

Unto Him be Glory in the Church

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Date: 22 March 2009

[0:00] And it's a milestone today. Each year the US President gives a State of the Union, a State of the Nation address, where they've been, where they're going to.

The State of the Church, where are we at? Where have we come from? Where are we going? What is God's will?

And as far as looking back, we look back with thanksgiving, what God has done. He's brought us thus far by His grace. He's helped us individually as a group and we've got gratefulness this morning for that.

The scars, the setbacks He sends, that makes us stronger and helps us grow. We're grateful for it all because we can rest more surely on Him. And when we look back, we can see how the Lord has led us.

We can exalt Him, seek Him and remember His workings and mark this moment in history. Just like Samuel did in 1 Samuel 7 verse 12.

[1:14] On the occasion of a great victory, 1 Samuel 7 verse 12, a great victory that the Lord gave. Then Samuel took a stone and set it. He called the name of it, Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto have the Lord helped us.

And we can set a stone today, if you like, and say, Ebenezer, hitherto, up to here, the Lord has helped us. He's brought us by His grace, all glory be to God.

And it's a good time too for an honest assessment. Just as you would do for yourself, we've taken an honest assessment about our physical health. We do that, don't we?

Some of you here are health nuts. There's some, you know, they're totally healthy. And they keep tabs of every aspect. And they take their pulse, they check the vital signs.

And they improve their personal best. You know, they're trim, taut and terrific. But even though they do this, they know it's all downhill, really. It's all downhill, really.

[2:14] But we do try, don't we? What about the church? It's a bit like that sometimes too, isn't it? Our spiritual condition. What is our spiritual state? Our standing, our health as a church.

Let's make an honest assessment. How has it been? It's like sometimes you get the school report card. Should have done better. Could have done better. And what of the church?

It's like that too. I can think, what of the pastor? Could have done better. Absolutely. What of the church? What of the church in its future? Looking ahead, brothers and sisters. Let's measure the church today.

Measure the church. So by what measure do we measure it? What measures matter? What is the measure that counts? Some would measure a church by the size of its congregation.

Is it a mega church? What of the preacher does he meet? Life felt needs. How sweet is the singing? How comfy are the chairs? How great is the air conditioning?

[3:11] Or not so great. How super cool is its youth program? People measure churches in all of these ways. And the list could go on and on. For you it might be different.

For you it might be different. Perhaps something on the list doesn't quite appeal. There's something lacking. And so we can easily think, I'm just going to go church shopping again.

Until I find just what I'm looking for. It all too often happens. And we can sometimes make that mistake of looking for something we never can find.

And some give up trying. By what measure do we measure a church? People will choose all kinds of things. All kinds of measures. For this one here, it's different from that one there.

Just as you would search for a new car, for some new fashion accessory, the latest gadget, the flashiest product on the shelf. Some people treat church like that.

[4:10] Is that how a church is meant to be measured? What matters is the question. Is church just a collection of people we join in with and leave as easily as we would change?

What shop we use or what team we barrack for? People don't tend to do that, do they? Or what brand they wear or what flavour of fast food they choose for the day? God's church is, if we are really such a thing, a divine institution.

It's extra special. It's supernatural. It's God ordained. And so it matters if we are truly God's church. Then the measures that matter unto Him are the measures that matter to us.

So I put it to you that one of the chief measures that we can use is to what extent do we see God getting the glory?

That is the ultimate measure. To what extent do we see God getting the glory? Or is His glory traded, diminished, replaced by something else?

[5:16] Paul tells us what matters in Ephesians 3 from verse 20 through 21. He prays now unto Him that He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.

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

This is what matters. To give the glory to God in our lives. To give the glory as a church body. Not a glory to man, to self-glory, to vain glory.

The glory is His glory. As it reads in Isaiah 42. I am the Lord, that is my name. My glory will I not give to another.

Neither my praise to graven images. Whose glory is it? His. His is the glory. Where do we give the glory today? I pray it's not a glory to men's pride, but a glory to God.

[6:22] There can be that danger in any movement, where any movement composed of men can make the mistake of man worship. Even where it seems a good thing.

And it might be a good guy. We can take heart. Take care, brothers. To guard against taking the glory away from God. It's a big danger.

