

“How is God Glorified?”

Summary

This powerful message challenges us to examine a fundamental question: How is God glorified in our lives? Drawing from 2 Thessalonians 1:7-12, we're reminded that God's glory isn't just displayed in our worship services, but in the daily surrender of our lives to His purposes. The heart of the message confronts our tendency toward 'independent dependency'—wanting Jesus while clinging to our own autonomy. We learn that God is glorified when we bear fruit that reproduces Jesus in others, when we become disciples who make disciples. The metaphor of being a 'window' versus a 'door' strikes deeply: will we merely look good to others, or will we actually open pathways for transformation? The call to missions work in Africa, Pakistan, and Trinidad illustrates a crucial truth—our lives aren't our own, and God's plans often disrupt our comfort. When we're asked to sacrifice our homes, possessions, and plans, we discover whether we truly trust Him. The message emphasizes that everyone has a testimony and a calling, regardless of age or circumstance. God doesn't need our excuses; He needs our obedience. Revival doesn't start 'out there'—it starts in the death of our self-centered ambitions. As we face an increasingly dark world, the question remains: Will we allow God to be glorified through our complete surrender, or will we offer Him half-hearted devotion?

Main Points – How is God Glorified?

Living for God's Glory: A Call to Sacrificial Obedience

Sermon Summary: This sermon challenges believers to examine whether their lives truly glorify God, emphasizing that God is glorified not through religious activity alone but through obedient, sacrificial living that reproduces Christ in others. Brandon shares personal testimony of God redirecting their ministry plans from permanent relocation to Africa back to America, illustrating the principle that our lives belong entirely to God. The message stresses that true discipleship means making disciples who can reach people we cannot reach, and that God's calling transcends age, circumstances, or personal comfort. The sermon confronts the American church's tendency toward spiritual consumerism while highlighting the desperate need in nations for solid biblical teaching. Ultimately, the message calls believers to move beyond being "windows" that merely look good to being "doors" that provide access to transformation, emphasizing that revival begins with personal death to self and complete surrender to God's will.

Key Points:

- God is glorified when we bear fruit and reproduce Christ in others, not just through personal worship
- Our lives are not our own; complete surrender to God's will is required for spiritual maturity
- Making disciples involves teaching others to overcome so they can teach others the same
- The familiar and comfortable must often be sacrificed for God to accomplish His purposes
- Every believer has a unique calling and sphere of influence that only they can reach
- Obedience is better than sacrifice; God requires action on what He's already spoken
- Age is not a disqualifier for God's calling (referencing Abraham and Moses)
- The American church has a responsibility to provide pure biblical teaching to the nations
- God watches how we handle small assignments before entrusting us with greater ones
- Revival starts with individual believers dying to themselves and rising in obedience
- Men must understand their identity in God to properly lead families, which impacts cities and nations
- God cuts us back through trials to produce more fruit in our lives

Scripture Reference:

- 2 Thessalonians 1:7-12 (primary focus on verse 10: "when he shall come to be glorified in his saints")
- John 15 (bearing fruit and God being glorified)
- Matthew 25 (parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins)
- Matthew 5:16 ("Let your light so shine that men may see your good works and glorify the Father")
- Romans 12:1 (presenting bodies as living sacrifices)

Small Group Study Guide – Small Group Study Guide – How is God Glorified?

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question: Share a time when God asked you to do something that took you completely out of your comfort zone. How did you respond?

Sermon Summary (5 minutes)

Brandon and Cheryl Terrell shared their journey of ministry in Zambia, Pakistan, and Trinidad, emphasizing that God is glorified when we surrender our lives completely to Him and reproduce Christ in others. They challenged the church to move beyond comfort, make disciples, and allow God to use our testimonies to reach people only we can reach.

Key Scripture References

- 2 Thessalonians 1:7-12 - That Christ may be glorified in us
- John 15 - Bearing fruit that remains
- Matthew 25 - The parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins

Discussion Questions

Section 1: Personal Surrender (15-20 minutes)

1. Brandon asked, "Can Jesus do whatever He wants to do with your life, honestly, at this point in your life?" How would you honestly answer that question today? What areas are you still holding back?
2. Brandon shared how God changed their plans about moving permanently to Zambia. Have you ever experienced God redirecting your plans? How did you respond? What did you learn?
3. "Your obedience is better than your sacrifice." What does this statement mean to you practically? Where might God be asking for obedience rather than religious activity?

Section 2: Being a Door, Not Just a Window (15-20 minutes)

4. Brandon asked whether we want to be a "window" (looking good but having no effect) or a "door" (making disciples that continue the work). Which one best describes your current Christian life? What would need to change to become more of a "door"?

5. Brandon mentioned that the nations can reach their own people better when properly trained. How does this principle apply to discipleship in our own context? Who are you currently investing in and equipping?

Section 3: Overcoming Excuses (15-20 minutes)

6. What excuses do you find yourself making to God about why you can't fully follow His calling? (Too old, too young, too busy, not qualified enough, etc.) How did Brandon's testimony challenge those excuses?

7. Brandon said, "Why do you ask me for more when you don't do the least?" What is the "least" thing God has been asking you to do that you've been avoiding? What's holding you back?

