

And They Glorified God (Part 3)

Introduction

The Text

“²⁴ 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.”²⁵ And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God.²⁶ And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, “We have seen extraordinary things today.” (Luke 5:24–26)

Rehearsing Where We’ve Been

- A. From this text in Luke we’ve identified what’s become our topic of interest for three weeks now and will occupy us for one more week next time. This paralytic and these crowds, we are told, “glorified God” (vv. 25, 26).
 - 1. I’ve been trying to answer the question: What does that mean? Not just in the context here, but in general. How do you and I glorify God? We talk about it, but do we actually know how to do it?
- B. To this point, we have formed a Basic Definition for glorifying God, and identified a Fundamental Dynamic that must be in play in our lives if we are to glorify Him (see handout).
- C. But now we are getting into the practicals, the nuts and bolts, the hands and feet of glorifying God.
 - 1. By doing a simple word study in the Greek, I’ve identified 12 different ways the Scriptures say we can glorify God. This list is long, but it is not meant to be exhaustive. It really just gets us started on the subject. But it’s to this list that we now return.
 - a. Last week we looked at the first three (see handout). This morning, Lord willing, we shall look at the next four.

(4) By Praying to Him Unceasingly

Identification

- A. Near the end of John’s gospel, as Jesus is preparing His disciples for His departure, He says in [John 14:13](#): “Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”
 - 1. While there is much we could talk about here, what we must give our attention to straightaway is the link that is made here between praying to God and glorifying Him. According to Christ, when we pray in His name, and He comes and moves in response to it, the Father is glorified in the Son.

B. With the language of “Father” and “Son” here we are reminded that prayer is identified in the NT as the chief privilege of our adoption in Christ.

1. Both Gal 4:6 and Rom 8:15 make this plain. Let me read to you from Romans: “For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’” (Rom 8:15).

a. In other words: What is the primal and persistent activity of a born again, adopted, child of God? Crying, praying to the Father as a son, through the Spirit of the Son.

i. This sort of thing is fresh on my mind. My wife just gave birth to our son, Levi. Now when Levi was born, what do you think was the very first thing he did? Cry—for mommy and daddy. And the new birth is no different.

C. Because of Christ, we have been adopted into the family of God, God is now our Father, and we can come and talk to Him. And what Jesus is saying back in John 14:13 is that when we make use of this privilege, when we live in constant communion with our Father, pouring out our anxieties and concerns upon Him, God is glorified.

1. We see who God is for us in Christ, we are convinced that He cares about our every need and is able to help, and so we pray. And in this God is glorified.

Explanation

A. But how? How exactly does my praying to Him glorify Him? How does it enhance His reputation in the world. What does my praying to Him say about Him?

1. To put it simply, it says, “God is Good Father.”

B. We might see this more clearly by coming at it from the opposite angle. When we don’t pray, what’s happening? Is it not that we are retreating back to the orphanage? We live as if we don’t have a Father in heaven, as if we aren’t being taken care of, as if it’s up to us to provide for our needs. We live not as adopted sons, but as forgotten orphans.

1. When we don’t pray, what are we saying to world about God? He’s the kind of Dad that you don’t want to bother. He’s always busy with other stuff. He’ll help you with the big things like salvation and entrance into heaven, but don’t bother Him about bread and bank accounts. He doesn’t care about those things. You’re on your own for that.

a. I fear I often give this impression to my own kids. Daddy’s too busy, distracted, self-important, irritable. But God is never this way! He not only wants you to come and cry to Him at all hours of the day, He is glorified when you do!

C. To drive this home, let me read something from Russell Moore where he describes his experience in a Russian orphanage: “The creepiest sound I have ever heard was nothing at all. My wife, Maria, and I stood in the hallway of an orphanage somewhere in the former Soviet Union, on the first of two trips required for our petition to adopt. Orphanage staff led us down a hallway to greet the two 1-year-

olds we hoped would become our sons. The horror wasn't the squalor and the stench, although we at times stifled the urge to vomit and weep. The horror was the quiet of it all. The place was more silent than a funeral home by night.

I stopped and pulled on Maria's elbow. "Why is it so quiet? The place is filled with babies." Both of us compared the stillness with the buzz and punctuated squeals that came from our church nursery back home. Here, if we listened carefully enough, we could hear babies rocking themselves back and forth, the crib slats gently bumping against the walls. These children did not cry, because infants eventually learn to stop crying if no one ever responds to their calls for food, for comfort, for love. No one ever responded to these children. So they stopped.

