

Everything is toward the Glory and Praise of God

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[0 : 00] Chapter 1, Paul is greeting the church at Philippi, as you will know, and he does so by dressing the overseers and the deacons, and then of course he moves into his thankfulness to God.

And as he gives thanks to God in verse 3, you then understand why he is thankful, most importantly because of their partnership with him in the proclamation of the gospel.

But there have been some matters on which he must address, and that is that there's still work that God must do within this fellowship, however great they are at partnering in the gospel.

They are to have a love with understanding so that they can accept and approve good things. So it's a question of discernment.

And then in verse 10, this really explains the reason why we are partners in the gospel, why we are to grow in love and discernment, why we are to continue in the work that God has given us.

[1 : 10] So that, verse 10, you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

And so this last part in verse 11 is really the focus, isn't it? That everything is moving towards, or everything must be, to the glory and praise of God.

Now this wouldn't be difficult if people knew what the glory of God was. It gets more difficult, however, when you're not actually sure what the glory of God is.

And then, of course, the impact of not knowing what God's glory is means that you're not quite sure then what the praise of God actually is. We're not going to have time to cover God's glory because, as you can imagine, it would take a lot to explain.

Well, if you can imagine, let me explain it to you. It would take a lot to explain. However, we will touch on it so as to give you a glimpse, as it were, into the glory of God.

[2 : 20] Let me pray, and then we'll come back to verse 11. Father God, we ask of you this morning that you would be glorified by the abilities that you have given us to teach your word, to hear your word, to receive your word in fellowship with the heavenly beings.

We recognize, Father God, that as we read your word, it's clearly the case that there are not two worship services, but one. And as the heavenly beings are worshiping you now, so are we.

We are engaged in the same service of worship. And this is what brings glory to you. They sing day and night without ceasing to your glory about your glory because you are the God of glory.

And, Father God, we would ask this morning that we would recognize at least just a glimpse, though we look through a veil dimly, that we would be able to see what is ahead of us by faith in Jesus' name.

Amen. Now, whenever there is a break in people's attention, your mind begins to wander. So if you're at home and you're thinking about something, or even if you sit down to pray, it's amazing how quickly your mind can begin to wander.

[3 : 38] So the discipline of actually learning to pay attention and to spend time with God is quite a difficult one. One of the things that I'm working on at the minute is a little program for young people, or not necessarily young people, but for those who perhaps find it difficult to spend time with God.

And it's a program called In Secret. The In Secret bit comes from Jesus' words in his sermon when he tells you to go into a secret place with God and spend time with him.

Now, of course, this is even more challenging for perhaps people who have a very active social media life, where they're posting everything that they do to everyone.

And Jesus says, doesn't he, don't let what you do, don't do it so that it can be seen by others. He's talking about prayer, of course, and about fasting, you know. But in the current context, it seems as though we live in a culture where everything we do is to be seen by others.

I mean, the whole point of social media is to present and demonstrate to others what shoes you've bought or what food you're having for tea tonight. So I've heard. It could be something else.

[4 : 52] It may be much more interesting than that. But I doubt it. But the point is, is that when it comes to prayer and when it comes to spending time with God and to glorify God on your own, it really is a matter between you and God.

And that challenge of not spending time with God, but the challenge of no one else knowing about it, is the thing that really undergets you.

Therefore, as we sort of come back to this passage, especially on the glory of God, we have to be reorientated, as it were, so that we can see, so that we can see that Paul's prayer is correct, that everything is to the glory and to the praise of God.

Now, I don't have time to go in to explain that your works, it's not your works that bring glory and praise to God, but rather it's the ability that God gives you to do those works that gives glory and praise to God.

There's a subtle difference there, but an important one, because one focuses on you and one focuses on God as the chief negotiator, as the chief instigator and momentum behind those things.

[6 : 11] So by way of reminder, let's see where we have been. Paul does not call himself an apostle because he wants to sow the seed about how important it is to be a servant.

