

Where has the Glory gone?

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[0 : 00] 1 Corinthians 1, verse 26 It says, That no flesh should glory in his presence.

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Chapter 2

It's that God has chosen you and I, the weak, the base, the despised, the foolish, that no flesh should glory in his presence.

The glory is not in the flesh. Now some churches may be prone to glory or boast in themselves. They've got an air of superiority. That they're more spiritual. That they have a higher learning.

[4 : 55] A higher doctrine. But we need to all watch out. I know, as was referred to in the morning service, that we're not to be boastful. You know, he that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall.

That we all need to have the humble spirit. A humility of spirit. 2 Corinthians 4, 7 it says, We are just vessels that contain him.

We are just containers for God. And these days some people want to be part of a big, powerful church. Where everything's cool and trendy. Where everything's upmarket and very sleek.

And of course we'd like to aspire to excellence as a church. We'd like that too. But it's not putting our focus on that. Where everything's a well-oiled machine.

Where it's all just geared that way. That it's all got to be so just right. And that it's a church that attracts people with power and with influence.

[5 : 59] And with prestige. With affluence. And it can become like a little club. Where it's just, you've got to be in the inner circle. You've got to be in this certain clique.

This certain type of people. And some churches can make that dangerous mistake of priding themselves on that kind of reputation. And recognition.

But the word tells us, Let no flesh glory in his presence. Not one of us. Myself included. That we need to have that humility. Of mine. That we're just a vessel.

We're just clay jars. And the treasure is Christ. We have this treasure in earthen vessels. That's what makes the difference. God's saving grace. That's what makes the difference for any of us.

That wonderful wealth. That wonderful treasure. That we are but containers of. Nothing much to speak of. Of ourselves. And it's wonderful, isn't it? In the word of God. You see it right through.

[6 : 54] From Genesis through. That God chooses the nobodies. God chooses the nothings. The everyday. The ordinary. The common. And Christianity is about sinners.

About weak. Wandering people. Who cry out. For his grace. And the Bible calls us like sheep.

Dumb sheep. Sheep that wander our own merry way.

And go willy nilly. Here there and everywhere. And we all like sheep. Have gone astray. And the Lord have laid on him. The iniquity. The sin. Of us all.

Sinful man. Is the. Container. That God chooses. And of course he changes. But God chooses the sinful. The lost. The weak.

The frail. The failing man. Those that are guilty. Burden. Falling. Failing. Ungodly. But turning to Christ. Turning to Christ.

[7 : 54] That's what makes the difference. That is what is the difference. It's like it's been said. Just as we are. We come. But we don't stay that way.

You know. Just as I am. I come. But God doesn't leave us that way. He changes us. We get saved. And we get changed. You could say we aren't a middle class. Yuppie church. We aren't a church where everyone's got it together.

But. But. That's who God chooses. Isn't it? He chooses the fallible. And the frail. And the weak. This is a church of clay pots.

Of vessels that God can fill. And every one of us. Is a little bit different. Every one of you. Has different abilities. It's like. The clay pavers around this building. They're all a little bit different. Some have got. Chips on the edges. And some are different colours. Different shapes. And sizes. It's like. As you could see. An old stone wall.

[8 : 52] That God. Puts us together. Like living bricks. It says in 1 Peter. That. In the olden days. Of course. They weren't all uniform. But there were different sized stones. That. I know in England.

You see those walls. That. They've all been kind of compacted together. So just fit. Snuggly together. In different ways. And that's what God does with us. We're a mixed bag. We don't have to be clones.

Or. Certain types of people. He uses every one of us. Every one of you. And puts us all together. People of all sizes. And types. And. Shapes. And. Backgrounds. Problem people. People with. Problems. You've come to the right place. It's like it's been said of a church. It's a. A hospital for sinners.

Isn't it? It's not a museum. Or. Some kind of display. Place. It's a. Hospital. It's a. Clinic. It's a. A group of. People. Problem people.