The silence continued as we entered the boys' room. Little Sergei (now Timothy) smiled at us, dancing up and down while holding the side of his crib. Little Maxim (now Benjamin) stood straight at attention, regal and czar-like. But neither boy made a sound. We read them books filled with words they couldn't understand, about saying goodnight to the moon and cows jumping over the same. But there were no cries, no squeals, no groans. Every day we left at the appointed time in the same way we had entered: in silence.

On the last day of the trip, Maria and I arrived at the moment we had dreaded since the minute we received our adoption referral. We had to tell the boys goodbye, as by law we had to return to the United States and wait for the legal paperwork to be completed before returning to pick them up for good. After hugging and kissing them, we walked out into the quiet hallway as Maria shook with tears. And that's when we heard the scream.

Little Maxim fell back in his crib and let out a guttural yell. It seemed he knew, maybe for the first time, that he would be heard. On some primal level, he knew he had a father and mother now. I will never forget how the hairs on my arms stood up as I heard the yell. I was struck, maybe for the first time, by the force of the Abba cry passages in the New Testament, ones I had memorized in Vacation Bible School. And I was surprised by how little I had gotten it until now.

1. Orphans don't cry because they don't have a father. Crying is just wasted energy. No one's listening anyways. It's up to me to help myself. Adopted sons cry because they know they will be heard. And they know that help will be soon on the way!

Application

- A. So here's the application question: Are you praying? Are you living like an orphan or a son, adopted in Christ?
 1. When we watch our nation ripping apart at the seams do we pray with conviction and confidence, knowing that we have our Father's ear? Or do we panic, and slander, and rage with the rest of them? Are we an orphan or is our Father in control?
- B. O may we find our way to Abba's lap and pour out our hearts into Abba's ear, in the name of Christ. For in this kind of praying, God is glorified.

(5) By Bearing Much Fruit through Him

Identification

- A. A chapter later in John's gospel, we come later to Jesus' discussion of the Vine and the branches. He begins in 15:1-5: " ¹I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in me that

does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.³ Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

1. And then in v. 8 we read: “By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”
- B. In case we are confused what is meant by “fruit” here, Jesus makes it plain in the context—He’s talking about love: “¹² This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends” (vv. 12–13).
- C. And when this kind of self-sacrificial love clusters on the branch that is my life, God is glorified.

Explanation

- A. But how? How does this glorify Him? How does this enhance His reputation in the world? What does my fruit, my love, say about Him?
 1. It says, to put it simply: “God is True Vine.” That is just a shorthand way of saying: “We owe all of our fruit-bearing to Him!”
- B. There is significant OT background for the imagery used in [John 15](#). Israel had long been called the vineyard of God.
 1. Only through the centuries there was one glaring problem: they never produced any fruit—
“For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!” (Is 5:7).
 - a. It is not in the hearts of men to love God and neighbor. It is in the hearts of men to love self at the expense of God and neighbor. Truly, as Christ says, in and of ourselves: “[we] can do nothing” (v. 5).
- C. So when Jesus comes and says He is the “[true Vine](#)”, He is saying that He is all Israel and humanity were created by God to be, but never were. He is the fruitful vineyard. He is the love of God incarnate.
 1. And it is only as we the branches are united to Him that we can begin to make headway against our hate.
 - a. So you see: This kind of love glorifies God, because it is a love that we could never produce in and of ourselves. It is a love that flows through the branches from the Vine. God gets glory for our fruit-bearing because God is ultimately responsible for it!
- D. Let me avalanche you with texts on this point for a moment:

1. Consider the immediate context of John 15 where Jesus says in v. 16: “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide.”
 2. Or Eph 2:10: “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”
 3. Or Rom 7:4: “Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.” The first step in bearing fruit for God is not to try harder in our own strength, but to die with Christ so that we can be raised to new life with Him!
 4. Or what about Phil 1:6: “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” Where Paul says in v. 11, we will be “filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.” God’s work, through Christ, fruit of righteousness, for His glory!
- E. God gets the glory for my fruit because He is the stem and root beneath it! And when people see love coming out of us that is not of this world, they will, as Jesus says in Matt 5:16: “See [our] good works and give glory to [our] Father who is in heaven.”