Where man is elevated. Where a man is put on a pedestal. And flesh is lifted up. And flesh needs to be crucified. Yeah. So, where man's movements are lifted up, it's a danger.

It was true this way in 1 Samuel 4, 21. Where a boy was born, and they named him Ichabod. Which meant, the glory is departed. The glory is gone.

What was this about? At that time, the visible glory of God was above the Ark of the Covenant. The special wooden chest that held the log. It held precious items.

[7:19] And over this Ark, this container, stood the golden cherubim. It was a place of worship, and God's glory was shown there. But Israel disobeyed God.

And the Ark was taken, captured by the Philistines. And the people of God had lost the glory. And so, the baby Ichabod was named. The glory is departed.

Ichabod could be written over the entrances of many churches of our land. No wonder the glory has departed. God's glory has left the building. By and large, because we've lost something.

And it's a danger for us, for all of us, for every church. And where there used to be the manifest glory of God in times past. Times of reformation. Times of revival.

Times of reaping. In many movements, such as the Salvation Army, the Methodists. Even amongst the Anglicans in some measure. And many other places, the glory was there.

[8:20] Yet now it seems as if the glory has departed. How so? It's as if we've traded the glory for another focus. Another focus.

Whoa. You don't look too good. You look a bit blurry. But we can trade the glory. We can trade the focus for another focus. And man gets in the way.

But we should rather give God the glory in his church. This is the crying need that we have. That rather than man being glorified, that all the glory be unto God.

May the Lord be magnified. It sometimes helps to show something. Think, what's he doing? I'm trying to lodge something in your minds here today.

May this be our prayer, our burden. To give him the glory. To magnify the Lord. It says Psalm 34. Magnify the Lord with me. Let us exalt him together.

[9:20] What is it that we magnify? You know, sometimes we can look for all kinds of little things. And magnify them. And concentrate upon them. And focus upon them. And miss the point.

Psalm 14. The psalmist says, Let all those that seek thee rejoice. And be glad in thee. Let such as love thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified.

The Lord be magnified. This is the critical question. As to where do we place the emphasis? Now it's needful that we exercise discernment.

But not as a fault finding narrowness. I can be guilty of that. I'm very good at heresy hunting. I read a quote lately. Lord, help me to hate sin in myself as violently and mercilessly as I judge it in the lives of others.

Help me to hate sin in myself as violently and mercilessly as I judge it in the lives of others. Rather, let us magnify the Lord. Let him be magnified.

[10:24] Let our attention, let everyone's attention be drawn unto him. This is our hearts focus. Certain Greeks came to worship at the feast in John 12.

And they asked a simple question of Philip. They said, Sir, we won't see Jesus. We won't see Jesus. Little Zacchaeus had the same aim.

He sought to see Jesus, who he was. And he could not. For the press, the crowd was too great. Because he was little of stature. But Zacchaeus did something about it. He overcame the blockage. And as silly as it looked, he climbed a tree. Wow. That was radical. But he got a good look at Jesus. And that's what mattered. What about you? What is stopping you?

What is stopping you from seeing Jesus? We can miss him. And that would be a sad, sad thing to do. To miss him. Could it be an idol taking heart in our lives?

[11:23] The dearest idol I have known, whate'er that idol be, help me to tear it from thy throne and worship only thee. What is it that hinders us? That's stopping us, that is holding us back from seeing Jesus.

We must smash the idols. Cherished idols can sometimes be hard to break. There's a strong attachment to them.

And Ezekiel, it says that idols can have a lodging place in our hearts. In our very hearts. The problem is a heart problem. That's why we lack the glory.

The people draw nigh to me with their lips, their mouth. They own me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Jesus said. You know, you might find it easy to mouth the words, to give lip service, to say you're a Christian when it's not really happened yet.

And faith can degenerate into a mere form, a superficiality that costs nothing. But God looks at our heart and he knows where we're really at. And where something else occupies his place, it's a problem.

[12:38] Sometimes our heart can grow faint. There's another heart problem. We can get faint-hearted. Our Lord wants to cause to wholeheartedness. Wholeheartedness. A real genuine zeal and love for him.

How is our worship? Is it heartfelt or is it just lips-mouthing words? It's easy to lose the real thing, the sense of honour, to honour him, not with our lips so much as our hearts.

