Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Back to the Basics, Part 2
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
Code: 90-2

As I said to you this morning, we're trying to re-grip, if that's a good term, some of the things that are basic to our Christian growth. In this morning's message I tried to show you from the Scripture all the way, really, from Genesis sweeping all the way through Scripture, that it is a basic fact of spiritual life that we are to live to the glory of God. We were called that, redeemed for that purpose. And there is really no other purpose than that for those of us who know Christ. We said basically that we are not saved for any personal gain, particularly, although there are those things that we definitely gain. The purpose of our salvation is indicated in 1 John 2:12 was that our sins have been forgiven for His sake. We were saved for His sake that we might be to the praise of the glory of Christ.

And so it's basic then for our understanding to realize that we are to live to the glory of God. And as we said in summarizing how it is in the whole wide world, there are only two kinds of people: those that glorify God and those that do not do that. For those who refuse to give Him glory, there will be a great day of reckoning and a day of accounting and a day of judgment. For those who give Him glory there will be a wonderful day of reward.

Now that brings us tonight, to talk about the matter of how we actually glorify God. How do we do that? I mean in a pragmatic, practical sense. Remember, also, that I suggested to you this morning that glorifying God is the means to spiritual growth. As we gaze into the Scripture, focusing on His glory, we're changed from one level of glory to the next until we come closer and closer to the very likeness of Christ. So we desire then, to be from glory to glory to glory, moving along a path led by the Spirit of God that shall bring us to Christ's likeness. We then, desire to give glory to God. That is process. That is the soil, as I said this morning, in which spiritual growth occurs.

Now how do we do that practically? And I want to give you a little of a list. We may not get through the list this time. If not, maybe two weeks from tonight we'll do that.

Now first of all, we glorify God by confessing Jesus as Lord. We glorify God by confessing Jesus as Lord. Open your Bible to Philippians chapter 2. And I want to take you to a very familiar passage and perhaps shed a little bit different light on it than we may have noticed in previous times of studying this great chapter. You know about verses 5 through 8, in which the incarnation of Jesus Christ is described. It tells us that He was in the form of God, the very essence of God. But thought it not something to grasp and hold on to, to be in equality with God. But rather, made Himself of no reputation. Took upon Him the form of a servant. Was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of

the cross. And that is what theologians have called the cyanosis. That is the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the condescension of God, in human flesh, to die for men.

Christ then, in verses 5 to 8, is humiliated. This speaks of His humiliation. Verse 8 sums it up, "He humbled Himself." Verse 7 says, "He was made of no reputation. He took on the form of a servant. He was made in the likeness of men. He was found and fashioned as a man. He had to submit Himself unto death, even an ignominious and shameful death on a cross." All of those are marks of His humiliation.

Then immediately there's a transition of the thought of the apostle, in verse 9, that moves from the humiliation of Christ to the exaltation of Christ. And verse 9 says, "Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name." That is there is an identity of Christ, which surpasses any other. And, not only is God to exalt Him, but at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in Heaven, in earth, and under the earth. That is those creatures that are in the presence of God, those creatures who are on the earth, those creatures who are perhaps, captive is the indication here, beneath the earth, those creatures in every part of existence. And verse 11, "Every tongue is to confess," now watch this, "that Jesus Christ is Lord." And the reason is then given: to the glory of God the Father.

We glorify God then, initially, when we confess Jesus Christ as Lord. This is where glorifying God begins. You cannot glorify God apart from the confession of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. That's basic. In fact, if you'll go back to Romans chapter 1, a passage that we studied some time ago when we began our series in Romans, and notice verse 5, Paul speaking about his apostleship and the ministry that God had given to him, says, it is really through the Son of God and the power of the Spirit that we have received grace and apostleship. So God has dispensed grace, God has dispensed apostleship, and the reason for the obedience to the faith among all nations. In other words, Paul says, I am an apostle. I have been given the grace of God. I have been called to preach in order that I might bring the nations to obey the faith. And then the reason for that, at the end of verse 5: for His name.

And again, what I said to you this morning is emphasized. Paul says, "I minister to bring people to the place of glorifying the Lord for His namesake." In 3 John, the last of John's marvelous epistles, in verse 7, John says, "Because for His namesake they went forth." And he is talking about those who went out to proclaim the gospel. They went for His namesake. They went to bring glory to God.