So he loses the title on purpose, and then he mentions Timothy alongside him, and he addresses the overseers and the deacons as a way of sowing the seed ready for chapter 2, which will be about the servanthood of Christ, the kenosis, Christ becoming man.

Now, we've not yet got to that point where Paul gets on to speak about Christ, but this will be the challenging part, because this will determine whether or not we are truly like Christ or not, or even becoming like Christ.

And so by focusing on the leadership of the church in his greeting, he draws attention to the qualifications that they must have by implication, but he also draws attention to the fact that though you are leaders, you are to be servants, and you are to serve according to God's will, not the will of the people.

Now, as this happens throughout the letter, you begin to see where some of the difficulties are, especially with two women in particular who don't seem to be able to get on.

[7 : 30] No one knows quite what the issue might have been, but we can imagine what it might have been, but that's not really our duty. The whole point here is the kenosis, that is the self-emptying of Christ, that where Christ becomes man, and Donald MacLeod explains it brilliantly, it is a form of subtraction by addition, that by taking on human form, Christ then becomes fully man, fully man is probably the wrong term to use, truly man, he is truly man and truly God, fully gives the impression of something full, something half empty, you can't be half, we're half human, before we come to Christ, we're not fully human, and a person who is truly human, like Christ, who was without sin, well that's what a true human looks like, and of course, now we can understand, that we're not even truly human, because we live with the sin, that we have inherited.

So we've got a long way to go, but it is the work of God, that will get us there. But we're not there yet. And so Paul's prayer for thankfulness, is really directed towards God, for the work that he has accomplished, in the lives of these Christians, within the church.

The reason they are partners with him, in the gospel, is because of what God is doing, God is working in them, and they are working it out, and there's the partnership, it begins.

And of course, anyone who is filled with the Holy Spirit, has their conversations filled with Christ. Now of course, the whole idea, behind the creation of man, is that we are the very pinnacle, of God's creation.

And therefore, what we are to be, sort of, must be taken first and foremost, before what we do. Not that we're to drive a separation, between the two, as if God created us to be something, without creating us to do something.

[9 : 40] But we are to be something, and we are to do something. What we are to be, is pure and blameless. And this is what Paul prays for. Why?

Because guess who we're going to meet? Don't you get dressed up, when you're meeting someone important, or you're going somewhere?

Don't you want to present, the very best to you? Some of us do. I'm not so sure, that I have that problem, if it's right. I probably have the reverse problem, in just not caring enough, about what I

look like, and just, well here I am, take me or leave me.

And I think that's because, I know that God loves me, and who cares, if I wear the same things, every week. See if you go back on the videos, you will never be able to tell, from what I wear, which Sunday it was.

I do it to confuse you. I also do it to make my life a lot easier. If I have one jacket, guess what? I can only choose one jacket. If I have only two, one, it's just far simpler for me, and you don't realize, how much I need that simplicity.

[10:54] But nevertheless, we understand, that we will be transformed, when we see Christ. But it is the work of God, we participate, in being faithful, and obeying, but it is the work of God, within us.

So God never gives up on you. God is never finished, with you. He is constantly, with you, at work, within your life.

And this righteousness, I want you to notice, is by virtue of union with Christ. Notice how, Paul calls it, the fruit of righteousness. I don't know, you can make a fruit salad, but you cannot make a fruit.

You can build a house, but you cannot make fruit. You can write a book, but you cannot make fruit. So we all know, that fruit, is a product of nature.

Trees, bear fruit, according to their nature, Jesus said. A good tree, will bear good fruit, and a bad tree, will bear, bad fruit. So, fruit, is by virtue of nature, but whose nature, is it, that produces, this righteousness?

[12:10] It's certainly not, my nature. So it is, by virtue of my union, with Christ, by Christ being, in my life, that my life, is now able, to produce, that fruit of righteousness, because fruit, comes from nature.

And that fruit of righteousness, comes from Christ's nature, within me. You get to appreciate, now exactly, what God has done, and exactly, how you will begin, to change.