The world delights in dishonour these days, doesn't it? We see dishonour and shame all around us. What a loss it is to see a dishonour of parents, of what is right and true.

This world delights in dishonour. But let us rather give him honour and esteem who it is due to. And see what it is that dishonours him.

How can we as a church honour God by the conversion of souls, by the sanctifying of saints? How can we as a church honour God to see people truly grow in their personal faith?

[13:43] To see a work of God's Spirit break through all the barriers. And to see Christ lifted up and drawing all men unto himself. That's the work of the Holy Spirit.

As much as in some quarters there's much talk about the Holy Spirit. What is the work of the Holy Spirit? Jesus says, John 16, He shall glorify me.

Speaking of himself. He shall glorify me. When we see Jesus glorified, we know the Holy Spirit is at work. He's doing something to magnify what matters.

Our Lord and Saviour. To give all glory that is due unto his name. What marks a God glorifying work? I put it to you. Now we come to the first part of this sermon. It's going to be a long sermon today.

But we're almost halfway there. This is the first part of the sermon this morning. I put it to you. A God glorifying work is a strengthening work.

[14:40] When God is glorified, there is a strengthening that happens. Wait upon the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord.

How can we be strengthened? It's about what we depend upon. And sometimes we can get in the way of the Spirit of God. The arm of flesh will fail you.

You dare not trust your own. And we need the arm of the Lord, his holy arm, to strengthen his people. In Ephesians 3, it says that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might in the inner man.

A strengthening with might in the inner man by the Spirit of God. Let's honestly ask ourselves today, have I that hungry, teachable heart? Do I want to see Jesus today?

Do I want Jesus in my life? Do I want to see him high and lifted up and reigning in my heart? Do I want to hear his voice and act upon it? It must be that we come in humility and come and bow our hearts to him, our will.

[15:47] To know that holy boldness, that holy courage, that holy diligence of a heart changed by faith. To be as those willing to lay down their lives for the Gospel. This is happening in countries just even now, in these days we live.

We read in Acts 15, are such men. Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. You know, they might have found it hard to get insurance. Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of Jesus Christ.

Are there such men and women in this place tonight? Will there be men and women like Priscilla and Aquila? Remember, Romans 16, Paul says, Greet them, my helpers in Christ Jesus, who have for my life laid down their own nets.

Have we got people like that today? A God-glorifying work is a strengthening work. It will strengthen us for whatever trials and tests we face ahead. We must be strengthened as we face the future.

Prime Minister Churchill, not particularly a godly man as such, but just as a reference point.

Churchill said this as he addressed the Cabinet on the 13th of May, 1940.

[17:01] It was a speech of warning, a call to arms, a stirring and uplifting call. And part of his speech was this. As I say to the House, as I say to ministers who have joined this government, I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat.

I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat. He goes on, we have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many months of struggle and suffering.

You ask what is our policy? I can say it is to wage war by sea, land and air with all our might and with all the strength that God can give.

To wage war against the monstrous tyranny never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime. A God-glorifying work is a strengthening work.

I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat. Friends, we are facing a conflict as we need his strength to draw upon.

[18:03] And most of all, our strength is seen in God's love at work within us and amongst us as we are strengthening and strengthening his love. Paul prayed in Flickens 1 that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all discernment.

There is love there working alongside knowledge and discerning. God-glorifying work will strengthen us. God-glorifying work will enrich us in abounding love. And love is what motivates it, constrains it, propels us.

A love for the Lord, a love for his church, a love for his word, a love for souls. Souls, perishing souls. Oh, that we would know the agony, the burden for lost souls.

For people living in darkness, they perish, they perish. And he says, warn them from me. Warn them from me. Show them the love of Jesus.

A God-glorifying work is a strengthening work. That will strengthen our faith and our commitment. Secondly, we see a God-glorifying work is a stirring work.

[19:07] There is need of soul stirring. We can get so sleepy, sluggish and sickly as a church. All too easily we can become as those dwelling at ease in Zion. Resting back in our holy hammocks.

Woe to them that are at ease in Zion. We need stirrers today. I like stirrers. Believe it or not, they get under my skin but I still like them. I know a few people who are stirrers.

And they stir things up. Strangely, stirring can be good though. It's a good stirring. So long as the stirring is God-glorifying, I welcome it.

