

Glory in the Lord

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[0 : 00] Let's turn again for a little to the chapter we read in Jeremiah chapter 9. I'm reading at verse 23. Jeremiah 9 at verse 23, verses 23 and 24.

Thus says the Lord, Now Jeremiah opens this chapter and he's saying, Oh that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears that I might weep day and night. And as we know, Jeremiah has been well titled the weeping prophet. His ministry was an incredibly difficult ministry.

Because his ministry was one where he had to go to the Jews and he had to tell them about God's displeasure with them and of God's coming judgment.

It was a very, very, very difficult. If you try and put yourself in that place and that you're going to have people who do not want to hear this particular message.

And I think one of the things that made it so difficult for Jeremiah was that the people looked on him as some kind of traitor. They thought that he was somebody who was quite happy to bring this message.

[1 : 54] And in bringing this message that he was actually showing that he had no love, no care, no concern for them. And the reverse was true. The fact that this was going to come upon his people broke his heart.

That is why he was the weeping prophet. His heart was broken with this particular message that he had to give. And he loved his people and he wanted the very best for them.

And he cared passionately about them. But there is often a high cost involved in being faithful to the Lord. And some people have been called to pay a very, very high price in being faithful to the Lord. Many people have been called actually to pay the ultimate price by being faithful to the Lord.

Because there are many people throughout this world and their very life is under threat.

There are many people tonight in parts of this world who have been thrown out by their family, who have lost all that they own in this world.

[3 : 00] They have been disowned by those who previously loved them. And there are some being killed and put to death because of their love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that is what we're talking here about sometimes the high cost of being faithful to the Lord. Now as we read this chapter, we read some of the terrible judgment that Jeremiah has to give to the people.

And he's talking about the land being ruined and wasted. There is death and destruction instead of joy, instead of mirth, instead of the sort of the heartbeat that you'd expect in communities, instead of all the togetherness and all that makes community life what it is, there is death, there is destruction, there is emptiness, there is wasteland.

Wasteland where the city should be. Why is the land ruined and the land laid waste, made waste like the wilderness?

That's a question we have in verse 12. Why is the land ruined and laid waste like a wilderness so that no one passes through? And the Lord gives the answer as to why.

[4 : 16] And this is exactly what happened to the Jews. And the answer is given. We see there that, and the Lord says, You see, it's an incredibly dangerous thing to stubbornly resist God.

To go defiantly, day after day, year after year, stubbornly refusing God's mercy and refusing to listen to what God says.

Now, God is an incredibly merciful God. And one of the things that Scripture highlights over and over again is his forbearance. Where he, as it were, is patient with people.

And patients, a patient way and beyond any patients that we can begin to understand. Because, by and large, we're very intolerant. And if people are really, really giving us grief.