Application

- A. So the critical question at this point is: Are we abiding in the Vine? Have we turned from trusting in self to trusting in Christ for our growth in righteousness and holiness? The self-help section of our local bookstores may be swelling with ideas, but they are void of substance.
1. May we, rather, see the Savior, savor Him, daily abide in Him, bear fruit through Him, and, in that, Glorify God!

(6) By Overflowing in a Wealth of Generosity for Others

Identification

- A. In Paul’s day, it seems the church in Jerusalem had fallen on rough times and many saints were in need of financial help. Paul had been collecting funds for them throughout his missionary travels and he recalls the response of the churches in Macedonia as he writes to the Corinthians in 2 Cor 8:1-5: “¹We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia,² for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.³ For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord,⁴ begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—⁵ and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.”
1. How do you respond in “severe test[s] of affliction”, when you find yourself in “extreme poverty”? Is that not when all our attention starts to turn inward? And we feel justified in

doing this, do we not? “Look at how much I am dealing with right now. I just don’t have time to think about you.”

- a. But these Macedonians move in precisely the opposite direction! Because they saw and savored all that God was for them in Christ, because of “their abundance of joy” due to the “grace of God” that had been given them, they “overflowed in a wealth of generosity.”
- B. And Paul would go on later to describe this financial gift being delivered to the Jerusalem saints as an “act of grace that is being ministered by us, for the glory of the Lord himself” (2 Cor 8:19).
1. In fact, he would go so far as to identify the men appointed to deliver this gift, as the very “glory of Christ” (2 Cor 8:23).
 - a. When these men come to you with money, you are not ultimately seeing dollar bills, or financial relief, or philanthropy from a few good men—you are seeing the glory of Christ. By overflowing in a wealth of generosity for others God is glorified.

Explanation

- A. But how? How does my generosity glorify God? What does my generosity say about God to the world?
1. In a word, it says: “God is rich.” It says: “I don’t need stuff, I have Christ! And He is able to meet my needs ‘according to His riches in glory’ (Phil 4:19).”
- B. So I don’t need stuff. I can give it away—and, in that, show you the One who so generously gave Himself away for me: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich” (2 Cor 8:9).
1. That’s why it’s the “glory of Christ” that’s seen when we give stuff away in love for others. He’s beaten us to the punch.
 - a. We are already rich in Him. So how could we not give all this earthly stuff away to you?!

Application

- A. This is the sort of thing that happens in this little church quite often. Like when we ask you to help us support three needy families from Allen and Steinbeck Elementary for Christmas, hoping to take in about \$300 or so, and you give over \$1000.
1. May God only multiply this kind of generous Spirit in our church. For in it God is glorified!

(7) By Giving Thanks to Him for Everything

Identification

- A. It seems a fitting place to conclude on this point: Giving thanks to God for everything.
1. We've talked about prayer and how He comes to answer. We've talked about fruit and how He supplies us with the very power to produce it. And then we've seen an example of this in the way we can freely give away our earthly possessions to those in need because of the riches we have in Him.
 - a. What more natural response should we have to all of this grace we have been given but to give God thanks?!
- B. And in giving thanks to Him, we come to find we have but glorified Him in yet another way! For as Paul says of his ministry in 2 Cor 4:15: "[I]t is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God."

Explanation

- A. But how? How does my giving thanks glorify God? What does it say about Him to the world?
1. In a word, it says: "God is Giver". It says: "Every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17). It says: "What do [I] have that [I] did not receive?" (1 Cor 4:7). It says: "³³ Oh, the depth of the riches . . . of God! . . . ³⁵ "[W]ho has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" ³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen" (Rom 11:33–36).
 - a. The cross of Christ should make us the most grateful people on the planet. Because it says at one and the same time: I deserve death eternal, but I've been given freely life abundant.

Application

- A. Where have you been with this? If you're like me, you can just get going so fast that you don't even think to stop and thank God. Has He answered prayers? Has He been on the move in my life? Sure. But by the time He's done one thing I'm already begging Him to do the next thing.
1. I can be like my kids on Christmas morning. Moving on to open another gift before they've even finished opening up the first.
- B. We don't want to be that way. We want to be like that leper we talked about a couple of weeks ago. Do you remember this?
1. Ten lepers begged for healing. Ten lepers were healed. But only one stopped in his tracks, turned back, and gave Jesus thanks: "¹⁵ Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising [doxazo] God with a loud voice; ¹⁶ and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks" (Luke 17:15–16).
- C. Let's join this leper at Jesus' feet now. Give Him thanks. And give Him glory!