

And They Glorified God (Part 4)

Introduction

Continuing Our List

- A. I have no time for introduction today. For four weeks now we've been giving ourselves to this magnificent subject of glorifying God and this morning we bring our discussion to a close.
 - 1. We will continue developing our list of ways the Bible indicates we can glorify God. We don't just want this to be something that remains in the abstract. We want to know what glorifying God looks like in the details of our lives. We want to know how we can actually do it.
- B. We've looked at seven ways already and, Lord willing, we will look at five more this morning.

(8) By Spreading the Good News about Him

Identification

- A. In John 16:13-14, listen to the way Jesus speaks to His disciples about the Holy Spirit's ministry: " ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you."
 - 1. Here is the connection between speaking God's word to others and glorifying Him. "He will glorify me [How?], for he will take what is mine [namely, my words] and declare it to you."
- B. Now, in the context, Jesus is referring to the Holy Spirit, but surely this same connection applies to us. What we hear Him speak, that it is that we must declare to others.
 - 1. Matt 10:27 is still relevant for every disciple: "What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops."
- C. Surely we are to think here, most of all, of our proclaiming the gospel, the good news, of Jesus Christ. All of God's words are important, but the gospel in particular seems to be the leading edge.
 - 1. This is the great burden of the Apostle Paul's ministry: "Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel" (1 Cor 1:17). And later: "[N]ecessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (9:16).
 - a. And, of this gospel, he writes to the church in Galatia: " ¹¹ I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. ¹² For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:11-12).

- i. “What I heard from Him, I declare to you: namely, the gospel of Jesus Christ.”
- D. And we are told on one occasion that, as Paul preached this gospel to the Gentiles in Antioch: “[W]hen the Gentiles heard [it], they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord” (Acts 13:48). And in glorifying His word, surely we are to understand they glorified Him.
- E. So when we ascend the rooftops of this world and proclaim this gospel that is not of this world but of God, God is glorified!

Explanation

- A. But how? How does my speaking God’s word glorify Him? How does it enhance His reputation in the world? What does my spreading the good news to others say about Him?
 - 1. To put it simply, it says: “God is the answer.” He is not just a tribal deity, a parochial savior, a household god. As Peter declared boldly before the Sanhedrin: “There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).
 - a. Jesus is not just my answer, or our answer—He is the answer!
- B. I don’t know if any of you have been struggling with this idea that we’ve been created to glorify God. I mentioned in the first message of this mini-series that this whole thing can make God sound kind of self-obsessed and arrogant to us—as if He’s all about Himself instead of us.
 - 1. But what we must come to see is that these two things are not in opposition. Indeed, He is all about Himself, in one sense, because He is all about us.
- C. It might help you to see it like this. If this fallen world is like a desert, God is like an Oasis. In a thirsty world full of mirages, God is an oasis. Now, is it self-obsessed and arrogant for the Oasis to say, “I’m here! Go and tell the world I am here! Enhance my reputation in the world. Glorify Me!”
 - 1. Certainly if I were to say such a thing it would be wrong. You don’t magnify Nick Weber in the desert. Nick Weber can do nothing for you. I’m just another thirsty, desperate creature just like you.
 - a. But God is not like me. He is not a creature. He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things. He is, as I just read the other morning, “the fountain of life”, and He “gives [the children of mankind] drink from the river of [His] delights” (Ps 36:9, 8).
- D. Glorifying God, therefore, is the most loving thing we can do for a people sun-chapped and drought-weary in the desert.
 - 1. And one of the ways we can glorify Him most plainly is by telling people about Him, by sharing with them the gospel of grace. When we do this we are saying, in not so many words: “If anyone thirsts, let him come to [Christ] and drink.” (John 7:37). There’s an Oasis for your soul here. Jesus is the answer.