8. "Your life is not your own." This is a hard truth. What does it practically look like to live as though your life truly belongs to God? What changes in daily decisions, priorities, or relationships?

Section 4: The Cost and Reward (15-20 minutes)

9. Brandon and Cheryl gave away their home, furniture, and plans for God's purposes. What has following Jesus cost you? What has it given you that you wouldn't trade for anything?

10. The Terrells support pastors in dangerous situations (like Pakistan where new converts had to flee). How does hearing about the global church's sacrifice challenge your own commitment? What persecution or inconvenience are you willing to face for the gospel?

Key Takeaways

1. God is glorified when Christ is reproduced in others through our lives - not just when we look good or feel spiritual.

2. Everyone has a testimony and a sphere of influence that only they can reach - no calling is too small or insignificant.

3. Obedience matters more than sacrifice - God wants our hearts and availability, not just our religious activity.

4. Making disciples requires dying to self - there's a "baptism and killing field" where our independence must die.

5. God doesn't need our excuses - He knows what He called us to and what we're capable of in Him.

6. The oil (anointing) keeps us young - surrendering to God's will brings life, not death, even in our later years.

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge (Choose 1-2):

Individual Actions:

- Identify your "Isaac" - What is God asking you to surrender that you've been holding onto? Write it down and pray about releasing it to Him.
- Make a list of 3-5 people in your unique sphere of influence who need Jesus. Begin praying for them daily and ask God for opportunities to share.
- Do the "least" thing - Identify one specific thing God has been asking you to do that you've been avoiding. Commit to doing it this week.
- Evaluate: Window or Door? - Journal honestly about whether your Christian life is more about looking good or actually reproducing Christ in others. What needs to change?

Accountability Questions for Next Week:

1. What specific step of obedience did you take this week?
2. What resistance (internal or external) did you face?
3. How did you see God show up?
4. What's your next step?

Closing Reflection (10 minutes)

Silent Reflection: Take 2-3 minutes of silence. Ask God: "What is the one thing You want me to do in response to this message?"

Share & Pray: Go around the circle and have each person share (in one sentence) what God spoke to them, then pray for the person on your right.

Memory Verse for the Week

"That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."

- 2 Thessalonians 1:12

"How is God glorified? That you bear fruit and your fruit will remain."

Discussion Questions – How is God Glorified?

Brandon asks, 'How is God glorified in your life?' and suggests it happens when we pour our lives out for others and bear fruit that reproduces Christ in people. In what specific ways are you currently allowing God to be glorified through your daily actions and relationships?

The sermon emphasizes that God doesn't need our money or talents—He needs our hearts. What areas of your life are you still holding back from God's complete lordship, and what fears or attachments keep you from surrendering them?

Brandon shares how God changed his plans to move permanently to Africa, requiring him to give up his house and possessions, only to call him back to America. How do you respond when God disrupts your plans, and what does true obedience look like when His direction contradicts your expectations?

The parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins is mentioned, emphasizing that the foolish missed their opportunity to prepare. What spiritual preparations are you making now to ensure you're ready when Christ returns, and are there areas where you've been 'slumbering'?

Brandon states that 'it's getting kind of ugly out here' and suggests this generation may not have as much time as previous ones. How does the urgency of the times affect your priorities, and are you living with an eternal perspective or a temporal one?

The sermon highlights that older believers have 'long memories' of God's faithfulness while young people have 'short memories.' How can your testimony and experiences of God's faithfulness be shared to strengthen the faith of younger generations or those newer in their walk?

Brandon emphasizes that making disciples—not just converts—is the key to kingdom impact, teaching others to overcome so they can teach someone else. Who are you intentionally discipling right now, and are you equipping them to reproduce what they've learned in others?

The message challenges the idea that we're 'too old' or 'too young' to fulfill God's calling, referencing Abraham and Moses. What excuses have you made about your age, stage of life, or circumstances that might be preventing you from stepping into what God has called you to do?

Brandon asks, 'Why do you ask me for more when you don't do the least?' reflecting on how God watches our faithfulness in small things before entrusting us with greater responsibility. What 'least things' is God asking you to be faithful in right now that you might be overlooking while praying for bigger opportunities?

The sermon describes how revival starts with personal death to self, saying 'somebody's got to die' to themselves. What specific areas of your life—comfort, independence, reputation, or plans—need to die for God's purposes to be fully alive in you?

Scriptures – How is God Glorified?