And when we acknowledge the sovereign Lordship of Jesus Christ; when we acknowledge His deity; when we acknowledge His saving power; He is glorified. God is glorified. God has revealed Jesus Christ to be the Savior. When we affirm that revelation, when we believe that revelation, when we acknowledge the truth of that and embrace Christ as Lord, we therefore, agree with God's revelation. And thus, we give Him the honor and the glory that is due His name. So it all begins at that point.

A couple of other Scriptures come to mind. First of all, in John's gospel chapter 5, just to solidify this. In verse 23, the Lord Jesus speaking somewhat of His relationship to the Father, says this, "The Father," in verse 22, "has committed all judgment under the Son in order that," verse 23, "all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father who hath sent Him." Now that is a very important statement. There is no way possible for a person to honor God without honoring Jesus Christ. That's a package.

Wednesday night, I was preaching in a church in the area. And I finished my message and a lady came up to me all smiles. And she said, "Thank you, I enjoyed that very much. That was a very significant message. And I appreciated it so much, the opportunity to be here." I said, "You don't normally go to this church?" She said, "No, I don't." I said, "Well, what church do you go to?" She said, "Well, I alternate Sundays between the Presbyterian church and the Christian Science church." I said, "Well, that's a rather interesting combination. Are you hearing the same message in both?" "Well," she said, "oh yes!" She said, "I love God! And I go wherever they love God. And I found that the Presbyterians love God. And the Christian Science people, they love God too." And I said, "Well, it might interest you to know that the Christian Scientists do not believe," by the way, Christian Science is a misnomer if every there was one, it isn't Christian or scientific. It's like Grape-Nuts, they're not grapes or nuts. I don't know how they got that name. But anyway, she said, "The Christian Science people, they love God too." And I said, "It might interest you to know that they do not believe that Jesus is God." "Oh, no," she said, "Jesus is the Son of God. He is different than God. No, He's not God." I said, "Well why do you go there and then the Presbyterian church?" "Well, I can worship God in both places."

I proceeded to point out to her the essence of John 5:23, that you are under a very, very deceiving delusion if you think for one moment that you can worship God without acknowledging the deity of Jesus Christ and His Lordship. It's impossible. That kind of confusion is not uncommon. And I pointed out to her that she would be better off, perhaps, to leave both of those situations and get into the church where I happened to be speaking that night. And hear the pastor who is faithful to the Word of God.

But there are people who have this illusion that they love God and they serve God and they worship God and they have a big place in their life for religion, but they deny the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Not only in terms of its fact of in terms of its application in their own life. You cannot honor God unless you confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In fact, the Holy Spirit has come into the world to convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment, it says in John 16, and the sin is, "They believe not on Me."

"They believe not on Me." The ultimate sin that damns men to hell is a denial of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, His sovereign deity. That is why in Romans 10 it says that if you confess with your

mouth, that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him for the dead, you shall be saved. So God is glorified when the Son is glorified. To deny that He is Lord is to deny glory to God. It is to contradict God. Don't you remember in John's gospel how frequently Jesus said, "If you don't believe the works that I do, believe the words that I say. And there's even a greater witness than these, and that is My Father who is in Heaven." And the Father in Heaven gave, in my mind, the single greatest testimony every given to who Christ is, when out of Heaven He said, on several occasions, "This is My beloved Son, hear Him." And said in effect that this One is of the same essence as I am. And so it is then that you glorify God by confessing Jesus as Lord. And no one should live under the illusion that they can bring glory to God unless they have embraced the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Now we saw this also, in our study of worship, some years ago, in John chapter 4. If you'll turn there for just a moment, I want to draw your attention to some things. And in this particular passage, Jesus is talking to this woman of Samaria. And in verse 23, He says, "The hour comes and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth for the Father seeks such to worship Him." Now, Jesus says true worship is the worship of the Father ... worship of the Father. The Father, who? You'll remember that we pointed out that God is frequently called the God and Father of ... what's the rest of the phrase? Our Lord Jesus Christ.

You only worship the true God and the true Father when you worship the One who is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is, when you worship the God whom you affirm to be the same essence as His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. No one anywhere, anytime, any place, ever worships God but through Jesus Christ. And another time, Jesus said, "No man comes to the Father but," what? "By Me."

