

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

Learning How to Live for God's Glory

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 90-309

As we turn to the Word of God tonight, just a reminder, and a brief one at that, that we have been looking at the great doctrines of the Bible. We have finally come to this wonderful doctrine of sanctification. And we had been talking about what it means to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

What it means to deal with the sin in our lives. What it means to become increasingly holy. As we do what the Apostle Paul commanded us to do, dealing with sin in our lives in a very strong way.

2 Corinthians 7:1: "Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God." We are moving along a path of increasing holiness, increasing likeness to Christ. We are moving through phases of spiritual growth from being.

As 1 John 2:12-14 puts it, "Spiritual children who know God as our Father and little more and therefore are tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine to spiritual young men who are strong in the word and strong in doctrine and therefore have overcome the wicked one who appears disguised as an angel of light promoting false religion."

We go beyond that, however, to becoming spiritual fathers of whom John writes, "You have known him who is from the beginning. One thing to know, God is your father." Something else to know, sound doctrine. Something else to know, God personally and intimately and fully and that's the essence of spiritual maturity.

And if we are going to grow in spiritual maturity, if we're going to be progressively set apart from sin, progressively sanctified, then dealing with sin is an absolutely critical matter. And in Romans 8, "Last time we emphasized the idea that those of us who live by the Spirit are killing the deeds of the body." We are killing sin. We are dealing sin a deathblow.

Regularly, routinely, those of us who have been transformed, no longer servants of sin but servants of righteousness. No longer servants of Satan but servants of God. We are engaged in a warfare with sin. We are a new creation in Christ, however, we are incarcerated in unredeemed flesh until our glorification and the battle is on. We are required to strike deathblows at the sin that so easily besets us.

We talked last time about the analogy of the Old Testament story of Agage and how Samuel came along and packed Agage to pieces. That is what we must do with sin. Deal with it severely. In our conscience, in our mind, in our heart, because that's where it conceives and gives birth to sin and its destruction. That was the negative approach. I want to turn tonight to a positive approach.

Last week we were looking at sin, recognizing it, dealing with it. I want to turn from that in one sense and yet in another sense I will relate it to sin. And I want to talk about how you'd take a positive approach to your Christian life, so that you're not spending all your time poking around in the dark, in the ugly places of your life. I want you to take a positive approach.

And what sums all that up, very simply, is learning to live to the Glory of God. Learning to live to the Glory of God. I'm convinced that's really the master key that unlocks all the treasures of sanctification. This is the way to progress spiritually, is to focus on the Glory of God. The old catechism says the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

Now this is foundational, and I don't want to get too caught up in this or we won't get to the applicable part. But suffice it to say this, God made everything for His glory. God made absolutely everything for His glory. That was and is the intention as expressed in Romans 11:36: "From Him, through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen."

Everything designed by God originally for His glory. You can talk about the created universe, the inanimate universe if you will - Psalm 19:1: "The heavens declare the Glory of God. Firmament shows his handiwork."

You can talk about the animate creation - Isaiah 43:20: "The beast of the field will give me honor." Even the animal kingdom has not rebelled although it is a part of the fallen creation. There are no anti-God agnostic or atheist animals. They are animate but they are not aware that they are animate since they don't have any self-awareness and are not made in the image of God for relationships. But nonetheless, they simply do what God designed them to do. They point to a creator. They point to the wisdom and the power of their creator.

The angels of heaven have the responsibility to give glory to God and we don't need much reminder beyond the second chapter of Luke. Suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest."

Everything that God has made is designed to give Him glory. And not to let us out. We hear this benediction, this wonderful statement from Paul in 1 Timothy 1:17, "Now to the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." And he is doing there what all humans should do.

All of creation is to give God glory. All people are commanded to give Him glory. And this is repeated, obviously, in many, many places in the word of God. And when people do not do that it is a serious and eternally devastating violation of God's command. We are called to give God glory.

In the book of Revelation 14: "In the future time, an angel flying in mid-heaven, having the eternal gospel to preach to those that live on the earth, every nation, tribe, tongue and people, an angel literally going to fly through the heavens in the time of the tribulation preaching a message, a message to everyone living on this earth."

And here is the message: he said with a loud voice, fear God and give Him glory because the hour of His judgment has come. Worship Him who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and the springs of water. Fear God and give Him glory.

That is the most basic command, the fear of God, to give Him glory. Or to put it in the language of the Old and the New Testament, love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. All people alive are commanded to give God glory.

And ultimate condemnation and ultimate damnation comes when people refuse to do that. Romans 1: "The wrath of God" - verse 18 - "is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." "Why" - verse 21 - "even though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God. The sin of man is the failure to glorify God. The failure to give to God the honor that he is due."

