

The Voice of Glory

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Preacher: Rev. James Wagner

[0 : 00] We continue in this sermon series for the month of July called Glimpses of Glory, and I hope the glory of the Lord is truly impacting your life.

It hasn't been subtle at all, but very explicit, but here's another dimension of it today, which I think is really impactful. For example, Psalm 29 is as big and bold and brilliant and even bombastic as thunder.

I don't know if you noticed that when you were listening to it. Maybe not, but hopefully by the end of this you'll agree with me. Now, if you were scared of thunder and lightning when you were a child and remain that way today, you might want to hold on to the person next to you.

Now, why do I use the word thunder and lightning? Sorry, if you're not sitting next to someone, then maybe you'll move next to them anyway, if they'll let you do that. But this word thunder comes up in the psalm.

The psalm reminds me of the thunder battle in that book called The Hobbit that you may have read, and if you haven't, you should, by J.R.R. Tolkien. And let me quote from chapter 4 this scene.

[1 : 15] It's about five sentences long, so a little bit longer than most quotes that you'll hear from a pulpit, but it's really important. It goes like this. All was well until one day they met a thunderstorm.

More than a thunderstorm, a thunder battle. You know how terrific a really big thunderstorm can be down in the land and in a river valley, especially at times when two great thunderstorms meet and clash.

More terrible still are thunder and lightning in the mountains at night when storms come up from east and west and make war. The lightning splinters on the peaks and rocks shiver, and great clashes split the air and go rolling and tumbling into every cave and hollow.

And the darkness is filled with overwhelming noise and sudden light. End quote. An important word in Psalm 29 isn't thunder, though.

It's glory. And the glory of the Lord is like thunder and lightning. It's like Tolkien penned a thunder battle of divine and glorious magnitude and majesty.

[2 : 32] Yet it fills the darkness with overwhelming, as Tolkien said, noise and light. And so this morning we look at another dimension of the Lord's glory.

And I want to look at it with you with answering three questions that aren't explicitly stated, but arise out of Psalm 29, including this. What is glory? What is so glorious about the Lord?

And what difference does the Lord's glory make? So first then, what is glory? The psalmist doesn't define but describes the Lord's glory.

Poetry works that way. It's not dictionary, but imaginary. Psalm 29 helps us imagine the glory of the Lord. And this glory is unique to the Lord.

Yahweh, who reveals his glory, is like none other. This unique glory can't be exaggerated. Our culture overstates glory in battle, competition, conversation, and publication.

[3 : 38] But the Lord is true to make known his glory to us in this world. And while his glory is more than we can comprehend, we for some reason tend to underestimate it.

All we can do is, as the psalm expresses is, three times in those first three or four lines, ascribe these attributes to the Lord, which are glorious.

And so when we seek, though, imagine by this, in terms of contrast, to estimate for a repair of a product or the building of it, we want to estimate to come in lower than what we expect, right?

We like that kind of surprise. But it's not so with the glory of the Lord. Our estimate of the glory of the Lord is always lower than the reality of it.

His glory is unique, and like nothing else, which exceeds our expectations. All we can do is accept it, and as the psalmist says, ascribe glory to the Lord.

[4 : 38] That's the first thing. His attribute that is glorious is a unique one. The second thing is, though, that this glory invokes worship. When we accept the glory of the Lord by ascribing it to the Lord, it causes us, it draws us, it compels us to worship Him.

Ascription and worship, or adoration, seem to go right together. The first, that is ascribing, leads to the second, which is worshiping. Or maybe ascribing actually is a form of worshiping.

And what is this glory? It is the value sign to the Lord, causing us to worship, which is worth-ship. Worship is giving the Lord His due.

Look at verse 2. The credit is all the Lord's, for He is glorious. It is the glory that's due His name. And the credit is His for that. And the essence of the Lord is glory. And when we worship Him, we give Him what He deserves. The Lord deserves worship from His people because He's glorious.

[5 : 44] His heavenly bleeds, including angels and saints, that is sinners that are saved by grace, are so because we ascribe and worship the strength, the name, the splendor, and the holiness of the Lord.

So what's the glory of the Lord? It's the value of His unique attributes that move us to worship Him. The Lord doesn't leave us to guess about His glory. We don't have to or have to make this up.

That's the first thing. The second question then, what's so glorious about the Lord? There is something that brings this to bear on our lives. How does this come about?

It all comes down to what the psalmist repeats seven times. Did you notice it? The one word is here, seven times repeated, voice. Now our God isn't a silent Buddha.

