

# Jesus and the Glory of God

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] St. John's Shaughnessy Church You would open your Bibles to John chapter 12 on page 101.

John 12 verse 23, Jesus answered them, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. You'll know that for some time we've been told by the experts that the last 200 years, the age of progress, technology and science, has been energised by the spirit of Prometheus.

Prometheus is the Greek hero who threatened the superiority of the gods by stealing fire and giving it to humans. But you also know that in the last 25 years our culture has moved on.

We're told from modernity to post-modernity. You know you're all post-moderns. It's very important to know that. And one expert, one very helpful expert this week I read said that if the spirit of modernity is Prometheus, the spirit of post-modernity is Petronius.

And Petronius is a Roman author living in the first century under Nero, who wrote a description of Roman society that comes to us in a salacious volume called The Satiricon.

[ 1 : 5 2 ] It's part soap opera, part National Enquirer, part detached observer. There's no lofty vision. There's no morality. Petronius writes about a culture which is marked by a superficiality that drains everything that happens from any kind of genuine and spiritual significance.

There's no lord of life. There's only instinct, conceit and greed. And this is a wonderful picture of who we have become.

Instead of living by Promethean ambition, we live by Petronian apathy. Instead of being marked by Promethean pride, our lives are marked by Petronian cowardice.

And you don't need any more proof of this than the magazines that come free under the door, Western Living and Vancouver magazines. I apologise to anyone who is involved in the printing of these.

I shouldn't spend too long at this, but the Western magazine spends their issue on how we can develop our bathrooms. The main article is called, More Lou for the Money.

[ 3 : 1 4 ] And you should know, and I thought this was ironic, that there's also an article on how pants have come back into style. Party pants, they're comfortable, practical and warm, and bonus, suddenly trousers, are the absolute height of style.

The Vancouver magazine this month has taken a sudden turn of seriousness, which I guess is post-September 11th, and smattered in between the articles on how to make the best chocolate mousse and drink the best wine is an article on racism.

However, both magazines breathe the spirit of Petronius. And I think like the culture in which we live, there is a complete lack of gravity, which drains our social life.

And we skim along the surface, and nothing in our lives is sufficiently thick or weighty enough to disturb the equilibrium of our soul. I came across Petronius this week as I was preparing to speak on Jesus and the glory of God.

And I realised why I've always found this idea of glory to be difficult. It's not because glory is abstract or remote, but it's because I am a superficial man, and I live amongst a superficial people.

[ 4 : 38 ] You see, in the Old Testament, the primary meaning of glory is weight, heaviness, substance. It means what a person is worth, what makes that person who they are, and how important they are.

And all that makes God God, all his greatness and power and majesty, is manifest to us, is shown in his glory, in his weight, as it were.

And we have trouble with it because we've trained our appetites to be so easily satisfied by instinct, conceit, and greed. And the problem for God's people in the Old Testament was that God was invisible.

And like us, they didn't know anything about God until he revealed himself. And when he does, we see his glory. Glory is the majestic God manifesting himself.

So when God brought the people of Israel to Mount Sinai, we read this, Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain, and the glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, and the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on top of the mountain in the sight of the Lord.

[ 5 : 56 ] And all the manifestations and wonders that God performs are the revelation of his glory, of his presence, of his very weighty presence.

But more amazing in the Old Testament is that God desires to dwell with us in his glory so that the fundamental human purpose and responsibility in this life is to ascribe to God the glory that is due to him, to come to see the truth and the beauty of God's glory which belongs to him alone.

And more amazing still is that in the Old Testament, God promises to bring salvation to us, his people, and he describes that salvation as nothing other than the revelation of his glory.

These are familiar words to us that come to us each Christmas, but listen to them again. In the wilderness, Isaiah says, prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up, every mountain shall be made low, and the uneven ground become level, the rough places are plain, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed.

[ 7 : 11 ] And all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken. And that is why the New Testament and John's Gospel opens with such power when we read in chapter 1 that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

John says, and we have beheld his glory. Glory is of the only Son from the Father. In the person of Jesus Christ, all the purposes of God are finally and fully revealed.

All the glory of God's immediate presence comes to us in Jesus Christ. All the glory that dwelt on the tabernacle in the Old Testament now dwells amongst us in the tabernacle of Jesus' flesh.

Jesus is the glory of God. And I think it is here in John's Gospel or at the beginning of the New Testament that we begin to see something entirely new about the glory of God.

The glory of God is not just his majesty and his splendour and his might and that which makes him different from us. The glory of God is also revealed in his lowliness and his humility.

[ 8 : 29 ] That the Lord, the King of glory, should enter our world for us reveals to us a heart of God that's full of meekness and loving kindness. And this too is the glory of God. And if you've ever read John's Gospel you will know how important this idea of glory is throughout the Gospel.