So we want to understand then, and I'm just making the point solid so you'll catch it, that to begin with, glorifying God is a matter of confessing Jesus as Lord. And I think some of us feel that persons who do not do that, but are religious or look to God in a general or vague way, are still worshipping God and may be all right. And that is absolutely not so. Not so.

Now the second factor in this practical list of ways to glorify God, and this one is also rather encompassing. We glorify God number one, by confessing Jesus as Lord. Number two we glorify God by aiming our life at that purpose. By aiming our life at that purpose. In other words, that's what we're saying this morning we have to have as our life goal to glorify God. That needs to be the life goal. In other words, whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, 1 Corinthians 10:31, or whatever you do. And why does he pick eating and drinking? Well, you can't think of anything more mundane than that. Anything more academic, in the sense of just a simple necessity as eating and drinking, I mean that's so routine you wouldn't think that it had much to do with whether you glorify God or not. So the apostle Paul suggests to us that even in the most mundane, even in the most common things of life, even in the most menial functions of human existence, we are to have as a consuming goal to

glorify the Lord. That is our objective. And we must aim our life at that purpose. It's the old story, if you don't know what your target is you haven't got a chance to hit it. So you have to set that as your life goal.

And as I shared with you briefly this morning in one of the services, that is in fact something that I got by the Spirit of God's grace, set into my mind early in my ministry: that my life goal could be simply reduced to glorifying God. That becomes an all-pervasive attitude. Now, I don't always have that attitude as dominantly as I'd like to. But I know I always should. And for me that simplifies all of Christian living.

When something happens, for example, that upsets me, and many things do; something happens that grieves me; or something happens that irritates me in the process of ministry or life or whatever, and I do have normal emotions and normal responses. When something like that happens, it seems to be that there is a control factor in my mind that says, "Now, whatever you do, do it to the glory of God." And that becomes a very key thing in the control of my behavior and my response. You say, "Well how do you get to that?" Well, it was a training process. I don't do it all the time; everything I do isn't to the glory of the Lord. But I do it more than I used to do it because I've trained myself, by repetition, to think that way. I want to do what'll bring glory to the Lord. I want to do what'll bring honor to the Lord.

But let me go a step further. It isn't just that you train yourself to do it. The reason you try to train yourself to do it is because it is the deepest desire of your heart. Right? In other words, a truly redeemed person isn't gritting his teeth and saying I'm going do this even if I hate it. He saying to himself this is what I really want more than anything else. So you set in motion, those things to train yourself. And when I see people who've repeatedly, in their life patterns, do that which obviously does not honor God, (1) I could conclude that they have an absolute lack of self-discipline; (2) I could conclude that the reason they can't train themselves to do that is because that's really not their deepest desire.

I don't know how it is with you but I've found out that the things I desire most, I'm usually able some how or other, to pursue. Have you found that out? I mean if they're within reason. And so I believe that at some point in your life, there's got to be this control factor that says, "I will do whatever honors God. I will do whatever glorifies the Lord." That means in anything. That means the way you respond to people around you. The way you respond in your family. The way you respond in your school or your job or your environment. The things you choose to do in life. And all of the factors of life are controlled by that thought of glorifying God. And the model for this is none other than Jesus who in John 8:50 sums it up and says, actually in verse 49, "I honor My Father," He says, "I honor my Father." What a beautiful thought. I honor my Father. That was His goal. And in verse 50, "I seek not Mine own glory."

I honor my Father. That is the essential direction of the life of a Christian. We're servants. And as servants our objective is to honor our Father, to bring Him glory, to bring Him praise. That was characteristic of Paul's life. He says in 1 Corinthians 3, "Who then is Paul? And who is Apollos?" And somebody from the back of the room says the two greatest preachers in the world. He says, "We're just servants through whom you believed. Even as the Lord gave to every man, I have planted and Apollos watered, but God," what? "Gave the increase." I honor my Father. I mean that's the bottom line. The Christian life is that simple at least in terms of verbalizing the basic. Hypocrites, of course, as we saw in Matthew chapter 6 verse 2 try to steal God's glory by parading around their own glory. They're far from what God would desire.