In Jeremiah 13, the prophet Jeremiah speaking for God says - and these are strong words and turned out to be tragic ones - Jeremiah 13:15: "Listen and give heed. Do not be proud or haughty for the Lord has spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God before he brings darkness and before your feet stumble on the dusty mountains. And while you're hoping for light, he makes it into deep darkness and turns it into gloom. But if you will not listen, my soul will sob in secret for such pride and my eyes will bitterly weep and flow down with tears because the flock of the Lord has been taken captive. The prophet says to Israel, I will weep the tears of God as you go into captivity, which will be your judgment if you do not give glory to God."

It is familiar to us - go back to the book of Daniel for a moment and recall the Daniel 4 where judgment falls. Daniel 4:30. Nebuchadnezzar is the main character here, the king, king of Babylon walking on the roof of the royal palace in Babylon. The king reflected in verse 30, and said, "Is this not Babylon the great, which I have built as a royal residence by the might of my power? And for the glory of my majesty?"

Here is a pagan king taking glory to himself as he surveys the greatness of the wonders of Babylon. God's response was immediate. While the words was in the king's mouth, a voice came to heaven

saying, "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared. Sovereignty has been removed from you." You're no longer king. "You will be driven away from mankind and your dwelling place will be with the beast of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle in seven periods of time" - most likely seven years - "will pass over you until you recognize that the most high is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows on whomever he wishes."

Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from mankind, began eating grass like cattle, his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagle's feathers and his nails like bird's claws. He turned into an absolute maniac, grazed like a wild animal. Completely bereft of all rational thinking.

At the end of that period, verse 34, "I Nebuchadnezzar raise my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me and I blessed the most high and praised and honored Him who lives forever and his dominion is an everlasting dominion and his kingdom endures from generation to generation and all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing but he does according to his will and the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth and no one can ward off his hand or say to him, 'What hast thou done?' At that time, my reason returned to me and my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out and I was established, reestablished, in my sovereignty and surpassing greatness was added to me. And now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the king of heaven for all His works are true and His ways just and he is able to humble those who walk in pride. And you will see Nebuchadnezzar one day in heaven."

Pretty profound lesson about giving glory to anyone but God. And when you give the true and appropriate glory to God, God will honor you as He did Nebuchadnezzar.

Acts 12, another fascinating look at a pagan who wanted to take glory to himself. The Acts 12 - we'll just look at the 20th verse. Well, verse 21. I won't give you too much of the background. We want to get keep moving. It's about Herod on an appointed day. Herod put on his royal apparel, took his seat on the rostrum and began to deliver an address to the people.

Apparently Herod had declared this to be Herod day. And he got up on his throne and he wanted everybody to come and give him honor. And the people kept crying out, the voice of a God and not of a man. And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory. And he was eaten by worms and died.

Now that was not the planned ending of Herod day by anybody's imagination. An angel of the Lord came, struck him and he was eaten by worms and died. God sent an angel to kill him and right there he was eaten by worms. That's pretty dramatic. When people came home and their wives said, "Well, what happened at Herod day?" "You won't believe it if I tell you."

You see everyone who's ever been created has been given the obligation and the mandate and the command to glorify God. And if you want to know what history is, history is the account, Biblical history and beyond is the account of what happens to people who do and what happens to people who don't and eternity will reflect that. People who give God glory will spend forever in His presence to people who did not give God glory will spend forever out of His presence and that's the dividing point. In fact, judgment falls on those who refuse to give God glory.

Now let me just mention something for clarification cause you might ask about it. There are two aspects to God's glory. One is intrinsic and the other is extrinsic. When we talk about God's intrinsic glory, we don't give Him that glory. God's intrinsic glory is that glory which belongs to his person. He is not in need of that kind of glory. He has all of that in himself. He is called in Acts 7:2 the God of glory, or the God who is himself glory or the God who defines glory.

Isaiah 6:3, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of host. The whole Earth is full of His glory." That's the intrinsic glory of God. That is the reality of the fullness of His person. The effulgence of His deity. The flashing of His holy person. He cannot be given this glory nor can this glory be removed from Him. That's why he himself said, "My glory shall I not give to another." His glory is never diminished, His intrinsic glory is never diminished nor is it ever increased. By the way, I will not give my glory to another is Isaiah 48:11.

All that can be done is to acknowledge it. You can only acknowledge it. You can only affirm it, ascribe to the Lord, glory. You can only affirm that it is true and that is what worshipping is. It is saying, "Oh God, you are glorious. You are all glorious." Like Psalms 24: "Lift up your heads o gates, be lifted up o ancient doors that the king of glory may come in. The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads o gates, lift them up o ancient doors that the king of glory may come in. Who is this king of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the king of Glory. We are acknowledging His glory." That is His intrinsic glory.

