

Session 14 The Dark Side of Experiencing God's Glory (Jn. 15:22-24)

I. GREATER GLORY REQUIRES GREATER RESPONSIVENESS TO JESUS

- A. **Principle:** Those who experience God's glory (His power and understanding) must respond to the Lord with greater obedience (Acts 5:1-12). Experiencing God's glory is not neutral in its impact on those who experience it—it softens or hardens hearts depending on one's response. Thus, people are enlightened, inspired, and tenderized or they are hardened, angered, and hostile against Him.

³Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit...⁵Ananias...fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard... (Acts 5:1-5)

- B. Refusing greater light and glory results in greater guilt and condemnation (15:22). Experiencing God's glory is spiritually dangerous in the lives of those who do not responded to it with obedience.

²²If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin [national guilt for rejecting Me], but now they have no excuse for their sin...²⁴If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and hated both Me and My Father. (Jn. 15:22-24)

- C. **They would have no sin:** Jesus is not making a theological statement contrary to Romans 3:23. He is not saying that they were all saved and without sin but that Israel would not have had national guilt related to rejecting Him as Messiah if He had not spoken to them with confirming miracles. If Jesus had not come to Israel, they would not have a glorious national destiny in the Millennium.

⁴¹"If you were blind, you would have no sin; but you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains." (Jn. 9:41)

- D. **They have no excuse for their sin:** Because Jesus spoke truth to them and did miracles which no one else did (15:22-23), Israel was more responsible as a nation to respond to God with obedience. They stand before God with greater guilt and judgment because they willfully rejected the truth.

- E. **They hate both Me and My Father** (15:25): Their rejection of Jesus was also rejecting God. Many leaders in Israel hated Jesus because of what He spoke to them. They opposed the truth about Jesus as the only way of salvation and the certainty of judgment for those who refuse His salvation.

- F. The preaching of God's Word moves some to life and others to death or hardness (2 Cor. 2:16). If preaching causes people to progress from death to death or to hardness of heart, then why preach to them? Because faith comes by hearing, giving them opportunity to progress from death to life.

¹⁵We are to God the fragrance of Christ..¹⁶To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. (2 Cor. 2:15-16)

¹⁷So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Rom. 10:17)

- G. Knowledge of God and His ways prepares His people to engage in partnership with Him.
⁶My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you...because you have forgotten the law of your God... (Hos. 4:6)
- H. "The billion soul harvest" (Rev. 7:9) will be result of the greatest outpouring of the Spirit in history that will occur in the final years of this age. Yet a great multitude will harden their hearts and refuse to repent (Rev. 9:21) and will be drunk with the wine of fornication and with blood (Rev. 17:2, 6).
²¹They did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts. (Rev. 9:21)
***²...the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her [Babylon's] fornication...
⁶I saw the woman [Harlot Babylon], drunk with the blood of the saints ... (Rev. 17:2, 6)***
- I. Sin will reach the greatest heights in history in the generation in which Jesus returns (Dan. 8:23).
²³In the latter time...when the transgressors have reached their fullness... (Dan. 8:23)
- J. The release of God's glory in the end-time revival will be the most powerful time in history and yet the most spiritually dangerous time. Persecution is necessary to purify His people (Dan. 11:35). Paul Cain said, "To a people without mixture, the Lord will give the Spirit without measure."
³⁵And some of those of understanding [end-time prophetic messengers] shall fall [as martyrs], to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end... (Dan. 11:35)
- K. Rightly responding to persecution results in God's people maturing in godliness. This will occur most when the greatest measure of power is released. Note the progression of Jesus' teaching in John 15. First, He emphasized *intimacy with God* (15:1-17), and then *persecution* (15:18-21) that results in spiritual maturity to walk in obedient love in context of God's release of glory. Next, Jesus warned of the spiritual danger of *not responding rightly to God's power* (15:22-24), and then He assured His disciples that the *Spirit will give them supernatural help* (15:26).
⁷If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you...⁸By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit...¹¹that My joy may remain in you...¹⁹The world hates...²⁰and will persecute you... ²²If I had not...spoken to them...[and] ²⁴if I had not done...the works which no one else did, they would have no sin [national guilt]...²⁶When the Helper comes...He will testify of Me. (Jn. 15:7-26)
- L. Those who love the truth will take a firm stand for truth regardless of the cost. God sends a strong delusion to those who do not ***receive the love of the truth*** (2 Thes. 2:11). Such people will be deceived by the Antichrist's demonic miracles that confirm his lies (2 Thes. 2:9).
⁹The coming of the lawless one [Antichrist] is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰and with all unrighteous deception...because they did not receive the love of the truth...¹¹God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie. (2 Thes. 2:9-11)
- M. To those who resist God, He progressively turns them over to greater darkness (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28).

²⁴...God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies...
²⁵who exchanged the truth of God for the lie...²⁶For this reason God gave them up to vile passions...²⁷The men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust...
²⁸God gave them over to a debased mind, to do things which are not fitting... (Rom. 1:24-28)

II. THERE IS A VARYING DEGREE OF SIN, GUILT, AND JUDGMENT

- A. Jesus taught that greater privilege results in greater responsibility and judgment (Lk. 12:48). One's greater knowledge makes them more responsible—their disobedience leads to more "stripes" (Lk. 12:47). There are varying measures of sin, guilt, and judgment for individuals and cities in this age and in eternity (Mt. 10:15; 11:22-24; 23:14; Mk. 12:40; Lk. 12:47-48; 20:46-46; Jn. 15:22).

