

Jesus, God's Glory, and Ours Exodus 40:34-38 & 2 Corinthians 3:7-18

Seven chapters before God's glory filled the Tabernacle, Moses asked to see God's glory (Ex 33:18). There, God responded, "*you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live*" (Ex 33:20).

Whoa! That's a statement. What then, is God's glory and why is it so important?

1. Let's define God's glory.

"No single drawing, painting, photograph, or verbal description could ever capture glory. Glory isn't so much a thing as it is a description of a thing. Glory isn't a part of God; it's all that God is. Every aspect of who God is and every part of what God does is glorious. But even that's not enough of a description. Not only is he glorious in every way, but his very glory is glorious!" – Paul Tripp

But what is that glory?

When Moses asked to see God's glory, God responded by saying, "*I will make all my goodness pass before you...*" (Ex 33:19).

From that text we understand that the glory of God is *the displayed summation of Who God is*; his greatness, goodness, beauty and perfection. (I intentionally didn't say 'summary.') God's glory is everything God is and everything God does.

2. You are hard-wired for God's glory.

Isaiah 43:1-7 - *But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. ²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. ³For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and in exchange for you. ⁴Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life. ⁵Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you. ⁶I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, ⁷everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."*

You are hard-wired for God's glory. Don't short-circuit your life with dead wires.

We are glory-oriented creatures because God built this glory orientation into us. For all of our lives, we are attracted to and pursue some kind of glory.

3. God created everything to point to his glory.

Psalm 19:1-6 - *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. ² Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. ³ There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. ⁴ Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, ⁵ which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy. ⁶ Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.*

We live in a world of glorious things, but all of those things are only signposts directing us to ultimate glory – the person of God himself.

4. We often stop short of God's glory.

Where do you want to go most in the world? Imagine you got close to there, saw a sign for it and stopped at that point. (I liken it to stopping under the interstate sign that points you to a restaurant) Would you be satisfied? No, of course not. The sign isn't the thing, it only points you to the thing.

The writer of Hebrews continually uses the phrase shadow to talk about how things in the OT foreshadowed Jesus but weren't Jesus.

Hebrews 10:1a – *For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities...*

5. Only God's glory can satisfy our hearts.

God's glory is synonymous with your good.
Your good is the same thing as God's glory.

This is why Paul encourages like this – *"So, whether you eat or drink [the smallest, most inconsequential things], or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31).*

Even in the smallest things (eating and drinking) we should seek to glorify God. Otherwise, we are trying to eat from empty plates and drink from dry wells.

For you, that might be....

- a) Popularity/acceptance
- b) Good grades/education
- c) Financial advantages

How many times have you gained those things just to:

- a) Be unsatisfied by them.
- b) Be worried about losing them.
- c) Hoard and wreck them.

And how do you react on each of those occasions? Worry, stress, anger, etc.

Each of these things drives us to sinful behavior and ultimately ruins us and our world.

Nothing other than God's glory can never satisfy you. You will,

- a) exhaust your life,
- b) waste your life, and
- c) ruin your life

searching for something other than God's glory.

6. This glory-theft is a good definition of sin

There is, in effect, a glory dysfunction, within each of us that drives us, but...

When we stop looking and rest in something that is 'short' of God's glory and less than God's glory, that's called 'sin.' Sin is choosing something other than God to satisfy your heart.

I've often used this paradigm to describe what happens when we marry selfishly, in love with ourselves and attempt to use our spouse in our pursuit of happiness. But it also works for other things.

- a) Desire – We desire something and pursue it.
- b) Demand – Nothing can fulfil us and we get angry toward it.
- d) Destruction – In the end, we destroy the beauty of everything.

7. We wrongly blame glory-less things for our unhappiness.

- a) We blame ourselves and this turns to self-hatred.
- b) We blame others and harm them because they cannot do what they were not created to do.

ILL – Prince Harry and Megan are perfect examples of this. He says, "*It's so hard being #2, being 'The Spare.'*" Is it any less hard being #1? No, it's just different. But do you see what he's done? Harry's looking in the wrong place – toward #s 1 & 2 - for wholeness and now, he's not finding it in England or America. In the interim, he's lash out against everything and everyone else in his world, destroying what is most valuable, himself and others.

- c) We blame God.

Did you know that God-haters are just people whom the world has disappointed? They've blamed themselves, others, things and, when they weary of that, or that doesn't work, or even blaming all those things doesn't get them what they want, they ultimately blame God for their unhappiness. They say, "*God is the source of my unhappiness.*"

But what have they done? They've made themselves God. No one lives a 'godless' life. They may try to live without God, but no one lives without a god.

Why? Because we are hard-wired for glory, will seek it in something and no one is exempt from this? Why not? Because God created us for his glory.

