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

From Glory to Glory, Part 2
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
Code: 90-76

Well, as we said this morning, we're going to continue in our study tonight of glorifying the Lord, moving from one level of glory to the next and bringing honor to His name. For those of you who weren't with us this morning, we are just doing a one-day sort of two-part look at how we as believers glorify God. That, of course, is the most important thing that we can do. We were saved to bring glory to the Lord. There are some very practical ways in which we accomplish that by His power.

And this morning we started out by saying we glorify the Lord by aiming our life at that purpose. First Corinthians 10:31 says, "Whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do all to the glory of God." The most mundane and simplest thing that we do in life is to be done to God's glory as well as the most spiritual and the most devout expression of Christian faith and truth. Everything in our lives is to be aimed at the glory of God. And that means we prefer Him and His Kingdom above everything else. We're content to do His will no matter what the price and we suffer when He suffers and we are content to be outdone by others as long as He receives the glory.

And then secondly we said, this morning, that we glorify God by confessing sin. When we confess our sin, take responsibility for our evil, our wickedness, our violation of God's law, our disobedience, when we take responsibility for that and God chastens us, then He appears rightly to be just and holy and do what is to be done for a holy God should indeed have a holy reaction against sin. And if He chooses not to chasten but to be gracious, then He receives glory for being gracious to one who is so utterly unworthy.

So, we glorify God by aiming our life at that focus and we glorify God by confessing our sin. Those were the things we looked at this morning and I don't want to take the time to go into them in any more depth than that. If you want to get the full richness and range of those two points, get the tape from this morning and I think your heart will be blessed. And it's a vital and very important foundational study for your own Christian growth.

But let's move to another point tonight, a third point. We glorify God by trusting Him...we glorify God by trusting Him. If indeed in our lives we are to glorify God moving from one level of glory to the next and becoming more and more like the very one we worship, the God we adore revealed to us in the face of Jesus Christ, then we're going to bring Him glory when we trust Him. We honor Him by trusting Him. It's a very simple principle. If I say that I respect my father, if I say that I respect and honor and highly regard my mother and demonstrate in the way I live that I have no regard for their

word, that I don't trust what they say, then you can question the legitimacy of my respect. If on the other hand I have tremendous trust in my parents, if I have tremendous trust in their integrity and in their wisdom and their decisions and their leadership in my life and I follow that leadership, then I am affirming my trust without any equivocation.

The same thing is true in the Christian's experience. If we say God is worthy to be believed in, He is worthy to be trusted and we demonstrate that we don't trust Him, question what He does, doubt and fear and dismay and sometimes sorrow and worry and anxiety characterize our lives, then people should have a right to say, "Well if you trust God so much, why do you live in doubt? Why do you live in fear? Why do you live in anxiety? If God is who you say He is, shouldn't He be trusted?" So again, we will bring honor to God by our trust. We will truly say that we see the glory of God when we trust God.

Let me give you an illustration of that as we've done in each case. Turn to Romans chapter 4. And as we've said all along, there are a number of illustrations of each of these point, I'm trying to pick out one that is some way or other unforgettable. And in Romans chapter 4 we come across the wonderful account reiterated of Abraham and Sarah and the promise and the fulfillment of the birth of Isaac. Now you remember the story, I think, that God had promised to Abraham that he would have a seed. In fact, his progeny would be so prolific that they could be numbered according to Genesis chapter 12 as the stars of the heavens or the sands of the sea. And we now know that there is probably some equality in those two, maybe there are as many stellar bodies as there are grains of sand. It's far more vast then we could ever imagine.

The unaccountable stars and the unaccountable grains of sand on the seas of the world were what the Lord selected to illustrate the vastness of the seed that would come from the loins of Abraham. God made that promise. However, by the time Abraham reached 100 years of age and his wife, Sarah, reached the age of 96, they had absolutely no children. Sarah's womb was dead and they had no fulfillment of the promise.

But in spite of that, I want you to look at Romans chapter 4 and verse 18. This is what it says about Abraham. "In hope against hope, in hope which made no sense from a human perspective, he believed. He believed in order that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, so shall your descendants be." When it made no sense to believe, he believed. When it made no sense to hope, he hoped. In fact, in verse 17 he believed even God who gives life to the dead could call into being that which doesn't exist, that God had the power to do what seemed humanly impossible. He believed that if God said you're going to have descendants, that he would have descendants. And verse 19 says, "Without becoming weak in faith, he contemplated his own body now as good as dead since he was about 100 years old and the deadness of Sarah's womb."

From a human perspective it just wasn't going to happen. Yet with respect to the promise of God, verse 20 says, "He did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith." And what did that do? Giving...what?...glory to God. "In being fully assured...verse 21 says...that what He had promised He was able also to perform. Therefore that faith was reckoned to him as righteousness."

