

FOR GOD'S GLORY

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[0 : 0 0] It was nearly 10 years ago since I met the most famous person that I've ever met. And when I say met them, they waved at me.

And when I say me, it was potentially the guy beside me, but most likely me. I was in Sacramento, California, for the National Youth Work Convention.

And at the end of a small group, I decided to go and grab some lunch before catching a flight home. As we walked out of the convention center and down into the mall, I noticed just to my left, a couple of black cars parked in the mall, SUVs with blacked out windows and all that.

And it was at that point that I noticed that one had a submachine gun and the other one had a shotgun poking up just above the dash. Each car had a couple of guys in them wearing black suits, wearing white shirts with black ties and black sunglasses.

And so it was either a remake of Men in Black or potentially, my hope was that it was the Secret Service. Given that the shotgun was a Remington 870 12 gauge and the machine gun was a Heckler-Kosh MP5 9mm, chosen weapons of the Secret Service, I figured it was in fact the Secret Service.

[1 : 3 0] And the fact that they also had an earpiece and were talking into their hands kind of gave it away as well. I noticed in that moment, quickly looking around, that there were various Secret Service guys in the mall.

So, it's either they're on protection duty or something pretty crazy is about to go down. So, either way, I figured I'm going to get a front row seat to see what happens.

And so, grabbed a spot right near this barricade and started chomping on a burger. And what I'd been hoping for the whole time that I was in Sacramento was to run into the governor of California, one of the greatest actors and philosophical thinkers of all time, Arnold Schwarzenegger.

And I wasn't disappointed. I was chomping on my burger when all of a sudden, he appeared from a restaurant about 50 metres from where I was seated.

And a friend and I, in that moment, who were both chomping and almost choking at this point, we both jumped up onto our chairs and over the tops of the screams of the adoring fans, we called out like a couple of teenagers at a Bieber concert, Hey, Arnie!

[2 : 5 4] Arnie! Arnie! And he turned and he waved at me. As did the Secret Service, turn and not wave but look at us.

And in that moment, you've got his attention. Arnold Schwarzenegger, you know, have you watched Kindergarten Cop? I mean, come on!

The guy's a comedy actor as well. And there he is. And he's looking at me and we're waving. And the only thing that I could think of in that moment was, We'll be back!

He looked as if he'd heard it before. Now, to mark this personal milestone, I quickly took a couple of shots, which I'm hoping to pass on to my children.

So up here, that's him right there. The next one's a bit clearer. Next one, Tim. That's his nose!

[4 : 0 5] That's him just appearing from behind there, the pole. Well, they are treasured memories of mine, those two photos, of the moment that I met Arnold Schwarzenegger, kind of.

Now, if you could be famous for one thing, what would it be? You see, there's a weird fascination in our world with celebrity.

A recent study in the United States revealed that 54% of teenagers want to be famous. Of those that crave fame, 68% said they weren't sure how on earth it was ever going to happen.

But 21% of them said that they would audition for reality TV shows in hope to become famous. Things like Britain's Got Talent and The X Factor in order to reach the masses.

You see, reality TV has become enormously popular. It drives me nuts. I hate any form of reality TV.

[5 : 13] Except for maybe Escape to the Country, if that's reality TV. I'm not really sure. You see, what it does, what reality TV does, it holds out the promise that any average smuck might be able to become famous for some ridiculous talent.

They might have that one shot at fame. Now, fame is a major goal in life. Apparently, Alexander the Great was the first person to have a celebrity culture in the modern sense of the word.

That's according to an English professor who authored a book called The Frenzy of Renown. And he wrote, not only did he want to be unique, but he wanted to tell everyone about it.

And he had an apparatus for telling everyone about it. He had techniques for doing famous things. He had historians, painters, sculptors, and gem carvers, bringing him along as entourage for every one of his battles.

He wanted them to record that Alexander was famous. Now, we don't need historians and painters and sculptors and gem carvers.

[6 : 36] We've got Instagram and Facebook and selfie sticks, recording every meal that we eat, every place that we visit.

Self-obsession. We want to leave our mark. We want to be known for something significant or to be regarded highly as an expert in a field.