[9 : 47] Baby Christians amongst us. Weak Christians amongst us. And that's the kind of church. That can rely on God. Because we haven't got too. Big noted. Or. Too puffed up.

And. Fancy. That we don't need God anymore. We need to be that kind of church. That relies on God. And that's a good thing. It's about God's grace. It's about the master's plan. To save man. From his own hopelessness. It's been said that. There's a book written. Why the Germans lose at war. And one German error. In World War II.

As all the world. Now knows. Was that Britain broke. The Germans codes. And. Thus we knew in advance. What they were going to do. And the Nazis made the blunder.

Of believing. That. Their codes were unbreakable. Their scientists. And their code experts. Were in their. Their eyes. The very best. And could not be broken.

[10 : 42] By the British mathematicians. And so. This author says. Thus the Germans. Fatally. Committed the military sin. Of despising the enemy. They had arrogant confidence.

In the infallibility. Of their superior genius. Compared with other peoples. And. Churches can make that mistake too. Getting too proud. And puffed up. And God forbid that we do that.

We all need to. Be relying on the Lord. It's like. There was a preacher. Who got up and said. My sermon today. Is on humility. And in my opinion. It's one of the finest pieces.

Ever written. Amen. You know. You know. He had the wrong idea. Because we're not here to impress. Or to big note ourselves. We're here to. As humble. One and all.

Seeking God. And we need to realise. Our great need. Of being humble. To never get to the place. Where we feel. That we've got it all together. Together. Because. As it says.

[11 : 38] He that thinketh. He standeth. Take heed lest he fall. Amen. And so. Pride goes before a fall. So when we get everything down pat. And to a place of perfect precision. That we don't need God anymore.

That's dangerous isn't it? You know. God forbid. That we should ever think. That we've arrived. We haven't. We've got a long way to go. And. Some. Might get to that point.

Where they feel like everything's so neat. And tidy. And perfect. And structured. And professional. We don't need God anymore. That the rapture could come. And we could still continue meeting. Just the same. We wouldn't know.

That the real Christians have already gone. You know. Where we have that superiority. And that pride. That boasting. In the kind of church that we are. So much that God is sidelined.

And some people feel excluded. And left out. I'd like to feel and think. That this is a church. Where drug addicts can come. And be healed. Where low income earners don't feel put down.

[12 : 35] Where people with learning difficulties. Don't feel talked down to. Or talked over their heads to. Where the hurting and the wounded will come. And be cared for. Not given the cold shoulder.

But given a shoulder to lean on. Where people from different racial backgrounds can come. And they don't feel different anymore. That we are one body. In Christ.

That we can have. A sense of family. Where we're brothers and sisters. From wherever we've come from. Welded together. Bonded together. United in Christ. And where we can value other people.

So that. The clay pots that are around us. Are our brothers and sisters. They're all different. But God has brought us together. And we can support and comfort one another. With love and encouragement. So we see firstly the members. The members of this church. The members of this church. Are people just like you and me. That God has chosen the weak. The foolish.

[13:30] The despised. Those least esteemed. There's no glory in the flesh. The glory is not in the members of themselves. The glory comes and fills the members.

And so we see secondly. In our text. It talks about. From verse 30. Of the master. We see the master. The Lord Jesus Christ. And it says of him. Christ is made unto us.

Wisdom. Righteousness. Sanctification. Redemption. Christ. Is the centre. Christ is the focal point. Christ is the priority.

And these same no hopers. That God picks up. Out of the refuse tip. The scum. Of this world. Such as me. God dusts off.

And makes these ones. Into the most precious jewels. In his holy crown. And it says of. Each one of you. That you can shine. As the stars.

[14:25] In the firmament. In the sky. Those of you that win souls. To the saviour. That one day. He's going to gather his jewels. And you are called a jewel. And you'll be a jewel.

In his hand. And he reaches down. Meantime. Into the trash can. Of this world. Into the very garbage. Into the very gutter. And he takes those. That the world would throw away.