But there's another aspect of His glory, his extrinsic glory. And that is that ascription that we give to Him, that glory which we give to Him in worship, that honoring of Him and worshipping Him and esteeming Him. Psalm 29:1, "Ascribe to the Lord glory." Ephesians 3:21: "To Him be glory in the church." In the church.

We affirm that glory that we give him praise. Listen to Jude 25. "To the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory," be glory. We're not adding to God and if we don't praise Him we're not diminishing from his intrinsic glory. But we had a responsibility outside of who He is to render him the appropriate worship and the appropriate recognition of His glory.

As a believer, you need to know that this is basic to your spiritual life. In fact, it might surprise you, go back to the foundation. The first way you give God glory. I'm going you a little list here - the first way you give God glory is by receiving Jesus as the Lord. By receiving Jesus as the Lord. When you come in repentance and saving faith to God through Christ, you are giving Him glory.

Listen to Philippians 2:9-11: "Speaking of Christ, God highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name, which is above every name, and that name is Lord. Lord is the supreme name. That at the name of Jesus, that name being Lord, every knee should bow of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth" - the verse 11 - "and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

That's the start. When you acknowledge Christ, embrace Christ, come to faith in Christ, believe the Gospel, confess Jesus Christ as Lord, that's when you start to glorify God. Romans 1:5 talks about those who went out to preach the Gospel for the sake of the name, for the glory of God. And 3 John 7, same thing, preaching Gospel for the same of the name.

And I always think about Henry Martin, the missionary to India who when he first went there was absolutely stunned by the horrors of Indian worship, Hindu worship. And he went to a temple and in that temple he was so overwrought with agony and sorry that in his diary he said I ran out of the place. I ran out of the place with tears coming down my face and I took my pen and these are the words that he wrote. I cannot endure existing if Jesus is to be so dishonored.

Cause He knew what it was to give glory to God by honoring the Son. And John 5 tells us if you don't honor the Father, you don't honor the Son. If you don't honor the Son. you can't honor the Father. Everything starts with receiving Jesus as Lord. If you haven't done that you have no capacity to glorify God at all. You're living a life that is completely unglorifying to God. You are refusing to glorify God because it starts with Christ, and apart from Him you will not glorify Him at all ever and you will suffer the consequences of all those who refuse to give Him glory.

So it begins with a true Gospel and understanding of the lordship of Christ and the confession of Jesus as Lord. Now let's assume that. We're Christians, what's the next thing we need to do? And I'm going to be real plain and simple if you will. First, you glorify God by confessing Jesus as Lord. Secondly, you glorify God by aiming your life at that purpose, the purpose of glory. You glorify God by aiming your life at that. I mean that's 1 Corinthians 10:31. Whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do all to the glory of God. Whatever you do down to the most mundane, routine thing - eating and drinking - down to the very minor details of physical life, you do it all to my glory. Everything.

This is the goal of your life. Will it glorify Him? Will it glorify Him? Will it glorify Him? No matter what it is. If it's something simple like eating and drinking, just the routine things. Or if it's something far more difficult than that. If it's the big huge decisions. If it's standing in the middle of a temptation or in the

middle of a crisis or in the middle of an opportunity to compromise or in the middle of distress or suffering. Whatever it is the focus has to be on glorifying Him no matter what it costs.

And I'll show you sometimes the costs can be very severe. Turn to Exodus 32. This is as severe as it gets. It is an amazing Old Testament illustration. Exodus 32. You remember what happened in this context. The people of Israel are down at the foot of Mount Sinai, Moses goes up to get the law, he comes back and under the leadership of Aaron they have made a golden calf that is supposed to represent the true and living God, Jehovah. What a horrible violation of the very first command that Moses had received on the mountain. They are engaged on idolatry and Aaron followed their lead.

So Moses comes back confronts Aaron. He asks him, "What in the world?" Verse 21: "What did these people do to you that you have brought such great sin upon them?" And Aaron said, "Don't let the anger of my Lord burn. You know the people yourself. They're prone to evil. It's not my fault. They're just bent this way. They're just like that." For they said to me, "Make a God," literally they said, "Make God for us who will go before us for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we don't know what's become of him." And I said to them, "Whoever has any gold let them tear it off. And so they gave it to me and I threw it into the fire and it came out like a calf." That was the most amazing thing. What a ridiculous response.