We want to be, may not necessarily to be worldwide fame. If we could get that, that would be awesome. It may be just famous in Australia or even in a country or in a city or have a street named after you.

Someone in Nat's family has had a park named after them. They've got an album this thick of all the photos, of all the articles about them, about this park.

Maybe it's just want to be the best in your family or something or even to have a park on the wall at church or just simply ensuring that I am remembered.

[7 : 57] We live life to make our name great, to make it remembered. My kids won't give a rip about those photos or the moment that I, Arnold Schwarzenegger, they won't even know who he is by the time they grow up.

Our mission statement says that we exist for a different purpose than making ourselves great and famous. St. Paul's exists to know Jesus, to treasure Jesus, to represent Jesus for God's glory, to make his name great and for the joy of all people.

We exist to make much of Jesus in order that we might make much of God. And that's what I want to look at today. What it means to exist for God's glory.

In Isaiah 6, which Wendy just read out to us, if you've got your Bibles, I'd love you to open up there, Isaiah 6. What we notice, first of all, is that God is not like us.

He is, in fact, worthy of fame. He is, in fact, worthy of glory and honor and praise. There are at least seven glimpses of God in these first four verses of Isaiah 6.

[9 : 11] Firstly, we notice that God is alive. In the year, it says, That is, King Uzziah, the most powerful man in the world at that time, has just died, but God lives on.

Psalms 90, verse 2 says, God was the living God when this universe banged into existence.

He was the living God when the Great Wall of China was built. He was the living God in 1966 when Time magazine put on its title page, God is dead.

He will be living 10 trillion ages from now. There is not a single head of state currently ruling in the world who will still be doing that in 90 years' time.

In a brief 120 years, this planet will be populated by more than 10 billion brand new people who currently do not exist.

[10 : 19] All of us alive today will vanish and be gone, just like Uzziah, but not God. He never had a beginning and therefore depends on nothing for his existence.

He always has and always will be alive. Secondly, we notice that God is authoritative. Verse 2, When he saw the law, he saw him seated on a throne.

You see, no vision of heaven, goes throughout the Bible, will ever, you ever catch a glimpse of God plowing a field or cutting the grass or shining shoes or loading a truck or filling out papers and reports.

He sits and he sits on a throne. All is at peace and all is in control. The throne is his right to rule that which he has made.

You see, we do not give God authority over our lives. He has it whether we like it or not. Few things are more humbling.

[11 : 24] Few things give us that sense of raw majesty as the truth that God is utterly, totally authoritative.

After him, there is no other court of appeal. Thirdly, we see that God is all-powerful.

The throne of his authority is not just one amongst many. He doesn't hold the bench with a bunch of other like-minded people. His throne is high and exalted. The throne that is God's throne is higher than every other throne and it signifies God's superior power to exercise his authority.

That means that no opposing authority can nullify the decrees of God. What he purposes, he always accomplishes.

As God says a little bit further in Isaiah 46, verse 10, he says, I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, my purpose will stand and I will do all that I please.

[12 : 36] Or again, in Daniel chapter 4, speaking about God, says, he does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. You see, to be gripped by the all-powerful sovereignty of God is either marvelous because he is for you or it is terrifying because he is against you.

Indifference, to sit here and to be indifferent to his all-encompassing power and sovereignty simply means that you just have not seen it.

The sovereign authority, the living God, is a refuge full of joy and power for those who are his and it's terrifying for those who are not. Fourthly, we see that God is magnificent.

I saw the Lord seated on the throne, highly exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. The best image I have of this one is back in 1981 when Diana, Princess of Wales, married, or Diana married Prince Charles, became the Princess of Wales.

And I remember as a little kid, I might have been 11 or something like that, staying up to the wee hours to see this on TV.

[14 : 04] I had no idea what we were doing. And when it came on, I remember the women in the room going, as she got out of the carriage and walked up and the train of her wedding dress just kept coming and coming and coming and it was like eight metres long and then going, what?