And making life difficult. And defiant. And going against everything that we want. And everything that we expect. And going, if they were going against us in an unreasonable and an irrational way. [5 : 44] Day after day after day after day. There would come a point in the not too distant future. Where we would probably erupt and snap and say, that's it. But that's what we're doing before God. We've never quite grasped. I haven't anyway. And I'm sure you haven't. Just how high his standards are. He is demanding us keeping to his law. And we don't do it. But the sad thing is, yes, we defy and we break it ignorantly. And sometimes willfully. But there is this stubbornness within us. Just this stubbornness. This self-will. And this is what the Lord is saying. This is a dangerous thing. And if you find that you're going on defiantly against God. Listen to what his word is saying to us. And what made it so sad for Judah is that it needn't have been like that. Because God previously, and indeed throughout the Bible, if you go back to Deuteronomy, God sets out beautifully. [6 : 46] Say, for instance, in Deuteronomy chapter 28. The tremendous blessing upon the land. That the people will be blessed. And the land will be blessed. That you will have wonderful houses. Your crops will be abundant crops. Your wine will be overflowing. Your gold and your silver, they're going to multiply. And there's going to be security. There's going to be joy, happiness, and peace in the land. If they adhere to and follow them. But God said, if you refuse to do that. And if you turn away from me. And begin to worship other gods. And push me out of the picture. And elevate the gods that are in all the nations round about. And go after them. And defy me. Be persuaded. That my curse will come upon you. In fact, he says, the blessing will overtake you. And likewise, he says, the curse will come upon you. [7 : 44] In other words, if they adhere to the law. And if they follow the Lord. The blessings. They couldn't prevent the blessings coming on them. But the reverse was also true. And here, this is what they have reaped for themselves. And this is part of the tragedy of it all. It need not have been like that. But then we find in verse 23. That the Lord sets out before us. Certain things. Which I think are so relevant. To where we are. And to everybody today. And he sets out three things. That we ought not to glory in. And then he sets out. What we ought to glory in. And so we read. Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom. Let not the mighty man boast in his might. And let not the rich man boast in his riches. Now, I think these are three things. That all people are liable to boast in. [8 : 46] Or to glory in. Riches. Or wealth. Might. Or we could use that as power. And wisdom. These three things. Now, these are tremendous blessings from God. Don't get me wrong. God isn't saying. If you are wise. Then, I'm really sorry about that. If you're rich. God isn't saying. I'm really sorry about that. If you are strong. I'm really sorry about that. That's not what God is saying. But there's this great note of warning. Because you see. All these things. Have the tremendous potential for good. Wisdom. For people to be wise. For people to have great minds. And great intellects. Let us thank the Lord for it. When you look at the. Just look at the whole field of medicine. The field of science. All these things. These great minds that are at work. And we see the benefits that flow. [9 : 48] From these minds. From these minds. Into today's society. Let us thank the Lord for these things. So it's a great thing. To have great minds. Great intellects. But it can be a snare. And people can begin to boast in their great minds. And in their great wisdom. And people can have an intellectual snobbery. Where they begin to look down on other people. And they look at others as inferior. That is wrong. But I believe that two of the greatest dangers. Of the great intellect. One is. That so many people with great minds. Look at the gospel. And they say no. It's foolishness. That was part of the problem. Way back in the times of the Greeks. These great minds. These great philosophers. And the apostle Paul was saying. That they actually looked on the gospel as foolishness. To the Jew it was a stumbling block. [10 : 45] To the Greek it was foolishness. They applied these massive intellects that they had. They viewed the gospel. And they dismissed the gospel.

Because to them it was. It wasn't anything that stretched the mind. It was something that you just. They thought no. This trusting in another person. And they wouldn't believe it. They wouldn't accept it. And you know. Even to this day. That is one of the reasons. Why so many. Push away the gospel. To them. It is foolishness.

But the other side. The other thing that. Unfortunately. There are many great minds. God has given these great minds. And these great minds. Are being used.

Not in the service of the Lord. Not for the well-being of society. But these great minds. Are being used. To try and influence people.

[11 : 40] Not to believe in God. Isn't that an extraordinary thing? That the creator God. The God who upholds these people. By his own mercy.

Upholds them day by day. Has equipped them. And given them these great intellects. And these great minds. That they actually use. These minds and gifts. That God has given. To try. And prove to people. That God is not. That he does not exist. That he is not the creator God. And that of course.

Is one of the. The awful things. Where we see. One of the saddest things. Where we see. Great minds. Not being used. But abused. Let us say.

Even at a. At a. Just at a normal. Natural level. If the Lord has given you. A good mind. A sound mind. Thank him. For it. And then we see.

[12 : 38] The might. Let not the wise man. Boast in his wisdom. Let not the mighty man. Boast in his might. I don't think this means. So much physical strength. Like in the idea.

Of the world's strongest man. I know that there are many people. Who will boast. In their physical prowess. Like Goliath did. He was that great physical champion. That huge physical specimen.

And he was quite happy. To challenge anybody. Because he thought he could beat anybody. And. Of course. It's one of the things. That people. Somebody who is. Immensely strong.

And somebody who. Sort of. Maybe. Displays their strength. It's a great thing. People. We admire these things. But I don't think. That that's really.

What's been talked about. So much here. As more. The idea of. Power. Of influence. The power. Of influence. And control. Where people.

[13 : 33] By sheer force. Of personality. Sheer force. Of character. And willpower. Have risen up. In such a way. That they exert. Power.

Whether it be physical. But more than likely. That they. That they. They exert power. In an influence. Over others. And hold people. Under their. Their control.

And we've seen that happen. So often. In the. In history. Where people. Have risen from obscurity. And become. Huge. Mighty dictators. Who have controlled. Ruthlessly.

All nations. By force. By force. Of mind. By force. Of power. By force. Of. And physically. By force. Of government. Now again.

