

Made for Glory

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Date: 12 August 2018

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[0 : 00] Good morning.

It's good to be back from vacation. It's good to see you all here on this beautiful day. As we were, as I was thinking about preparing for our topic this morning, I was thinking that one of my greatest joys in July was watching the World Cup.

And for the rest of the world, it's the football championship of the world. And so, and I enjoy watching that. And one of the enduring sights and images that I have from the whole thing was watching the celebration in the capital of Croatia after they won the semifinal game to propel them into the final.

It was the first time that Croatia had ever been there. And in Paris, France was the other country that made it. In Paris, they celebrated, but not like they did in Croatia. They celebrated with flares and with, it was pandemonium, literally, as these people rejoiced and got caught up in this incredible celebration of their country.

And I thought about why is that? What is the dynamic? It's the same kind of thing that happens.

Some of you are too old, but it's like watching the Americans beat the Russians in hockey in 1980.

[1 : 34] There are times when we get caught up in this, these international sports events where we are caught up in a glory of something about our nation that seems to be greater than we would anticipate or expect.

We're caught up in the glory of something bigger than ourselves. And it transports us and it changes us and it causes us to celebrate and to worship.

And I've wondered, why is that true? And I think that it's because humans were made for glory. We were made for something greater than ourselves, something bigger than us to be caught up in.

And I think we see this in our everyday lives. We see it in the mundane pursuit of meaningful work or employment that shows our desire to expend our work in something valuable, in something that's going to make the world a better place, an expression of our glory making.

We certainly see it in some of the great fields of our day where we see people pursue glory. I actually Googled glory in the New York Times.

[2 : 52] And the most popular places where glory was used was sports and entertainment. And is that not the places where in our culture people get caught up in something bigger than themselves?

Whether it be a football game on Sunday afternoon or a rock and roll concert or something like that? Is that not when we get caught up in something bigger than ourselves? I think it's also shown in our ordinary and mundane disappointments.

The reason why being overlooked or why it feels so bad when we feel like our lives have no meaning, we have nothing to contribute to those around us.

It's a similar sense of because we were made for something else. And we feel that even in the disappointments that we face. This desire for glory can transport us to great feats of human greatness.

It can also expose the ugliness and the worst of human boasting and self-exaltation at the expense of others and on the backs of others.

[4 : 10] But in this hunger for glory, in this desire for this thing that we were made for, we feel the transcendence of it. The glory of great achievement, the beauty of nature or art, the sweetness of relationships, all of these things tap into this longing for glory.

C.S. Lewis, in the essay, *The Weight of Glory*, which if you have not read, you need to read it. Go home, Google it, *The Weight of Glory*. It is worth your time to read it in its fullness.

But he says something interesting about this pursuit of glory that's a common human experience.

He says, For they, that is the things that we find these moments of transport are getting caught up

in, for we find that they are not the thing itself.

That is, they're not the thing that we're actually desiring. But they're only a sense of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard.

News from a country we have never yet visited. What Lewis is saying is that when we tap into this desire for glory, we're actually looking for something that's beyond us and even beyond this world.

[5 : 30] Maybe you've experienced it in people you've met. I remember when I was in ninth grade, two new friends came into my school. If you've been around here long enough, you've heard their names, Bill and Becky, because Bill and Becky were significant in my coming to faith in Jesus Christ.

But the first thing that happened in that process was that as I became friends with them, there was something about them, something intangible, something I couldn't put my finger on, but there was something about their lives that I wanted more of.

And I couldn't tell you what it was, but I saw an emptiness and a longing in my own heart that I saw in them having a fullness of.

I didn't understand it. I didn't understand it, but I wanted what they had. And what I came to understand is what our passage this morning is going to teach us about and point us towards.

What does God have to say about our hunger and our longing for glory? As we continue in our series in the book of Exodus, which is we're finishing up.

[6 : 45] We have only a few more weeks left, but we're continuing in our series in the book of Exodus this morning. We're going to be looking at Exodus chapter 34. And so you can turn with me there in the Pew Bibles if you want on page 75.

And we're going to continue to look at what we're going to see this morning is that glory is a significant category for God and His people.

Remember where we've been in the book of Exodus. Some of you are visiting, just coming through, so I'm going to give you a one-minute really quick sweep. In the book of Exodus, God has rescued His people to be His own.