So when Moses saw the people were out of control, for Aaron had let them get out of control, making them a derision among their enemies, Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, "Whoever's for the Lord come to me." Okay. Let's find out who's on the Lord's side. Come to me. All the sons of Levi gathered together to him. Levi responsible for service to the temple and the worship of God tabernacle. Then he said to them, all right, thus says the Lord the God of Israel. Every man of you put his sword on his thigh. Get your swords, guys, strap them on your waists. And go back and forth from gate to gate in the camp and kill every man his brother and every man his friend and every man his neighbor.

What? Just go kill everybody you know intimately. Go kill your family, go kill your friends and go kill your neighbors, closest circles. God has been dishonored. The commandment has been violated, now comes judgment. And you are going to be instruments through which God will bring that judgment. This is a test, really a test. Are you gonna glorify God at any costs? Verse 28: "So the sons of Levi did as Moses instructed. About 3,000 men of the people fell that day."

You see you aim at God's glory when you prefer His glory at any cost. Even if it cost you your family, your friends, your neighbors, though maybe not in an actual act of taking their life in divine judgment. But still living to the glory of God may cost you all those people that are around you. I don't want to turn that act of judgment into some kind of a spiritualized metaphor. But the fact of the matter is this is extreme behavior demanded by God and only the Levites were willing to do it because they were concerned about the glory of God. To give God glory is to prefer him above anybody else even if it

means you lose everybody. Everybody.

And I would say a second thing about it. You aim your life at glorifying God when there's no personal price you won't pay. It's not just about everybody else. It's about you. How far will you go in your commitment to the glory of God? Isaiah called to the persecuted remnant in Isaiah 24:15. He said, "Glorify God in the fires." When you go into the fires and they persecute you and you become a martyr, glorify God in the fire, in the fire.

Look at John 21 for a moment. It's that wonderful account of Jesus talking to Peter down in verse 18. Jesus says to Peter, "Fully, truly, I say to you when you were younger you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished. But when you grow old you'll stretch out your hands and someone else will tie you up and bring you where you do not wish to go." He says, "Peter, you've been a pretty independent guy. When you were young you put on your own clothes and just about did whatever you wanted. When you grow old it's not gonna be that way. You're gonna stretch out your hands." That particular phrase in the Greek can be used to express crucifixion and that's what tradition tells us happened to him. Someone's gonna bind and take you where you don't want to go.

And that's exactly what Jesus was talking about - verse 19, writes John, "Now this he said" - listen - "signifying by what kind of death he would" what? "Glorify God." You glorify God when you prefer His will if it costs you all the people around you. You glorify God if you will do His will if it costs you your own life. There is no point in the language that we were talking about this morning at which you sell out.

"If you're reviled" - 1 Peter 4:14 - "for the name of Christ you're blessed because the spirit of glory and God rests on you. By no means let any of these sufferers or murderer or thief or evildoer or troublesome meddler, but if anyone suffers as a Christian because you're a Christian, do not feel ashamed. But in that name let him glorify God." The Bible is very specific in the use of the word glorifying God, or the phrase glorifying God. You glorify God when you prefer Him above all the people around you that are intimately involved with you. You glorify Him when you prefer His glory over your own life and you're willing to be persecuted and suffer as a Christian.

Let me take that a little deeper. You glorify God when you suffer when He is dishonored. You glorify God when you suffer when He is dishonored. Turn to the psalms for a moment, and Psalm 69. This is a very important verse. It has New Testament significance, as I'll point out in a moment. But in 69:9, Psalm of David here, you hear from the heart of a man who seeks the glory of God.

Verse 9: "For zeal, for your house has consumed me. I'm literally being eaten up because of my zeal for your house." Zeal is an interesting word. It's kind of a two-way word. Going forward it means love for, passion for, and backing up, it means protection for. Zeal means that I have a passion for them and I am protective against anything that would diminish me. Zeal goes in two directions. It goes

toward the one worshipped and loved and it goes away for those who would threaten that. Zeal for your house is consuming. David says I'm literally eaten up for your house, for the glory of your house. And then at the end of the verse: "The reproaches of those who reproach thee have fallen on me."

What's he saying? He's saying when you're dishonored I feel the pain. When your name is dishonored I feel the agony. Now you know you're living your life to the glory of God when you're willing to have it cost your family, when you're willing to have it cost your comfort and maybe your life and when you feel the pain when God is dishonored. It was said of the church at Aphis - and this is a good thing in Revelation 2:2 - "You can't bear those who are evil." That's good. That's feeling the things that dishonor God personally.

Sometimes people wonder why I get so exercised about error. Because I feel the pain of God being dishonored but being misrepresented. Jesus becomes really the fulfillment of that psalm I just read you, Psalm 69, because in John 2 he goes into the temple and he sees - verse 14 - people selling ox and sheep and doves and moneychangers. And says he made a scourge of cords and drove them all out of the temple with the sheep and the ox and poured out the coins of the moneychangers, overturned their tables. And for those who were selling the doves, he said, "Take these things away. Stop making my father's house a house of merchandise." And his disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house consumes me." The disciples who were educated in the Old Testament remember Psalm 69. Yes, yes.