These things. Control. Force. Power. Might. These things. Can be. Wonderful. If they are channeled. In the right way. If they are used.

[14 : 30] In the right way. But so often. These are things. That are abused. And there has been. So much hurt. So much chaos. So much courage. So many people. Have been trampled on.

And abused. There has been. So much oppression. And this world. Is crying out. Tonight. And there are victims. All over the world. Because of this.

Desire. In people's lives. To exert power. And God is saying. Don't glory. In that power. And then again. Riches. Now I'm sure.

All people. One way or another. Desire. Riches. Some people. Desire. To be very rich. And I'm sure. Most people. Would desire.

To have a little more. Than they have. It has been said. That. Whether a person. Has a pound. Or whether they have. Ten million pounds. They always want. A wee bit more. I don't know.

[15 : 24] Whether that's true or not. But I've heard that said. And again. Riches. Can be. A phenomenal blessing. There is so much. Good. That can be done. In a person's life.

In a person's home. In a person. Within our communities. Within our land. When wealth. Is distributed. In a right way. There are so many. Benefits to society. And there is so much.

In this. That we ought to. Thank God for. But. Justice with the. Wisdom. And justice with the. Power. Wealth. Can be so abused.

And. The desire. The craving. The love. Of money. Remember. We're told in scripture. Is the root of all evil. It's not money. It doesn't say. Money. Is the root of all evil.

It says. The love of. Love. There's a big difference. Between money. And the love. Of money. So the Lord. Is saying to us here. That with regard.

[16:19] To wisdom. And to might. And to riches. Whatever. Really. We have. In this world. That. That. Is not. To be the center. Of our.

Affection. Of our love. Of our glory. Of our boasting. If. Tonight. Let me say. If the Lord. Has blessed you. In this world.

With a sound mind. If he has blessed you. With a strong body. And if he has blessed you. With enough.

And the resources of life. To get by. Thank him. And praise him. Because these are. Awesome. Blessings. Blessings. That sometimes. We take for granted.

But they are wonderful things. And we ought to acknowledge. That God. Who has given us. Gives us. The abilities. And equips us. In this world.

[17:15] And let us remember. The Bible. Very forcefully. Reminds us. What do we have. That we have not received. You know. That's a very sobering question. At the end of the day.

The Lord is going to. Challenge. Everybody. With that. What. Do you have. That you have not received. See.

Everybody. Some have. Different abilities. Some maybe have. Just one. Talent. That's very obvious. But I believe. Everybody has. Different abilities.

And different gifts. Some at a great measure. Some at a lesser measure. But God is going to ask us. Right. What did you do. With these things. Did you look after them.

For me. Did you use them. For me. Did you thank. Me. For them. Because I gave them to you. For your own good.

[18:12] For the good of others. And for my glory. So you see. It's a very. Searching question. And it's a question. That will be asked of us.

What have you done. With all that I gave you. And whether a person. Is a billionaire. Or a person. Doesn't even have a pound. In their pocket. The question is.

The thing is. What do we have. That we have not received. God reminds. We've said this often enough. Before. God reminded his people. When they were going. To the promised land. He said. I'm going to give you. The ability. To prosper. It's not you. You are not going to get it. Of yourself. I will give you. The ability. So that when you work.

The land. It will flourish. When you build houses. It's going to go well for you. All these things. Are going to multiply. And you're going to prosper. Because God.

[19:08] Was giving them. The capacity. And the abilities. So we've got to remember. These things. Because if God. Keeps giving. And giving. And giving to people.

And they do not appreciate. They do not acknowledge. And in the end. They begin to abuse. What he has given. The Lord tells us. I'm going to take it away from you. I'm going to take away.

All these things. I gave you. It's a very solemn. And a very sobering thought. And so the Lord sets out this warning.

About these things. Don't boast. Don't glory. In these things. Don't glory in the riches. Don't glory in the might. Don't glory. In the wisdom. Why?

Why? Because. While these. As we say. While these are great blessings. Let us remember. That. They don't keep. The troubles. And the traumas.

[20:04] And the trials of life. Away from us. Doesn't matter how wise you may be. Doesn't matter how powerful you may be. It doesn't matter how rich you may be. Troubles. Will come into the life.

Of the greatest minds. Of the most powerful people. And of the wealthiest people. Just the same. As all others. So don't glory in them. Again.