So initially then, to glorify God means I confess Jesus as Lord to the glory of God the Father. Secondly, I aim my life at that purpose. And that is two things: (1) it is a deep desire. And you say to yourself I don't have that desire. And I say to you then you better recheck on number one as to whether or not you really have confessed Him as Lord and been truly redeemed. Because if the deepest desire of your heart is not to aim your life at His glory, then something is greatly wrong down there where the deepest desire exists. It should be your deepest desire. And based upon that, you then capture the means that are available to you to discipline yourself to aim at that purpose. So that they glory of God becomes the control factor. Honoring God becomes the control factor in your life.

I'm going to give you some more practical things on this second one. How does this flesh out? All right, let me give you some ways to test it. Here's how you can tell if you're really living for the glory of the Lord, if that's the consuming thing. And I'll give you several. First of all, ask yourself if you prefer Him and His Kingdom at any cost. Ask yourself that, at any cost. I mean isn't that what Jesus said when He said to those who wanted to follow Him, "Leave all and follow Me." Isn't that what He said when He said, "If you don't hate your father and your mother, you're not worthy to be My disciple." Isn't that what He meant when He said, "If you don't take up your cross," that is willing to die, "and follow Me, you're not even worthy to be My disciple." Isn't that what He meant, when in a parable He said, "No man builds a tower unless he first counts the cost." Isn't that what He was after with the rich young ruler who wanted so much to follow Jesus but when he heard the price, went away because he didn't want to pay it. Yes. All of those things tell us that true disciples are those who prefer the Lord and His Kingdom above all us, no matter what the cost.

His glory is the issue. Let me illustrate this to you in a rather unique illustration in Exodus chapter 32. We're all the way back now, to the wilderness wandering of the children of Israel. And in chapter 32 is that horrible tragedy of the golden calf. While Moses being away and leaving the people to Aaron, the people then pursue the worship of the true God in a false image and get involved in this terrible idolatry. And the Lord, of course, comes in great judgment.

Moses comes down in verse 25, and I want you to see what happens. Moses saw that the people were naked. Now this is incredible. This is an orgy. The children of Israel have taken their clothes off. They are participating in an orgy that is inconceivable when you stop to think of the fact that there were as many as 2 million people wandering in the wilderness. I don't know how many of them were naked. But it says, "Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies." So they must have been naked enough to have shamed themselves. And I want you to notice that Aaron is blamed and you can be sure that Aaron didn't go around and undress everybody. But the blame was laid at the feet of leadership.

And so this terrible, shameful thing reaches the eyes of Moses. And he stood in the gate of the camp and said, "'Who's on the Lord's side, go ahead and come to me.' And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him," the priestly line. And he said to them, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, put every man his sword by his side and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp and slay every man his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor." Go kill your family, go kill your friends, go kill your neighbors. You say, "Wait a minute! Wait a minute! Killing my enemies is one thing, killing my brothers is something else. Why?"

Because the glory of God has been dishonored. Because the first commandment said that there was never to be any graven image, right? That there was to be "no other God before Me." And this was, in a sense, them usurping the glory that belonged to God and giving it to their own manmade idol. And God says this is such a serious act of defiance and rebellion toward the glory of the true God, these people need to die. And He says you go kill your own friends, your own family, your own neighbors. What would you have done? Would your zeal for the glory of God have been so great that you would have gone out to slaughter the people you loved?

Verse 28 says, "And the children of Levi, did according to the word of Moses. And there fell of the people that day, about 3 thousand men." They did it. They went out in a bloodletting slaughter and killed their own family and their own friends. You say, "You mean to tell me that the glory of God and the honor that belongs to God is so important that God, Himself, commanded the execution of 3 thousand men?" And there may have been others as well; we don't know the full amount. If included were women, it would have even been more. We don't know whether they were or not. "You mean God authorized that bloody massacre to preserve His glory?" That's right.

Now what is more amazing to me than the fact that God desired that, I can understand that because God is a purer eyes than to behold evil, cannot look on iniquity and wanted to get the idolaters out from among his people, like a surgeon cuts cancer out of a human body, I can understand that. What is hard for me to understand, and in a sense is thrilling for me to understand, is that the Levites, the priests of God, had enough of an understanding of the glory of God to do it. Even though the cost was fearful. And they would have to live all the rest of their life with a vivid image in their minds of running a sword through the heart of one they loved. But such was the commitment to the glory of

God.