You aim your life at the glory of God when you're willing to give up everyone around you and even your own life and when you feel the pain of God being dishonored. That's why there's so many things in the culture and in the society, there are so many forms of entertainment and media. So many kinds of conduct and behavior that I find very distressing. Not so much for their own sake but because of the fact that they dishonor God.

There's another thing I want to mention about this. You aim your life at glorifying God - this is a real practical one - when you're content to be outdone by others as long as He is glorified. Now this might get close to home. Now there are a lot of people who feel like they should be getting a better situation than somebody else. They get jealous that somebody else succeeds. If somebody's a better teacher, if somebody else is a better preacher, if somebody else was a better singer.

I remember W.A. Chriswell telling me one time they had so many people in his church who thought they could sing a solo and they all thought they needed to be singing before the whole church that he decided to have solo night. And one night he paraded them all across the platform to sing one verse each to get it out of their system.

There are all kinds of ways in which this can show up. But it, sad to say, it shows up even in ministry. I remember reading some years about two churches that were competing to see who could get the

most people. And in this particular article in a Christian periodical, it said the pastor that lost got sick in his stomach. What is that? If you aim your life at the glory of God, it's never about you, it's always about Him.

Let me give you an illustration of that from Philippians 1, Philippians 1. This is so helpful to me and should be to you, Paul writing to the Philippians while he's a prisoner. Talks about his imprisonment in verse 14. Verse 15, some people to be sure. "Preaching Christ even from envy and strife" - well stop there for a minute. What is that? What is he talking about? Well, if you study the story and dig a little deeper into the prison epistles and the circumstances of Paul, it kind of goes like this:

People were saying, "Paul, ha-ha, he's in prison now. He's there because he's got some secret sin in his life. He's there because God put him on the shelf. His time is over." And there were people who out of envy and hostility toward Paul were using his imprisonment as a way to elevate themselves. Verse 17 says they proclaimed Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. They wanted to add more pain for the pain he was already being a prisoner. Adding to my chains or my bonds - actually at the end of verse 17 - "causing me distress in my bondage." Boy, that's pretty low, pretty low to be going around saying, "Listen to me, I'm the new guy on the block. Paul's day is over. He's been on the shelf. He's in prison. God put him in prison. He's got secret sin in his life. His day is over. We gotta get rid of the past, we gotta move into the new era. We're the new guys, listen to us." And that's how they were preaching. They were preaching the Gospel, but they were preaching the Gospel with hearts full of envy and ambition and pride and strife. And they were saying terrible things to defame and dishonor the character of Paul. How do you react to that?

Well, verse 18. "Well, so what?" That's Paul. "What then? You wanna know my response? Only that in every way whether in pretense, whether it's phony, you're only pretending to be pure and holy or whether it's real, truth, Christ is proclaimed. And in this I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice." What's he saying? He's saying I don't care what happens to me. I care about the Gospel. I'm gonna rejoice if He preaches the Gospel affirming me or if He preaches the Gospel defaming me. That doesn't matter to me.

Wow. You can tell if you're living your life to the glory of God when your inner feelings are unmixed joy and praise, when someone else does what you do better and with more blessing. Let my candle go out if the son of righteousness may but shine with healing in his beams. Who cares?" Who cares? 1 Corinthians: Paul is nothing, Paul says nothing, Cephus is nothing, Christ is everything.

So how do we live to the glory of God? One, we confess Jesus is Lord. Two, we aim our lives in that direction. Whatever we do, whether we eat or drink, whatever we do, we do all to the glory of God to the degree that we're so consumed with that that we will sacrifice all who are around us. We will sacrifice our own lives to whatever the degree the Lord might ask of us. We are suffering deep pain

when God is dishonored. We are so connected to His glory and content to be outdone by the people who do exactly what we do better than we do it with more blessing than we do it and even with impure motives when they do it.

Now there are a lot of other things that I could talk about, probably for about a month, that we need to do in adding to this list, but I'm not gonna do that now. I am going to, however, talk about a couple of things, staying on the positive side.

Turn to Romans 4:19. I just skipped a really good point but you'll never know it. Romans 4:19. This will be a little third point for you: "We glorify God by trusting Him." We glorify God by trusting Him. This is about Abraham and the promise of God. Verse 20. Abraham is, of course, the theme of this whole section. Verse 20: "With respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith giving glory to God. God is glorified when we confess Jesus as Lord. God is glorified when we aim our lives at that purpose at any and all costs. God is glorified when we are strong in faith. Unbelief affronts God. Unbelief questions God's nature. Unbelief makes people think God is not everything He is.