The descendants of Abraham, delivered by God from slavery in Egypt, called out to then come and be His people in the world. And God brought them into the desert, and then He revealed Himself at Mount Sinai, most popularly and clearly in the Ten Commandments, but then also in the giving of the law.

And God has called them into relationship with Himself. I will be your God, and you will be my people, and I will dwell among you. And this is the first 31 chapters of Exodus.

[8 : 04] And what we've seen in 25 through 31 is this description of the tabernacle, which is this portable worship center wherein God is going to manifest Himself among His people.

The living out of that, I will be with you. And then if you've been here for the last two weeks, you know what happened. While God was instructing His people in doing all this, His people were failing to respond to this well.

Chapter 32, we see them making an idol out of gold, a golden calf, and then bowing down and worshiping it. Pastor Nick preached on this about how our hearts so quickly divert from the true and living God to worship man-made gods or God substitutes in our lives.

And then last week, Pastor Greg talked about how through Moses' intercession and through God's gracious response, God provided a way so that, like all of us, when we have blown it with God, when we have not responded to Him as we ought to, how God graciously gives us a way forward. And in the middle of this story about what the way forward is, there's this experience of glory that is central to this story. How God's people are caught up with and overflow with the glory of God, and that this, in fact, is His purpose for His people.

[9 : 36] So that's what we're going to look at this morning. We're going to read the end of chapter 34, so starting in verse 29, to see how we got there, and then we're, as we do this, we'll dive in.

So let's first read together. Exodus 34, chapter 29. I'm going to get this right one of these days, all right?

It's a chapter 34, it's a verse 29. There we go. All right, here we go. So, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone, because he'd been talking with God. Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders with the

congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them.

Afterwards, all the people of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the Lord had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face.

[10:53] And whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he would remove the veil until he came out. And when he came out, he told the people of Israel what he was commanded.

The people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining, and Moses would put the veil over his face again until he went in to speak with him.

Will you pray with me? Lord, thank you for this word. Lord, thank you for your incredible grace of being a God who calls us to yourself.

And Lord, in calling us to yourself, you call us into the glory that we were made to live in. Lord, be with us. Help us this morning in the heat to be able to listen to your word.

By your spirit, apply it to our hearts. Lord, that we might be caught up in a vision and understanding and a desire and a love for your glory.

[11:58] And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. So, today's sermon is going to be slightly different than some of the typical ones because we're going to start from this passage, but we're going to expand a little bit to think about God's purposes for his people being caught up in and overflowing with God's glory.

So, we're going to first look at how that expressed itself in Moses in this book in the chapter in Exodus. And then we're going to look at how then that points us ahead to Jesus.

And finally, we're going to look at how that points us to us as God's people. So, if you're taking notes, there's your outline. God's glory in Moses, in Jesus, and in us.

So, first of all, let's look at this passage and think about the glory of God and Moses being caught up in it. Now, if you remember the story of the golden calf, right?

The people had sinned. Moses intercedes and says, God, you have to go with us. If you don't go with us, who will we be? How will we be your people? And God relents and says, okay, I will go with you.

[13:15] But Moses says, that's not enough, God. I'm going to be bold enough to ask for more than that. He says, Lord, show me your glory. And God says, no one can see my face and live.

No one can see the fullness of my glory and live. But I will grant you your request. I will hide you in the old-fashioned language, in the cleft of the rock.

I'm going to put you in a cave somewhere so that your vision is limited. So that I'm going to pass before you so that you can see my goodness. And what you're going to see as you see my goodness is you're going to hear me proclaim who I am, the character of who I am, the Lord, the Lord, slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness, the God of mercy and the God of justice. And if you want to hear more about that, go back and listen to Pastor Greg's sermon from last week because he did a great job unpacking how it is that God's... that Moses saw in the glory of God, God's character as being one of both mercy and justice, and what good news it is that he would do that.

But this encounter with God was different. Moses, if you remember, had been up on the mountain before, and he had talked with God before, and he had listened to God, and the cloud had descended before.

[14:41] And when Moses came down before, his face wasn't shining. So this encounter with God was unique in the way that Moses interacted. And God was bestowing upon Moses a particular kind of glory that then manifested itself from this time forward, that whenever Moses met with God, when he came away, his face shone.