(9) By Welcoming One Another

Identification

- A. We must know that the early church was in many ways just as troubled and disjointed as it is today. Just as we deal with factions and divisions, bitterness and judgmentalism, so too did they.
1. And perhaps no finer example of such things can be found than that which entailed in the relationship between Jews and Gentiles.
- B. Jews we recall had always thought themselves God's special chosen people. And I suppose they were, but it was always with a view to more.
1. They were set apart from the nations not in spite of the nations, but for the nations' sake. Abraham was blessed to be a blessing.
- C. And yet, still, as the Gentiles came flooding into the people of God through the person of Jesus Christ, the Jews couldn't help but be a bit off-put, standoffish, closed.
1. "Maybe, okay, maybe, they would allow that God has granted these Gentile pagans coming from lives of blatant idolatry and unnamable immorality, but certainly these types of people would always be add-ons, second-class citizens. The Jews have been here from the beginning."
- D. But the blade could cut in the other direction as well. The Gentile churches could really look down on the Jews as a sort of backwards, behind-the-times group. "Why are they still all worked up about what foods they can or can't eat? Why are they still making a big deal of this or that day for worship and rest?"
1. The Jews weren't quite ready to move beyond their traditions. Their faith was weak—growing, but weak. And the Gentiles, rather than being patient with them, were looking down their noses.
- E. But Paul would not have any of this. From whichever side the blade was swung, such division and criticisms were a reproach to the gospel that's supposed to be at the center of God's church.
1. So when he sensed such things going down in the church in Rome he knew it must immediately be addressed. And, after a great many exhortations, the final capstone to his argument comes in [Rom 15:7](#): "Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."
 - a. When we welcome one another because of Christ, in spite of differences in spiritual maturity, ethnicity, economic class, etc. we glorify God!

Explanation

- A. But how? What does my welcoming you in the name of Christ say about God to the world?

1. To put it simply, it says: “God is welcoming.”
- B. We are to welcome one another as Christ has welcomed us. God opens His door to sinners. He eats with prostitutes and tax collectors. “[W]hoever comes to me I will never cast out” (John 6:37).
1. We owe our salvation to the welcome mat of God. And when we put that welcome mat out in front of our homes and hearts for our brothers and sisters in Christ, we put Him on display in the world.

Application

- A. That’s one of the things I love so much about this church. We have incredible diversity for our size. And I think this text gives me warrant to say that this diversity gives us a unique opportunity to showcase the glory of God.
1. There is perhaps no greater testimony to the beauty of God and the truth of the gospel than this: that His people welcome one another—that Jew eats with Gentile, that black eats with white, that rich eats with poor, that introvert eats with extrovert, that engineer eats with artist, that Republican eats with Democrat, that Texan eats with Californian—that our unity in Christ overcomes any division in the flesh.
 - a. Jesus Himself would say as much when praying for us to His Father: “²⁰ I . . . ask . . . ²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:20–21).
- B. O Mercy Hill, let’s steward our diversity well. Forsake the cliques and put out the welcome mat!

(10) By Fleeing from False Pleasures for Him

Identification

- A. The Corinthian church emerged from a pretty depraved cultural context. And some of the cultural baggage still influenced the way they were living now as Christians.
- B. The most poignant example of this is found in their seeming acceptance of and continued involvement in sexual immorality. So Paul calls them out on the mat in 1 Cor 6:18-20: “¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”
1. We can’t get into the complexities of Paul’s argument here. I just want to make the link for us between what we do with our bodies and the glorifying of God.

- a. Paul is saying here that when you turn—when you flee from sexual immorality or any other sin you are tempted by—and flee towards the Son of God who loves you and purchased you with His precious blood, you glorify God.

Explanation

A. But how? What does my fleeing from false pleasure in preference of Him say about Him?

1. In a word, it says: “God is pleasurable.”

- a. I purposely chose a word here that’s been hijacked by the night: “pleasure”. We blush even using such a word, as if it’s reserved only for things like pornography and gluttony and so on. That’s why we often pair it with the word “guilty”. We have “guilty pleasures”.

B. But it is a thoroughly biblical word: “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Psa 16:11).

1. And when we forsake the false pleasures of sin for the enduring and greater pleasures that are at God’s right hand in His presence, does that not glorify Him in the world as the true object of desire and the true source of everlasting pleasure?

- a. When the prostitute is knocking on your door (or on the other side of your computer screen) and you turn back from her advances with a twist of the deadbolt or a click of the mouse, are you not declaring to the world in that moment: “God is better than sex”?!

C. And, of course, sadly, we could come at it from the others side.

1. Is it not that our giving into sin always communicates something along these lines: “O I know that lust is wrong, but she just looked too good, better than Christ. Gossip, it just tastes good on my tongue and tickles my ear. O I know God says anger is the seed of murder, but I don’t care. I want, it’s just more pleasurable for me to give that person what they have coming.”

- a. We don’t glorify God here. We glorify sin. We make sin look like the superior pleasure. May it never be!

Application

A. Can I suggest that we get our sanctification process all backwards when we start with all the “No”s and the “Thou shalt not”s. Growth in holiness begins with Christianity’s radiant “Yes!”

