

Glory to God: Proclaiming God's Goodness
The Meaning of Glory
Exodus 33:12-19

Exodus 33:12-19~ ¹² Moses said to the LORD, "See, you say to me, 'Bring up this people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.' ¹³ Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people." ¹⁴ And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." ¹⁵ And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. ¹⁶ For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?" ¹⁷ And the LORD said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." ¹⁸ Moses said, "Please show me your glory." ¹⁹ And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

I. Introduction

I would like to start a five-part series today that is perhaps one of the most important messages that would ever be taught, at least by me. In fact, out of all the series and messages that I have taught over the past twenty plus years of ministry, I believe that there are three that rank the most essential within the Christian faith. That is, if you and I do nothing in our entire Christian faith except study and live out these three series of lessons, than we would have accomplished far more and far greater than any spiritual leaders, theologians, or religious gurus. The three series are:

1. The Kingdom of God (What is it? And who are its subjects?)
2. The Sermon on the Mount (I started on the Beatitudes but one day hope to complete the entire series)
3. And this one: "The Glory of God: Proclaiming God's Goodness"

These are the three most important and essential series, so I hope you will intentionally and intensely journey with me as we probe and apply these essential messages of the Christian faith ... the Glory of God.

When I first came to know God by acknowledging Jesus as my Lord and Savior, I started to attend church. It did not take long for me to notice that pastors, leaders, and other believers quite often threw around the phrase "Glory to God". If one goes to church often, that phrase "Glory to God" is woven into the fabric of songs and sermons and even as expression of excitement or a pronouncement of praise ... "Glory to God".

1. When God answers prayer and the testimony of such account is being shared, I hear people exclaimed, "Glory to God!"

2. When a message is spoken at the right time and it pierces our heart, we sometimes say, "Glory to God."
3. When the worship leader reaches the climax of his worship, he would shout out, "Give Him glory, give Him glory" to the applause and shouts of the congregation.

"Glory to God" ... Have you ever paused and asked yourself, "What does that mean?" When someone says to you, "You need to give glory to God," have you ever thought to yourself, "How do I do that?" and "What does it look like?" I have.

I remember one time during my earlier years of living the forgiven life, I asked a leader what he meant when he kept telling us to give glory to God. You see, after every point during his teaching, he would punctuate that point by saying, "Oh, give glory to God." That sounded pretty neat, maybe I should pick that habit up. But I wonder at that time, what did that mean and what did "give glory to God" look like. Hence, I asked him.

He told me, "The glory of God, Long. It is the *Shekinah* Glory. It is the brightness, the glory of God." Well, that cleared it up. To this day, I still have no idea what he is talking about. How do you give this glory to God? How do you give this *Shekinah* glory ... this bright, shiny, luminescent glory to God? What does that look like? Do we take a flashlight and shine it to heaven? But that is what we Christians sometimes do. We use Christian jargons to explain Christian jargons that sounds good but not even the Christian himself understands what he just said.

II. The Chief End of Man

Before we delve into the Bible to discover the biblical definition of the glory of God, let us pause to understand why the subject of glorifying God is so essential. Why dedicate five precious weeks to such a spiritual lesson? Let me give you at least two reasons.

1. First, we are Saved in order to give glory to God (1 Corinthians 6:20)

In this "Me Generation" where it is about my feelings and my self-esteem, one of the misconceptions concerning salvation is that the Father sent Jesus to die on the cross for my benefit. It IS true that I AM a recipient of such benefits that salvation offers. But such benefits are secondary or a by-product of the main purpose that the Father sent His Son, namely, it is for His sake. The epistle of 1 John chapter 2 and verse 12 emphatically emphasizes that reality.

1 John 2:12~ ¹² I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his [the Father] name's sake.

Our sins are forgiven not for our sake, but for the Father's sake. Our sins have robbed the Father of something very precious. When we sin, when we bicker, when we hate, when we indulge in our own self-gratification and desire, it is God who has lost something ... not us. Well, we do as a by-product, but the Bible teaches that it is God who has lost something special that is due to Him.