In fact, it actually says that his face shone with words that are like rays or horns that came out of his head. And there's an interesting suggestion that maybe instead of worshiping the golden calf that had golden horns, Moses was bestowed with this glory from God that radiated from him as a replacement and as the fullness of what God actually meant.

It's a suggestion. So just a little note. But it's so interesting that this is what happens then, and this is what we see in the passage that we've read in chapter 34 starting in 29.

Moses doesn't even know that this has happened. He knows that he's met with God, but he comes down and his face is glowing, and he doesn't even know it. And the people see it, and they're afraid.

Remember, they've just sinned terribly and seen God's judgment poured out on them horribly. And they're thinking, oh no, if I get close to that, I'm going to get burned again.

[16:10] And Moses has to say, no, no, no. The God of mercy and justice is with you. And he has shown mercy to you. And so he invites the leaders, and he explains to them what's going on, and then they feel safe.

And so then the people come, and they hear the word of God from Moses. And then we see in verses 34 and 35 that this is what happens on an ongoing basis from here on out.

When God meets with Moses, Moses goes in, and as he meets him, he takes off this veil, and this veil then allows him to see, to interact with God face to face.

And then he comes out, and he speaks to the people, and his face is shining. Now, why does he do this? Why does God do this to Moses? I think there are maybe a couple of reasons.

First of all, because God is reinforcing to God's people that Moses is his chosen spokesperson and intermediary.

[17:16] Do you remember at the beginning of chapter 32, what was the start of their sin? What happened to that guy, Moses? We don't know what's happened to him.

They dismissed him, and they didn't trust that God had actually appointed Moses to play a role. And so in overlooking that, they went astray. So God has bestowed this glory on Moses to say, this is the one through whom I am going to speak to you.

Listen to him. Interestingly, I don't know about you. I've read this passage for a long time. I've read the Bible for a long time.

And I always had this vision that Moses went up on the mountain, he saw the glory, and then when he came down, he put a veil over his face because he didn't want the people to see this glory because they would be afraid.

And then even as he went into the tent of meeting, he would come back, and he would cover his face so that people wouldn't have to interact with the fullness of God's glory in his face. That's what I thought. But did you notice how the text read?

[18:16] It's not until after he's spoken that he puts the veil on. The people see the glory of God in the face of Moses.

Before, as he speaks God's words to them, then he puts the veil over. So that they might not see it fading as we heard earlier. And we'll explore that a little bit later.

But the veil doesn't prevent the people from seeing Moses' shining face. So I think this is the primary purpose that God gives. But the other reason is that I think that he gives Moses this glory so that the people of God might remember this is what you were made for.

When you truly know me, when you truly have a relationship with me that is face to face, you will be caught up in glory like Moses is.

And your face will shine. And you will be transformed. And it's this down payment on a promise of what God is going to do in his people.

[19:31] And we see this then being fulfilled. And remember, in the book of Exodus, there's an arc. And at the very end of the book, flip ahead with me a couple pages to chapter 40. Nick's going to preach on this in two weeks, so I'm not going to steal all his thunder.

But if you look at 34 and 35 of chapter 40, do you see what happens? The glory of God that had previously only been up on the mountain and in the tent of meeting outside of the camp when Moses went out now descends upon the tabernacle itself after it's erected.

And you see from this time forward in the tabernacle and then in the temple that Solomon builds in Jerusalem, that God's presence and the display of his glories actually manifested physically in the midst of his people.

And one of the great tragedies of the history of Israel is in Ezekiel when the glory of God departs from his people. They lose the glory that God intended for them to have.

And so, friends, the first thing we see is that God captures Moses up in his glory and this glory overflows to his people.

[20:58] As Moses plays the role of God's spokesperson and as Moses shows his people what it will be like, what the fullness will be like when God's people get to see God face to face.

This is what this story points us to in Exodus. But we know that Exodus is not the last story in the Bible. In fact, it's only the second book of the Bible, right? So we know there's a lot more to come.

And as we see this theme developing itself forward, we see it pointing towards the person of Jesus. God revealed himself, according to Hebrews, in many times and in many ways.

