

Glory, Grace and Truth

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Preacher: David Parker

[0 : 00] Now, the particular part of that reading and verses that I want to explore with you tonight are found in verse 14 and then in verses 16 and 17.

In verse 14, we read these words that we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

And then in verse 16, for from his fullness, we have all received grace upon grace.

For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. Well, as you know, we've been going through some messages from John's Gospel.

And we're really scratching the surface. It would be not that difficult to get a dozen messages from what's known as John's prologue.

[1 : 24] That is to say the first 18 verses of chapter 1 of John's Gospel. But this is my fourth message. In the first message, I tried to present the relation of Jesus Christ or the Word of God to the being of God.

And we saw in that message that that relation was that Jesus Christ had existed eternally in an exquisite relationship of fellowship and love with God the Father, facing from all eternity the Father in that exquisite love and fellowship.

We then looked in our second message at the light. Those that were observant among you would have noticed that I skipped the relation of Jesus Christ to creation.

And I went on to speak of the relation of Jesus Christ as the light. And in particular, as it states in John's Gospel, the light of every single person.

Notice these words. Every single person. That is to say, he's the light existentially of every single person. And he's the light of every single person from a spiritual and redemptive point of view.

[3 : 01] I thirdly, although it was the first message, I know that doesn't make much sense, but those of you who heard those messages will know exactly what I mean. The third message was the explosive and staggering statement of John.

Almost in which that whole prologue is moving inexorably towards staggering. The word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory.

Tonight we're continuing that theme and we're continuing that theme, which is the major theme of John, the Christ for us.

And this evening we'll be looking at three things that John further mentions in Jesus' relation to us as our saviour and our salvation.

And those three things are glory, grace and truth. I think, I don't know what others think, it's also true that those three aspects, glory, grace and truth, are relevant to the life of every single person.

[4 : 18] Before we're, as we sit there listening and we're wondering, is this all sort of theological and only esoteric and for certain amounts of people?

But I think these three things are relevant to the life of every single person. Take glory. Would we not all love our lives to be lifted above the orderly, the mundane?

If only our lives had some prestige and kudos. If only we could see a glorious dimension to our lives.

We could call this a longing for a life that has substance and splendour. Then there's grace. Which among other things, not something perhaps that we focus on a great deal in our church.

Among other meanings, the meaning of grace is charm and beauty. They wondered at the gracious words that fell from his lips.

[5 : 31] Never man has spoke like this man. And finally, truth. Something important, is it not?

For everyone. Especially when we're faced with horrible events, for instance, like the Manchester bomber. And even living in a world as we do in which truth is a rare thing and hard to identify.

So then, even these theological terms like glory, grace and truth, I believe can be relevant to our everyday lives. But, as we'll see, the real relevance relates to our need of salvation.

Let's look then at what John has to say about these three things. First, glory. And there's what he's got to say. We see it there in verse 14.

He says, We have seen his glory. It's interesting that he says that after he told us that he came unto his own.

[6 : 46] And his own did not receive him. It's interesting that he says that after the light shines in the darkness. And the darkness has not overcome it.

Or has not recognized it. Or understood it. But John says, We have seen his glory.

And you can think there's a hundred people looking at this Galilean man. And they see the sweat pouring from his brow. As he is walking around.

As he's speaking in the heat. And they see him perhaps even tired. But John says, We have seen his glory.

Who are the we? Well, some people say that it's the community of believers of which John is their leader.

[7 : 56] Other people wonder if it's John and a few other disciples. But I don't know for sure.

And neither do you. And neither does anybody. But here's the important thing. This is a statement, I believe, to a greater or lesser extent of every single believer and every single Christian.

There came a point when we were able to say and join with John. We have seen his glory.

The glory of this Christ for us. This Christ that is pro-me. This Christ that laid down his life for sinners like me and you.

What is this glory, John? That you've seen? Have a look then at verse 14.

[9 : 08] We have seen his glory. Glory as of the only son from the father.

Glory as of the only son from the father. Now, the word son is not in the original language at this point in this text.

And neither is there any definite article there. It literally reads, Of a son from a father.

And notice the word as, Like a son from a father. But the actual word, Sorry, like a unique one from a father.

Because the word monogenes or monogenus Is a word that means one of a kind. Mono, one, genus of a kind.

