

He Glorified His Father

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[0 : 00] All right. Well, good to see you all here. I'll start out with a bit of an update on last week we prayed for Daniela as she had had surgery scheduled.

And so I just want to give you the good news that the surgery went forward on Wednesday and they were able to take her home that very day. And so she is now recovering at home. And so just thank you so much for all of your prayers and your encouragement for BK and Daniela.

So I want to begin by talking about this concept of glory. And that's a word that we use a lot of times.

It's sort of like one of those words you use in church and in certain secular settings. Maybe a villain uses it in a movie, that sort of thing. But I think we have this sort of a word that we don't use in day-to-day conversation and yet is very familiar to all of us.

And I'll tell you about a time where I sensed a lack of glory in my life. It was a time when I was surrounded by several friends and some of those friends of mine are natural athletes, right?

[1 : 14] You've got a friend. We've all got those friends, right? The ones who can pick up a baseball glove or pick up a hockey stick. And in what just seems like a matter of minutes, they have the game mastered.

They have it all figured out. And I want to assure you that I am not one of those people. That's not me. I am whatever, what is the other end of the spectrum from that?

That's me. It takes me a long time, a lot of time, a lot of practice, a lot of work to become mediocre. And so I can get to the mediocre level, but it takes a lot of effort to get there.

And so it probably won't surprise you that playing a pickup game of basketball isn't really a strength of mine. And when I used to live in Indiana in the United States, if you couldn't play basketball in Indiana, that was considered by law to be a physical handicap.

Like, right? I had the handicap thing hanging from my mirror. I could park in those. Maybe not quite that bad, but boy. If you want to look good in front of other people, and of course I did, playing basketball was always going to be a disaster.

[2 : 34] And so I remember one time playing a small pickup game with a few friends they wanted to play. And so, okay, all right, I'll join in. And as the game wore on, it became clear that my ability to shoot a basketball was not the greatest.

And I kept missing all these outside shots. And I began to notice that as the pickup game kept going, I was being guarded more and more lightly.

It reached a point in the game where any time that I had the ball, it was like a two-on-two game, I think. Three-on-three or two-on-two, I don't remember. And any time I had the ball, the players on the other team, none of them, by the time the game was near the end, none of them would even bother to guard me.

They would just run to the hoop and stand underneath it, waiting for the rebound. Oh, it was, you want to talk about a blow to the ego. And that was it right there, right?

Now, how would you feel if that was you in my shoes? Would you feel super discouraged? Would you feel down?

[3 : 41] I felt actually a little bit angry, right? And the funny thing is, I understood why the other players did what they did. And, you know, who knows, maybe I would have done the exact same thing in their situation.

But I was still angry because they weren't treating my basketball skills with respect. Right? They weren't treating that with respect. And I was angry, not just with them, but I was angry with myself for failing to live up to that high status of basketball stardom that I really wanted to achieve.

We place these heavy expectations on other people to recognize our glory. We place heavy expectations on ourselves to live up to the glory that we feel that we ought to have. And feeling like a loser, that's kind of the dark side of pride. Pride. It's something that we don't really expect. We think that pride will always feel like you're just puffed up and happy all the time. Pride, a lot of times, what I find, it doesn't feel good at all. Pride feels like I'm a loser. Because I just want to be great. I want to be amazing. I want to be triumphant and glorious. [4 : 54] And I'm falling short. Thwarted pride. You fail to achieve the glory that you crave. I want to say that there is an alternative for that.

If you've ever had that experience, and maybe this is, maybe you're like, yeah, I've had a similar experience like that at work last week or at home. I failed to be who I thought I ought to be. I fell short of being the mom that I'm supposed to be. I fell short of being the student I'm supposed to be. I fell short of being the employee I'm supposed to be. I fell short. And I feel like a loser. But there's an alternative to that. There's an alternative to that painful, soul-rotting shame that comes when we fall short of glory. The Apostle Paul, he wrote about this in his letter to the church of Philippi. And in this letter, Philippians, partway through this letter, Paul takes time to emphasize that there is a danger in running after this personal glory. [5 : 55] This pursuit of personal glory can actually cause serious damage to the church community.