These things are not guaranteed to last. Many a person who has been incredibly wealthy. Has lost everything in a moment. Many people. Who have been so strong in body.

Have been crippled in a moment. Sometimes people with incredible minds. Have lost their mind. These things can happen. So the Lord is saying. Don't glory.

In these things. And I would say the last thing regarding it. Don't glory in it. Because these things can't save you. At the end of the day. The all important thing is.

[21 : 03] That you are right with God. And your mind. Your great intellect. Whatever great power. Or whatever great worth. None of these things.

Can buy us. This salvation. So that's what the Lord is saying to us. Don't glory in these things. Supposing. You.

Had all the wealth in the world. Were the wisest man in the world. The most powerful man in the world. And yet you lost your soul. What would it profit? Nothing. That's what Jesus said.

What will it profit a man? Supposing he gained the whole world. And lost. His own soul. Then he asks the question. What will a person give.

In exchange for a soul? Nothing. The soul. That's you. You. What can you give in exchange for you?

[22 : 01] Well. There's nothing more precious. To you than you. And if you. That's what the Lord is saying. Unless. You have me. You're going to lose yourself.

And that's. That's. Something too awful. To think about. And then the Lord goes on. To tell us. Where our glory. And our boasting.

Should be. That he understands. And knows me. That's what he goes on. To say. In. In. In verse 24. But let him. Who boasts. Boasts in this.

That he understands. And. Knows me. And then the Lord goes on. To demonstrate. A little bit about this. To understand. And know him. That I am the Lord.

Who practices. Steadfast love. Justice. And righteousness. I would say. That the greatest achievement. That any person. Could have in this world.

[22 : 57] Is coming. To know. The Lord. And some of the greatest minds. Have said that. Was it Alexander Fleming? He was asked. What was his greatest. Is discovery. And everybody expected.

To say. Discovering penicillin. It was not that. It was. That he was a sinner. Than that he had discovered. A savior. Jesus Christ. And there's many. A person.

Who said. The very same thing. And in fact. Every person. Who has discovered. Jesus. Will say. The same thing. That we might come. To know him.

You make it. Your aim. Your ambition. You make it. A determined. A. I said. Well. Put your. All your determination. Into this fact.

That you will come. To know. The Lord. Whatever you do. Or whatever you don't do. In this life. Make this a priority. I plead with you. Because.

[23 : 52] Out with this. Life. Is going to be missing. It's like a car. That's. You know. Where the engine is. It's just not going properly. And it's. It's putting. Putting. And you're saying.

You're saying. Oh. What's wrong with that? It's just missing. This beat. All the time. And that's what a life. Is really like. Without the Lord Jesus. And of course. The end of life. Without Jesus. Doesn't bear thinking.

And so that we might. Come to know. That's what brings. A taste of heaven. Into earth. Is our coming. To know the Lord.

And the more. We come to know him. The more wonderful. He becomes. I've said this so often. But it's so true. When we get to know. One another. The more we get to know.

One another. Unfortunately. The more we get to see. The bumps. And the bruises. And the. The faults. And the failings. And we say. Oh. I never saw that before.

[24 : 49] It's just. That's. That's. That's. Nature. We're so full of. Imperfections. We're seeing. And say. Oh. Never saw that side to him before.

Never saw that trait in her before. Don't we say these kind of things. The more we get to know. Great thing about friendship. And about love. And family. And all these things is.

That love overlooks these things. But the fact is. That the more we get to know one another. Generally. The more we see the faults. And the failings. That is never. So with the Lord.

The more we get to see him. The more we get to know him. The more wonderful he becomes. And that's what is being said here. And that of course is part of what will make heaven.

The wonderful place it is. Where we will enjoy eternally. This knowledge of coming to know him more. And more. And more. And more. And the more you come to know him.

[25 : 45] The more you will trust him. Knowledge and trust go together. You don't trust somebody with your life. That you've never met before. You wouldn't be going away on holidays.