So, aiming your life at that purpose means that you would take a stand against evil. In other words, you would prefer God and His Kingdom above everything else, whatever the price. And sometimes, as I mentioned, the price is your own life. And sometimes the price is a very bold stand against evil ... a very bold stand against evil. And that, I guess, takes me to the second point.

Not only do we aim at His glory when we prefer Him and His Kingdom above everybody else, including ourselves. But secondly, and just almost the same thought but a shade different, we aim our lives at His glory when we are content to do His will at any cost. Not only that we prefer His glory. But that we're willing to do His will no matter what circumstances it may bring to us.

The price for doing the will of God may be very high. It does mean the abandonment of all your own desires and self-will. It does mean a living sacrifice, that is you sacrifice on the altar all your hopes and dreams and ambitions. I mean I don't know that we really understand what it means to present our bodies a living sacrifice. I think most people want to do what they want to do. They want what they want. They want to possess what they want to possess. They want a career where they want a career. They want success where they want success. And they're not willing to say Lord, if You don't want me to have that, I gladly abandon that. They're not understanding what Jesus meant when He said, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." They think they have to clutch the things.

But Jesus set the example in John 12:27 when He prayed to the Father, "Now is My soul troubled and what shall I say? Father save Me for this hour?" Shall I ask you to spare me the cross, "But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name." In other words, all I care about is Your glory. And the voice comes from Heaven saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." In other words, Jesus says should I ask you not to let me die. Should I ask You to remove the cross? No! All I ask is that You glorify Your name. And you know Jesus went to the cross and God was glorified.

Glorifying God then, aiming your life at the purpose, means that you prefer His Kingdom to all other things and will take a stand to that extent no matter what it costs. Secondly it means you personally will do His will no matter what. That's your consuming desire. So you can do a little inventory. What is it that you prefer above all things? Are you zealous for God or for your own enterprises? Are you willing to pay any price to do His will? Are you eager for that? Talks about those who were, in Hebrews 11, and it says, "Of whom the world was not worthy," Hebrews 11:38. The people who are so devoted to the cause of God, so devoted to His glory, so devoted to His honor, so content to do His will at any cost, are people of whom the world isn't even worthy.

So aiming my life at that purpose means preferring His Kingdom beyond anything else. It means that since I prefer His Kingdom beyond anything else, I am content do His will within that Kingdom no

matter what it costs me. No matter what dreams and ambitions and hopes and schemes and desires, I have to set aside. No matter what possessions I have to set aside. No matter what relationships I have to set aside. Since I prefer Him above all else, I am content to do that for His glory.

And you remember in the book of Daniel, Daniel's three friends, great young men, young men who were the prime young men of Israel. The Babylonians named them Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednago. They were told you're going to get thrown in a fiery furnace, in Daniel chapter 3. They said well, that doesn't bother us. That doesn't bother us at all. They said in Daniel 3, "Our God is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace. And He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto you, O king, we won't serve your gods or worship your golden image, which you have set up." Our God can save us from the fire, but even if He doesn't we wouldn't think of worshipping you or your idols. Now that's an uncompromising spirit. That's the spirit of someone who aims his life at the glory of God, willing to do God's will at any cost, because that is the highest preference. That's the place of blessing.

Let me give you just a couple of other elements to this because I think they're very essential. A third element of aiming your life at the glory of God is suffering when He suffers. Suffering when He suffers. This is a very important thought. We read in the Bible about being zealous for God, zealous for His name. Now the word "zeal" has a sort of a two-edged meaning. On the one hand, to be zealous means to be aggressively for something. At the same time, it means to be aggressively against something. It is in this sense: if I am zealous for good that means I hate evil. If I am zealous for God, I hate the devil. If I am zealous for the advance of the Kingdom, I hate anything that impinges that advancement. If I am zealous for the Word of God, I hate that which is a lie and which is antithetical to the Word of God. So zealous means I am consumed with that, of course, which You set before me. It is a compound affection, a mixture of love and hate. I am zealous for God in that I love His righteousness and I hate sin. In fact, it's that which is spoken of, of the church in Revelation 2:2 where it says, "Thou canst not bear them that are evil."