And so, Paul gives us an alternative to the glory seeking. And so, here are the words that he gives us, inspired by the Holy Spirit. And it's in Philippians chapter 2, and I will read verses 5 through 11. If you're using one of the blue Bibles that the ushers handed out, that's on page 980. Page 980, Philippians chapter 2, verses 5 through 11.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God, a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. [7 : 29] As we reflect on that, let me turn to the Lord in prayer. Our God, we are encountering this vision of glory in Jesus Christ, and we ask that we ourselves may learn from him.

We learn what it means to pursue glory and see the way that he does it. Lord God, open our eyes, give us eyes to see, ears to hear, a heart to understand. All of who Jesus is, how marvelous he is, and over this Christmas season to just celebrate what it means that you gave your son for us. Amen. Now, we just read verses 5 through 11 of Philippians chapter 2, and there is a phrase right at the end of verse 11. And this phrase is a complete shift, a whole other radio station to tune into, totally different from the way that the culture around us lives, the way that we are born thinking just automatically.

And this is the way that Christians are called to live, this shift, this message that transforms the lives of those who place their trust in Jesus of Nazareth, and trust him that he is God's chosen Messiah. [8 : 49] And I can't, in good conscience, help but focus on it, because it is vital to the message that God has for us today. And this phrase right at the end of verse 11, Paul has been writing, we've seen about how Jesus Christ, how he humbled himself, and as a result, he is honored by God the Father.

Jesus Christ lowers himself in humility, and God raises him up to a status of honor. God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. That's what he does with his own son. And then Paul writes at the end of verse 11, why all this happens. All this happens, all of this is, to the glory of God the Father. To the glory of God the Father. And so if we want to put it all together, here's what we learn. Jesus Christ glorified his Father through his humility. Jesus Christ glorified his Father through his humility. Now, we've been talking about glory. When Paul uses that phrase, to the glory of God the Father. It is so easy to gloss over that.

[10:00] You know, once again, if you're in a church context, you know, you know, we talk about, you know, yeah, we're here to glorify God. We're here to glorify. And it becomes this automatic, natural way of talking, and outsiders come to church, are like, oh, wow, that's the, that's the way Christians talk.

That's their little Christianese way of talking, just throwing in these things about the glory of God. And if you read what, the way that the Apostle Paul writes, the way that Jesus and his apostles speak, they use that, that sort of expression all the time, talking about the glory of God. And so we pick up that language naturally. But let me tell you what, it is much easier to pick up the vocabulary of the Bible than is to pick up the whole mindset. It is much easier to talk about living to the glory of God than to actually think that way.

than to actually have the mindset, I am here for the glory of God, the Father. The reason why this concept of living for the glory of God, the Father, the reason why it is repeated so often in the Bible is because it's not obvious to us and it's not easy to do.

It's repeated a lot precisely because it's so hard, precisely because it's so counterintuitive to us, so opposite the way that we naturally think. And so we need to slow down.

[11:28] Let's talk about glory. Glory, it is one of those words that we toss around a lot. Everyone nods their heads. But we don't slow down and stop to think, what is it really? What is glory? One of the reasons that it's hard is because it is a hard word to define.

If I were to sit down with you and say, okay, put you on the spot. What is glory? Define it for me. Man, think for a moment. What would pop into your head?

How would you answer that? Glory, the way it's used, it's just such a broad word. It carries with it the idea of renown, of beauty, of distinctiveness, of nobility.

And glory can take many forms. Let me show you. Even in the Bible, glory can be found. First of all, glory can be found in some things. Glory can be found in having lots of money. Here's a way to be glorious.

Have lots of money. Psalm 49, verse 16. Be not afraid when a man becomes rich, when the glory of his house increases. So being rich is in parallel with glory.

[12:34] So there you go, guys. If you want to be glorious, what's the easiest way to do it? Be filthy rich. Or it can be found in physical strength or superior wisdom. Proverbs 20, verse 29.

The glory of young men is their strength, but the splendor of old men is their gray hair. Now, which ones of you would, what would you prefer?