⁴⁷And that servant who knew his master's will and did not...do [it]...shall be beaten with many stripes. ⁴⁸But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required... (Lk. 12:47-48)

- B. Some individuals, cities, and nations are less guilty having less knowledge of God and less experience of His glory. Tyre and Sodom will be punished for their persistent rebellion less than Chorazin and Bethsaida who rejected Jesus after seeing many of His great miracles (Mt. 11:20-24).

²⁰He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: ²¹"Woe to you, Chorazin...and Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre...they would have repented..."²²It will be more tolerable for Tyre...in the day of judgment than for you. ²³And you, Capernaum...if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained..."²⁴It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you." (Mt. 11:20-24)

- C. Teachers have a stricter judgment from God because many of them spend much time in the Word.
¹"...let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment." (Jas. 3:1)
- D. Some Pharisees will receive greater judgment because of manipulating widows (Mt. 23:14).
¹⁴Woe to you...you devour widows' houses...you will receive greater condemnation. (Mt. 23:14)

III. SOME WHO WITNESS MIRACLES REFUSE TO RESPOND WITH OBEDIENCE

- A. Many saw miracles but refused to embrace His message (Jn. 6:8-66). The Jews saw many signs but did not believe (Jn. 12:37-43). After Lazarus was raised, the leaders sought to kill Jesus (12:10). Abraham told a rich man in hades that miracles would not change his brothers (Lk. 16:22-31).

³⁷Although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him...⁴²Many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³for they loved the praise of men more than...God. (Jn. 12:37-43)

³¹But he [Abraham] said to him [the rich man in hades], 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'" (Lk. 16:31)

- B. The children of Israel witnessed the greatest miracles in history and yet rebelled against God.
- 8...a stubborn and rebellious generation...¹⁰refused to walk in His law, ¹¹and forgot His works and His wonders that He had shown them. ¹²Marvelous things He did...¹³He divided the sea...¹⁴He led them with the cloud, and all the night with a light of fire...¹⁶He also brought streams [of water] out of the rock...¹⁷but they sinned even more against Him... (Ps. 78:8-17)***
- C. Historically, some of God's servants who were anointed with an unusual measure of power and insight did not continue in humble obedience to God. To obey God while being used in great power and insight is a miracle of grace. Paul rejoiced being persecuted as it humbled him (2 Cor 12:7-10).
- ⁷And lest I should be exalted...by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan...⁹[Jesus said], "My grace is sufficient...for My strength is made perfect in weakness" ...¹⁰I take pleasure...in persecutions...for Christ's sake. (2 Cor. 12:7-10)***
- D. Two days earlier on Tuesday, Jesus described a man who did not respond rightly to God's grace (Mt. 25:24-30). In this parable, we see a tragic loss by not fully responding to God's grace. The parable ends with a spiritual principle containing a great promise and sober warning (Mt. 25:29-30).
- ²⁴Then he who had received the one talent came and said, "Lord, I knew you to be a hard man... ²⁵I was afraid, and...hid your talent..." ²⁶His lord answered..., "You wicked and lazy servant... ²⁹For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Mt. 25:24-30)***
- E. ***Spiritual principle:*** "Everyone who has, more will be given, but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away"—Jesus spoke this principle five times (Mt. 13:12; 25:29; Mk. 4:25; Lk. 8:18; 19:26). ***Truth is not neutral***—it tenderizes or hardens those who hear it. We must engage with Jesus and His truth to keep from losing it—we must take new ground in our spiritual growth to keep from losing the ground we previously gained. Truth that is responded to increases our capacity to respond more. Truth that is not responded to decreases our capacity.
1. ***The promise:*** "Everyone who has" includes understanding, inspiration, a tender heart, responsiveness to God, opportunities to grow in knowing God, etc.
 2. ***The warning:*** *If you do not have, even what you have you will lose.* Jesus described a person who was initially inspired by grace in receiving a small measure of insight, zeal, tenderness, etc. Many are drawn by grace with introductory insights and stirring of their heart, but they did not continue in them—they never "took a firm hold" of the grace that was drawing them. So they did not really have it. Jesus described it as something that *he does not have* as well as something that *he has* (25:29). Luke said, "what he *seems* to have" (Lk. 8:18). Those who fail to respond to aspects of God's grace will find that they diminish and eventually are removed.
- ¹⁸...whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him." (Lk. 8:18)***

- F. ***Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness:*** Jesus described the most extreme outcome—a servant of God whose heart became progressively hardened until he fell away from the faith (Rom. 11:22; 2 Thes. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 5:15; 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:3-5; Heb. 3:12; 6:4-6; 10:26-31, 39; Jas. 5:19-20; 2 Pet. 2:1-3, 20-22; 3:17).
- G. Many believers do not take seriously the consequences of playing with sin in a casual way.
- ²⁶For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth...²⁷a certain fearful expectation of judgment...²⁹[for those] who trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant...a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? (Heb. 10:26-29)***