It is because, Christ is in you, the hope of glory. It is, you have been imputed, with his righteousness, 2 Corinthians 5, verse 21, okay, the great exchange, but that fruit, of righteousness, is in accordance, with the nature, of Christ, because he is, the righteous one.

We, we don't have, the kind of nature, that can produce, good fruit. We have a nature, that produces, bad fruit. And so now, we begin to appreciate, why everything, or we should be getting, to appreciate, why everything, is to the glory, and to the praise of God.

Now I begin to realize, that all the good things, in my life, is to the glory, and to the praise, of God. Everything, is to the glory, and to the praise, of God.

[13:25] And simply affirming, that truth, is not going to be enough. It's not going to be enough, is it, to simply say, Jesus is the center. Or, everything's about Jesus. Or, everything is to the glory, and to the praise of God.

Those affirmations, are not really, what Jesus is looking for, because of the, because of the distinction, Jesus makes, between mouths, and hearts.

You know, the moment, we listen to Jesus, speak about mouths, and hearts, you know, that the mouths, are saying one thing, but the hearts, are far from me. And this is seen, in Isaiah 29, Ezekiel 33, and Matthew 15, that distinction, between hearts, and mouths.

So the affirmation, is Jesus' center, it's all about Jesus. It sounds very good, it sounds very biblical, doesn't it? It sounds as though, he's a good man. It's impossible to tell, from the affirmation alone. It has to be, much more, than that. And this is why, the qualifications, of an elder, for instance, is not just, the affirmations of truth, but the denials of error. They must teach, and defend, because people understand truth, not by just the proclamation, of one side, but the teaching, against the error, as well.

[14:43] And we do not want, to be a people, who have the form, of godliness, but deny its power, to Timothy, to Timothy 3. So now, we begin to appreciate, that simply affirming, that everything, is to the praise, and glory of God, or rather, get it the right way around, to the glory, and praise of God, isn't quite enough, because of the distinction, between head and heart, and the form, and the reality.

So what do we need? We need, what Paul prays for, and that is, the discernment, for what reason? It is discernment, for the glory, and praise of God.

This is why, you are to become discerning. Discernment, for the glory, and praise of God. God, wants you to be a people, who can approve, what is excellent, and by implication, stay away from, be disapproving, of what is erroneous, what is an error.

You must know, what to cling to, and what to stay away from. Now, you are not complete, and I am not complete, and one day, we will be complete, in Christ.

But this is not always appreciated, in a couple of different ways. We are to do everything, to the glory, and to the praise of God. We are to be pure, and blameless. We are to be filled, with the fruit, of righteousness.

[16:10] And hopefully, by now, we have understood, this is by virtue, of belonging to Jesus. That this happens, because we belong, to him. And this, of course, becomes a concern, for all those, who belong to Jesus.

A genuine concern. But we just might need, to bring it back, into focus. So that you can appreciate, which area, needs the maturing.

Where the change, actually has, to happen. And so, since everything, is to the glory, and to the praise of God, discernment, must also be, to the glory, and to the praise of God.

Why? Because it's the glory of God, that's at stake. In other words, if we move into error, what is the actual error? Well, the error is manifested, in the fact, that the glory, and praise, that is due to God, is not being given, to him.

Let me illustrate. Several years ago, many years ago, there was a book, written called, Blink. It's a brilliant book.

[17:14] The author, Malcolm Gladwell, has written, several books. The only, issue that I have, with the book, is that you, read it entirely, and you begin to realize, that when you read, his other books, and because, when I got to the end, of the book, I thought, he's not really, arrived at a conclusion.

And then you read, the book that came out, after that, and you realize, how he saved it, for another book. And so, the tipping point, in other books, that he wrote. Nevertheless, there were a few insights, in that book, that were particularly, interesting.

In one chapter, he speaks of a man, who's driving. He's not driving, I think he's in the bus, looking out of the window. And he's looking, down onto, a site, that they are, digging up relics.