The glory of being strong and powerful or the glory of having gray hair? You know, I wish you would have said something to men who have no hair. But strength and wisdom, those can be glorious too. Right? Have you, if you've ever watched people who are strong and powerful, good, natural, you know, that, those friends of mine who are natural athletes, good at every sport, that's their glory. And then we know people who just always seem to have the answer, always seem to know what to do. And, oh man, it's just, they just seem to be so glorious. We look up to them.

[13:42] We elevate them. Some of you are good at other things. You know, we talked about money. Some of you are good with handling money. You know, over the years, your careful spending habits, your wise investment strategies, they've earned you a lot.

Maybe you've developed a particular talent at playing the piano or guitar or violin. Maybe that's your glory. Maybe you've established yourself at work, at your workplace as someone who's just got these uncompromising moral principles and your righteous life and your moral living.

That is your glory. That is what you, that is what you look to. That's what makes you stand out. And maybe you have none of those things, but you still, you know, you still have some little niche that you've carved out in which you excel.

Maybe you're like, I'm not really good at anything, but I have an amazing, I don't know, amazing Pokemon card collection. Okay, that's my glory, right? You know, so these, all of these things that we look to, these things where we feel great, these things where we feel this is a strength, this is something that exalts me, this is something that makes me feel bigger.

Glory is a concept that we can all relate to. And so when we read the authors of scripture talking about God's glory, here's what they mean.

[15:06] They mean that God's nature, God's character, God's actions, they are so distinct, they are so supreme, they are so worthy, so marvelous, so amazing, that God sets himself apart.

God is elevated on a whole other level, a whole level of prestige that is above and beyond anything that he has created, above and beyond the whole universe that he has made.

There is no one glorious like God. His glory is the original. Our glory is nothing but a pale imitation of his.

His glory is like staring into the sun. It is brilliant and blinding. Our glory is like staring into the moon. I mean, it's nice, but it's not going to blind you with glory.

glory. All we can do is reflect the glory of the sun. And that's why Paul can speak with such confidence in Philippians 4, verse 19.

[16:13] And it's interesting, he's talking about money, about riches. And here's what he says when he considers the financial needs of the Philippian church. He writes this, my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

So he associates glory and wealth together and he says God's got it all. You know, according to Forbes, the wealthiest person in the world today is Jeff Bezos of Amazon fame.

And Bezos is worth, can you, could you guess how much he is worth? Currently it is \$177 billion. So his wealth, that \$177 billion, which is, if you don't think that's a lot, then it's time to sit down and write out how many zeros there are behind the 170.

That is a lot of zeros. His wealth is a tiny molecule of water. compared to the ocean of wealth of the God who holds the entire universe at his disposal.

God owns everything. He is not lacking in riches and he is not lacking in glory. He has it all. And so how strange is it then?

[17:41] This God who is already glorious, already owns everything, already awesome, he has nothing to prove. God the Son in Philippians 2 verse 11, God the Son chooses to glorify his Father.

He is not increasing his Father's glory, he is putting it on display. And he is putting it on display and he is telling everyone the truth about his Father's glory.

And how does he do it? He does it through his own humility, by lowering himself. And that is the incredible irony, the amazing power of the Christian message is that real glory is revealed, the glory of God is revealed through humility, by the lowering, by going down, by letting go of glory.

Everything Jesus did was to the glory of God the Father. God the Father wasn't lacking in glory, he already has it all.

The idea is that God's glory, it isn't fully recognized in the world today. That is something that is very consistently spoken of in scripture, that God's glory is not recognized, we do not see it, we have our eyes shut.

[18:59] I pray at the start of every sermon that God would open our eyes, you know, give us eyes to see, ears to hear, a heart to understand because we do not see it, our eyes are blind, our ears are deaf, our hearts are hardened and we do not look and see how amazing God is, we yawn at his glory.

It's like we're looking at the beautiful mountains around us today and we just don't even see it anymore. We're so occupied with other things and in fact, we even work to suppress the knowledge of the glory of God, we don't want to see it.

In Romans chapter 1, here's what Paul writes, his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made.

So Paul is basically saying, look, look around you, walk outside and look around you, see the glory of God. So they are without excuse, you cannot not see it.

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened.