Let me bring it down to practicality. You say you trust God, you say you believe in God. You've given your life to the Lord. He's transformed you. He's your God. He's the master of the universe. He's the Lord of all exists. And can take care of you and meet all your needs. And what happens when all of the sudden something goes wrong in your life and you crash and burn in some emotional heap. What does that communicate? That's certainly not being strong in faith, bringing glory to God, because you've just moved out of a posture of trust and you've just diminished people's understanding of who God really must be.

Abraham was strong in faith and that gives glory to God. You greatly dishonor God when you claim to believe in His power and His wisdom and His goodness and mercy and His providence and His sovereignty. And yet you can't cope with life and with the issues of life and you get frustrated and you question what He does and you fear and you worry and on and on and on. That's not being strong in faith, and therefore diminishing in people's view the greatness of God. Faith that knows no impossibilities with God, faith that trusts totally gives glory to God.

Daniel is a good illustration, Daniel 3:13. Nebuchadnezzar in a rage, anger gives orders to bring Chadrick, Meshach and Nebednego, their pagan names, not their Jewish names. He said their Jewish names connected them to the true God. This connected them to false God. So the three were brought before the king. Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, "Is it true, Chadrick, Meshach and Nebednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden images that I have set up? Now if you're ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, saltry and bagpipe and all kinds of music, fall down and worship the image that I have made very well. If you do that you're gonna be okay. But if you will not worship, you will be immediately cast into the midst of

the furnace of blazing fire and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"

Chadrack, Meshach and Nebednego answered, little trio here, said, "Oh, Nebuchadnezzar, we do need to give you an answer concerning this. We have nothing to say." Verse 17: "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire, and he will be able to deliver us out of your hand, oh king. If we burn, we're going to Him, or He could take us out of the fire. But even if He doesn't, let it be known to you, oh king, we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

Now you know the rest of the story, right? He's filled with fury, fire's up the heat seven times hotter, and they're in there having a wonderful time. In the blazing fire, still tied up, and verse 25 says, "Oh, I see four men in there loose and walking around, just having a great time. One has an appearance as a son of the gods." Probably the angel of the Lord, Christophany, reincarnate appearance of Christ. They had the kind of faith that knew no impossibility, they had the kind of faith that says, "Ooh, you want to put us in the fire, fine. Where's the fire? We're ready to go. Either our God will deliver us from the first or he'll take us out of the fire or through the fire He'll take us into His presence. But doesn't matter, we're not going to do what you told us to do."

You know, one of the greatest acts of faith in all of Scripture we read about in Hebrews 11, and it is really, it's a great story. I mean we all know the story but I don't know if we think about what an act of faith it was. And it's in Hebrews 11:7: "By faith, Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen in reverence prepared an ark." You remember how long it took him to build it? A hundred and 20 years. I mean talk about extended enduring faith.

And everyday some people were coming by and saying, "It's going to what, Noah?" It's going to what? It's going to rain. Water's coming out of the sky. Really? Noah, there's never been water coming out of the sky. It's never rained. What do you mean rain? Water doesn't come out of the sky. It would be tough for a week. A hundred and 20 years of that kind of stuff from his neighbors? Talk about enduring challenge to your faith. A hundred and 20 years of building a boat in the desert, a boat essentially the size of the Queen Mary. There's no water anywhere and water doesn't come down out of the sky.

And all he can ever say is, "God told me it will and it will, it will. And 40 and 50 years in he says, "God told me it will and it will." And 110 years: "God told me it will and it will," and it did. What a statement about faith and about God.

There's another way to glorify God - a lot more to be said about that, by the way - but there's another way to glorify God, we glorify God by our fruitfulness, by being fruitful. John 15, John 15 - this is familiar text about the vine and the branches - verse 8: "By this is my Father glorified." We're building these around text that talk about glorifying God. "By this is my Father glorified" - John 15:8 - "that you

bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples." Fruitfulness glorifies God. You glorify God when you bear much fruit.

By the way, his character is at stake. And I've said this before, if you've had a transformed life, it ought to show up. It ought to manifest itself in spiritual fruit. Don't go around saying, "I'm a Christian and I've given my life to Christ," and it's impossible to find any evidence in your life. That is to dishonor God. God expects fruit. I mean 1 Corinthians 9:7 asks a very simple question, "Who plants the vineyard and eats not the fruit of it." Not God. You expect to plant and grow and have fruit.