Now you want to do a little more inventory in your life? You wanna find out if your life is really aimed at glorifying God, ask yourself this question: do you prefer Him and the advancement of His Kingdom to everything else in your life? Secondly, will you then, in that preference, be content to do His will no matter what it costs you of your own dreams and your own ambition. Thirdly, do you so hate that which is evil that when God is dishonored, you suffer along with Him? Do you? Do you have that aversion to evil that God does? When you see sin, does it cause you to be offended as it does to God? And when God's name is taken in vain and His holy majesty dishonored, does that cause you to have pain? Do you hurt when God is dishonored?

In Psalm 69, I want you to look at it for a moment. There is a passage that is a messianic, prophetic passage because the New Testament indicates so. But in Psalm 69 verse 9, David is speaking of his passionate, consuming love for God. And he identifies it, in verse 9, by saying, "For the zeal," that's

that strong affection that combines love and hate, "zeal for Your House." And what he means by that is I have such a tremendous passion for Your worship.

The temple he has in mind, of course, is the place of worship. My zeal for worship is eating me up. In other words, he says I am driven by this, I am consumed by this. I literally live and breathe to express worship. And then this, that's the positive side, "The zeal of Your House is consuming me." The negative is, "And the reproaches of those who reproach you are fallen on me." In other words, I have such a zeal for You and Your glory and Your Kingdom and Your worship and Your majesty and all of that, that when someone reproaches You they reproach me. When someone hits You, I feel the pain. And in verse 10 he says, "When I weep and fast, I must endure scorn." Well what made him and fast? Reproaches on God, when evil men tarnished the name of God. When men blasphemed the name of God.

When the world around us speaks evil of Jesus Christ, does that grieve your heart? Does that pain you deeply? That's an indicator that your life is aimed at His glory. Do you have some holy indignation? That was certainly true of David in Psalm 69.

But let's see its fulfillment in Christ in John chapter 2. John chapter 2 verse 13 the Jewish Passover was at hand so Jesus went up to Jerusalem, up to the plateau for the Passover celebration. And in going into Jerusalem, He went also to the temple. And in the temple He found people that were selling oxen and sheep and doves. And, of course, they were selling them at an exorbitant price and they were ripping off the people. And He found the changers of money. There was a certain law in the temple that you could only give a certain kind of coinage. And when all these people came from different provinces and different parts of the world, they had different kinds of coinage. And in order to give their money in the temple, they had to have their coins changed into the proper kind. And when that was done, the exchange was really exorbitant. It amounted to a scandal.

And so Jesus sees this. He sees exorbitant prices being charged for the animals. And all the priests had to do was say well your animal's got a blemish so take your animal out of here and you'll have to buy one of ours. And the price was unrealistic. And so He made a whip, in verse 15, when He saw this in the temple, and drove everybody out of the temple: the sheep, the oxen, poured out the changers money, overthrew the tables. By the way, He did this twice: once at the beginning of His ministry, recorded here and once at the end. And He said to them that sold doves, "Take these things from here and make not My Father's House, a house of merchandise." And the disciples, or His disciples, remembered that it was written. And where did it come to mind from? Psalm 69:9, "The zeal of thine House has eaten me up." The rest of the verse, "The things that they have done to reproach Your name have pained me."

Are you in pain when God is dishonored? Does it grieve your heart or can you tolerate sin? I am amazed that some people can be even entertained by it. Not someone whose whole life focus is the

glory of God. And then there's one other thing I would like to speak to of this second point. In glorifying God by aiming our life at our purpose, that means, as we've already seen, that first of all, we prefer His Kingdom above everything else. Secondly, in preferring His Kingdom, we're therefore content to be obedient to His will at any cost. Thirdly, we suffer when He suffers. But fourthly, and I think this is a very important point, one who aims his life at the glory of God, mark this, is content to by outdone by others as long as God is glorified. Okay? In other words, you can sort of do a little inventory in your own life. How about your humility? Humility is the mark of someone whose greatest concern is the glory of God. Because they're not ever concerned about what happens to them.