He spoke to his father through the prophets. But Hebrews 1, 1 through 3 says, But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

He, that is Jesus, is the radiance of the glory of God. Now, to us Gentiles, we just think, Oh, that's cool.

[22 : 11] Like, Jesus is shiny. You know, that's wonderful. But to anyone who's read the Old Testament, to anyone who's read Exodus 25 through 40, and thought about what glory meant as God was establishing this Old Testament covenant with his people, and seeing how it had not reached its fulfillment, but had actually failed, and failed to accomplish what God's plan had been, but pointed ahead instead to a greater fulfillment that was to come.

They read this and they go, Oh, Jesus is the fulfillment of this. This is why the story of the Mount of Transfiguration is so beautiful in the Gospels.

In Luke chapter 9, do you remember, Jesus invites his disciples to go up on the mountain with him, Peter, James, and John, and they go up and the disciples fall asleep, because that's what they do. And suddenly Moses is transfigured and transformed, and he's glowing and shining, and it says, The cloud descended on the mountain. And they saw the glory, and the cloud came down and overshadowed them.

And God said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him. Again, that sounds good, but do you see now how Jesus is fulfilling that role that Moses had among his people?

[23 : 52] God is saying, This is the one you are to listen to. If you want to know who I am, if you want to know how you can know me, this is the one who now bears my glory, and who shows my glory.

He is the one with the final authority to speak to humanity on behalf of God. And friends, this leads us then to John 1, and the beautiful passage that we see there.

Let me read part of it. I hope you will see how these themes come together in a beautiful way.

Talking about Jesus, it says, The true light which gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him. Yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become the children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory. Glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

[25 : 16] For from his fullness, we have all received grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

No one has ever seen God, but the only God who is at the Father's Son. He has made him known. Friends, the longing for glory that we have points us to the person of Jesus Christ.

Because God has come and endowed him, the God-man, with the fullness of God's glory, so that we might see him. And so that by believing in him, we might be caught up in his glory as well.

The Old Testament saints longed to know, longed to see what we know and what we see. How do we know God?

We have seen Jesus. Where is his glory? In Jesus. How do we be God's people? Through Jesus. The light of the glory of God has come to earth.

[26 : 29] He has descended the mountain to manifest his glory in flesh and blood. And so we see that this hunger for glory is not found in great achievements.

It's not found in the little or big successes and the hunger and the ache and the longing that we all have for that scent of a flower we've never seen and a distant country that we've never visited.

Jesus has come to us to break in and say, this is what you were made for. This is what you are here for. So if you're here this morning and you're wondering, is there a God?

How do I know him? If you are here this morning and you're wavering in your confidence that God can be seen and can be known, look to Jesus.

For he has come so that you might know. And we no longer need to be grasping or wondering or hoping, but we can know with certainty because of Jesus that by believing in him we might know

and be caught up in the glory that God intended for his people.

[28 : 02] But friends, this glory that we see in Jesus and that we, by believing in him as God's people, then are caught up in is not the end of the story about God's glory.

Because not only is God displayed his glory, caught up Moses so that it might overflow through him in his words, not is it only is it caught up in Jesus, the pinnacle and the fullness of it so that we might listen to him.

But finally, it is in us that is the church, God's people, those who have by faith in Christ been joined with him and been caught up in his glory.

We now have something even more wonderful. We have not only this being caught up in, but this overflow of glory for the world.

Let me show you this in two places in the New Testament. The first one is in Colossians chapter 1. Paul is talking about his ministry, his ministry of the gospel.

[29 : 13] And he says it, he's doing it to make the word of God fully known. That is, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. To them, God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this ministry.

Of this mystery, that is. The glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. What Paul points us to in this is that the great message of the gospel is that as we believe in Christ, he actually comes and dwells within us and in him because he dwells in us, we have the hope of being caught up in God's glory forever.

And hope is not a wishful thinking in the New Testament. Hope is a certain future event. So that hope of glory is the certainty that we will know and be caught up in God's glory because of Christ. But then I want you to see that it's not just that because we've kind of already covered that ground, but it's also, Paul is saying this in the context of his own ministry to others, that he, as an example, as believers, is not only caught up in God's glory but he is overflowing with it.