Our God isn't there and He is not dumb. He makes His glory known through His voice in demonstrative ways. Did you notice the effective ways of the Lord's voice in Psalm 29?

[6 : 53] The Lord's voice is over and above. It thunders and breaks. It skips and flashes. And it shakes and strips.

To quote the author of Hebrews along these lines, For the word of God is alive and active, sharper than a double-edged sword. It penetrates even dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow.

It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Largely in that middle section of the psalm is about judgment. But not only does the Lord's voice impact creation, but when taken to heart, the word of the Lord expresses through His voice transformation of our soul, redeeming and saving and reconciling.

Whether we choose to accept the impact or not, the psalmist is expressing that the voice of the Lord is powerful and effective. We can treat His voice the same way we do maybe a parent or a spouse or even a friend.

You know, kind of pushing the mute button. But sometimes we hear the voice, but ignore the word or message. Nevertheless, the Lord's voice and message accomplishes exactly what He intends.

[8 : 13] There is no separating the intent and the impact of the Lord's voice and message. Not only is the Lord's voice powerful, but it's creative.

Look at verse 9 with me. We read, And so the voice of the Lord, yes, it renders judgment.

And at the same time, the voice of the Lord issues life and salvation. So if you feel like your life doesn't count for much, or no one's listening to you maybe, then listen to the voice of the Lord and go into His temple, that is the church, and cry out, Glory.

Glory is the Lord. It's the second thing. That's what's so glorious about the Lord's voice. But if that isn't glorious enough for you, and you want to ask the question, But what difference does the glory of the Lord make?

Then look with me at the last two verses of Psalm 29. The glory of the Lord accomplishes or establishes two things, two matters. And the first one is the rule of the Lord, and the second one is the peace of the Lord.

[9 : 35] The psalm ends with this image of the king. He's the one who accomplishes his will with his word through his voice. And he does so from his throne.

It points forward, I think, to the occupant of this throne. The one who sits on the throne is Jesus. Executed on the altar of the cross, Jesus sits on the throne, resurrected and ascended into heaven. He rules over floods, which represent judgment, before he issues salvation. How long will this last? The psalmist tells us.

What is the duration of his rule? The Lord rules forever. Everlasting and eternal. He can command and control what only earthly rule can contain.

Earthly rule is all about containment. But the glorious and divine kind is different. The Lord is about commanding and compelling this world by his word through his voice.

[10 : 41] That's the first thing. It's about his rule. But secondly, about his peace. The consequences of the glory of this king is just that. Peace, shalom, rest. Verse 11 reads, May the Lord bless his people with peace.

How do we have that peace? It's like this as the Apostle Paul revealed. We have peace with our Lord through Jesus Christ. Converting our sinful hearts through the cross of Christ, we are blessed with his peace like nothing other.

And this peace causes shepherds and CEOs, prostitutes and prime ministers, professors and the poor, artists and machinists, farmers and industrialists, to confess Jesus Christ as Lord and to the glory of God the Father.

Sometimes even singing, Glory be to God on high, peace and goodwill towards all men. So what difference does the Lord's glory make?

Well, when we behold the glory of the Lord, the effect is that we enjoy the peace because at the center of all things on his throne is King Jesus.

[11 : 56] And the peace of the Lord only comes when we ascribe glory to the Lord who sits on this throne, when we not only hear his voice, but take heed to it, and when we with tears of repentance cry glory because of Jesus.

It's not we who sit on the throne, but he's the one who sits on the throne issuing this blessing. Let me return to Tolkien. Before the beginning of the quote that I shared with you at the start of this message, Tolkien said this in that storyline.

He says, He, that is Bilbo, you know, the hobbits, knew that something unexpected might happen. And he hardly dared to hope that they would pass without fearful adventure over those great tall mountains with lonely peaks and valleys where no king ruled.

End quote. There's been a great noise and a great lightning in this world. It was the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the king. And this psalm is a prayer, and prayer is more than exercising Christian discipline.

It is an encounter with the Lord of glory. And when we pray, not only do we know something unexpected might happen, but something unexpected had, and unexpected is even happening today.

[13 : 28] The glory of the Lord is enough for little people like you and me, and at the same time, more than we can ask or imagine. And so today, and so today, are you downcast?

The Lord of glory lifts you up. Are you proud? The Lord of glory will drive you to your knees. Are you fearful? The Lord of glory will give you hope.

This world is not a land of peaks and valleys where no king rules. Our king is glorious and brings peace to those who worship him alone.

I speak to you in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.