

Jesus: The Revealer of God the Father

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[0 : 00] Some time ago, the last time I preached here, indeed, we thought of Jesus' prayer in John 17, verse 24, where he prayed that those who were with him might see his glory.

And we thought about that together. We thought about how do we see Christ's glory? Now we see it by faith in creation. We see it in the gospel record.

What he said, what he did, the miracles he did. We see it in his death.

Today I want to think again about Christ's glory. Today I want to think about his glory as the revealer and representative of God to the church.

The revealer and representative of God to the church. In the passage we read together, 2 Corinthians 4 and verse 6, we read, He has shown the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus.

[1 : 26] In Hebrews chapter 1 and verse 3, we read that Jesus is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature.

Jesus is the image of the invisible God. He is such a clear image that when Philip asked Jesus in the upper room, he said to him, Lord, show us the Father and we will be happy.

And Jesus replied, he who has seen me has seen the Father. So what is God like? He might say. Look at Jesus. For Jesus reveals the Father to us.

He who has seen me has seen the Father. In the shorter catechism, question 4 is, what is God? And the answer is, God is a spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

He is a spirit. And then can we see God? How can we know God? We cannot see him. The most powerful telescope in the world will not find him.

[2 : 46] If we travel to a distant planet, a distant galaxy, we will not be any nearer to him, nor will we be any further away.

You see, unless God reveals himself to us, we can know nothing about him. And our notions of God would almost certainly be false. If we were to try and imagine God, we would create a God in our own image.

So how are we to know God? Well, God has revealed himself in nature. His power and his glory is seen there. He's revealed himself through his word, through the prophets and apostles.

He's revealed himself most clearly in and through the Lord Jesus. It is through Jesus that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines into our hearts.

Isn't that a wonderful revelation? The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. We see God's glory in the face of Jesus.

[3 : 54] The tragedy of our state before we come to Jesus, before we come to know him as our saviour and are brought into his family, is described in verse 4 of our passage.

In verse 4 of our passage we read of those who are still veiled, who cannot understand the gospel. We read in their case, the God of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

We see the glory of God's eyes blinded, eyes blinded by the devil, so that we don't see the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus.

So you see, the glory of God is a mystery to us outside of Christ. It's a mystery to our neighbours outside of Christ. That's why we need a saviour.

[4 : 53] To cleanse us from our sins and open blind eyes to see the glory of God. And when we come as sinners to Jesus, God's light shines into the darkness of our hearts to give us that light.

Because Jesus and Jesus alone declares and makes known to us the glory of the invisible God. We who know him as our saviour rejoice that we have had our spiritual eyes open because we were blind, just like everyone else.

And if we don't know Jesus, then we cannot truly worship him. Now we might ask, in what ways is Jesus the image of the invisible God?

And when we see Jesus, how are we seeing God the Father? Well, as the Catechism said, infinite wisdom is one of the characteristics of God.

And that wisdom is revealed in Christ and the salvation he has gained for us. Paul in 1 Corinthians 1, verse 20, wrote these words.

[6 : 07] He said, where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.

For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles.

But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men. The foolishness of God in becoming a baby, growing from weakness to boyhood and manhood, walking the roads of Palestine as a homeless creature, accepting shame and mocking and death for us.

The wisdom of God in a crucified Christ. Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. He didn't come as a great king, conquering and building an empire on earth.

[7 : 27] Not at all. He came in weakness. And he builds his kingdom with one person. Yet this gospel, without swords or spears or guns or aircraft today, it conquered the Roman Empire in 300 years.

300 years of much suffering for the church. But they gained the victory. And the gospel is still changing men and women around the globe and bringing them into God's family.

It is still the power of God to salvation for all who believed. It is still the wisdom of God. Might seem foolish to come the way Jesus came and die the way he died.

But the foolishness of God is wiser than men. O loving wisdom of our God, when all was sin and shame, a second Adam to the fight and to the rescue came.