And discount. It's been said of our Lord Jesus. That he died. On the very town. Garbage dump. Of Jerusalem. Certainly it was in the proximity.

Of where. The garbage dump. Of Jerusalem was. And he was outside the camp. As it was said. He was rejected. He was an outcast. And he was crucified. Outside the camp.

And still he takes the broken. The rejected. The foul. The unclean. The unworthy. And by his grace. He transforms them. Into his diamonds. Into his jewels.

[15:22] It says. Christ. Is made unto us. Christ. Is made unto us. It says. These. Same misfits. And rejects. That. Those. Who acknowledge.

Their lack. And need of him. Are the very same people. Christ. Can be glorified in. Christ. In you. That's what matters.

That's what makes the difference. When you see. A person. Revolutionize. Transform. From the inside out. And of course. Some things. Seems like it takes a while.

For some things. To drop away. That are not God's best. Christ. But God is doing the work. Let him mould you. And shape you. And change you. Christ in you.

He gives wisdom. Righteousness. Sanctification. Redemption. And it's when we recognize. Our total weakness. We need to come to that point.

[16:16] That place. I need to come to that point. Of realizing my absolute weakness. And inadequacy. And utter reliance on him. One of the well-known composers.

Was Ludwig von Beethoven. What is the worst thing that could happen. To a composer. Someone wrote. You become deaf. The last 12 years.

Of Beethoven's life. He was deaf. Think of the pain. Of the agony. Of the love that he had. Of composing songs. Of music. And yet.

Of these last 12 years. Beethoven composed. Four of his five greatest symphonies. Some of the most beautiful music. That has ever been composed.

That in his weakness. There was strength. And it's like that with a Christian. That when we feel inadequate. That Christ can be all sufficient. That God's grace can have its full sway.

[17:13] When we just surrender. When we just realize. How hopeless we are. And how needful we are of him. The glory is in the Lord. The glory is in the Lord.

The master of the church. The head of the church. The Lord Jesus Christ. It says. 1 Corinthians 1.31. Let him that gloria. Glory in the Lord. Let him glory in the Lord.

A writer Tozer said. The Lordship of Jesus. Is not quite forgotten among Christians. But it has been relegated to the hymnal. Where all responsibility toward it.

May be comfortably discharged. In the glow of pleasant religious emotion. The idea that the man. Christ Jesus. Has absolute and final authority.

Over the whole church. And over all its members. In every detail of their lives. Is simply not now accepted. As true. By the rank and file. Of evangelical Christians.

[18:12] Christ. Christ. Has to be central. Let him. That gloria. Glory in the Lord. He has to be Lord. He has to be Lord.

It's so great. When you see. Believers. Who show a clear testimony. There's a clear testimony. That. As they make a strong stand.

You can see they're saved. You can see. There's evidence. Of salvation. That God is truly at work. In their lives. Sometimes you don't see that. There's profession of it.

There's claims of it. But there's not the evidence. There's not the. Testimony. That God is at work. In their lives. And you question. Sometimes.

Is Christ truly. Lord. Lord. Or is it just. Lip service. Is it just. A glib. Token. Profession.

[19:07] That isn't the reality. Within. Him. And if we take the spotlight. Off the master. And put it on. Any one other thing. The glory will go. It will depart.

And some churches. Have lost it. They've replaced him. They've replaced the Lord. They've replaced him. As some. Might place. A focus on. Other things.

It could be. That place. The focus. On. Their music. On their money. On their programs. On their denomination. On their philosophy. On their status. On. Whatever it might be.

It can be. Said. As someone put it. The dearest idol. I have known. Whatever that idol be. Help me to tear it. From thy throne. And worship.

Only thee. Sometimes. It may be things. That are not in themselves. Are wrong. That can become an idol. That can become a distraction. That can take our focus. Off Christ. And.

[20:07] For some. They can. And we. We can too. We can. Every Christian. Every church. Can make this mistake. I'm not saying. We're immune to it. They can brag.