We like to think that when a person does not live up to his or her full potential, it is us who has lost something. We like to think that when a person does not do what he or she is supposed to do in our eyes, it is us who have been robbed. So we get angry ... and bitter ... and resentful because we have lost something that is due to us. But it is not our lost. It never was. It is the Father's lost.

In Luke 15, when one sheep went astray, it is the Father who lost that sheep and went out to find it. When a coin went missing, it is the Father who lost that silver coin and searched carefully until he found it. When a son lost his mind and left his father, it is the Father who lost the prodigal son. You see, the lost of a person is an economical lost to the Father. And when we indulge in our own lustful desire, we do not rob each other, we rob God of something very precious ... and that is, we rob God the glory that is due to Him. Salvation is for His sake.

The Corinthian church had to be reminded of this. In 1 Corinthians 6, the believers were indulging in their sensual passion. They have surrendered themselves to the lust of the world ... the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the boastful pride of life (cf 1 John 2:16). And Paul had to write to them, instructing them to ...

1 Corinthians 6:18~¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality ...

Why? ... Look a couple of verses down, in verse 20.

1 Corinthians 6:20~²⁰ for [here is the reason] you were bought with a price ...

Now this phrase "bought with a price" is a used to invoke a slave trade industry where we are slaves to one master but then transfer over to another master because He paid a great price for us. We are still slaves, but slaves to a different master, namely we are slaves of Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:22). And as slaves of Christ, what do we do?

1 Corinthians 6:20~²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

The reason why He saved us is so that we can glorify God. A few chapter over in chapter 10, Paul wrote this ...

1 Corinthians 10:31~³¹ So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

We are saved so that we can give glory to God. This teaching of glorifying God is so prevalent in both the Old and New Testament that the Westminster Catechism, an education system for converts to Christianity to study and learn, states:

Q: What is the chief end of man?

A: Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.

That is the summary of the purpose of man and the purpose of salvation. Let me quickly give you the last reason why we are to glorify God.

2. Second, we are Created to give glory to God

Not only are we created to glorify God, the whole purpose of creation is to glorify God. Everything God created is meant to glorify Him.

a. One: The Universe is created to give glory to God (Psalm 19:1)

Psalm 19:1~¹ The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

b. Two: Animals are created to give glory to God (Isaiah 43:20)

Isaiah 43:20~²⁰ “The beasts of the field will glorify Me, The jackals and the ostriches, Because I have given waters in the wilderness And rivers in the desert ...

c. Three: Angels give glory to God (Luke 2:13-14)

Luke 2:13-14~¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!

Even the seraphim give glory to God.

Isaiah 6:3~³ And one [seraphim] called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”

d. Four: All Things are to give glory to God (Romans 11:36)

Romans 11:26~³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

We are saved so we can give glory to God. We are created so we can give glory to God. Everything that we do is to give glory to God.

1 Peter 4:11~¹¹ whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

III. The Painful End of Man

Now, there is a reverse side. The chief end of man is to glorify God. But, there is a painful end of man if he refuses to give glory to God. There are at least two results.

1. First, failure to give glory results in Depravity (Romans 1:21,24)

Romans 1:21,24~ ²¹ For although they knew God, they did not honor [literally "glorify"] him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened ... ²⁴ Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves ...

2. Second, failure to give glory results in Darkness - that is, calamity (Jeremiah 13:15-16)

Jeremiah 13:15-16~ ¹⁵ Hear and give ear; be not proud, for the LORD has spoken. ¹⁶ Give glory to the LORD your God before he brings darkness, before your feet stumble on the twilight mountains, and while you look for light he turns it into gloom and makes it deep darkness.

IV. Meaning of Glory

Now that we know we are created and saved for the purpose of glorifying God, and the refusal to glorify Him invites several consequences, what does it mean to glorify Him? Actually, the first question should be, "What does the word 'glory' mean?"