Yes, it is true that the miracles reveal the glory of God. But the primary place of the revelation of the glory of God, the deepest sense of God's glory, is nowhere else than the crucifixion of the Son of God for us.

And that brings us to John chapter 12 verses 20 to 33 that was read so well for us by Jane a minute ago. You know that in John chapter 11 Jesus has absolutely infuriated the Pharisees.

It wasn't enough that he claimed to be equal with God. He makes matters so much worse by raising Lazarus from the dead. And you can see the deeply religious response. Look back at chapter 12 verse 9 please.

Page 101. When the great crowd gathered, the crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came, and not only on account of Jesus, but also to see Lazarus whom he had raised from the dead.

[ 9 : 48 ] So, the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus. it's a futile solution to put Lazarus to death, don't you think?

I mean, if they did, Jesus would just raise him back to life again and more people would believe. Well, things become worse for the Pharisees. You read on verse 12, Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey and the crowds hail him as Messiah and the Pharisees are in despair and in verse 19 we read, the Pharisees then said to one another, you see that you can do nothing.

Look, the world has gone after him. The world has gone after him. And the very next verse, verse 20, we are told there's something very unusual. That there were Greeks in the Passover and they come to Philip, one of Jesus' disciples, and ask for an appointment to talk with Jesus, to know him.

They're uncertain how Jesus will receive them, which is a big problem I think for many of us. we wonder how Jesus will really receive us. As soon as Jesus welcomes the Greeks and hears about their coming, he sees it as a turning point in his ministry.

Verse 23, Jesus answered them, the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Jesus knows that he's the saviour of the world and not just Israel.

[ 11 : 19 ] And now that the world has come seeking him, he knows that his mission has climaxed. The hour that he's spoken of so many times in his ministry, the hour of his death has now come.

He will die for the world, not just for Greeks. And even though we're familiar, and if you've been a Christian for three or four years, you're very familiar with these words in verse 23.

Does it not seem incredible to you that Jesus speaks about his death as being glorified? It's not that he thinks of his death as shame and the resurrection and exaltation to heaven as being glory.

What he's saying is the humiliation and degradation of being crucified, that is where he will be glorified. That the supreme manifestation of the glory of God is nowhere else than in the brutal crucifixion of him.

And if there's any doubt about whether he's speaking about his death, look at the very next verse, verse 24. He says, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone.

[ 12 : 26 ] But if it dies, it bears much fruit. He says, I am a grain of wheat. And the career of a grain of wheat is basically about dying. It's only in dying that the grain can fulfill its purpose and bear fruit.

He says, My death is the moment of glory the Old Testament has promised when the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. And because of it, it will bear great fruit.

And the fruit that it bears is shown in the lives of those who follow him. See verse 25? He who loves his life loses it.

He who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me. And where I am, there shall my servant be also.

If anyone serves me, the Father will honour him. Jesus is inviting us to share his glory. He says, If you live for this world, you will lose your life eternally.

[ 13 : 32 ] glory. But if you give away your life to him and follow him, he will bring you to the glory of the Father. The fruit of his death is seen in the lives of people who are shaped and changed by the cross.

But, all this talk of glory, I think, can easily lead us astray. This is no easy victory for Jesus. He doesn't contemplate the cross from the safe distance of an actor playing a role.

He's not some Hollywood superhero knowing it's going to have a happy ending and not letting it really disturb his dignity. Look at the struggle in verse 27. He says, Now is my soul troubled.

What shall I say, Father, save me from this hour? No, he says, for this purpose I have come unto this hour, Father, glorify thy name. Yes, the cross is a moment of glory, but Jesus recoils in terror at being made sin for us.

And such is his distress of being separated from God. It threatens to overwhelm him. And yet just as the garden of Gethsemane, he knows that this is the hour for which he has come and his heart swells in obedience to God.

[ 14 : 44 ] And when that happens, something takes place that has no parallel in this gospel. God himself speaks. I wonder if you noticed this as it was read for us.

Halfway through verse 28, a voice came from heaven, I have glorified it and I will glorify it again.

And the crowd standing by heard it and said that it had thundered and others said an angel had spoken to him. we know from the other gospels that twice God speaks audibly.

The first time is at Jesus' baptism. The second time is at his transfiguration. But you know John tells us about neither of those. This is the only time in John's gospel when God the Father speaks audibly and it is a deep and tender word of affirmation.

Yes, he says, I have glorified your name. Throughout your ministry, I've done it. But now as you face death, I will glorify it again. In the shame, in the humiliation, it is the moment of our glory.

[ 15 : 55 ] There is no revelation of the glory of God that is deeper or higher or wider or stronger than the cross of Jesus Christ. Because it is the cross of Jesus Christ that reveals God's hatred of sin and evil and his willingness to do all in his power to deal with it.