[30 : 50] That is, he is displaying God's glory through his ministry. Just as Moses spoke God's word to his people, just as Jesus comes and speaks God's word to us that we are to listen to him, so now God calls his church to display and overflow with his glory by speaking to the world about who Jesus is and about the glory that is in him.

This brings us to the passage that was read earlier in 2 Corinthians 3 and I actually want you to turn there. 2 Corinthians 3, it's such a beautiful passage that captures so much of, again, in it, Paul is talking about his ministry and he's talking about, he's actually defending his apostleship against those who say that he is a substandard apostle who does not meet the requirements in his weakness.

And what he is saying is that the badge of my apostleship is that I have been given a ministry that has greater glory than that which came before.

In this passage in 2 Corinthians 3 starting in verse 6 and going on, he says, look, the Old Testament, the Old Covenant, the Old Ministry to God's people was the law and the law was not able to give life.

It was preparing the world for Jesus. It only brought condemnation to reveal sin and judgment. It could not bring a solution. But Christ came and Christ came and obeyed the law and so he satisfied it.

[32 : 43] Christ came and satisfied the law by dying in the place of sinners so that justice is satisfied. Christ came and calls his people into a new covenant relationship. The one that was promised before in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

The new covenant where the law is written on our hearts that are renewed by the Spirit. A new covenant that brings not death and condemnation but life and joy.

The new covenant that frees us from the veil of a hardened heart that chooses our own glory and instead softens us and breaks us so that we would receive from God a glory far greater than anything we can accomplish.

And the amazing thing is he says this is sealed by the Holy Spirit that God himself not only shows us the glory of God, not only does Christ dwell in us, but the Holy Spirit himself comes and indwells the believers.

This is what it says in 16 through 18. Read with me there. When one turns to the Lord the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom and we all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

[34 : 22] Friends, do you know this? Do you know that the Holy Spirit, God himself dwelling within the hearts and souls of women and men who have placed their faith in Christ are manifesting the glory of God in your lives?

you are being transformed so that you might not only know the glory of God and be caught up in it but so that you might overflow to others.

Again, in this context, Paul is talking about his ministry. We see in chapter 4 verse 1, therefore, knowing these things, we have this ministry and we don't lose heart.

friends, this is what God has called his people to be in the world, is people who not only are caught up in the glory of God through faith in Christ but who overflow with the glory of God.

This is what I saw in my friends, Bill and Becky, so many years ago. I saw in them something different. They had tasted the food from that distant land.

[35 : 37] They had an aroma of heaven that I could not place and could not understand but because they knew and loved and worshipped Jesus, their love and their hope overflowed in their lives.

And I saw that long before I heard the words that they were saying to me and when God graciously finally allowed me to hear the words they were saying that what I was longing for and what I was hoping for and what I was made for was Jesus.

It's because they had overflowed with the glory of God for months and months and months in their actions and in their words.

friends, this is my longing for us as a church. This is my longing for us that we might be those in whom the glory of God might be on display that we would treasure and find it to be the greatest goal for us.

If you're wondering what you need to do with your life, here's a goal, here's a, here's a thing. Glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Someone said that a long time ago.

[37 : 02] It's a good idea. You don't need to find a great purpose in your relationships or your work. There's lots of value in that but when that gets caught up in this greater goal of living to the glory of God, friends, that's all you need and it's in fact what God has made you for that He might display His glory in you just as He did in Moses and just as He did in Jesus.

That He might display the glory through us until He comes again. Let's pray. O Lord, we pray this morning for Your help.

Lord, for we confess that we are often tempted to pursue lesser glories. Lord, we are often filled with cynicism about actually achieving glory and so our hearts are hardened and turned from You. Lord, I pray this morning as we have read this passage and thought of Your purposes for our lives that we would be renewed. Lord, help us to repent of our sin and our idolatry, to repent of our cynicism and our despair and Lord, to again hope for glory and to turn to You and to believe in You. And Lord, we pray that as we know Your glory in increasing measure, Lord, that we too might be those who overflow with glory, that those around us might see You in us, might see Your glory, might hear of Your glory through our words and through our actions, and that they too might come and by believing in You be caught up in that same glory.

[39 : 08] Lord, we know that these things are good for us, but they are even more so for Your glory that You might display the greatness of all that You are in us and in Your world.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.