And when God is at work, He stirs men. I pray that you will be stirred. Stirred this morning. Stirred and take hold of God. That it's time to stop neglecting what matters.

Isaiah 64 said, Isaiah said, There is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.

[20:10] None that call upon his name. None that stir up themselves to take hold of God. There's need of a stirring up. People of God today, if we can stir up and take hold of God, if we can see him and take hold of him, it's a good kind of stirring.

I want to stir you from complacency and apathy. I want to stir you from neglect this morning. It's a time to stir up the sleeping church.

It's time to sound the alarm, to blow the trumpet and make the people jump. Joel 2.1, it says, Sound an alarm in my holy mountain, that all the inhabitants of the land tremble.

Blow you the trumpet, it says. With a divine commission, with a divine trumpet that must be sounded, there's a gripping reality of the horrors of hell, of the terrible wrath of God, and all the while, yet, still, his beckoning love extends grace.

But time is running out, people. Time is running out on planet Earth. We need stirring up. In Acts 12, there was a stirring up. When the people prayed, as Peter was in prison, persecuted for his faith, the people prayed, and it caused a big stir.

[21:23] In Acts 12, it says, there was no small stir among the soldiers. Why? There was an earthquake, and Peter's shackles, and chains were broken, the doors were wide, and God moved.

There was no small stir. And when people get together to pray, God moves. God moves when we get together in believing prayer. That's why the prayer meeting is important.

It's a God-glorifying work. Acts 19 tells us again, when God worked, it caused a stir. In Acts 19, 23, there arose no small stir about that way.

The context is of Paul preaching, of religious idols being made, and of the people who made them, getting all stirred up when Paul preached Christ to them.

How we need to be stirred up, stirred up, to preach Christ and Him crucified, to reach out, to launch out, to reach out, and to have that burden, that concern, that soul thirst, that desperation, that fervency of prayer.

[22:35] The opposite of stirring up, is neglect. Neglect. I think how sad it is to see neglect. Neglect of fellowship.

If the church is a divine institution, then as someone has expressed it, to neglect of fellowship, is contempt to the authority of God. It's a serious matter. We shouldn't treat fellowship lightly.

Where we can, we should be there. This is no mere social club, of men's making. For all its faults, it is the church of God. The church of God. And we neglect, neglect stunts, our spiritual growth.

We need to stir it up. Paul urged Timothy, he said, Timothy, 2 Timothy 1, stir up the gift of God, which is in thee, by the laying on of my hands. Stir it up, Timothy.

Stir it up. Stir up the gift, that God has given to you. Use your gift, for the glory of God. How sad it is to see neglect. Neglect of your gift, neglect of your duty, neglect of your calling.

[23:37] Paul got stirred up about it, and so should we. He ceased not to warn everyone, night and day with tears. He said, I commend you to God,

and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up.

Paul was stirred up. He was stirred up, and he saw idols in the city. He was stirred up, to warn with tears. And we need to get stirred up, people of God.

Be stirred up to support your church, defend your church, glorify your God. And remember, the opposite of stirring, is neglect. Neglect. How sad it is to see neglect.

Neglect of God. Most of all, neglect of salvation. How sad it would be, to hear all of this, to hear Christian talk, and challenge, and yet, to think, he's talking to someone else today.

What about neglect of salvation? Neglect of soul? God's called us to be provokers, stirrers. I plead with you, get stirred up today. Get stirred up, so you seek after God.

[24:40] Get stirred up, so you see Jesus this morning. And it says in Hebrews 10, let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works. I understand the intent of this provoking, it's like a jab with a sharp sting.

That's what we need sometimes. A bit of a, whoa, that hurt preacher. It's time to provoke. We need to provoke one another. Provoke me, provoke one another. Provoke unto love and good works.

A good kind of stirring. A deeper love, a deeper faith, a deeper walk, a deeper rejoicing, to love him more deeply, to believe in him more fervently.

A deeper devotion. Thirdly, we see a God glorifying work is a striving work, a striving work. God strives with man.

He strives with man. Isaiah tells of a potter and the clay. He says, Woe to him that striveth with his maker. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it? What makest thou?

[25:37] We can't tell God what to do. We are just clay in his hands. I trust clay that can be shaped. God strives and works with vessels of clay.