Every time I hear about somebody who got ruffled and upset and took their ball and went home, I know I'm dealing with someone who doesn't live to the glory of God. Because no matter the deprivation might have been, no matter what might have occurred, if you sought that God should be glorified then you wouldn't be concerned about yourself. Let me give an illustration of this in Philippians chapter 1. And I'm only selecting illustrations among many. But these are representative of these truths and you'll find these truths illustrated repeatedly.

Now you have to understand that as the apostle Paul writes Philippians, he is a prisoner. The epistle is written in Rome. And Paul is incarcerated, to some degree, bound. And as a result of his being bound, it's amazing what's happened to his reputation. Amazing.

I know a little about this because when I was sued, it was amazing how there were some people who said, "Well, I always knew there was something rotten in that apple. There was something wrong with him. And now he's gonna get his due." In fact, I heard someone who said that, "Now he'll finally get his due, the truth will be told." And there are always those people who sort of enjoy your agony.

And so when Paul went into jail, a lot of second-rate preachers all of a sudden started to fight for the limelight. Paul was in prison and the word started being pushed around that he was prison because the Lord put him on shelf; he blew his ministry. The Lord just shuffled him off to jail to get rid of him, get him out of the scene. And some people were even saying, "Well, boy for the Lord to put him on the shelf he must have done something very awful." And there may have been questions about his spiritual integrity and so forth and so forth.

And so, as he writes to the Philippians, he wants to let them know his attitude. So in verse 12, he begins by saying, "I want you to understand brethren that the things that have happened to me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel." My being in jail, in effect, he says has not halted my ministry. It's just really fallen out for the increase of my ministry. Because my chains in Christ are now manifest in all the palace and in all other places. In other words he's leading people in the palace to Christ. And everywhere they go, they're talking about what's happened to them.

You see the biggest problem wasn't Paul being in jail, Paul being a prisoner. The biggest problem was the people who had to be under his influence where he was. It was no problem for him to be incarcerated and bound by a soldier. It was a problem for the soldier to be bound with Paul. That was the problem because of the tremendous power of his life.

And he also says, "Not only has the furtherance of the gospel occurred because of my imprisonment but," verse 14, "many of the brethren in the Lord becoming confident by my chains are much more bold to speak the Word without fear." It also has increased the fact that other people have a greater amount of courage to preach the gospel because they see that being put in prison isn't necessarily all that bad.

And then he says this, in verse 15, "Some indeed preach Christ out of envy and strife. And some also of goodwill." Some are out there preaching Christ, taking my place, as it were, in the place of freedom and they're preaching out of goodwill toward me. They have good thoughts toward me and good words toward me and they're supportive of my ministry and they're affirming of my ministry. And some are out there and their attitude is envy and their attitude is strife.

And you can understand that because Paul was the most beloved and the most proficient and the most profound and the most gifted and the most revelations were given to him. And he was the unique man of God to touch the Gentile world. Everybody who was a Christian in the Gentile world was, at some point or another, connected to the ministry of Paul. And some of these other guys coming along wanted so desperately to be somebody and envy and strife got into the way. So in verse 16 he says, "One preaches Christ contentiously." That is fighting and opposing me. Not sincerely, all he wants to do is add more pain to my chains. He's trying to hurt me. He's trying to destroy my reputation and damage my image. And others are preaching Christ with love toward me, he says in verse 17. And they know that I'm set for the defense of the gospel and that's why I'm here.

Now would be his attitude? Listen to the picture. He's the old warhorse. He's on the shelf. He's coming to the end of his life. He's in jail. His freedoms are limited. Here comes a whole young generation of people. And it's a time in his life when he's losing that he really relished in and that was the love of the churches. He could wander around with freedom and everywhere he went they embraced him and they love him. He could preach all night, literally all night. Remember a guy sitting in a window? And he started to preach, he preached in the middle of the night. The guy fell asleep and fell out of the window and broke his neck and died. You know what happened? They went down and raised him from the dead. Brought him back up and he preached the rest of the night. He wasn't done. They loved him.

And when he tried to leave the Ephesian elders in Miletus, in Acts 20, they threw their arms around him; tears ran all down his neck. They embraced him and kissed him and hardly would let him go. They loved the man. The man knew what it was to be beloved. He knew what it was to have the love

and the esteem of the people. And now he was set apart and others were coming along, taking that place. And he could have been very bitter. And he could have been very jealous. And he could have said this is not acceptable to me. He could have fought against this. The least he could have done was return the bitterness to those who were giving bitterness to him.