You know, for me it was no big deal, but it seemed to cover, and you look at the images of it, it seemed to cover the steps of St Paul's Cathedral. What would it mean if the train of her robe just kept coming and it filled the aisles and it covered the seats and the choir loft and the pulpit and it was all made out of one fabric, woven together into one piece?

What would that mean? It would mean a little bit more than... That God's robe fills the entire heavenly temple means that God is incomparable in splendour.

The fullness of God's splendour shows itself in millions of ways. The magnificence spills over in excessive beauty as God the creator expresses himself in what he has made.

We see it in the wonder of creation all through this universe, from the tiniest of atoms to the depths of the oceans to the furthest reaches of the universe. It all displays his splendour, his character.

[15 : 36] Fifthly, God is revered. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings, with two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, with two they were flying.

Now no one actually knows what these strange six-winged creatures are with feet and eyes and they've obviously got intelligence. One thing is for sure, given the grandeur of the scene and the power of the angelic hosts, we had best not picture fat little babies with wings fluttering around the head of God.

That's not the picture of angels in the Bible. According to verse 4, when one of these creatures speaks, the foundations of the temple shake.

And Jason could not turn this microphone up enough right now in order for me to shake this building. There are no puny or silly creatures in heaven, only magnificent ones.

And the point is this, even these creatures, as magnificent as they are, not even they look upon the Lord, nor do they feel worthy even to leave their feet exposed in his presence.

[16 : 58] As good and as great as they are, as untainted by human sin as they are, they revere their maker with great humility. So just think of that in terms of escalation of scale.

See, one of these creatures appeared to us. What they generally do, according to the Bible, is one of the first things they say is fear not when they appear to a human being. Because that's exactly

what you do if one of these things appeared to you.

You would fear. You would think you were going to be dead. And yet even they hide in holy fear and reverence before this God. The sixth thing we find is that God is holy.

And they were calling to one another, holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty. The whole earth is full of his glory. The possibilities of language to carry the meaning of God actually run out.

The word holy carries us to the brink. And from there on, the experience of God is beyond articulation.

[18:05] And the reason I say that is that every effort to define what the holiness of God actually means just winds up with you saying that God is holy means that God is God.

The meaning of the word holy is to cut or separate. A holy thing is cut off or separated from common use.

Earthly things and persons are holy as they are distinct from the world and they are devoted to God. But what happens if this definition is applied to God himself? From what can you separate God in order to make him holy?

The very godness of God means that he is in fact already separated from all that is not God. He exists.

He exists in a different way than we exist. We, his creatures, exist in dependent, derived, finite, fragile ways.

[19:17] But our creator exists in an eternal, self-sustaining, necessary way. Necessary in the sense that God does not have it in him to get out of existence.

In the same way that we do not have it in us to keep living on forever. We necessarily age and die because it is our present nature in order to do that.

And God necessarily continues forever unchanged in his being. The God of the Bible needs no support system.

God is one of a kind. In that sense, he is utterly holy. But then you have said no more than he is God. God has life in himself and he draws his unending energy from himself.

He is the absolute reality beyond which there is only just simply more of God. God is not holy. He is not holy because he keeps the rules.

[20:43] He wrote the rules. He is not holy because he keeps the law. The law is holy because it reveals him. God is absolute. Everything else is derived from him.

In the end, God is holy in that he is God and he's not us. He is incomparable. His holiness determines all that he is and that he does and is determined by no one.

You can call it his majesty. You can call it his divinity. You can call it his greatness. You can call it his value. In the end, language runs out.

There may be yet to know, more to know of God, but it is beyond words. And so as Habakkuk chapter 2 verse 20 says, There is a seventh and a final thing about God and that is that God is glorious.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. The whole earth is full of his glory. And I've been wrestling with this bit all week and Sam communicates it in 30 seconds.

[22:12] Thank you for that. I'll take a little bit longer. God's glory is the revealing of his holiness.

God is glorious means that God's holiness has gone public.

That is, his divine being, his character, who he is, has gone public. Unless he reveals who he is, unless he reveals himself, we cannot see him for who he is.

But when he does, we see glory. And there's only one response to glory.