You know, it's interesting, isn't it, to think that God chooses such as we, human vessels, human vessels. We see that in 2 Corinthians 6, 4 rather, 6 through 7.

It says, For God who commanded the light to shine, 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. Just vessels. Could be just something simple like that.

Look, I don't need to make this a poor example, but just an ordinary container. An ordinary container. That's all we are, brothers and sisters.

[26:35] We have this treasure, God's treasure, his glory, in earthen vessels, just vessels of clay. And our dependence must be on God. There's nothing special, particularly about what we look like.

But we're vessels, we're containers for his glory. Imperfect vessels. Sometimes he has to remake us, as the vessel is shaped and moulded on the potter's wheel.

O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter, saith the Lord, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand. God's glory works in human vessels, mere vessels, yet vessels cleansed, holy vessels, made clean, made rid of our guilt.

His blood can make the foulest clean. You might think, what can God do with me? I'm nothing. I'm unworthy. Yes, we all are. We're all in the same category, but his blood can make the foulest clean. Vessels, human vessels, spirit-filled vessels, filled with God, filled with the Lord Jesus Christ. The glory is within you. Christ in you is the glory that we know.

[27:45] And poured out vessels, I trust, reaching out to others about us. A God-glorifying work is a work of striving. Not a striving of men, but a striving of God's spirit.

Genesis 6 tells us of how the spirit of God will strive with men, but not always. One day the striving time will be over. And friends, I pray he'll wrestle you to the ground and draw you to himself today.

Don't put it off to get right with God. Do not put it off. Friends, we've got no guarantee of whether we'll see tomorrow, but I trust you'll see heaven if you trust him today.

Trust him now. Do we recognise the flesh in all its ugliness, in all its shame, in all its pridefulness? Even knowledge can be a bad thing. 1 Corinthians 8 verse 1, knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

We can get like a big balloon, puffed up, inflating our ego as we know things, but rather let us seek love. Love builds up. Builds up.

[28:47] We need knowledge too. We need wisdom. But we must guard against pride all the way. That's nothing to do with the vessel. It's just a vessel, just a container. Sometimes we can be vain in our own Bible knowledge and miss the mark about what measures matter to God.

We must be aware of that. I must be aware of that. Truly it is, our life purpose, our meaning, our reason for being, why we're here, why we are here, is to give him the glory.

He's made you for that purpose. It's Isaiah 43. Everyone that is called by name, my name, I have created him for my glory. Yea, I have formed him.

Yea, I have made him. God's made you for a higher purpose than just making a buck and making a life that you'll have something heavenly, something eternal to show that you'll know him.

You'll see him. You'll find him. You'll hold him. You'll follow him. He will be yours and you'll be his. And he'll fill you with his glory with himself. Do we recognise the urgency of the hour to the need to take refuge in God?

[29:55] There's a healthy striving. Look through your Bible. There's numbers of strivings. Striving against sin. Striving in prayers. Striving together for the faith of the gospel.

Of course, there's the bad kind of striving. A striving as in quarrels or unhelpful contentions. I've been guilty of that. We can strive in an unhelpful way but rather let us strive in a spiritual way.

And a God glorifying work is a striving work. Where God strives with us and where we strive with those who we want to reach for him. A striving. A striving within between flesh and spirit.

Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Whatever a man sows, that also shall he reap. We can sow to the flesh. We're going to reap corruption. We can sow to the spirit and reap life everlasting.

Let us not be weary in well-doing for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. What it's saying here is talking about what we're planting in our lives.

[30:55] You're planting something. You know, it's nice to have a garden and plant something and see it grow. And think, well, I helped put that there. That was something I've done.

Something to show. Our lives too. We're planting things, aren't we? Every day. And harvest time is approaching. Let us be careful how we're planting.

What we want to plant is what matters. Are we planting that which is good and true? He's called you to serve in holy service.

It says, Serve the Lord with gladness. Come before his presence with singing. His holy service is not an irksome thing. It is a glorious privilege and it takes a holy resolve because our flesh will want to quit.

Our flesh will want to weaken. But we're in a battle where there is no truce. There is no compromise. There is no suspension of hostilities. This is a fight to the death.