It is the cross that reveals God's love and God's mercy and his willingness to die in our place. The cross reveals the judgment of God. It exposes the futility of living life apart from him, of living life for this world of choosing apathy and superficiality and cowardice.

That is why Jesus takes pains to explain his death as the judgment of God. God. You see the final verses, verse 30. He says, this voice has come for your sake, not for mine.

Now is the judgment of this world. Now shall the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.

He said this to show by what death he was to die. I sometimes find myself in conversation with Christians who find the idea of judgment objectionable.

[ 17 : 13 ] That somehow we should be ashamed that God is judge. You cannot be ashamed of judgment without being ashamed of the cross of Jesus Christ. Because Jesus says plainly that that is where the world is judged.

Yes, there is a future judgment for all who have lived. But that future day is not separate from what happened on the cross. The verdict of the last day is ours now when we place our faith in Jesus' death.

And Jesus says that judgment has two sides to it or two ways it works. The first he says is that in my death the ruler of this world will be cast out.

The ruler of this world, Satan, who exercises his tyranny over people through deception and sophistication. If you go back to John chapter 8, Jesus says apart from him and the truth he brings we are held enslaved by Satan.

Enslaved by our instinct and our conceit and our greed. But in his death Jesus breaks the power that Satan holds over us. By taking our disobedience, by taking our sin, by taking the punishment that is ours, Satan has no power over those who trust in him.

[ 18 : 27 ] Our judgment is past. God has told us the verdict now. And secondly he says that in my death I will draw all people to myself.

I think the Greeks by now who were listening, probably their jaws would have been on the ground. What a terrible and wonderful way of describing being crucified when I'm lifted up from the earth.

Jesus knows that the cross is the place not only of his agony but of our hope, not only of his condemnation but of our acquittal. The cross is the place where salvation is accomplished.

That is where God's love and God's wrath are revealed. That's where his mercy and his justice kiss one another. The cross is the revelation of the glory of God and in his loving kindness God draws all kinds of people to himself.

The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I had the experience this week of preparing to speak on the glory of God.

[ 19 : 37 ] The cartoon of the little boy who's fishing and his bait is taken by the biggest whale in the ocean and he is swept away. Except that when you read about the glory and allow the glory of God to enter into you, it's more like all the weight of all the planets of all the world are drawing your line.

You see, it was for this glory that we've been talking about that we were created. Apathy and cowardice and pride and love for this world all push the glory of Christ into the periphery of our lives because they're fundamentally hostile to the cross.

And I want to finish by pointing out just one final thing. In the Old Testament, the people of God saw the glory of God. But for us who live this side of the cross and resurrection, we not only see God's glory, we participate in it.

When we turn to Christ crucified and trust in his forgiving death, we don't just see the glory of God at work there, but God shares his glory and pours his glory into our lives.

And he begins a process of change in us where we are changed from one degree of glory into another until that day when our present earthly bodies will be transformed into being bodies of glory.

[ 21 : 00 ] And the creation will witness the glory of God that is revealed in us because the New Testament says we are called to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus. Jesus.

And as we wait for that final revelation of the glory of God, the consuming passion of our lives is to live for the praise of his glory.

And I think the way that that shows itself is this, our lives will be marked by an entirely new spiritual ambition. And the ambition is that God be glorified in what we do.

That sin be uprooted in our life, not because it causes grief, but because it falls short of the glory of God. And that through us God will draw many sons to glory through the cross.

And how different that spiritual ambition will make us from the cynicism and apathy that is around us, from the detached attempt to live for this world.

[ 21 : 59 ] Because the glory of God is the very opposite to the pervasive superficiality of our lives. It gives a depth and a significance to everything we do and it kindles this ambition which I've been talking about.

In the Old Testament in the book of the Daniel we read, the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. And if we know God's glory, we will have great energy for God and great thoughts of God and great boldness for God and great contentment in God.

And I hope you will pray with me that God would replace our apathy with a holy ambition for the Lord of glory. That he would replace our cowardice and passivity with a holy desire to do what we can to see God's glory on it.

And that he would replace our superficiality with a longing that every area of our lives become the arena for the glory of the one who loved us and gave himself for us.

Until that day when the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Amen. This digital audio file, along with many others, is available from the St. John's Shaughnessy website at [www.stjohnschaughnessy.org](http://www.stjohnschaughnessy.org).

[ 23 : 33 ] That address is [www.stjohnschaughnessy.org](http://www.stjohnschaughnessy.org).

On the website you will also find information about ministries, worship services and special events at St. John's Shaughnessy. We hope that this message has helped you and that you will share it with others.

Thank you very much.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.