[20:13] Claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

So we have this God who is obviously glorious, but we don't have the eyes to see it. We don't want the eyes to see it. When we say that God the Son was wanting to glorify his Father, what we are saying is that what motivated Jesus, what drove him, his deep passion, passion, is that he wants his Father's glory to be recognized for what it is.

He loves his Father. When you love someone, you want people to recognize their glory. Don't you? If you love your children, don't you want, I want everyone to see the glory that's in my children.

If you love your family, your family, you want people to see how glorious your family is. And Jesus loves his Father. And he lives for nothing more than to see his Father, his Father's glory recognized for what it is.

He wants people to recognize how great God the Father is. In fact, this is that central reason, this central, white-hot passion of his, that his Father would be recognized as possessing the ultimate glory.

[21 : 50] Jesus says it himself. Here is where he talks about this. John chapter 7. He says, My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.

If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory. But the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood. And so, what Jesus is saying here is, look, if all I'm doing is coming to you with my own message, with my own ideas, speaking from my own experience and my own authority, and that's it, he says, well, then I'm seeking my own glory.

I'm longing to elevate myself. And his response is, I'm not. What I'm telling you doesn't belong to me.

It didn't come from me. It's from my Father. I want you, I want you to see his glory. Again, in John chapter 12, he says, now is my soul troubled.

[23 : 02] And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name. Then a voice came from heaven, I have glorified it and I will glorify it again.

And there, Jesus has come to the hour where he is going to suffer and die a criminal's death on a cross. Is he going to cry out, Father, save me from this hour?

He said, this is why I came. Father, glorify your name. Do this for your namesake, for your glory. I came to suffer and die for your glory so that people would see who you are and enjoy you the way that you, that I have enjoyed you and love you the way that I have loved you and marvel at you the way I have marveled, I have marveled at you and loved you.

And he prays again in John chapter 17, Father, the hour has come. Glorify your son that the son may glorify you. Since you have given him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.

And this is eternal life that they know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.

[24 : 25] And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. Jesus is obsessed with this idea.

If you are a follower of Jesus, the more you come to know him, the more you will become obsessed with this idea. I want people to know how glorious God is.

I want to know how glorious God is. I want that sense of marvel, of wonder, of joy when I know him. I want that to fill my heart more and more with each passing week and month and year. I live for his glory. And this is why God the Son was willing to become a mere human being, why he was willing to lower himself.

From our perspective, it looks like he is letting go of glory. He's becoming a helpless baby. What's glorious about that when you are God?

[25 : 37] Becoming a helpless baby, born where? In a royal palace? No. In an insignificant backwater corner of the Roman Empire. To a poor and obscure couple, a birth that is not announced to the royal elites with great fanfare and triumph, but announced to lowly shepherds working the night shift in the fields outside of town.

In Luke chapter 2, the angel who announced the birth of the Son of God, he told the shepherds, here is how you are going to recognize your glorious king. Here is what glory looks like. This will be a sign for you.

You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying where? In a manger, in a feeding trough. Where the goats eat.

And what is the angel's response to this humble and pathetic story in our culture? To hear that the new king is born in a feeding trough. That would have produced embarrassment.

Were the angels embarrassed? Was there great embarrassment in the heavens? Do they, you know, this is where you're going to find your king. You know, do they lower their voices? Do they

avert their eyes in shame at this lack of glory, at this glory vacuum?

[27 : 03] Not at all. the weakness that was on display in the son of God humbling himself, lowering himself, lowering his status, stepping down.

The weakness that was on display became a cause of greater celebration. Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased.

And so that is how the life of Jesus Christ begins. It begins with this deep lowliness. And God is not ashamed of the lowly.

God is not ashamed of the losers. God is not ashamed of those who have low status, who feel like they don't belong. Jesus Christ continued to live to glorify God by humbling himself and lowering himself.

And in fact, he shows that this is the one and only way to live in peace. Remember how I talked earlier about this glory seeking corrodes, corrupts, destroys churches.

[28 : 20] If you want peace among those with whom God is pleased, if you want peace in the family of God, the only way to do it is to let go of our status, to not have to be a winner anymore, to not have to feel like you're awesome and you're powerful, to not have to feel great, great about yourself anymore, to let go of that and to say, it's God's glory.