8. Why doesn't God just divert his glory to everything?

All through the Bible God commands people to glorify him.

The fact is that only God is glorious. Everything else is glory-less.

One of God's great glories is that he knows what is and isn't glorious. If he knows that nothing other than himself can satisfy you, but directed you there, he would be less than glorious. But he can't do that because he is glory-full.

9. Jesus is the ultimate expression of God' glory

In Hebrews the writer says that if the OT sacrifices had been the end of what God was looking for, only one would have done and there would have been no reason for people to offer repeated sacrifices.

Hebrews 10:1b-2 - *...it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins?*

And then he says this –

Hebrews 10:4 - *For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.*

But Jesus is the "end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Ro 10:4).

In the same way, God said to Moses -

Exodus 33:20 - *But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live."*

And yet, John says, we "have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son" (John 1:14).

2 Corinthians 3:7-18 - T

10. All of the OT points to Jesus as the ultimate, final Bible reality.

All year we've been looking into Genesis and Exodus to find Jesus. He told us to look for him and that we would find him.

Luke 24:27 - *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*

John 5:39 - *You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me,*

In this regard, the OT is the signpost and Jesus is the destination.

And, you were made for him – *Colossians 1:16c - ...all things were created through him and for him.*

Conclusion: What does this mean?

It means you will never be happy, never be satisfied, until Jesus is at the center of your life. Only he can 'save' you in every way.

Community Groups

(there are no CGs this Sunday, so the CG questions are for your own reflection).

1 – Read Exodus 40:34-38.

(Reference the various other sermon texts throughout your discussion)

2 – What did the cloud symbolize that descended on the tabernacle?

3 – How would you define God's glory?

4 – What the difference between God's glory and your good?

5 – What are some examples that illustrate God's glory and your good?

6 – What does it mean to stop short of God's glory?

7 – Why is it that only God's glory can satisfy our hearts.

8 – What kind of things to people

8 – Why is a good definition of sin, 'glory-theft?'

9 – Why does desire, loving things/people that make us happy, turn into demand, demanding that things/people make us happy?

10 – How does this destroy our relationships to people and things?

11 – Why doesn't God just make other things/people glorious so anything/everything will fulfill us?

12 – Read 2 Cor 3:7-18 to reflect on how glorious the giving of the law was and much more glorious Jesus is.

Daily Devotion

Mon, Dec 25th. This year's preaching has been devoted to seeing Jesus in and above all things and this is what Christmas is all about – seeing God in the face of Jesus, born a baby, living a perfect life, dying a vicarious (substitutionary/for you and me) death, being resurrected (to prove he was God's son (Ro 1:4), and exalted at God's right hand as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Tues, Dec 26th. Read Ex 40:34-38. God's glory is the summation of who he is and what he does. Spend time in prayer today asking the Holy Spirit to let you 'see' Jesus; in those you love, in creation, in the Scripture, so that, like the Tabernacle, it fills your horizon and life. Then....look for him and wonder at the awe-fullness of your God. If you pray this regularly and look for him constantly, you will live overwhelmed by the goodness (Ex 33:19).

Wed, Dec 27th. Read Isaiah 43:1-7. You are hard-wired for God's glory. Don't short-circuit your life by connecting to things that will only disappoint you. You've done this before haven't you? Putting anything before Jesus is glory-theft. Since God's glory and your good are the same thing, anything that robs God of glory robs you of good (things outside of you meant to bless you) and goodness (personal holistic health). What contests for Jesus as the center of your life. Refuse it. Keep Christ the center by daily choices that honor him, keep life in balance and make you a blessing to those around you.

Thurs, Dec 28th. Read 1 Cor 10:31 & Col 3:17. Eating, drinking, speaking, behaving. Even in the smallest things like food, drink, words and behaviors, God reminds us to glorify him. How about you? Is God's glory on your mind, in the 'whatevers', the "everything's" or the "alls" of your life? Think about it like a circle. Start small and work your way out. If you take care of the small things, the larger things will come more (super) naturally to you. What area of your life isn't glorifying God? Start there today.

Friday, Dec 29th. Read 2 Cor 3:17-18. When God gave Israel the Ten Commandments and that cloud covered Mt. Sinai, it was glorious. Moses's face revealed it when he came down from the mountain. But if that was glorious, how much more is Jesus? We see God's glory in Jesus, and we see Jesus in the Bible. It is also by reading Scripture and seeing Jesus that we are conformed into his image. Do you read the Bible regularly? Would you like to read it in the order it happened. You can. Order this Bible today and start January 1st!

<https://www.wtsbooks.com/collections/bible-devotional/products/esv-chronological-bible-hardcover-9781433589508?variant=42996924809416> (It's \$27 at Westminster Bookstore and \$43 at Amazon so I've given you the WB site.