And they're, digging up artifacts. And, this is what he does, for a living. And as he drives past, he looks at this artifact, that is being dug up, and immediately, he knows it's a fake.

Immediately, he knows it's a fake. He doesn't even know, why he knows it's a fake. But immediately, he knows it's a fake. And, as he gets down, to the site, and after many years, of testing, everyone else, is saying, no, it's the genuine artifact.

[18:26] It's the real deal. It's the real thing. But this man, how to his conviction, but he wasn't, entirely sure, why. And Malcolm Gladwell, points out, towards the end of his book, not with a clear, conclusion, but, what happens, with people, when they, stick within, one profession, for a very, very long time, is that they accumulate, loads and loads, and loads of knowledge, loads of experience, loads of insight, and they're unable, to recall it, to their mind immediately, but they're able, to make instantaneous, judgements, and be absolutely right.

And the reason, they're able to do that, almost like, this second nature, kicking in, is because, the amount of years, that is behind them, on that one key subject, they become an expert.

Well, after a few years, of testing, guess what? He was proven right, and they were proven wrong. It was, in fact, a fake. We have one Bible.

One Bible. But we have, many interpretations. And just like the artifact, everyone was looking, at the same thing. But not everyone, was reading, the same thing into it, or out of it.

And in the same way, we come to God's word, and God gives teachers, to the church, because not everyone, can see the same thing. And so now, we begin to realize, where the difference, and the change, and the maturing, needs to happen.

[20:06] It doesn't need to happen, in the Bible. The Bible is the same, for everyone. The change doesn't need, to happen in the artifact, because the artifact, remains the same. The change needs, to happen in those, looking at it.

Because some people, can get it right, and some people don't. And it's exactly, the same way, with God's word. It's hard work, to learn, how to read the Bible, at an ever deeper level, so that you can bring, the glory and praise, to God.

We take seriously, the faith of a child, but we recognize, that the faith of a child, will mature, over the many years. And the same is true, for anyone, who comes to faith, later on in life.

Their faith, is to mature, it is to grow. And one of the difficulties, that we often have, as adults, is that we tend to think, that our past experience, can be translated, into, biblical realms, and say, well it overlaps, there's a certain amount, here that will fit.

Well perhaps reading, perhaps a little bit, of comprehension, but the very, the very fact, of maturing in the faith, is not just about reading, but it's about appreciating, what the word actually says, about you, becoming pure, and blameless, filled with righteousness, to the glory, and praise, of God.

[21 : 38] This is why Jesus says, let him, who has ears, to hear, hear. The difference, was never to be interpreted, in what Jesus said, the difference, was always going to be seen, in the people, who listened.

The differences, was not, were not, in the words of Jesus, they were in the words, of those who listened. And some listened, in faith, and obeyed, and some did not.

And this is why, Jesus' gentle rebuke, to the disciples, when he has to explain, to them, the parable, the weeds, and the tares, is, well, you should know.

The very fact, that something, has to be explained, to someone, is a, is a, demonstration, to them, that they don't know, perhaps, especially, when they should know.

For instance, if I tell you a joke, and I get to the punchline, and you go, I don't get it, I then have to, explain the joke, if it is a funny joke, that is.

[22 : 41] A well constructed joke. And so, Jesus, in the same way, by having to explain, the parable, is highlighting the fact, that if he's having, to explain it, you don't get it.

You don't get it. And so, the difference, is not in the parable, but actually, in those, who are receiving, and hearing, God's word.

So now, we begin to realize, that the maturing part, is actually, is actually, on our side. That we don't need, another Bible. We don't need, a study Bible.

We don't need, a Bible. Believe it or not, you can even get, coloring in Bibles now. What will they invent next? First, you don't need, fancy gadgets. You need God.

You need the word. You need the spirit. I need to pray. I need to work hard. And then, you save yourself, a lot of money. But if you do like reading, and you like to read, what other people have said, it should encourage you, that I have, lots of books, by lots and lots, of different, authors, on my shelf, that I read.