Leviticus 10 verse 3, God says, Among those who approach me, I will show myself holy. That is, I will reveal my character, my being.

[23:14] I will go public. In the sight of all people, I will be honored.

Or another word for honored is glorified. When God reveals his glory to his creatures, the response of his creatures is to glorify God.

To give glory to God. That is what we were created and redeemed for. What it means to glorify God is in fact to respond to his glory. We cannot glorify God without engaging with his glory.

You see, God wants to be praised for his praiseworthiness and exalted for his greatness and his goodness. He wants to be appreciated for who and what he is.

But the glory that is his goal is in fact a two-sided thing, a two-stage relationship.

[24 : 14] It is this process of to-ing and fro-ing where God reveals his glory to people and to angels in a free and radically generous way.

And at the same time, there is a response of adoration on the part of people and of angels where they give glory to God out of gratitude for what they have seen and what they have received from him.

The glory of God is received by us. And so the way to glorify God is to be engaging with God. You cannot glorify him without engaging with his glory. God's glory showing requires glory giving. And this is the heart of the true fulfillment of God's creatures. It brings joy to people as it does to God. Notice Isaiah's response in seeing God's glory in verse 5.

[25 : 22] Woe to me! I cried, I am ruined, for I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips. And my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.

You see, Isaiah responds appropriately to seeing the magnificence and the perfection and the splendor of God. He understands himself.

He understands that he is not God. He sees his limitation, his finiteness, his unworthiness, his failure, his lack of praiseworthiness.

He understands his true self, that he in fact is not worthy of the praise and the honor and the fame of the nations.

In seeing God, he sees himself. He is humbled and he confesses his sin. And what's God's reaction?

[26 : 24] One of the seraphs comes to Isaiah and says, he places a coal, he's from the altar in the temple, places a coal in his lips and he says, your guilt is taken away and your sin is atoned for.

At least one major purpose in God revealing his glory is for us to experience his compassion and his mercy and his forgiveness.

Now, the New Testament writers proclaim that the public display of God's nature and character and power and purpose is now open to view in the person and the role of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In fact, John chapter 12, verse 41 is pretty explicit. John chapter 12, verse 41 says this, Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him.

What John 12 is saying is that what Isaiah saw in Isaiah 6 was in fact the enthroned Jesus Christ.

[27 : 43] Jesus is the one who radiates, reflects, mirrors, displays the character and purpose and power of God and the magnificence of what went public in Jesus was the plan and the work and grace whereby he saved sinners.

And so as a church, we want to make much, much of Jesus. To know Jesus, to treasure Jesus, to represent Jesus is in fact to bring glory to God.

Now it probably shocks us to think that God's goal is in fact his glory.

His goal is to make much of himself. Probably shocks us to that because if I stood up here and I said, well my goal in life is to make much of Steve Jeffery.

In fact, your goal is to make much of Steve Jeffery. At that point, you would go, right, time to look for another church. Because it's just pure ego driven.

[28 : 51] No one can say you exist for my glory except God. But unlike God where I would say you exist for my glory, it's about my ego.

To exist for God's glory and for God to exist for his glory does not point to divine ego but is the very foundation of his love for us.

God doing everything for his glory is the foundation of his love for us. Listen to what the Bible says. Let me just ask a few questions and I'll look at some Bible passages.

Why did God forgive our sins and make us his children through Jesus? According to Ephesians 1 that the glory of his grace might be praised.

Why did God create a people for himself? According to God in Isaiah 43 I created them for my glory. Why did God spare rebellious Israel in the wilderness and finally bring them into the promised land?

[30 : 03] According to God in Ezekiel 20 I acted for the sake of my name that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations. And according to Isaiah 66 the reason why God sends messengers out to tell the far reaches of the world about his fame and his glory is that those people might be gathered to him and verse 22 says as the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me so will your name and your descendants endure forever go to the far reach of the earth declare my name declare my fame declare my glory that you might be gathered to me so that

I will make your name great forever.

His glory his pursuit of his glory is the very foundation of his love for us. Live for the glory of God live for his glory for his fame and he will make your name endure forever.