[31:54] And so we want to make sure we're fighting for the right things. Amen. Fighting for the right things and fighting against the right things. to fight against.

And so God strives with all men and women and some will just resist and go to hell. But some he strives with and they crumble at his feet.

And he breaks them down to kneel before him. Friends, I trust you're in that Latin number. But you'll find him and trust him today. He's looking for men and women, faithful men.

Timothy was told by Paul to teach them, to search them out, to find them, to teach them so they could teach others also. He says, commit these things to faithful men. 2 Timothy 2, verse 2.

Friends, there's a call this morning. I urge you, a call for this church to holy service. A call to bless. A call to build. To walk in love, as Ephesians 5 says.

[32:54] To love the brethren. To love the Lord. To love his word. To sacrifice. We're called to die so that we can live.

You know, the resurrection power can only come when we die. And it's the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead and came to do his work. But the death to the flesh must come first.

So when your flesh gets battered and bruised, it's a good thing, brothers and sisters. It'll help us. The striving could be his doing, his working, to help you yield to him, to help you trust him.

He will build his church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. He belts with living stones. He fills human vessels just like people, just like you and me.

It's amazing, isn't it? You know, sometimes we think, who's God going to fill? Who's God going to choose? Could be people sitting in these chairs today. Could be people here in this very place.

[33:53] For all their faults and failings, it's amazing that God would choose us. And it's a God-glorifying work, I pray, of his strengthening, as he gives us his power, of his stirring, as he shakes us from complacency, of his striving, as he urges us and prompts us to trust him.

And lastly, a God-glorifying work is a work that rocks the status quo. It shakes us to our very core. Sometimes our greatest enemy is the status quo.

We can get so comfortable. The greatest enemy can be the person standing in our shoes. We can get comfortable, comfy. Now, I've got to go from the sublime to the ridiculous now, but sometimes these graphic and somewhat strange illustrations can stick in our minds.

So, bear with me while I do this now, because sometimes it helps to remember things that are visual. What are we focusing on? What are we magnifying? We magnifying the Lord?

That's what we want to do, isn't it, church? To magnify the Lord together with me to glorify God.

Sometimes it helps to see something visual so we remember it.

[35:08] And even if it is ridiculous, which this is really somewhat the case. So, I hope you'll remember this now. And we quoted the former Prime Minister of England earlier, Churchill, and now some words of wisdom from a former Prime Minister of Australia, the Honourable Kevin Rudd.

In answer to someone who was criticising what his government had done to support women, he said, and I quote, fair shake of the sauce bottle, mate. Fair shake of the sauce bottle, mate.

What am I on about? The point I'm making here is that just as a sauce bottle can get clogged, so can we. Why don't we see the glory of God? Sometimes the problem is right here.

We're getting clogged. We're getting clogged, brothers and sisters. What's stopping the glory of God filling his church? It's sometimes when man gets in the way. We can get hindered by man.

I can get hindered by Andrew Craig. Just as the sauce bottle can get clogged, it needs to be shaken. And so too, we need to be shaken up a bit. To be shaken from our complacency, the glory disrupts the status quo.

[36:16] Jesus is passing by. He changes everything. He wants us to behold his glory. In John 17, he prayed for his church that they may behold my glory.

That was his prayer. He wants us to behold his glory. He wants you to see him this morning. To see Jesus high and lifted up and his train filling the temple. He wants you to see Jesus this morning as Isaiah saw him, the king of glory.

He wants you to see Jesus today. And sometimes we can get in the way of the glory. We can get in the way of the glory. What is it that makes the church great?

It is the glory of God. The glory of God. Man has to get out of the way. Flesh has to get out of the way. And sometimes, as I say, the greatest obstacle for you, for me, in trusting God, is our selfish state.

and our standing that we can live or act or be without him. But friends, it must be by his help, by his grace. Flesh has to get out of the way.

[37:23] In other words, we need to come to the end of ourselves so he can have his way with us. In 2 Chronicles, we see of a time where they were as one, of making one sound in praising and thanksgiving.

They lifted up their voice with trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music and praised the Lord for he is good. His mercy endureth forever. And then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord, so that the priest could not stand to minister by reason for the cloud.