And boast. About their numbers. About their bank balance. About their band. About their credentials. About their superiority. Over others. And then. It's a danger.

We can make that mistake. We don't want to get. To that place. Where the master. Isn't the focal point. The central one. But they. These. When churches.

Go like this. They're like the Laodicean church. They look like they had it all together. They look like they had it all. Down pat. It says. Because thou sayest. I am rich.

And increased with goods. And have need of nothing. And knowest not. That thou. Wretched. Miserable. Poor. Blind. Naked. This church was.

[21:02] In a. Disastrous state. Lost it. 18 year old. Jonathan Edwards. A preacher of old. Wrote in his journal. Amongst other things.

He made some resolutions. Now. We're close to New Year's. People make all kinds of resolutions. All kinds of promises. They don't keep. But Jonathan Edwards. Wrote this. And I believe he kept it.

As best he could. Resolved. That all men should live. To the glory of God. Resolved. Secondly. That whether or not. Anyone else does. I will. That we live.

To the glory of God. It's been said. That the chief end of man. Is to glorify God. And enjoy him forever. That should be our focus. Our chief end. And in some churches.

And I say. Ours can too. They depend. On things. Other than the Lord Jesus. Whether it be. Man's wisdom. Man's training. Of self-made righteousness.

[21:57] Of fleshly effort. Of putting on appearances. Of man in forced sanctification. Where it's a holiness. Of show. And rules. Where it's not really.

From the heart. Where it's a redemption. Of man's making. And of manipulation. And we can be just as guilty. As the rest.

If we ever get to that place. Where we don't rely on God. God forbid. Friends. We need to pray. We need to seek his face. We need to depend on him.

I need to depend on him. And we need to go to prayer. To go to the altar. The glory has departed. Worldwide. In churchdom. There's much to be desired.

And that's across the board. It's not insane. It's not picking on any particular brand of Christianity. It's across the board. It's a worldwide decline.

[22:52] It's a falling away. As our Lord says in apostasy. Friends. We need to be alert. The glory has departed. And when some churches. They've taken away. The emphasis from the master.

They put the spotlight. On man. On a denominational machine. On their pride. In a program. In a formula. In a particular doctrinal position. And it's like.

It's been said of Samson. In Judges 16 verse 20. The Lord has left them. And they don't even realize it. They don't even know it. They don't recognize.

They don't notice it. But. Friends. The focus. The focal point. The central priority. For every one of you. Individually. And us corporately. As a gathering of God's people.

Is that. The Lord Jesus Christ. Is made unto us. Wisdom. Righteousness. Sanctification.

Redemption. We owe it all to him. All to him.

[23 : 46] All to him I owe. Who else can we go to? There has the words. Of eternal life. When we take the glory. From the Lord Jesus Christ. When the focus gets taken off the Lord.

He has left. The glory has departed. And he's standing outside the door. Trying to knock and gain admission. As he was with the Laodiceans. So he's seen the members.

The members of this church. Just clay vessels. That his glory fills. That God has chosen. The weak. The foolish. The down and out. The outcast.

The neglected. The refuse. The scum. The offscaring. Me. And you. By his grace. Have been chosen. The glory.

Is not in the members. But it fills the members. The glory is in the master. The master. Christ. Is made unto us. And unto him be glory. In the church.

[24 : 41] And thirdly. We see the message. We see the members. We see the master. The message here. In 1 Corinthians. Paul says. Of his message. He says. I was with you. In weakness.

In fear. In much trembling. I determined not to know anything among you. Save Jesus Christ. And him crucified. I know. That there is no glory. In the messenger. Paul didn't big note himself.

He says. I'm weak. I'm inadequate. I'm with trembling. I'm with fear. I'm with weakness. He says.

There is no glory in the messenger. Whoever this messenger be.

At this time. At night or morning. Whoever declares the message to you. The messenger. Is just a messenger. Just that. There is no glory in the messenger.

