

# And They Glorified God (Part 1)

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## Introduction

### The Text

“<sup>17</sup> On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with him to heal. <sup>18</sup> And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus, <sup>19</sup> but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus. <sup>20</sup> And when he saw their faith, he said, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.” <sup>21</sup> And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, “Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” <sup>22</sup> When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, “Why do you question in your hearts? <sup>23</sup> Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? <sup>24</sup> But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the man who was paralyzed—“I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home.” <sup>25</sup> And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God. <sup>26</sup> And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, “We have seen extraordinary things today.” (Luke 5:17–26)

### The Pioneer of God’s New Creation

- A. As we progress in Luke’s gospel, we must not lose sight of the greater storyline Luke has been developing for us thus far. Though we certainly want to dig into each individual text week after week, we cannot forget that each of these texts, each of these scenes, is still related to the whole in some way.
- B. In particular, we must remember that Jesus has been clearly introduced by Luke in this gospel as the second and greater Adam. Where all was lost, broken, and fractured in the first Adam of [Gen 3](#), all is being regained, healed, and repaired in the second Adam now of Luke’s gospel, namely Jesus the Christ.
  - 1. We’ve been watching as, from His baptism in the Jordan river, to His combat with the devil in the wilderness, He’s now emerged and is marching forward as the Pioneer of God’s new creation.
    - a. He’s remaking the world. He’s restoring fallen humanity. He’s announcing the year of God’s favor and Jubilee. People are coming back into orbit around God and their lives are being put back in order.

### Glorifying God

- A. One profoundly important indication that such a thing is happening is found when we give a closer look at just how our text, this scene with the paralytic, ends: “<sup>25</sup> And immediately he

rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God.<sup>26</sup> And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, “We have seen extraordinary things today” (vv. 25–26).

1. This paralytic and these people around him, upon coming to face the person and work of Jesus Christ, glorified God.
- B. Now how is this little bit of detail an indication that Christ is putting people back together, restoring fallen humanity?
1. You and I were created to glorify God. Do you want to know what repaired humanity looks like? What do people who’ve been put back together do? They glorify God. They stop looking to and focusing in on self and start looking to and loving and glorifying God. That’s Human Flourishing 101.

## Making the Case

- A. If you question me at this point, allow me to make a quick case for what I just said.
1. I studied at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. And the whole curriculum was really built off of the Westminster Confession of Faith. The Westminster Confession of Faith was composed by our Puritan brothers in England back in 1646. But alongside the Confession they created a Larger and Shorter Catechism (in Q&A format) to aid people in learning the truths of the Confession.
    - a. And the Shorter Catechism opens with this most important question: “What is the chief end of man?” To which the answer comes: “Man’s chief end is to glorify God . . .”
      - i. So certainly that means I am not alone in my thinking. But is this idea in the Bible? Well, certainly the Westminster divines only put such a thing in their Catechism because it stood so plain on the face of the Bible.
  2. God says it Himself in *Isa 43:6-7* when He’s talking about gathering in His people: “<sup>6</sup> Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, <sup>7</sup> everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”
  3. And, of course, we might think of that staggering text in *1 Cor 10:31*: “Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” Did you hear that? “Whatever you do!” All of life—from first to final breath—“do all to the glory of God”!
    - a. How’s that for a life’s mission statement?! That’s why I had to build glorifying God into the mission statement of this church: “Mercy Hill Church exists to Adore, Manifest, and Proclaim the glory of God as revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

4. Or consider what he writes later in 2 Cor 5:15: “He [Jesus] died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.”
  - a. When Christ gets a hold of people, redeems them, restores them from their fallenness back to what they were created for, what happens? They finally stop living for themselves and start living for God! We’re just done with the black hole of self and we’re set back in the big sky of His glory.
- B. But of course we could simply derive all of this by going back to the original day of man’s creation. If you want to know why something exists, you should go back to the day that thing was created. Well on the day of mankind’s creation we read that: “God created man in his own image” (Gen 1:27).
  1. What does that mean if not that men and women exist, were created, to image, to reflect, to glorify Him?!
    - a. And yet so often we try to flip this around, right? Life is about me! And when we do this we shouldn’t be surprised when our life blows a tire and spins out on the freeway.
      - i. We were created for so much more! We were created for God, to image, to glorify Him. When we settle for less, we become something less than human.