And you say to yourself. Well I'm going to leave the house keys with somebody. And you're going out from your house. And this stranger is passing. And you say to him. Oh by the way. I'm going on

holiday. There's the house keys. You wouldn't do that.
The person might be as honest as the day. As long. You don't know. But he might not be. You don't give. Your life. Or. What's. What's important to you.
Someone that you don't know anything about. Knowledge and trust. Are wonderfully linked together. And the more we come to know the Lord. The more we will come to trust him.
And we will discover. That he is absolutely trustworthy. And so he says. But let him who boasts. Boasts in this. That he understands. And knows me.
[26 : 45] That I am the Lord. Who practices. I am the Lord. Who practices. Steadfast love. Justice. And righteousness. Now when.

We see this word. Practice here. That doesn't mean. That the Lord. Is doing something. In order to perfect it. We often use that word. I'm going out to practice.
You're going out to practice for football. Or practice for. For anything. You're going out in order. That you might get better. In order that you might. Home in your skills. That you might.
Develop. And get better. That's not the practice. That is spoken of here. I suppose it's more like. What you would term. The doctor's practice. The practice. The GPs.
Their practice. Now. When we talk about their practice. We don't go down there. Saying. Oh. I think the doctor's going to practice on me. I hope he's getting better. That's not the idea. His practice is what he have.

[27 : 39] Or she. Habitually. What they do. They have already qualified. They are already trained. And they are now. It is. It is. What they do. And that's what is spoken about here.

About the Lord. It is. What he does. This is what he does. To us. And with us. In the earth. That he practices. Steadfast love.
Justice. And righteousness. God's covenant love. Is amazing. Circumstances. Cannot change it. It is our love.

That is unchanging. Why? Because he is unchanging. God doesn't take love. As if it's in some compartment. And he says. Right. I'm going to give him. This person. My love.
And he goes there. And takes his love. And he gives it to you. No. His love is himself. God is love. And so God's love. Is communicated to us.

[28 : 35] Through. The work of Jesus Christ. And applied to us. By the Holy Spirit. And this is. Himself. And so this love. Cannot change. Despite what we do.

Despite what we are. His love. Remains. Constant. Isn't that wonderful? And he practices. This steadfast love. And it's justice.

God cannot. But deal. In a just. And a right way. Injustice. Is abhorrent to him.
And whether injustice. Is practiced. Within a home. Or within a community. Or within a country. God is taking note. And there will come a day.
When there will be a righting. Of the wrongs. There will come a day. Because God is a just God. And all his dealings. Are in justice.

[29 : 31] Absolutely. Just. And right. In what he does. And in righteousness. This governs all his dealings with us.

This righteousness. Affects our life. This righteousness. Of course. Affects our life. With regard to salvation. Because it is in and through Jesus Christ.

His perfect righteousness. Which is placed to our account. And when that happens. Then we are to live. In our righteous way. Before. Our God.

So we finish with a question. Where is your boasting? Where is your glorying tonight? I have to ask myself that question.

You must ask yourself that question. What do I really. Really. Glory in. In life. Is it.

[30 : 25] My achievements. Is it my ability. In my work. Is it. My parenting. Is it. My school work.

Is it. My loyalty. As a friend. Is it. My abilities. On a football field. Or a golf course. Is it. My abilities. With music.

Is it. My. Abilities. Intellectually. What. The. The. The. Intellect. The. The. Qualifications. That I have attained.

Is it. In my strength. Is it. In my bank account. God. Ask yourself. All these questions. Can be very subtle. Or is it.

In the Lord. It's a Lord first. Is he. Our glory. Is he. The one. That we've. Put everything. Upon.

[31 : 21] Is our life. Given. To him. Let. Ask yourself. That question. And if you have to say. Well I don't think so. Then I would urge you.

Right here. Right now. To seek the Lord. As your own. Personal saviour. Let us pray. Lord. Lord God. We. We ask thee.

To. To bless us. As we come under the word. And we pray. That we might be challenged. By the word. We give thanks Lord. For all the various. Abilities. And gifts.

In life. We give thanks. Oh Lord. For thy patience. With us. And we pray. That. There might be a desire. To. Honor. And glorify God. We ask thee Lord.

To forgive us. For. Just how often. We fail. And how often. Our glory. And our boasting. Is not in the Lord. Forgive us Lord.

[32 : 16] For when we become. Preoccupied. With other things. Lord. Give us a vision. Where the Lord. Might be at the forefront. Of who we are. And what we are.

Bless each one of us. Here tonight. Bless us. And take care of us. And keep us. Part us with thy blessing. And do us good. And cleanse us. From all our sin. In Jesus name.

We ask it. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.