But no, no, he says, "Even though they preach out of envy, even though they preach out of strife, even though they preach Christ contentiously, even though they aren't sincere, and even though they're trying to add more pain to my chains," I love this in verse 18, "so what." So what. Nevertheless. In every way, with no equivocation, whether in pretense or in truth, whether they're legitimate or not, Christ is preached. And in that I do rejoice. Yea. And will rejoice. Now there my dear friends, is a man whose life is aimed at the glory of the Lord and he doesn't care who the human instrument is. Do you get that? Whether it's him or not.

I remember early in my ministry at Grace Church, the two pastors had a Sunday school contest to see who could get the most people in the Sunday school. And the one that lost got sick and threw up. The competition was so intense. I have seen fights and jealousies and envies between churches and pastors and people. In fact, they used to say that when Lucifer fell out of Heaven, he landed in the choir loft. Because there was always so much argument going on in the choir about who got the solos. Thank the Lord that God has given us such wonderful people in that ministry here. But I tell you, some places it's a fight to be prominent. That's true in Christianity so many times.

And sometimes in our own little world we feel that way. Somebody violates our territory in our Sunday school class or in our Bible study or in our flock group or somebody does exactly what we do only better than we do it. How do you handle that? How do you handle it when the best thing you do is sing and somebody sings so much better than you? Or the best thing you do is teach and somebody does teaching so much better than you? Or the best thing you do is counsel with folks and somebody else does it so much than you, from your perspective? How do you handle that? Well, if your life is aimed at His glory, you rejoice, don't you? Because you're not the issue, isn't that true? You're not the issue. The issue is what Paul says, "So what." This isn't a battle of egos, Christ is preached. That's all. And that's the mark of a person whose life is aimed at glorifying God.

Well, there are twelve points in my list. I'm in deep trouble folks. Who cares? So what. I'll be back another day. You understand what I'm driving at, don't you? This is it in the Christian life. And I want you, because I love you and because I care about you, I want you to set your life to glorify God. I want that to be the goal and objective of everything you do. I want you to learn not to react instantaneously in the flesh. But I want you to have that control factor of aiming your life at His glory so that you so prefer His Kingdom that no matter what happens, His Kingdom is the only issue. Therefore you would be content to do His will no matter what sacrifice that would involve. And when He is dishonored, you feel the pain. And you're content to be outdone by others who do exactly what you do better than you do it, if He is glorified.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to have a church full of people who all the time live like that? Who are just totally consumed at all times with the glory of the Lord. Wouldn't it be wonderful to be married to someone like that? And wouldn't it be wonderful to have children like that? Whose only concern was the glory of the Lord. That's the issue. Well, next time I will give you the key remaining ones so you'll know practically what else the Scripture has to say.

Let's bow in prayer. I want you to pray a prayer in your own heart instead of me giving you words. I want to just ask the Lord to bring you to this point that we've talked about tonight. That means, first of all, confessing Jesus as Lord to the glory of God, the Father. And secondly, whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, doing it all to the glory of God. I want to say in your heart, "Yes, Lord. I confess you as sovereign Lord and Master. And I glorify God for what You've done." And I want you to pray in your own words, "Lord I covenant with You to live my life aiming at Your glory and Your glory alone. Seeking Your Kingdom and letting You add all other things." Take a few moments in silent prayer.

Father, I pray that Your Spirit, so evident with us tonight, what a wonderful night. Lovely and challenging music, exhorting our hearts, comforting our spirits, calling us to worship and praise, calling us to be servants and then Your Word bringing us again to the focus on Your glory, may we be obedient to respond. And I know right now, Lord, that there are some here who are fighting that. They want to say, "Yes. Yes I wanna confess you as Lord but that means I have to give up myself." There are some Christians who want to say, "Lord, I want to give You glory no matter what it costs me," but they find it hard to say that because they hold so tenaciously to some things, some possessions, some ambitions, some relationships. And so I pray Lord, that by Your Spirit, You'll free us from those things that bind us and hold us back from confessing Christ as Lord and aiming our life at that purpose of Your glory. We pray that You would move among us on every heart for Christ's sake. Amen.

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