He is fearful. He is trembling. He's got to give account. For what he does. As he stands. Whoever is here standing. And declaring it.

[25 : 39] Has got to answer to the living God. For what he delivers. And. That is the great.

Awesome. Accountability.

And. Woe betide. This man. If he fail to deliver the message. Faithfully. And forthrightly. Paul says. 2 Corinthians 12.

And he said unto me. My grace is sufficient. For thee. For my strength. Is made perfect. In weakness. When I am weak. Then am I strong. You know.

We all need. Every one of us. Who does anything for God. Whatever it be. To never get to that place. That. We feel strong. Of ourselves. That.

When I am weak. Then. Am I strong. That's our strength. There's no glory in the program. In the technology. In the methodology. In the procedure. In the technique. The glory.

[26 : 34] Is in the message. The message. The message. That we need to realize. Our absolute inadequacy. Our inability. Our total dependence. Upon God. There's a little saying.

That. You can get a little. Hand band. It's sort of popular. Amongst the youth. And I've mentioned it before. I think. F. R. O. G. Fully rely. On God. Fully rely.

On God. That should be our slogan. That should be our. Creed. To fully rely. On God. That we never. Come to that place. Where we don't have. An absolute.

Inadequacy. Of ourselves. That. As we can have. Like Paul. This one thing. I've decided. I've resolved. To. Just declare. This message. That's so vital.

And essential. There's lots of things. We can know. There's loads of things. There's lots of things. We can know. We can know. Of many matters. Which Christians. Spend all manner of energies.

Debating. And deliberating.

[27 : 30] Arguments. About alien baptisms. About open. Closed. Or close communion. About women in pants. About head coverings. About women pastors. About baptismal regeneration.

About the grace teaching. About Calvinism. About eternal security. But the key message. Must be Christ. And him crucified. The key message.

Is the real message. That must be delivered. And can't be diluted. And can't be neglected. Is the message of the cross. Christ and him crucified.

And we can make the mistake. Of getting off track. That that's just sidelined. And that's just referred to in passing. But that must be the main message.

So that if ever. There is anyone. That we come into contact with. That they hear the message. Loud and clear. That it's forthright. And clear to each one. It's said.

[28 : 25] There's a quote here. Millions of churchgoers today. Think the way the world thinks. They follow the same behaviour. The same culture. The same love. Many churches are so worldly.

There's no definite message. The glory is in the message. The cross. Christ and him crucified. A preacher was told.

After a sermon. Thank you for that message pastor. Don't thank me. Thank the Lord. The pastor said. I thought of that. But it wasn't quite that good.

You know. It wasn't that. It wasn't that. The message was. Was so good. That you would thank the Lord for it. But. Let's not thank the preacher. Let's thank the Lord. If the message is clear.

Thank the Lord for it. Don't. Don't pat me on the back. Give the glory to God. The glory for the message. And the simple message is needed. In this. Crying. Need.

[29 : 22] Of the hour. Is this message of salvation. There's nothing more critical. That this message be broadcast loud and clear. In our world today. The simple message.

The simple gospel. The Christ. And him crucified. To get back to the word. To be led by the word. Henry Martin. Henry Martin went to Calcutta.

In 1806. He cried out. Now let me burn out for God. He probably didn't realise how fast that blaze would consume him.

He died six years later. Age 31. Eager to devote his life to the Lord. For the Lord's work in India. With an incredible determination.

And unselfish dedication. Martin compressed a lifetime of service in those six years. We need to have a burning blazing message. That consumes us.

[30 : 19] That moves us. That motivates us. That we can't but be silent. As his witnesses. As God gives you grace to.

Let him use you. No other message will do. Not impressive psychology. Not obscure doctrines. Not exciting and ear tickling entertainment. Not hyped up conjured up performances.

Not pampering pussyfooting philosophies of men. Not worked up manipulations. Not imagined latter day prophetic utterances. But the message.