1. Because we have God, because we know God, because have been bought with a price and are so loved by God, we can say “No” to the fleeting and false pleasures of sin.

(11) By Dying to Gain Him

Identification

- A. This point really just takes the last one to its logical end. Because we've laid our "Yes!" down for Jesus we can lay our "No!" down for sin. And we will have to be faithful to that "Yes!" and "No!" even through death.
- B. You might remember that conversation Jesus has with Peter on the banks of the Sea of Galilee after He's been crucified and raised from the dead. After the whole denial incident, He's got some things to put in order and restore in Peter's heart, so He pulls him aside and three times asks Him: "Do you love Me?"; and then encourages Him: "Feed My sheep."
- C. But the whole conversation ends on what seems to be this ominous and somber note: " ¹⁸ Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.' ¹⁹ (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, 'Follow me'" (John 21:18–19).
 - 1. Here Jesus is referring to what we understand from tradition would become Peter's own death by crucifixion. And John, making sure we understand all of this correctly, inserts that parenthetical note that links Peter's death to his glorifying God!

Explanation

- A. But how? How would Peter's death, being killed for Christ, glorify God? What would it say about God to the world?
 - 1. To put it simply, it says: "God is treasure." God is supreme treasure. There is nothing more valuable in all the universe than Him. Therefore: "[T]o live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil 1:21).
- B. The key to my interpretation here is found in the way Jesus comes out of this brutal conversation with Peter about his death. Did you catch it: "And after saying this he said to him, 'Follow me'" (v. 19b).
 - 1. "The suffering and death is nothing compared to Me! Even though it will cost you your life, follow Me! Because I am your life! Because I am your supreme treasure!"
- C. Peter seems a bit freaked out about all of this at first. That's why he's asking about John: "Lord what about this man?" (v. 21). "Am I alone in this?" Misery loves company.
 - 1. But later he really starts to get it. He starts to talk about all of this differently. In his last letter to the churches he writes: "¹⁴ I know that the putting off of my body [skēnoma] will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me." (2 Pet 1:14).
 - a. And here's the thing. The Greek word he uses for "body" here isn't the standard choice. The word translated here as "body", could be translated as "tent".

- D. Have you ever gone camping? I'm not talking about glamping. I'm talking about tent camping. You know how you're all jazzed up on the front end of the trip, but then after a night you're thinking: "Seriously?" You're shivering through night. You wake up and it feels like a semi must've driven over your back in the night. You step out and your food's been all torn up by animals. You're ready to go home.
1. And Peter's saying: This life is like tent camping. The permanent, the glorious stuff, is coming.
 - a. So, Peter, the man who to save his own skin couldn't even stand up for Jesus before a little servant girl, is at the end of his life calling that skin a tent and saying to his persecutors: "Bring it on! What are you going to do? Kill me? All you're doing is ripping me from my tent and putting me in a palace. Because to live is Christ, and to die is gain!"

Application

- A. You might be thinking: "Man, Peter had it rough, but thank God that's not my calling." But you should know, Jesus, in a sense, has the same kind of conversation He had with Peter back on the banks of the Sea of Galilee with everyone who would become His disciple: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23).
1. Let's just be clear: No one in the first century was putting this verse on their coffee cup or embroidering it on their pillows. These words would make them stop and shudder. They knew what a cross was for—killing people. What's Jesus talking about? This sounds crazy. This sounds hard.
 - a. There's blood dripping off of these words. And it's not His blood here—it's mine!
- B. But there it is again: "...take up his cross daily and follow me"! It's the "me" at the end of that sentence that makes the horror of taking up my cross worth it.
- C. Who in this room finds Jesus so compelling, so worthy, so valuable they'll follow Him through this? Those are the kinds of people that will glorify God!

(12) By Confessing Him as Savior and Lord

- A. Perhaps you've come this far in our list and you're now thinking: "I don't stand a chance at this! How in the world am I going to live this out?"
1. If you are feeling this way, you are actually positioned perfectly to glorify God in yet one final way: by confessing Jesus as Savior and Lord. By saying: "I can't do this thing. But You've done it. And You can do it again, through me. I need You save me, I need You to guide me, or it's over for me."
- B. Listen to Paul as he reflects on the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ for us: "⁶ [T]hough he was in the form of God, [he] did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.⁸ And being

found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:6–11).

1. He’s died for our sins, risen for our justification, ascended to the right hand of His Father, and sends His Spirit back to make sure His children will be with Him where He is. Let’s together confess Jesus as our Savior and our Lord and in that glorify God!