That's really important. It's his glory that really matters. I'm just here for that. And I can go low in my marriage, when I'm raising my kids, at school, I'm okay.

I don't have to be the great one. I don't have to be big. I'm here for the glory of God. I'm here to show that he is big. This is why Jesus grew up to be a man who chose a life of hardship, a life of persecution in service to God.

This is why Jesus permitted the Jewish and Roman authorities to falsely accuse him of crimes, to condemn him to death, to beat him, to ridicule him, to crucify him.

In a horrifying and degrading spectacle of public humiliation, the whole point of crucifixion was to degrade and humiliate the victim as much as possible.

[29 : 43] Jesus knew that this was the way in which his father was going to be glorified. Jesus knew that when God the Holy Spirit raised him from the dead, that, that was the way by which God the Father would pronounce him Lord of all creation.

He is risen from the dead and he is Lord, exalted to the highest place so that the name of Jesus, every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

It is by going down that God raises him up. It is this amazing reversal from the shame of the cross to the honor of now seated at the right hand of God forever and ever.

This amazing reversal, here is why it is done because it demonstrates the sheer supremacy of God. Only God can do that. Only God can take a criminal dying publicly on a cross, can take someone of that lowly status down at the very bottom of human society, down at the very bottom, down in death itself, and elevate him to the name above all names, Jesus is Lord.

There is no one like him. That is how God is glorified, by being the one who elevates his son to the true status and title of Lord.

[31 : 30] And here's where this becomes counterintuitive for us because there are implications for us. You see, Jesus Christ glorified his father through his humility, so let us glorify our father in the same way.

Let us glorify our father in the same way. God the father is the one that we want to glorify. It's not about glorifying you.

It's not about glorifying me. It's not about elevating ourselves. It's all about him because as Paul is writing his letter to the Philippians, notice how he is warning them. He's warning them that they are going to be tempted to call attention to their own glory.

Look at me. Look at me. Notice how Paul is drawing them away from focusing on themselves and he is drawing them away from thinking, what's so great about me?

What's so great about me? Here's what Paul writes in Philippians 2 verses 1 to 5. So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

[32 : 45] Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others.

Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus. And his basis for all of this is that Jesus Christ is the ultimate example for the Philippians to follow.

The mindset of Jesus Christ becomes our mindset. The pathway of Jesus Christ that he traveled becomes our pathway. To be united with Jesus Christ by faith means that your life takes on the shape of his.

Your status of being united in Christ by faith in him means that you functionally follow in his footsteps and you experience that union as you walk in that place of humility.

Part of the reason why sometimes we feel distant from Christ, there can be several reasons for it, but one reason may be this, that we are not willing to walk the path he walked.

[34 : 02] And when you're not walking the path he walked, of course you're going to feel distant. We are to imitate our Lord and champion.

We are to adopt his mindset as his own. Jesus declined to claim his rights. Jesus deprived himself of glory. Jesus degraded himself through obedience and he humbled himself to death.

And what makes this so hard for us to do is that you and I, we still are holding on to the old way of thinking, that old mindset in which we desperately want to be elevated.

We want to be glorified. We want to be recognized and I want to be respected and I want to be appreciated. I want to be special. I want to be unique. I want power or money or fame or talent or strength or good looks.

I want to be recognized as a good person. And if you don't think that's true, it comes out in all these little ways. The last time that, think about this, last time that you told a story about your day to a friend or a family member, some incident happened and you're telling them the story of what took place.

[35 : 13] Who did you paint as the hero of your story? Who was the central character? If you had a conflict at work with your boss, I have a question. When you retell the story, who is the person behaving reasonably who is the person who's talking in a level tone of voice and making good points and who is the person who is being totally irrational?

We're at the center. We're the hero. You come home from school, right? Don't you, if you're coming home or if you're telling your friends or your parents about something that happened that day, you know, maybe the teacher gave you a homework assignment that you didn't like, don't you portray the teacher as, oh man, so thoughtless, so cruel, so awful.