[23 : 54] That should, that should be, a huge encouragement to you. Do you know why? Because now, you're beginning to realize, that my learning, is not just me, and the Bible. Because I could be like, one of those, archaeologists, that is looking at, the statue, thinking it's real, when indeed it's a fake.

So I then go read people, mainly who are dead, but some, who are alive, who have written books, and have proved themselves, over many, many years. And where I'm wrong, they correct me.

So I'm being corrected, all the time. You may not get to see, how much correction, I go through in a week. And it's humbling, and sometimes, it's disappointing. How can I not, get this?

Why do I still need, someone else to tell me? And so I have to read, lots and lots and lots of books, by lots of different people, all the way back, to the early church. Because we must never think, that we're the only generation, who can understand, what the Bible teaches.

We don't want to have, that chronological snobbery, do we? Where, we're the only ones, to get it right. And so, what often looks like, new teaching in the church, is actually, very, very old teaching, that people have forgotten.

[25 : 05] So when we teach on things, like covenant theology, and we teach on the trying, God of scripture, and we teach on the glory of God, people think, I've never heard this before, this is new, it's not new, it could be a thousand years old.

And this is what I think, we need to appreciate. Well, God, then is jealous, for his glory. And this is why, it's important. Because we come against a God, who is jealous, for his glory.

God will not give, his glory to another, and neither are we, to Robert. The central concern, of the entire, biblical scriptures, is the glory of God.

Everything is about, the glory of God. Everything is concerned, with us knowing, that God is, the one who is, to receive all the glory. In Isaiah 42, we read that God is, jealous of his glory, that he will not give, his glory to idols.

Let me try and, give you an application, of what that means, just in case you're, you don't quite sure, what it means. If you are to trust, in yourself, rather than trusting, in God, you have made, yourself

an idol.

[26 : 19] But not only, have you made, yourself an idol, you are giving, the glory of God, to that idol, because your trust, is due to God. Your glory, is due to God, as you trust him.

So it's not just, an issue of, oh I messed up again, it's just a mistake. That's much more, serious than that. Because you're, exchanging the glory, of God, for an idol.

Which is exactly, what we read, in Romans 1. What was the biggest sin? What's the biggest sin?

People who exchange, the glory of God, for idols. And trust in things, that are not God.

And so when you trust, in yourself, rather than God, you're exchanging, you're exchanging, rather, the glory of God, for something, that you have made, or trust in, or hold on to.

So you begin, to see now, that if everything, is to the glory, and to the praise of God, why we need discernment. Why we need, to get this right. Now since, God, is the one, who's to receive all glory, and since, everything is about, the glory of God, Isaiah 43, and since, the whole of creation, Psalm 19, displays the glory, of God to us, on a daily, basis.

[27 : 36] And we, as Paul says, in Corinthians, can only look, through a glass dimly, because it's, currently veiled. And we know, why it's veiled, don't we? Because we currently, live in a fallen world, and therefore, we cannot truly see, the glory of God, properly.

Even Moses, when he had to be, held back, in the cleft of the rock, that the glory of the Lord, would pass by him, but he could not see God, face to face, and live. And yet, the promise to us, is what? That we will one day, see God, face to face, and live. That though we look, through a glass dimly, we will one day, see him, face to face.

There's the promise. Everything is moving, towards the glory of God, and therefore, if everything is moving, towards the glory of God, everything currently, is about God's glory, God's purpose, something that we are not, to rob him of.

So here's, a simple definition, because we don't have time, to go into the glory, of God. The glory of God, is everything that God is, that you are not. The glory of God, is everything that God is, that you are not.

[28 : 49] And we don't get to see, the glory of God, clearly, because we look through, a fallen world. We look through, fallen lives. But every time, you breathe, that's the glory of God.

Every time, you're able to use your body, and do things, that's the glory of God. Every time, you're able to sing, and pray, and praise, and work, that is the glory of God.