[10 : 14] It means very special. And what I want you to understand is, In the culture of Jesus' day, Yes, a firstborn had a special status.

But an only son. Had a very, very special status. And although the definite article is not there, And although the word son is not there, The translators are absolutely spot on in including it.

Because John, finally, Although this may be an illustration, In the sense that, An only son, Especially in that culture, Was meant to reflect his father, In a way that, Perhaps, A son that wasn't an only son, Wouldn't or couldn't.

And that's what John is drawing on here. And if you want to be literalistic, You wouldn't have the definite articles in, Or the, But it's obvious, From the whole gospel of John, And from his prologue, And the beginning of that prologue, He has in mind, The son of God, Our saviour.

And he says, This is the glory that we, We saw. That's what that glory is. And, We saw it, In the man Jesus.

[11 : 49] Now, You can see that, Can't you? John gets to verse 14, And he says, The word became flesh, So the specific subject, Of his concentration, At this moment, Is the enfleshed word, Is the human man Jesus.

And the word became flesh, And it's this word became flesh, Whose glory we beheld. Some people rush, In their mind, To the transfiguration, And think, Oh that's what he means.

No it's not. He means, The entire, History, And historical event, Of the enfleshed word, Is the place, Where he saw, This glory.

The glory of his love, The glory of his compassion, The glory of his obedience, The glory of his, Moment by moment, Living for the will of God, Why is this glory, So important, So important to John, Now there's a well known verse, In Paul's letter to the Romans, That most of us know, All have sinned, And we all know that bit, And we all quote that bit, It's the second bit, I'm interested in, And come short, Of the glory, Of God, The new testament tells us, That the end,

For which we are redeemed, It's not justification, That's a means to an end, The end, For which we are redeemed, Is to participate, In the glory of God, Some of the rabbis, In Jesus' day, Believed that Adam, Before he fell, Shared in that glory, And the, Cardinal sin, We could say, Is failing, To reflect, The glory, Of God, In our holy existence, And John is aware,

[14 : 49] That there's so many people, Don't see the glory of God, And I want to ask you, Before I move on, To my second point, Is John's testimony, Your testimony, We have seen, The glory of God, In the face of Jesus Christ, John, Then says at the end, Of verse 14, And, You could even see, That statement, About the glory of God, In parenthesis, Or in brackets, So you could, Read 14, Like this, And the word, Became flesh, And dwelt, Among us, Full, Of grace, And truth,

Now, How I understand that, Is this, This glory, That John then gave us, In brackets, Or in parenthesis, The reason he gave it, Is because he wants to talk, About two of the great, Bright, Shining, Lights, Of that, Glory, Of Jesus, Christ, Namely, Grace and truth, Characteristics, Of that, Doxa, Or glory, Shining from our, Saviour's person, And ministry, And shining, For, For our, Salvation, Now, These two words, Are,

Massive words, And they're very, Very important, There's a translation, Of the Old Testament, Called, The Septuagint, Which, Existed in Christ's day, And just as an aside, We know, As we read the New Testament, That Christ quoted, Possibly, Mainly, From the Septuagint, Oh my goodness, He didn't, Quote from the Masoretic Hebrew text, That's just an aside, But these two words, Grace and truth, Translate two Hebrew words, Keced, And Emeth, Emeth is the Hebrew word for truth, And Keced, Is the Hebrew word for, Grace, Or mercy, Or kindness, And John is saying,

The fullness, Of this grace, Of God, Of this kindness, Of God, Of this mercy, Of God, Came with Jesus Christ, And John is also saying, Now the word, Emeth, In Hebrew, Means firmness, Stability, Trustworthiness, Trustworthiness, Reality, And John is saying, And John is saying, Jesus Christ, Brought with him, The reality, Of the eternal God,

What does this fullness mean? I want you to notice that word, Fullness, Full of grace and truth, And in verse 16, I can happily see the print, Of this Bible, Unfortunately, For from his fullness, For from his fullness, So, He came, Full of grace and truth, And out of his fullness, So, John here is emphasizing, There is something, Extravagant, About this coming of Jesus, About this Jesus who has come, There is something, Extravagant, About the grace and truth,

[19 : 56] That he brought, John is saying, John is not saying, That there wasn't truth, During the history, Of the Old Testament, John is saying, That the fullness, That the grace and truth, That Jesus brought, Had a fullness, Had a completeness, Had a perfection, Had a finality about it, Both quantitatively, And qualitatively, In other words, Quantitatively, Jesus brought about, If you like, The whole truth, Of God, During the history, Of the Old Testament, It came, Now and then, And it came,

Piecemeal, And in part, But with Jesus Christ, It came, In its fullness, In its completeness, He that hath seen me, Hath seen the Father, And it came, Not only quantitatively, In its fullness, But qualitatively, How do we know that?