And I, here I am, this noble, helpless victim of such a cruel fate. We are the hero. You go to a store's customer service desk and they don't let you return the item that you wanted.

Then you go to somebody else, oh, how could they do this to me? How could they, like, look, I was just so reasonable, I was so thoughtful, and I made such a good case and then they treated me so poorly. And if any of those don't strike a chord, how about this?

You're driving down the road, anyone driving faster than you is a maniac. Anyone driving slower than you is just, I don't even know, I don't even know what words to describe the people who are slower than me, okay?

[36 : 54] Just totally, totally unreasonable. Everyone who is not cooperating with me is totally unreasonable, and here I am, this very noble driver. Very good. We tell, we massage the truth just a little bit.

We leave out little details that point us in a negative light. We take the wrongful behavior of others and we just blow it up. We adjust the tone of voice that the other person spoke in.

We make it sound inappropriate and awful. And as we retell the story, you know what's really funny is as we keep retelling the story, our memories actually even change.

And we start forgetting the details that made us look bad, right? But you tell it a few times and eventually, you don't even remember that you actually used a tone of voice towards your boss. You don't even remember the things that you actually said that weren't reasonable or did that weren't reasonable.

Pretty soon, we've convinced ourselves that we're the ones in the right and we're the heroes. We're the glorious ones living in a world of less glorious people than ourselves. We want other people to applaud us.

[38 : 03] We want other people to approve us. We want other people to respect us. We want them to recognize our strengths. We want them to be unaware of our weaknesses, right?

Just be blissfully unaware of our weaknesses. But God, the Holy Spirit, he's telling us that there is a better way to live. I know this is the way that we live and we think this is the way.

If only we can do that and just be really successful at it. But God is telling us there is a better way to live than that. It is not our strengths, it is not our glory that are the primary ways in which we bring the glory to God our Father.

We don't honor and glorify him by making ourselves big and making ourselves look righteous and making ourselves look reasonable and making ourselves look strong. It's actually our weaknesses. It's where we're small. It's where we feel like nothing. Where do you feel small? Where do you feel weak? Where do you feel like you are nothing at all?

[39 : 09] Where do you feel pathetic? That may be the very place where God's glory will shine through you.

In one of his letters to the church in Corinth, Paul writes about a painful hardship in his life, something that is very hard for him.

We don't quite know what it is because he doesn't speak about it directly. Certainly, it seems that the church he's writing to seems to know, but whether it's a physical ailment or something, it's clearly something that just distressed him so much.

2 Corinthians chapter 12, Paul writes, to keep me from being conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations. A thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from being conceited.

Three times, I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in what?

[40 : 22] In weakness. And Paul's conclusion, therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that, why?

So that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities, for when I am weak, then I am strong.

And then Paul writes in the same letter, chapter 4, for God, who said, let light shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But we have this treasure, we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed, perplexed, but not driven to despair, persecuted, but not forsaken, struck down, but not destroyed, always carrying in the body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.

[41 : 49] For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

That is the way that Paul thinks. He is so consistent across all his letters that his mindset is, hey, look at my life. Look at where you, look at where I seem to be weak. Look at where I seem to be suffering.

Look at where I seem to be pathetic. Look at where I am falling short over and over and over again.

I am not the glorious person that you want, Corinthians. I am not this amazing, glorious super apostle who seems to be awesome and you just want to be around my magnetic glory.

It's like, I look pathetic. And that's how I glorify God because he takes a weak person like me, a small person like me, someone who seems to be of no account and when his power is at work through me, it's unmistakable that that power didn't come from me.

It didn't come from my magnetic personality. It didn't come from my strength. It didn't come from my superior wisdom. It came from him. Is your life lived in such a way that when God does great work through you, everyone around you goes, yep, that came from God, not you.

[43 : 12] Wow. That must have come from the Lord. Give praise to him. That's the way God likes to work through weakness, through smallness, through poverty.

There are many popular preachers who will get on TV and who will tell people that God wants them to have health and wealth and prosperity. They will tell people that God wants you to have the American dream, that God wants all of your dreams and ambitions to come true.

That's human wisdom masquerading as God's wisdom. That's seeking the temporary glory of a dying world.