The message. This is what the world needs to hear. It needs to hear it. And you need to be the voice. The voice piece. The spokesman. The spokeswoman of this message.

The message of Christ and in crucified. Let's not get off on tangents. Let's kick down. Straight down the track. The glory will depart. If the message is not right.

[31 : 15] I've seen Christians and churches. With stunted growth. And defective effectiveness. Because the message wasn't right. They've lost the message. And we know it's all too common today.

At times in any circle. Where there's this showmanship. At times of manipulation.

For people to make a profession. That is just a token man's reaction thing. Without it being a real work of God in their soul.

And God's message must be declared. Such that people can't help but cry out. It's like in Jonathan Edwards day. Where he preached sinners in the hand of an angry God.

And he talked about and suspended. Like from a spider's web. Above the chasm of hell. And how the people were crying out. In agony. In despair. In despair. And realizing that utter hopeless estate.

[32 : 17] Without Christ. Of their absolute dire need. Of genuine total repentance. Of complete commitment to Christ. That they couldn't help but cry out.

For mercy. For God to save their soul. From sin and hell. The message was clear cut then. I don't know that he would draw the same attention today.

Or whether he'd get the same call to speak today. Because there's so much else to occupy people's pulpits and churches.

But the Bible's message is loud and clear. It must be declared. Crystally clear. A resounding definite absolute truth. There is no other saviour. There is no other God.

There is no other way. The cross is the absolute ultimate essential message. There is no other message. Do you want to be strong in the faith?

[33 : 18] Go to the cross. Do you want peace? The cross. Do you want to know right doctrine? Get back to the cross. Do you want victory in your life? Humble yourself. Go to the cross.

Guidance? The cross. Do you have relationship problems? Go to the cross today. When we are weak, God can make us strong.

Fully rely on God. Absolute reliance upon Him. Trust in Him. Do you need spiritual power? Go to the cross. Do you need godliness?

Go the way of the cross. Have you got doctrinal questions? We can only get answers when we fully realise the cross and what it means. The glory has departed where churches neglect and sideline the cross.

Christ and Him crucified. When the saving work of Christ is neglected. When the saving work of Christ in dying for sinful man is secondary or is substituted with some other emphasis of man.

[34 : 28] Let's see God at work. Let's see God at work. God's glory in His church. As we get the members who give God the glory. Members who realise that they are weak and foolish and despised and not esteemed.

Not powerful and recognised in the world's eyes. Weak, frail, inadequate members.

When we see the Master as the central point of Christ who has made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification, redemption.

When we see the message communicated in all its wonder and glory and majesty of what God has done at the cross for you.

What God has wrought. What Christ has done. Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. The message communicated in all its power and glory.

[35 : 34] Clear and strong. Christ and Him crucified. Unto Him be glory in the church. Friends, we need that glory, don't we? We need to get back to that glory.

Not that we can glory in it and dignite ourselves. But that this treasure would come and dwell in earthen vessels. Just like you and me. By His mercy.

Let us pray. Lord, we thank you today. Dear God. Dear God. Dear God. For that mercy. That mercy. That mercy. mercy, that mercy, that mercy that you bled in Christ to pay that awful guilt, that penalty, that dread, vile guilt of our lack, of our fault. Lord, that you took our payment, paid at Christ's cross. Lord, you paid it there for our sin. Lord, we thank you for that grace.

Lord, we praise you. Lord, we want your glory in your church. Lord, we want your glory. We want you to be glorified. We want you to be glorified in your church, Lord God, that you would glory, that you would fill each one, that we would be Christ in you, the hope of your glory, that each one here seated would be a temple of the Holy Spirit and filled with your glory, that Lord, you would be the one that we love and adore and owe our all to, that you would have our church be a clear messenger of your word to this lost and dying humanity around us, this community that so desperately needs this salvation truth. Help us, Lord, to faithfully declare it, to deliver it by whatever means we can. As you give us help too, we pray that you would be glorified in your church. In Jesus' name, Amen.