The cross of Christ, Christ, He that spared not, His own son, But gave him up, For all of us, Here is grace, At its, Apex, Its pinnacle, Here is truth, At its pinnacle, The word, That was in the beginning, With God, From before creation, From all eternity, The word, That faced God, In that exquisite, Fellowship of love, And harmony, And oneness, The father and son, That were enthralled,

Eternally with one another, He gifts that son, And gives him over, To the darkness of the cross, But, I want you also, To notice, The amount of this grace, Full, And out of his fullness, I don't know, Maybe there's people here, Who feel, I don't know if there's any grace for me, Surely the door of grace, Has closed on me, No, The door of grace, Will never close, Out of his fullness, Said John, Have all we received, Grace upon grace, This grace, This grace is inexhaustible, This grace is unending,

Quantitatively again, And qualitatively, This grace, Is capable, Of coming to redeem, As the hymn writer puts it, The vilest offender, That truly believes, That moment from Jesus, There is no, Sin, That it is so evil, And so horrendous, That that grace, Is not capable, Of cleansing, And redeeming, And it never runs out, Time will not make it run out, But, We need to receive it, Notice once again, What John says, For from his fullness, We have all, Received grace,

[24 : 34] Can I ask you tonight, Have you received, That amazing grace, And can I also ask you tonight, If you're a Christian, Do you keep receiving, That grace, I know Colin says this, So often, And how true and correct he is, And I know it to be true, In my own life, I need that grace, Almost moment by moment, Not just for my sins, That grace is not there, Just for our sins, That grace is available, That ocean of inexhaustible grace, Is available for us, From whatever situation, We find ourselves in, I've always been intrigued, By that incident, Where Paul, Who said he had a thorn in the flesh, And he prayed to God,

That God might remove that thorn, And the answer came to, Well, My grace, Is sufficient, For you, For you, For you, Have you received, This wonderful grace, This ocean, Of wide and deep, And unending grace, But you know, The second doxa, That beams and shines, Brightly, Dazzlingly, Is truth, And that's, We've looked at glory, We've looked at grace, And we're now looking at truth, And I hope you've picked up, That we're not to think of those, In isolation, We're to think of those,

As interconnected, And unified, Especially in the person, Of Jesus Christ, Firstly, As we think of, This truth, This fullness of truth, That came with Jesus, Let's ask, Some questions of Jesus, Shall we?

Jesus, Are you telling the truth? Are you in possession, Of the truth, Jesus? Jesus, Can you point out, The truth to me, Or point to the truth, In this matter?

Jesus would answer yes, To all those questions, But Jesus is not only, Telling the truth, Not only in possession, Of the truth, Not only able to point to, Or point out the truth, The claim that Jesus makes, In this very gospel, Later on, Is something much more profound, And breathtaking, You'll remember, And it's a verse that led to my conversion, John 14, John 14, Verse 6, Jesus said, I am the truth, Truth, Truth, Truth, Truth, Truth, Truth, That is,

[28 : 25] I am truth, Incarnate, I am truth, Truth, Truth, Truth, Embodied, I am revealed truth, And truth revealed, This is staggering, Ultimate truth, Ultimate truth, Isn't a religious creed, Or a religious way of life, Or a theological system, Truth, Truth, Truth, Is relational, Personal, And revelatory, Because truth is Jesus Christ,

Truth, Is crystal centric, And so is grace, Jesus Christ, Is the grace of God, And Jesus Christ, Is the truth of God, I said earlier on, I think, That the word truth, Means it's got two, Even in the New Testament, Aletheia, That word, Means, Has two, Nuances, Two connotations, Reality, And revelation, Jesus Christ, Is the greatest reality,