For the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God. Wouldn't it be great if the order of service had to be scrapped and you didn't have to worry that, wow, I'm getting hungry and it's time to eat soon. Or, you know, you didn't have to think about what it is that you wanted to do for the rest of the day because the glory of the Lord will fill the house. Wouldn't that be wonderful? To be wonderful, to see God move us, shake us, stir us and be a church on fire.

Let us catch the fire today. Catch the fire and keep on burning. How we need much more than just mere meetings, just having get-togethers and chin-wags and chatting, but to see the glory of God fill His people, to see the cloud of glory as it were, to see that which matters is what is measured. [38:49] That what matters is the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ. And friends, to come to a close here, I urge you today, wherever you're at with God, you may not have thought of these things.

See Jesus today. Let that be your desire. Press into Him. See His smile as He invites, as He embraces you, as He welcomes you, as God the Father receives you as an adopted son, a daughter into His family.

Do we mean business with God? Do we seek His presence? Do we even realise that God is not with us? You know, sometimes we seek His presence, but we're not even conscious of His absence.

Of His absence. Maybe we're like Samson who made that mistake when he was deceived as he lost his fellowship with God. He didn't even realise that it happened.

As Delilah tricked him as he slept there on her lap and then he awoke out of sleep thinking he would shake himself as at other times, but he did not know.

[39:58] That the Lord had departed from him. What a shame it would be for the glory to depart and we don't even realise it. We don't even notice it. It must be more than just having meetings.

We must not settle for the status quo but cry for the showers of blessing to fall. Man has to get out of the way. Andrew Craig has to get out of the way.

Flesh has to get out of the way so that we can unplug the blockage. and flesh must be crucified that the Spirit of God will do a heaven sent work.

Friends, that's for all of us too. I trust you can identify with that too. What about you? Will you enter in?

Enter in boldly. Hebrews foretells of a great high priest. He cannot be removed from our feelings because he was touched with them too.

[40:57] Tested in all points just as we yet without sin. And it says, so then, let us therefore come boldly, boldly before the throne of grace and find grace to help in time of need.

Friends, to wrap up, come to the throne today. Come to the throne today. Don't let anything stop you. Unclog the blockage. Let's shake ourselves from the status quo.

Let's seek after God. Let's be amongst those that will take hold of him. Take hold of him.

And be as Moses prayed. He cried out, show me thy glory. Show me thy glory. Let's cry out as Moses, oh Lord, send the fire.

Send the fire right now. How do we measure a church? Measure a church by the measures that matter to God. A God glorifying work is a strengthening work.

[41:58] We need his power and enablement, his empowerment. A God glorifying work is a stirring work. We need to be stirred from that rocking in the cradle, from that hammock, as it were.

A God glorifying work is a striving work. Realise his striving with you and stop resisting the Holy Spirit. A God glorifying work rocks the status quo.

And what matters is we place our confidence in the right things. We magnify the right things. We unclog some things. And we put no trust in the flesh. Have no confidence in the flesh, says Paul. Don't trust in the flesh, but get it out of the way. Get out of the way so God can do his work. Enter in today. See his glory in his church.

Be his church and do all to the glory of God. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we praise you for this time of fellowship just now. Lord, work in us.

[43:08] We pray that everyone here today will have that desire that Zacchaeus had. So even climb a tree to do something that seemed a bit odd, to go against the grain, to shake ourselves and step out of the status quo of how we've always had things and to say, Lord, I need you.

I cry out to you. I need you, Jesus, I need you today. Jesus is passing by. What a shame it would be for him just to walk by and to miss that moment that you can have, to say, Jesus, Lord, save me.

I cry out to you now. I know the unworthiness and my lack. I know my sin. I cannot earn heaven. I cannot ever merit it.

All the good I can do is fall short. I trust you now for saving me by your grace and love, by your bleeding on the cross and rising again to life, eternal.

Lord, I trust you now as saviour, as risen Lord, as master of my life. I trust you now. I pray that might be the prayer for you today from deep down in your heart.

[44:21] And for each one that knows in today, let us, Lord, we pray, be that church you want us to be. Help us, Lord, to shake ourselves where we need to be stirred.

Help us, Lord, to stir up that which you want us to be and do. Help us, Lord, to know your will and to do it. We pray, Lord, for your grace to be evident as you lead us forward in whatever direction.

Lord, let it be to your glory and praise. In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.