The weakness of God is stronger than men. Because by his death, Jesus defeated the devil and paid our debt of sin and made a way for a multitude, a crowd beyond number, who will one day sing his praises in heaven.

[8 : 48] The weakness of God is seen in Jesus dying on the cross. Yet it is stronger than death and the devil. It was the moment of his victory and his glory. In all this, Jesus demonstrates the wisdom of God.

How could sinners, guilty sinners like you and me, be brought back to a holy God who hates sin and must judge sin?

How could God be just and at the same time declare not guilty, a sinner like me, a sinner like you? Before the world was created, God in his wisdom planned our salvation.

He would take our sin on himself and he would give us his righteousness. Again, another hymn writer wrote, Mine is a sin, but thine the righteousness.

Mine is the guilt, but thine the cleansing blood. Here is my robe, my refuge, and my peace. Thy blood, thy righteousness, O Lord, my God.

[9 : 55] It is because of that wisdom of God in the death of Jesus that God is able to declare us not guilty and share with us the righteousness of Christ.

So the wisdom of God planned our salvation. Who would ever have thought of such a plan? Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan. Oh, the grace that brought it down to man.

Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span at all the way. So the wisdom of God is sin through what Jesus has done. In Jesus, we see the wisdom of God.

In Jesus, we also see the love of God, the love of God. 1 John 4, verse 8 tells us that God is love. What does that mean?

Are we to know this love? Does it mean that God is like an absent-minded grandfather who doesn't care really what his grandkids do as long as they have a good time?

[11 : 03] Is he like that? No, this cannot be. This cannot be. The Bible is full of examples of God's anger at sin. We're told his wrath is revealed from heaven against the ungodliness of men.

To see and understand God's love, most clearly, we need to look at Jesus. Again, the next verse, 1 John 4, verse 9, tells us, In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live in him.

In this is love. Not that we have loved God, but he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. It's not so much our love for God as his love for us.

It's so much greater. So we see the love of God in the mission, person, and work of Jesus. In all that Jesus did, he was demonstrating God's love.

So Jesus, the good shepherd who gives his life for the sheep. Jesus, wounded for our transgressions. Jesus, weeping by Lazarus' tomb.

[12:15] Jesus, his face marred beyond any man as they scourged him and beat him. Jesus, the Lamb of God, sacrificed for us.

All these examples of Jesus' love for us are also showing us the Father's love. We must never think, you see, that God the Father is like an angry judge, frowning, always wanting to punish us, and that Jesus comes in and pleads for us that God will love us at least a little bit.

It's not so. Not so at all. God so loved the world. That he sent his only son. That he gave his only son. It was the love of God, the Father, that planned Calvary with Jesus, certainly, and our salvation.

Jesus came and died because of God, the Father's love for us. Jesus, the image of the invisible God, shows us what God's love is like.

Third thing that I want to mention is that Jesus shows us God's holiness and justice. See, Jesus cleansing the temple.

[13:43] You remember that day? He came to the temple and he found it full of tradesmen, traders selling sheep and goats, changing money. There was a marketplace.

And he was angry with them. He was furious. He chased the animals out. He overturned the tables on the money changers. He said, you've turned my father's house into a den of thieves.

What chaos there must have been that day in the temple. Jesus was angry. He chased them. Hear him speaking to the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23.

He says, woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, hypocrites. Time after time, he says, woe to you. And then in conclusion, he says, you serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?

You know, Jesus spoke of hell and judgment more than anyone else in scripture. His great love, which brought him to earth to die for us, did not stop him warning about hell.

[14:54] Indeed, we could say his love made him warn us. Jesus reveals God to us, great in compassion, great in love, but also our God of justice who will one day punish sin.

And for all of us who found Jesus as our Savior, God has already punished that sin in Christ on the cross. For those who reject him, only judgment awaits.

Only judgment awaits. I wonder how seriously we take that, those of us who know Jesus. Does the reality of judgment and hell affect how we live?