So you must not get it confused, with I'm doing this, so Paul says, do everything to the glory of God. That is true. But he says that, in the context, of what the glory of God, actually is.

So we must recognize, that as we, sort of bring this, to a conclusion, where we are, as we understand, what it means, to do everything, to the glory of God.

Well, the glory of God, answers these questions. What is my purpose in life? It is to glorify God, and enjoy him forever. Now, I know, I've just quoted, from the Western Stratagism, I know that I'm in a, Baptist church, you're not going to, tell me off, are you?

[29 : 58] I don't think, anyone's ever written, anything better. But I want you to understand, what that means. The chief end of man, is to glorify God, and enjoy him forever. What does that mean?

What does that actually mean? Well, let's just bring it down, to the level, at which you could possibly understand, and that is, happiness. An unhappy Christian, is one that doesn't glorify God.

Because the glorify God, is your enjoyment forever. So if you're unhappy, it's not a question, of your unhappiness, it's a question, of God's glory. Something, is amiss, in your life, concerning, the glory of God.

So if everything is to be, to the praise, sorry, to the glory, and to the praise of God, Philippians 1 verse 11, then we recognize, that if, the chief end of man, my chief end, my ultimate purpose, is to glorify God, and enjoy him forever, then I recognize, that my ultimate happiness, my ultimate good, is actually found, in God's glory.

Nowhere else. So now we begin to understand, or continue to understand. This is what it says, God works all things together, for our good, and he does this, by his infallible foreknowledge, and by the free, and immutable counsel, of his own will, to the praise, of the glory, of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.

[31 : 25] There's God's glory. God works all things together, for our good, but notice how he does it. God works all things together, for our good, but this is how he does it, by his infallible foreknowledge, and his free, and immutable counsel, of his own will, to the praise, and glory, of his

wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.

It does not say, that God works all things together, according to your will. It's according to his will. So here's the exhortation, as we close.

The question before us, which hopefully, you would have recognized, by now, is not, what do you see, when you look at Jesus? The question before us, is not, what do you see, when you read God's word, but rather, what should you see, when you look at Jesus?

Because the issue is, we're not all seeing, what we should be seeing. The issue is, we're not all reading, what we should be reading. So, it's not about, what do you see, as though, let's have a, let's have a devotional point, where everyone gets to share, what they see.

I don't think, that would be very helpful. Especially, when we've just had, the couple of illustrations, that explain quite clearly, that everyone can look, at the same thing. Everyone can listen, to the same Jesus speak, but not everyone, hear the same thing.

[32 : 50] So, if everyone gets to share, it's almost like, sharing ignorance, for many. So, the question is not about, what do we see, when we look at Jesus?

But rather, what should we see, when we look at Jesus? What should we see, when we read his word? And this, of course, addresses our maturity. It addresses our purpose.

And of course, it addresses the fact, that we will never have to ask, the question ever again, what is God's will for my life? The question's, redundant.

Because God works, all things together, according to his own will, which includes your life. God will take good, good, good care of you.

It is your responsibility, to obey, and be faithful, and to pray about everything. But God will take care of you, and your future.

[33 : 54] So, when it comes to addressing the issues, in the churches, Paul will, in a moment later on, he wants to lay the foundation, or at least in part, that the whole of creation, brings glory to God.

That everything is about, bringing glory to God. That when God created the world, the creation, gave glory to its maker. And so, since we are a creation of God, in fact, we are a new creation, in Christ Jesus, our ultimate purpose is, of course, is to bring glory to God.

And so, the purpose of creation, though it's happened through the full, has not changed. The full did not change the reason, the purpose, for which God made creation. And you are a creation.

It's hard to think of yourself, as a creation. You are a creation of God. What will God do with what he has made? Therefore, since we are responsible, to God, and we are responsible, to respond to him in faith, and we are to really recognize, that God is our ultimate good, that we are therefore, not to exchange God, for any substitute, or lesser good.

Because to do so, would be to rob him, of the glory, that is due, to his name. Amen. Amen.