. For Christ's sake. For when I am weak then am I strong. Someone put it in a paraphrase.

Therefore I take pleasure in being without strength. In insults. In being pinched. In being chased about. In being cooped up. In a corner for Christ's sake. For when I am without strength.

[25:54] Then am I dynamite. I take pleasure. In these troubles that come about me. Because when I am weak. Then am I strong.

And another preacher said this. He said. Here is the secret of divine all sufficiency. To come to the end of everything. In ourselves and in our circumstances. When we reach this place.

We will stop asking for sympathy. Because of our hard situation. Or bad treatment. For we will recognise these things. As the very conditions. Of our blessing. And we will turn from them.

To God. And find in them. A claim upon him. Friends. When I am without strength. Then. Am I strong.

Because our strength. is not in us. The glory is not in these earthen vessels, in all the human faults and frailties that each one of us have, particularly this one, that his glory can shine.

[26:54] His glory can shine. That's what it's all about. As we read in Ephesians 3, 21, unto him, unto him, unto him, be glory, be glory in the church.

By Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. Unto him, be glory in the church.

That's what we long for. Friends, I pray that you will know what it is, that we will know what it is, to be changed, to be changed for his glory, to be channels for his glory and to be a church for his glory, that we will see the glory of God in whatsoever you do, whatever you do, do all to the glory of God, that he might get the praise, that he might have the preeminence, that he might be magnified, that he might be exalted in our praise, in our life, in every aspect of our lives.

Let us pray. Let us pray.