And it dishonors God to have just a little fruit. Philippians 1:11, Paul praised that you would be filled with the fruit of righteousness. Ah, that's the kind of fruit we're talking about, righteousness. Sure, sure, righteousness, the fruit of righteousness. What do we mean when we talk about the fruit of righteousness?

Well, I'll give you something that's practical in that regard. I guess you could say, you can break it into two things, yeah, two things for our thought tonight. There is attitude fruit, okay, there are righteous attitudes. Fair enough? Love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. The fruit of the spirit. That's attitude fruit, okay, that's how you think. That's your hard attitude, attitude fruit.

So we glorify God when we manifest the fruit of the spirit: love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control, and all the other elements of a right spiritual attitude. But it's not just attitude fruit. It's action as well. It's action. It is righteous conduct. It is righteous behavior. For example, Romans 1:13, Paul says this: "I did not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I have planned to come to you, have been prevented thus far, in order that I might obtain some fruit among you, also even as among the rest of the Gentiles. I want to come to Rome so that I can preach the Gospel and have some fruits." So fruit here is people coming to faith. Converts, leading people to Christ. That's fruit. That's one kind of action fruit.

Philippians 4:17, he says, "You've sent me a gift. It's so wonderful. I'm glad you sent the gift. It's not that I need the gift." He writes in this wonderful text. "But I seek" - verse 17 - "the fruit, which increases to your account." In other words when these people gave a sacrificial gift of money and support to Paul, he said, "This is fruit that accrues to your divine account." Is what we're talking about this morning, his treasure laid up in heaven. So fruit can be action. Leading someone to Jesus Christ is fruit, giving is fruit, to support ministry.

Hebrews 13:15 says, "Offer God the fruit, the praise of your lips." Praise, worship, that is fruit. Colossians 1:10: "Walk worthy of the Lord, bearing fruit in every good work." Every good righteous work - evangelism is part of that, praise is part of that, giving is part of that. All righteous works are fruit. Now listen to this very carefully. Now there's attitude fruit and there's action fruit. And when you have attitude fruit producing action fruit you have that which honors God. When you have action fruit

without attitude fruit, that is legalism and that is hypocrisy.

Pharisees did all the right action. There are lots of people who do the right action outwardly but the heart's not there. God is glorified in the fruit that starts on the inside and works its way on the outside. And God wants much fruit that you bear much fruit. By this is my father glorified.

Let me give you another to think about. We glorify God by praising Him, we glorify God by praising Him. In Psalm 50, one verse. Just write it down and I'll read it to you. Verse 23: "He who offers a sacrifice of praise glorifies me. He who offers praise glorifies me." That's the authorized expression of it. "He who offers praise glorifies me." When you praise the Lord, you give Him glory. That's such a basic and wonderful thing.

What is praise? You ever analyze it? Give it to you real quickly. Praise is, praise is declaring God's wonderful works, declaring God's wonderful works. And secondly, declaring God's glorious nature and saying thanks for both. It is declaring His works, it is reciting His works. And sometimes in praise we do that. We go back over all that God has done. That's one of the great riches of reading the Old Testament, reading the psalms, reading all of the Old Testament. You rehearse again and again and again what God has done, what God has done, and when you praise God, you can say, "Yes, you're the God one day stepped out on the edge of eternity and spun the whirling worlds into place and created the universe and the year of the God who in six days made everything that is and crowned it with a creation of man and gave him a wife, etc. You're the God who did all that. You're the God who sought to redeem fallen man. You're the God who brought your people out of Egypt and opened the Red Sea. And you're the God who led them to the Promised Land and defeated their enemies. And on and on. You're the God most notably who sent your son into the world born of a virgin, lived a perfect life, died a substitutionary death, rose from the dead." You're just reciting and rehearsing what God has done and affirming the glory and the goodness and the greatness of it.

And on the other hand, it's rehearsing and reciting what God is or who God is. You're glorious and you're immutable and omnipotent and omniscient and omnipresent. And your mighty and your gracious and going through all of that. That's what praise does from the heart. It's giving God honor for who He is and what He has done.

The psalmist does that all the time. He goes back whenever he gets into some kind of difficult situation, he goes back and he rehearses all of God's dealings and then he recites all God's attributes. Giving God credit for everything, that's praise. And praise glorifies God. "Whoever praises me glorifies me," says Psalm 50:23.

I think I'll give you one more. This'll be the last one. We glorify God by bringing others to him. We already suggested that as a subpoint. But look at 2 Corinthians 4:15. Let's pick up that evangelism aspect once again. 2 Corinthians 4:15, and I'll close this one. We glorify God by bringing others to

him. 2 Corinthians 4:15. In fact, I can back up. This is such a very important text of Scripture. It's one that's a favorite of mine. Because Paul I talking about how life is extremely difficult for him in ministry. He - verse 8 - he's afflicted, he's not crushed. He's perplexed, he's not despairing. He's persecuted, he's not forsaken. He's struck down, he's not destroyed. I mean it's like he's hanging on by his fingernails here.