That ever set foot, On this planet, His ultimate reality, He's God's reality, He's God's reality, And Jesus Christ, Is truth, Not only in the sense of, The real, The real deal, The real thing, And if that's so important, Isn't it, Among and within, Our candy floss, Fake society, Fake society, At certain levels, But Jesus Christ, Is also, The revelation, The manifestation, The outflowing, Of this reality, And truth,

But there's, There's also, A tragedy, Associated, With the truth, We've already, We've already seen, This tragedy, In the prologue, Part of the tragedy, Is, As John said, In his prologue, The light, The truth, The glory, The doxa, The grace, It shines, Okay, But it shines, In the darkness, And John, Mentioned, Later on, That he came, On to his own, This doxa, This glory, This truth, This Christ, Of God, And they did not, Recognize him, But let's fast forward,

Shall we, To somebody called, Pontius Pilate, Here is an illustration, Graphically, Of that tragedy, Incarnate truth, Is standing, Before the Roman, Governor, And the Roman, Governor, Opens his mouth, And he says, To incarnate truth, Standing before him, What is truth?

[33 : 24] And I believe, That's how he said it, I may be wrong, But that's how I, Feel that he said it, What am I referring to? Cynicism, And why do I, Bring Pilate?

Because I believe, We're in a society, That's got that cynicism, About truth, Truth, Truth, Truth, Where, Can we find, Trustworthy, Truth, In this life, And in this world, Now I could say a lot of things, And pick out a lot of, States of affairs, And institutions, But I'll, Not bother, I'll just bother to say this, I'll tell you one place, We can be sure, That we'll find it, In Jesus Christ, Our saviour, And lord, Finally, I want to just, Comment, On verse 17, For the law was given, Through Moses,

Grace and truth, Came, Through Jesus Christ, This is not, A contrast, Between, Law, And grace, And truth, As such, Notice I used the word, Contrast, It's not suggesting, As a contrast might, That, At the time, Of the giving, Of the law, There was no grace, Or no truth, It's not saying that at all, Because we know, There was, Truth, At the giving of the law, And we know that there was, Grace, At the giving of the law, The actual giving of the law, Was a, An action of grace, So contrast isn't really,

Between law, And grace and truth, As if they have no relationship, Or bear no relationship, To each other, Or that they are completely different entities, They're not, The contrast really, Is between, This word, Fullness, You'll get the picture, When you think of Hebrews, For the law, Was a shadow, But not, The very reality, And it's this kind of thing, That John is trying to convey, In this statement, And he conveys it in a way, Through the verbs, That he uses, So he says, For the law was given,

Through Moses, But notice the language, He used for Jesus Christ, Grace and truth came, Through him, If you like, He was the receptacle, Of that fullness, Of grace and truth, Moses was given it, Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, Is the full, Final, And ultimate revelation, Of emeth, And kesed, He's the fullness, Of kesed, He's the fullness, Of emeth, He is God's, Supreme reality, And steadfast love, Jesus is the truth of God,

[37 : 50] And the truth about God, And I want to also say, As I close, Not only is Jesus, The truth of God, And the truth about God, Jesus is the truth, Of human beings, Made in the image, And glory of God, When we see Jesus, The man, And we look at the, His life, And we have to say, We have seen his glory, That's what God wants, For every single one of us, I finish, With, The exodus, The idea of the exodus, Because I believe,

That the idea of the exodus, Is here, In this passage, Let me tell you why, Well first of all, John begins his prologue, In the beginning, Was the word, And the word was with God, And the word with God, And the word was God, And remember, When I gave that message, I said to you, Notice the emphasis, In verse two, That one was in the beginning, With God, Ah, But then we go to 14, The word, Became flesh, And dwelt, Among us, Now, The word that is, We translate as dwelt, Is a word, That conjures up, The,

Tabernacle, Or the tent, In the Old Testament, Where the cloud, Of the glory of the Lord, Descended upon, And remained upon, And no doubt, That is what has, Prompted, John's remarks, About the glory, Because the glory, Is no longer to be sought, And found, At a tabernacle, Or a tent, Or a cathedral, It's found exclusively, In the man, The historical man, Jesus Christ, But, These are, Echoes, Of the exodus, And perhaps, I don't know for certain, But perhaps, John has in his mind, The greater exodus, From the father's bosom,

To Golgotha, To the cross of shame, I hope, That all of us here, Will see the glory, That is in Jesus Christ, And I hope, All of us here, Will receive that glory, And that glory is Savior, Amen.