God's commitment to his glory means love and life and forgiveness and eternal fame for those who live for his glory. His commitment to his glory is the foundation of his love for us.

It's not about divine ego. And that's why you read passages that Wendy read out to us in 1 Corinthians 10 where the apostle Paul says do everything for the glory of God.

And whatever you, so whether you eat or drink, whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do everything for the glory of God. When you're eating your cheese and bickies and drinking your diet coke, do it all for the glory of God.

[31 : 54] Not for personal benefit, for personal advancement, for personal promotion, for personal glory, personal satisfaction, but for God's glory. And it does actually come down to the nitty-gritty, even to eating and drinking.

That is, God's glory is all-encompassing of our lives. Jesus is not just for Sundays. Relationship with him touches everything, everything in our life for those whose glory has been revealed.

is, in fact, a God moment, not a Steve Jeffrey moment. It's a God moment. Everything is an opportunity to engage with God, to worship God, to glorify God, to honour God.

24-7, every decision is either I'm going to make much of me, or I'm going to make much of God.

Now, I'm convinced convinced that for us to effectively bring glory to God, it has to be much more about certain external behaviours.

That is, it's possible for you next week to sign a pledge card and not glorify God. It's possible for you to not sign a pledge card and also not glorify God. to glorify God is so much more than just external behaviours.

[33 : 29] Internal motivations are, in order to glorify God, are absolutely essential. If we're not careful, we can get settled into a pattern of dutiful behaviour, where I read the Bible, I pray, I attend church, I'm part of a small group, I give some money to church, but I don't give praise to God when I go to bed at night and thank you for the day I've had, where I can go and purchase a motor vehicle and not even pray about the issue, ask what God might have in that, where I can build a church building for my fame and not for God's.

That is, what can happen is, we can tick certain boxes and our relationship with God is all about duty, obligation and loyalty. When we are settled into that position, we may even fulfil our duty at great personal cost.

We may even give more and sacrifice much. What is missing is the affections.

Rather than requiring dutiful obedience in doing everything for his glory, God is actually interested in us seeing his glory and being moved by his glory from our hearts.

He wants us to love him according to Deuteronomy 6. He wants us to light ourselves in him according to Psalm 37. He wants us to worship him with gladness according to Psalm 100. In fact, he condemns dutiful obedience where there is no gladness and no joy in him in Deuteronomy 28.

[35 : 26] So picture a husband bringing flowers to his wife on their anniversary. Must remember to do that. And she is overjoyed and she thanks him for it.

And in that moment, he says, don't mention it. It's my duty. Even though I didn't really want to do it, I sacrificed my money and my time and I bought these flowers for you.

It's just what I've got to do. I think I know how Nat would respond. It would be an insult to her honor and the relationship.

She is honored when the husband sacrifices and gives because it is his delight to do so. And so here's the thing.

If we are doing everything for the glory of God as a church out of a sense of duty and because it is a great personal sacrifice for us to do it, then it reveals what we really treasure.

[36 : 35] And it's not Jesus. If it is a great sacrifice for us to do everything for the glory of God, it shows us what we truly value more than God and it tends to be us and our fame, our name.

God is our greatest treasure. When he is our greatest treasure, then choosing him over lesser things is not even a sacrifice. When we delight in his power and his perfection, his beauty, his mercy, our service of him will glorify him.

God is dishonored when all of our service of him is but a duty. God desires that we see him, that we savor his mercy, his forgiveness, his acceptance and serve him with all of our lives, with joy and

with gladness.

And so I, if you haven't connected this, I have deliberately connected God's glory and the joy of all people in our mission statement. They go together.

God's glory and God's glory and you and I were made for the express purpose to glorify God at all times, in all places, in every circumstances. Our deepest joy and our most profound happiness is that our creator has revealed himself to us in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[38 : 09] And what he has revealed to us is that he loves us, that he wants to know us, that he has given himself for us, that he has given us a name and a status that will in fact live on for all eternity as he will live on for all eternity.

And that hope and that revelation and that status means that we get to live for his glory and we get to participate in his glory now that we're finally able to do the thing for what we were made to make God look great in everything that we do.