## The Next Three Weeks

- A. All of this was just introduction to say: Glorifying God is everything! It’s life!
- B. But now I’m going to set the agenda for what I am thinking will take us a total of three weeks. We’re going to start with this text in [Luke](#), but I’m going to let it catapult us into a larger discussion. At the heart of everything we’ll discuss is a single question: What does it mean to glorify God?
  1. We’ll flesh out our answer to this question under three separate headings: (1) first we’ll need to come up with a Basic Definition; (2) then I’ll identify a Fundamental Dynamic that must be in play if we are to glorify God at all; and finally, (3) we’ll move from the basics and fundamentals into the Particulars of our lives. What does it actually look like for me to glorify God?

## (1) A Basic Definition

### Enhancing God’s Reputation in the World

- A. As we attempt to define what it means to glorify God, before even looking for clues in the details of our text back in Luke, I simply want to go to what is considered the standard dictionary for biblical Greek.

1. There we find that this word glorify (Gk. doxazo) means something like this: “To influence one’s opinion about another so as to enhance the latter’s reputation.” To glorify God then means in some way to enhance His reputation in the world.
2. A quick glance at other dictionaries provides us with a greater sense of what is meant by this word doxazo: to beautify, magnify, praise, honor, extol, exalt, celebrate, adore, worship. To put it simply (and perhaps a little tongue-in-cheek): glorifying God means we give Him glory.

## But Not Adding to Him in Any Way

- A. But we must be careful to avoid a misunderstanding here. The language of enhancing God’s reputation, beautifying Him, magnifying Him, giving Him glory, etc. might make us think that we are in fact adding something to Him that He didn’t already have before.
  1. He is lacking in reputation, so we are enhancing it. He is lacking in beauty, so we are beautifying Him. He is lacking in magnitude, so we are magnifying Him. He is lacking in glory, so we are giving glory to Him.
- B. Therefore, when we glorify God we must be adding to God, right? Wrong. We are not adding anything to God. Indeed we could never do such a thing. He is infinite and eternal in all of His perfections. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
  1. So when we glorify God it is not that we are adding anything to Him but that we are coming to see more of who He has always been and responding to this revelation appropriately.
- C. To put a picture on it for us, we might think of God as the blazing sun and the world as the front room in a house. Since the fall, a curtain has been drawn between God and the world, between the sun and this room in which we all live.
  1. When you and I glorify God it’s as if we walk up to that curtain and draw it just a little bit further back, letting just a little bit more light into the room. Certainly we are not to think that by our action we somehow made the sun any brighter than it has always been. But we did help others come to see more of its brightness, its eternal brightness.
    - a. And in that sense we can enhance God’s reputation in the world while not adding a single thing to it.
- D. So again, in sum, to glorify God is to enhance His reputation in the world so that others come to appreciate more of who He has always been and will always be.

## (2) A Fundamental Dynamic

## See and Savor

- A. Now that we have our Basic Definition, we can begin to look at how you and I actually participate in this. How can we take part in glorifying God? We will start this morning with what I would consider the Fundamental Dynamic that must be in play if we are to glorify God.
1. The next two weeks will be given over to the myriad of Particular Expressions that multiply out from this point.
- B. Now we are ready to return to our text in [Luke](#), because I think this Fundamental Dynamic is made plain for us there. Look one final time with me at vv. 25-26: “<sup>25</sup> And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God.<sup>26</sup> And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, “We have seen extraordinary things today.”
1. Here’s what I think this text tells us is fundamental to glorifying God: Seeing Him and Savoring Him. Seeing something about Him put on display, and loving what I see.
    - a. In this instance this crowd saw that Jesus has authority to fix paralysis and forgive sins and they savored what they saw: they were “amazed” and “filled with awe” and said, “We have seen extraordinary things today.” They loved it. And, in that, they “glorified God”.
- C. I borrow these two words—“See” and “Savor”—from a book by John Piper entitled *Seeing and Savoring Jesus Christ*. I love these words. I think they capture what we’re after here perfectly.
- D. But let me make sure we understand them properly. I think what is meant by “See” here is quite evident, but what exactly do I mean by “Savor”? It’s not a word we use all that often.
1. It’s a word that makes me think of a wine connoisseur or something. Have you done that whole wine tasting thing? You don’t just drink this cabernet, you savor it. They talk about the 5S’s. You See, Swirl, Smell, Sip, and you...Savor. “This one has subtleties of cherry and chocolate, this one of oak and citrus. This one tastes like the morning dew is descending from heaven upon your taste buds.” Really? No. Actually it’s just a good glass of wine. But you should savor every sip.
    - a. And that’s how we feel about the sightings we get of God. Why do you think it’s taken over a year now for us to get through 4.5 chapters in *Luke*? I want to taste every little flavor of God’s glory in this book. Wow, did you taste that? That was His mercy. And that? That’s His holiness. And that had the aromas of His omnipotence and authority. And that, that was His steadfast love. Drink it down.
      - i. See Him...Savor Him...Glorify Him! When people love God like this His reputation is enhanced in the world!