That is not God's wisdom. That is not God's way. Paul tells us the wisdom of God the Father. My grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness.

And so we who know Jesus Christ and walk the path of Jesus Christ and live for the glory of God our Father, we join Paul in saying, I will boast all the more gladly of what?

[44 : 25] My weaknesses. So that the power of Christ may rest upon me. The surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We don't grovel in the dirt about how weak and pathetic we are.

We're not doing that just because that's what you do out of this sort of stoic, grim determinism. We are willing to be honest about our weaknesses. Precisely because it will glorify God and the glory of God means our glory and our joy, our delight.

We're doing it because there is something so much better than just looking strong and looking big and looking proud on our own. There is a better way to live. Years ago, I worked in the warehouse of a flooring store and I remember one time one of our, one of the installers who worked for the store, he admitted to me that anytime he came into the office of our store, he said, I always have to put on my game face.

He didn't want to look weak in front of my boss and he knew that at that store, if he showed weakness, it would be identified and it would be pounced on and taken advantage of.

That's one reason why we don't show weakness. We don't want to be taken advantage of.

Unfortunately, it's all too common in the church.

[45 : 56] The degree to which the church becomes like the world is the degree to which we are uncomfortable when someone confesses their sins. We are upset when our leaders admit their fears and insecurities.

We try to wallpaper over the failures and act like they're not there. We ignore them. We don't want people to see the weakness. We don't want people to see how we fall short. Well, I'll tell you what, guys.

This church falls short. Hang around here. If you haven't figured it out, you'll figure it out pretty fast. I fall short. Get to know me and you'll see it.

So many of you are very familiar. You know me well enough to know that I am not an ideal pastor. and I know you well enough to know that none of you are ideal people and you have weaknesses and you have shortcomings and you have sins that grieve you that you're fighting but you still have not overcome and you have insecurities and struggles.

We do not live to cover up those weaknesses to elevate our strengths. What we do if we do that is that we deny the power of God to shine through our weaknesses.

[47 : 19] Let's no longer be confident in the flesh. Brothers and sisters, let's no longer be confident in our strengths, in the things that we think make us great, the things we think that make us look good, our own human abilities and qualities.

Let's be confident that we have a God who is glorious. Our God is powerful. There is no one like him. Jesus lived to glorify his father.

And how does he do it? Not by demonstrating his own glory. He did it by embracing weakness, by being small. That's the Christmas story. Every time that we try to elevate ourselves and emphasize our own glory in all these subtle little ways, we are denying Christmas.

The whole point is that he goes low. So we do it by being unafraid to admit our own weakness. We find our confidence in the fact that we are connected with a God who is glorious.

We belong to our glorious God. He is the one who is to be glorified. God. We elevate him. We draw attention to him. And as we do, God opposed the proud and he gives grace to the humble.

[48 : 34] So you're small. You're weak. You're sinful. You're a failure at times. But God is big. He is strong. He is righteous.

And he always accomplishes everything he sets out to do. And if you've put your faith in his son, Jesus Christ, then you are a citizen of his heavenly kingdom.

You are a member of his royal family. And from his heavenly throne, we await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

That is who our savior is. God has elevated him to the status of highest glory. Do you want to be with him there? Jesus Christ glorified his father through his humility.

So let us glorify our father in the same way. Our father, we thank you that I know the wisdom of this world is to find our strengths and elevate them to avoid our weaknesses, to cover them up, to compensate for them.

[49 : 51] And we live that way, Lord. But your church is not meant to be that sort of community where we do that, where that is normal practice. Lord, your church is a community where we are learning not to do that anymore, where we are learning that it's okay to be small and it's okay to be weak.

And this is where the power of God is at work. Let us humble ourselves. Let us think less of our, think less about ourselves and more about Jesus Christ. Marvel at him.

Find our glory and joy and strength in the fact that we are connected to him, united with him. And I'm asking that anyone here who has not united themselves to Jesus Christ by believing in him and entrusting themselves to him may do so.

May put their faith in Christ and find that this is where real glory is found. by humbling ourselves so that our God and Father may be glorified.

Amen.