Everyone we meet, everyone we meet will one day stand before God, be judged, and be either welcomed into heaven because of what Jesus has done, or be banished for eternal judgment in hell.

How seriously do we take that? How does it? Do we see it? Rico Tice is one of the authors of Christianity Explored, which I think we've all heard about the Christianity Explored course.

[16:06] And he tells the story of how, as a student for the Anglican ministry, he played rugby, and he was a member of the team, and he had friends who didn't know Jesus and who were members of the rugby team.

And Rico was already preaching. And one day, one of his Christian friends invited a little group of the rugby players together, and they listened to it.

Remember tapes? Nowadays we don't have tape recorders hardly anymore, but there were tapes in those days. And they listened to the tapes of a sermon Rico had preached. In that sermon he had spoken of judgment and hell.

One of his non-Christian rugby friends, on hearing the sermon, said, Rico is no friend of mine. Now Rico wasn't there.

But his Christian friend said, of course he's your friend. He plays rugby with you all the time. And the other said, I've known him for two years, and he has never warned me of this in two years.

[17:19] How can he be my friend? Challenging thought, isn't it? How can he be my friend? He's never warned me of this. Now clearly we don't want always to be talking about judgment when we talk about Jesus.

Do we talk about it? Do we feel anything of the seriousness of a situation, of our non-believing friends and neighbours of work colleges, the situation they're living in. Do we care?

Do we care? Jesus shows us the holiness and judgment of God. Jesus shows us the goodness and kindness of God.

Jesus looks in the hungry crowd and feeds them. He calls those who are weary and heavy laden to him and promises rest. He has compassion on the widow woman who had lost her son and brings the son back to life.

He models the goodness of God. He shows us the grace and mercy and compassion of God. Now grace is God's undeserved kindness to us.

[18:29] Jesus showed it very clearly when he met Peter after the crucifixion and after the resurrection. Remember on the night when Jesus was arrested and tried, Peter was outside standing with the servants of the high priests and the soldiers around the fire.

And a servant girl saw him and said, you're one of his disciples. And he denied it. Later on, again, you're one of them. You're a Galilean.

And he denied it with oaths and curses. Three times that evening, he denied knowing Jesus. How could he live with the shame?

And yet, after his resurrection, Jesus came to Peter, especially to Peter, it seems, and met with him and recommissioned him to the work of the gospel.

Did Peter deserve this treatment? No. But God's grace, God's kindness, is, grace is something that we don't deserve.

[19:46] It's something that we haven't earned. That's what grace is. Grace is God's goodness to us when we deserve his punishment. And Jesus shows us God's grace.

I wonder, perhaps you're ashamed of some sin, a sin you feel you cannot forgive yourself for. And even though you made Jesus your saviour, you found him a saviour and Lord, that sin still comes and haunts you.

And you wonder if God has really forgiven you. Remember Peter. Remember Jesus' forgiveness to Peter. Jesus shows us God's grace.

grace. He is the image of the invisible God, a God of compassion, and a God of grace.

In Jesus, we see then the wisdom of God, the love of God, the holiness and the justice of God, the goodness and kindness of God, the grace and mercy and compassion of God.

[20:52] Jesus isn't your saviour this morning. He has shown you what he is like and what God the Father is like. He invites you to come and find that forgiveness that is found only in him.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, since in his love, God has opened our eyes in Christ to see something of this glory, his glory revealed in Jesus.

Let us put aside every sin and the sin that so easily besets us. Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, the one who has shown us what God the Father is like.

May God bless his word to all our hearts this morning. Let's pray together. Father, how we thank you that Jesus is the image of the invisible God, your image, your image.

And he has shown us what you are like. And we thank you, Lord, that in him we see your love and your compassion and your justice and your holiness. We thank you.

[22:07] We see all these things. Father, write them on our hearts. Grant, Lord, that we will indeed fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

Grant that we will run with perseverance the race that is set before us and be lights for you and reflect your image indeed in this, our needy world.

We pray, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.