Scripture References from the Sermon

Explicitly Mentioned or Directly Referenced:

1. Matthew 25 - Parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins (oil in their lamps)
2. John 15 - Bearing fruit; God is glorified when you bear fruit
3. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-12 - Read in full during the sermon (Christ being glorified in His saints)
4. Matthew 6:25-34 - "Take no thought for your life" (what you will eat, drink, wear)
5. Romans 8:14 - "The sons of God are led by the Spirit of God"
6. Proverbs 14:12 - "There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"
7. Colossians 1:27 - "Christ in you, the hope of glory"
8. Jeremiah 1:5 - "Called and formed you while you are yet in your mother's womb"
9. Luke 22:31-32 - Jesus telling Peter that Satan desired to sift him as wheat; "when you return, strengthen your brothers"
10. Romans 12:1 - "Present your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God"
11. John 12:32 - "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me"
12. Matthew 5:16 - "Let your light so shine that men may see your good works and glorify the Father which is in heaven"

Alluded to or Thematically Referenced:

13. Matthew 28:19-20 - Great Commission; making disciples
14. Romans 11:29 - "The calling and gifts of God are without repentance"
15. 1 Corinthians 5:6 - "A little leaven leavens the whole lump"
16. Acts 14:22- "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God"
18. 1 Samuel 15:22 - "Obedience is better than sacrifice"
19. Psalm 139:13-16- God knowing us before we were formed
20. John 10:9 - Jesus as the door (referenced in "door vs. window" analogy)
21. Galatians 3:26 - "We are all sons of God" (mentioned regarding male and female equality in ministry)

Devotional – How is God Glorified?

5-Day Devotional:

Day 1: When God Changes Your Plans

Reading: Proverbs 16:9; James 4:13-17

Devotional: The testimony of selling everything to move to Africa, only to have God redirect back to America, reminds us that our lives are not our own. Like Abraham offering Isaac, sometimes God tests whether we're willing to surrender our "Isaacs"—the good things we've planned in His name. True obedience isn't just doing what God asks; it's releasing control of the outcome. When God changes your direction, He's not being capricious—He's positioning you for greater fruitfulness. The question isn't whether your plans make sense, but whether you're willing to follow wherever He leads. Your willingness to pivot demonstrates that His glory matters more than your comfort or reputation.

Reflection: What "Isaac" might God be asking you not to sacrifice, but to release control of? How do you respond when God redirects your carefully laid plans?

Day 2: The Oil That Keeps You Young

Reading: Psalm 92:12-15; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Devotional: "Getting old ain't for sissies," but in God's will, there's life that keeps the oil flowing. The image of being pressed like olives to produce oil is powerful—the very crushing that could destroy us instead releases what brings light and anointing. Abraham and Moses began their greatest works in old age. Your past doesn't disqualify you; your age doesn't sideline you. God wastes nothing—every experience, every trial, every year adds depth to your testimony. The nations need what only seasoned saints can provide: wisdom born of walking with God through decades. Don't let the enemy whisper that your best years are behind you. In God's economy, the latter glory exceeds the former.

Reflection: How has God used your life experiences to prepare you for current ministry? What wisdom can only come through years of walking with Him?

Day 3: Windows or Doors?

Reading: John 15:1-8, 16; Matthew 28:18-20

Devotional: Do you want to be a window or a door? Windows look attractive—people admire what they see—but they provide no access. Doors, however, allow entrance and transformation. God isn't glorified merely by our appearance of righteousness, but by fruit that remains—disciples who make disciples. The Great Commission isn't about looking

good in the "church window"; it's about opening doors for others to enter the Kingdom. This requires sacrifice. You must decrease so Christ can increase. You must be broken so others can be fed. Making disciples means investing your life, your testimony, your hard-won wisdom into someone who can reach people you'll never meet. That's how God multiplies your life beyond your years.

Reflection: Are you currently a window or a door? Who is God calling you to invest in as a spiritual son or daughter?

Day 4: The Least Thing

Reading: Luke 16:10-12; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2

Devotional: "Why do you ask me for more when you don't do the least?" This confronting question exposes our tendency to pray for greater anointing while neglecting current assignments. God watches how we handle small obediences before entrusting larger ones. The man with Alzheimer's weeping over lost freedom reminds us: we have freedom now—what are we doing with it? We have strength, clarity, and opportunity today. The "least thing" might be forgiving that offense, serving in obscurity, or sharing Christ with your neighbor. Faithfulness in the mundane prepares you for the miraculous. God doesn't need your talent as much as your availability. He's not impressed by your potential; He's watching your obedience in the present moment.

Reflection: What "least thing" has God asked you to do that you've been postponing? How might your obedience in small things unlock greater assignments?

Day 5: Before He Comes

Reading: 2 Thessalonians 1:7-12; Matthew 25:1-13

Devotional: Christ is coming for a prepared bride, not a half-hearted one. The five foolish virgins knew what they needed—they just didn't prioritize getting it. They had opportunity but missed it. Now is the time to get oil—intimacy with God, character development, obedience to His voice. The world needs to see Jesus in you before He returns. Your life is a living epistle, read by those who may never open a Bible. This isn't about earning salvation; it's about being ready, being useful, being found faithful. God knows those who are His. The question is: will He find you watching, working, and walking in His ways? Let your light shine now, that when He appears, you'll be glorified together with Him.

Reflection: If Jesus returned today, what would He find you doing? What adjustments do you need to make to be ready for His return?

Closing Prayer

Father God, let my life glorify You. I surrender my plans, my comfort, and my independence. Make me a door, not just a window. Help me be faithful in the least things so You can trust me with more. Fill my lamp with oil—intimate knowledge of You that sustains me through the night. Let Jesus be seen in me before You return. Whatever it takes, Lord, be glorified in my life. In Jesus' name, Amen.