E. This why that old catechism actually adds one more piece to their answer of the first question. I pulled up short earlier. Let me read it to you now in full: “What is the chief end of man? Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.”

1. There is a close connection between our glorifying God and our enjoying (or savoring) Him.

## A Few More Examples

A. This Fundamental Dynamic shows up again and again in Luke’s gospel as God is bringing people back into orbit around Himself through Christ. I’ll give you just a few examples:

1. Do you remember what Luke says of the shepherds after the angels appeared to them and they ran to find the baby Jesus lying in a manger? After all of this: “the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen . . .” (2:20). I see God...I savor God...I glorify God.
2. Or consider later when Jesus is met by those ten lepers and He heals them while they’re walking away and we read that: “<sup>15</sup> one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising [doxazo] God with a loud voice; <sup>16</sup> and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks” (17:15–16). I see God...I savor God...I glorify God.
3. And then, of course, my favorite example comes in at the very end. When Jesus is on the cross, dying for my sins, as he breathes His last, there’s this centurion, the very man who would have been in charge of the whole crucifixion affair, and Luke tells us: “When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised [doxazo] God, saying, “Certainly this man was innocent!” (23:47).
  - a. Isn’t that it for us?! I see at the cross the love God has for a sinner like me and I savor the sight. I drink it down. I love the God who first so loved me. And in my love for Him He is glorified!

## Falling Off On Either Side

- A. Now, when it comes to this dynamic and glorifying God, we must realize that we can fall off on either side of it.
- B. On the one side, we can savor God without truly seeing Him.
  1. There are people all over this valley who would call themselves Christians, they might even go to church, and they claim to love God but they are not loving the God of the Bible but a god of their own making. How many major denominations are now blatantly denying the clear claims of Scripture.

- a. They are like the Jewish people that Paul weeps over in Rom 10:2: “I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.” They claim to savor Him, but they’ve never seen Him.
    - i. Therefore, they don’t glorify Him at all. In fact, as Paul says of them: “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you” (Rom 2:24).
- C. But on the other side, we can truly see God but not savor Him in the least.
- 1. There are people all over this valley who see God’s glory being declared in the heavens every evening as they sit in their million dollar mansions and look out at the setting sun. But they don’t savor that wine, they spit it back in His face.
    - a. For the one leper that turns back to glorify God, there were nine others that just went on their merry way without a second thought. And for the one centurion who glorified the crucified Jesus, there are millions of people lined up who think the message of a dead man on a cross is utter foolishness and weakness.
      - i. If we don’t savor what we see in Him we do not glorify Him.

## Two Closing Exhortations

- A. So let me encourage you as we close:
- 1. First: See Him truly! How you ask? Where am I supposed to see Him now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? He’s been gone for millennia.
    - a. Do you remember what Jesus says to the Jews in 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.” Do you want to see Jesus in 2017? Make it a year where you live in this Book!
  - 2. And second: Savor Him deeply! How you ask? I can’t change my heart. You’re right. But Christ can. That’s what He’s come to do—to take hearts of stone and make them soft for God by His Spirit.
    - a. Do you remember the two on the road to Emmaus? They read the Bible and they didn’t see anything. Until the risen Christ led them in a study, opened their eyes, and set fire to their hearts: “They said to each other, ‘Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?’” (Luke 24:32).
- B. We see Him in His word, we savor Him by His Spirit. And in this we glorify God as we were created to do!