The best definition is found in Exodus 33. Israel had just sinned a great sin by making and worshipping a golden calf at the foot of the mountain while God is making a covenant with Israel on top of the mountain. So in verse 3 of chapter 33, God said that He would fulfill His promise by bringing the people to the Promised Land, but He Himself would not go with them.

Exodus 33:3~ ³ Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; but I will not go up among you, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people."

But Moses would not go up to the land unless God's presence went with them.

Exodus 33:15~ ¹⁵ And he [Moses] said to him [God], "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.

Through Moses' plead, God relented and promise to go with the children of Israel to the Promised Land.

Exodus 33:17~ ¹⁷ And the LORD said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name."

The fact that God knew Moses by name, Moses wanted to know God by name. Well, Moses already knew God's name in Exodus 3 as God revealed Himself as Yahweh, the "I AM". What

Moses was asking is that he wanted to know God's character. You see, the name of a person is the character of that person in biblical times. Moses wanted to know God in His fullness ... His character ... His name. So Moses asked in verse 18.

Exodus 33:18~¹⁸ Moses said, "Please show me your glory."

God answered Moses' request and said in the next verse.

Exodus 33:19~¹⁹ And he [God] said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

And there lies the meaning of glory.

1. **Definition:** The glory of God is the Goodness of God (Exodus 33:18-19)

Moses prayed, "Show me your glory." God answered, "I will make all my goodness pass before you" (i.e. I will show you my goodness).

You got a pen? Underline the word "glory" and draw an arrow to the word "goodness". The glory of God is the goodness of God. When we show or display God's goodness, we glorify God.

Now this is not unique here in Exodus. Turn with me to 2 Chronicles 7 and verse 1. King Solomon had finished building the temple and offered a prayer of dedication to the Lord.

2 Chronicles 7:1~¹ As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

Jump with me to verse 3.

2 Chronicles 7:3~³ When all the people of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of the LORD on the temple, they bowed down with their faces to the ground on the pavement and worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever."

The children saw the fire coming down from heaven. They saw the glory of Yahweh on the temple. And the response to what they saw was ... "He is good." The glory of God is the goodness of God. And when we demonstrate the goodness of God through the way we live, we glorify God.

Look with me in Matthew 5 and verse 16.

Matthew 5:16~ ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

That is, as people see God's goodness through your righteous works, God will be glorified.

Look with me quickly at Joshua 7. I do not have time to develop this, but in Joshua 7, God judged the whole nation of Israel because one man, by the name of Achan, stole something that belong to God. So God, judged the whole nation. Achan was then discovered to be the culprit who brought trouble upon Israel. Joshua confronted Achan and said in verse 19 of chapter 7.

Joshua 7:19~ ¹⁹ Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the LORD God of Israel and give praise to him. And tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.”

Achan's confession of sin shows that God's judgment upon the nation of Israel was good and just, and therefore, glorified God. Confession of sin is glorifying God because it shows that God is good and just in His act.

So when we manifest God's goodness, we magnify God's glory for the glory of God is the goodness of God.

Since the chief end of man is to glorify God, we will delve into the questions of how to glorify God. And we will want to apply these principles in our life.

V. The Blessing

Presider: May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. May the love of our Lord Jesus Christ be unto you.

Congregation: And also to you.

VI. The Forgiven Life (Home Work)

List some ways the Bible tells us to glorify God. Then do one thing this week to accomplish that.

1. John 15:8: _____

a. What is the "fruit" Jesus is talking about? (John 15:12 cf. John 13:35) _____

- b. How can you show your love to your church family this week? What will you do? It can be something like calling them up and see how they are doing. Or pray with them either in person, over the phone, or through texting. Or taking someone out for coffee or lunch who has a long and hard week. How will you show your love this week? __

2. 1 Peter 4:11: _____

- a. What is your gift of service or speaking? _____

- b. How can you use that gift to glorify God? _____