Everyday is a day that could be the end of his life. He's always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, the life of Jesus maybe manifest in our body. This is not something mystical. He's just saying it's very, very dangerous to represent Christ. It's very, very dangerous to have Jesus Christ in me. It's very dangerous to do His work because I'm on the brink of death every day. There are all kinds of plots hatching all around him everywhere he goes to take his life and he knows it. Verse 11: "We who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus sake." It's because of the Gospel that I'm constantly on the brink of death. It all comes because of the life of Jesus being manifest in our mortal flesh.

So verse 12 he says it another way. "Death works in us. Life in you." The point is this: I gotta live on the brink of death to bring life to you, okay? Gospel ministry threatens my life every day. I live on the edge of death in order to get life to you. Now you're gonna say to him, "Well, what are you doing? I mean can't you cool your jets a little bit and back off?" I love this. Verse 13. He says, "Having the same spirit of faith," according to what is written, "I believe therefore I spoke. We also believe therefore also we speak." Wow. He says, "Look, what am I gonna do? This is what I believe is the truth. This is what I speak, and these are the consequences but I can't change anything. Because I believe it, I say it, and this is what it does.

Oh I love that resolve, I love that resolution, I love that commitment. I'm living every day on the brink of death to get the message of life to you and you're gonna suggest that I might slow down a little, back up, make the message a little more palatable, take out the offense? I'm telling you, I don't have that option. I believe therefore I spoke. I believe in the truth of the world of the living God and it is that which I must speak. "Now I may die but" - verse 14 - "I know this: that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you." If the worst happens and I'm killed, I'll be raised.

And so you say, "Well, Paul, this level of dedication is just so great. What is causing it? Why are you willing to die? Why are you willing to live on the brink of death? Why are you willing to say these things that you believe?" Answer, verse 15. "For all things are for your sakes. That the grace" - saving grace, salvation grace - "which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God." He is saying, "I do this, I live on the brink of death and I'm willing to die, to be raised." I say what is true because I believe it, I say it. And why do I do it? In order that more and more people may receive salvation's grace and give thanks to God so that there is an abounding of glory to God. Another way to put it, I love to see people converted so that I can add one

more voice to the hallelujah chorus.

Wow. This is living to the glory of God. You live your life, you give your life. And here's the pinnacle really: you glorify God in the greatest God when you lead someone else to Christ because now you've just multiplied yourself. When you approach your Christian life, it is important that you be aware of your sin and dealing with your sin. But as I said at the beginning, you don't want to spend your whole time looking into the dark place. You want to look at the light. And if you learn to live your life to the glory of God, it's amazing how all-consuming that vision of light and glory will become.

Turn to 2 Corinthians 3:18 and we'll close there. If you're chapter 4, it's just back one page. 2 Corinthians 3:18: "Now that the veil's off your face and you can see the Lord's glory clearly, you're not like those in the time of Moses and the law. The veil's off. And you" - verse 18 - "with an unveiled face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord." The picture is this: you have the veil off, you have crystal clear vision and you're looking at a HD picture of God's glory. Clear, sharp, crystal. As you gaze at His glory, as you lose yourself in the shining vision of the glory of God. Verse 18 says, "You are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory to glory to glory to glory justice from the Lord, the spirit." This is consummate verse.

It says that if you keep the vision of glorifying God and you focus your life on glorifying God, whatever you do, through all the things that we've talked about - and there are many more - as you set your vision toward the shining glory of God and see it clearly, crystal clear revealed on the pages of Scripture, you see that glory and you live in the light of that glory, you will be transformed into that glory from one level to the next in an increase of glory because that's the work of the holy spirit.

That's really sanctification. And that until one day when we are all glorified - and we'll talk about that when we return to this series. Let's pray.

God, there are so many people in the world who are overwrought by what they see as a God of wrath and judgment and yet we see you as a God of such immense goodness and mercy, compassion and generosity. You have done, you are doing, you will do, seated abundantly above all we can ask or think according to that power that works in us so that it might be to the praise of your everlasting glory. Help us Lord in gratitude ever thrilled, every stunned and shocked by the greatness of your mercy toward us to live to you glory. And lost as it were in the light of your glory find the spirit of God changing us into that very glory. This is sanctification and it happens when we are lost in the light of your glory. Work that in our hearts that we may be a sanctified people that bring honor to your name. May our light so shine, that light that's reflected from you that men will see us and glorify our Father in heaven. And we pray. Amen.

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