It was that very faith in God that saved him, as faith always saves. It saved Abraham. He believed God for that which was humanly impossible. He was strong in faith and gave glory to God. You see, unbelief is an affront to God. For God to make a promise and you not to believe it is to question His character. If the Bible says, for example, as it does in Philippians 4, "My God shall supply all your need," do you believe it or do you worry about your need? If Jesus said, "Take no thought for what you shall eat or drink because the Father in heaven who takes care of the birds of the field and clothes...the birds of the air, rather, and clothes the lilies of the field and the grass promises to take care of you, don't you think He'll do it?" And if the Scripture says inspired by the Holy Spirit that there never will come a trial into your life that is more than you can bear, do you believe it? And the Scripture says that in the midst of the seemingly unbearable trial there will always be a way of escape? Do you believe it? Because if you don't and if you doubt and fear and are anxious and worried, question whether God can perform His Word, you have denied Him the glory that is due His name. He is worthy to be trusted. He can do what He says. He will do what He promises. And unbelief questions His integrity and that doesn't bring Him honor anymore than questioning somebody's integrity brings them honor, it brings them dishonor to question anyone's integrity. And how foolish to question the integrity...the ability, the power and the honesty of God.

Listen to 1 John 5:10, the middle of the verse, "The one who does not believe God has made Him a liar." The one who does not believe God has made Him a liar. You are treating God as if He lied. The Lord says He's going to meet your needs, He's going to lead through all the trials and temptations of life, all the tribulations and bring you to glory. He says there's never going to be anything that's more than you can bear and there will always be a path through to triumph and victory. He promised He's going to be there as a friend sticking closer than a brother, He's going to supply all your need. Every resource of heaven is at Your disposal, including the angels which are sent to minister to the saints, as Hebrews 1:14 says. All the promises of God are ours because they're all yes(?) in Jesus Christ who is ours. And we greatly dishonor God when we claim to believe in Him and yet we can't cope with life and we can't solve our problems and we can't rest confidently and assuredly in His wisdom and His power. In fact, we're stealing His glory. Sure, life is full of troubles. But our God is beyond all of those. There's no sense in fearing.

This morning in one of the services I alluded to a text in Daniel. I want to go to it. Daniel 3 chapter 3 and verse 13, it's back to this experience with the three young men who were thrown into the fiery furnace known as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. That, of course, was their Chaldean names, their Hebrew names were Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, but the Chaldeans, part of the brainwashing process gave them names that were Chaldeans names which bore as a part of the

name the name of the Chaldean gods, false gods, to try to lure them into idolatry. But you remember the story of these three young men because you remember that everybody was required to bow down to the king. And anybody who didn't bow down to the king was going to have to pay with his life. And that is precisely what happened. You remember these men are mentioned there in chapter 3 verse 17, Hananiah, Mishael...chapter 2 rather verse 17...Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

But by the time you get into chapter 3 they are called in verse 16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. And when they are told to bow down to the king, they refuse to do that. And verse 15 says, "If you don't worship you're going to be immediately cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire." And then he says, does Nebuchadnezzar, "What God is there who can deliver you out of my hands?" He thought himself to be more powerful than the Hebrew God. And it's understandable since the Babylonians had managed to conquer the Hebrews. They ascribed their conquering powers to their own deity and assumed that if the Hebrews' God couldn't defend them against the gods of the Babylonians that therefore the gods of the Babylonians were more powerful and that he, Nebuchadnezzar, was perhaps the most powerful of all...even though he was a man, he saw himself as some kind of deity.

"Well," he says, "you either bow down to me or he'll throw you in the fire." Verse 16, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego answered and said to the king, `O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this.'" We don't have to say anything to you, you can't force us to speak to you, we don't respect your office or your authority. "If so be, our God...verse 17...whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and He will deliver us out of your hand, O King." Now that is tremendous faith. If somebody asks you in a simple question in the normal course of life if you believe God could deliver you out of any situation, you'd probably say yes but it might be a little different if you were standing on the edge of a fiery furnace...feeling the heat and breathing the smoke and the flames as they were, but it never caused their faith to waver one bit.

Verse 18 they added, "Even if He doesn't, let it be known to you, O King, we're not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you've set up." What did they mean? I think that's an evidence that they believed in the power of God to raise the dead. Even if God doesn't protect us from the fire, He'll take us out the other side. I believe they were so confident in God's power and God's promise that whether it was in life or death, they knew God would deliver them. Well Nebuchadnezzar was so enraged by that in verse 19, he was filled with wrath, his facial expression was altered. He screwed up his face in fury. And he answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. And he commanded certain valiant warriors who were in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, I guess he expected a fight, he didn't get one, in order to cast them into the furnace of blazing fire. And these men were tied up in their garments, their coats, their caps and their other clothes and cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire. They're just bundled up and just heaved into this fire.

"For this reason because the king's command was urgent and the furnace had been extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego." It was so hot that it burned the guys who got near enough to throw them in. "But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire, still tied up. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste, he responded and said to his high officials, `Was it not three men we cast into the midst of the fire?' They answered and said to the king, `Certainly, O King.' He answered and said, `Look, I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm and the appearance of the fourth is like the son...like a son of the gods.'" Most Bible commentators would believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the second member of the trinity in a pre-incarnate appearance came and attended to these three wonderfully faithful men.

"Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire, responded and said, `Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here.' And they came out of the fire. Their faith was vindicated. Well, it tells us in verse 27 that the fire had no affect on the bodies of these men, nor was the head of their heads singed, nor where their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire even come upon them.

I remember one time as a kid when I was in college I was on a very strict budget, I was a long way away from home. And a department store in the area of the college burned down. And it was a perfect opportunity for some of us to go buy clothes cheap. And I remember buying a sportcoat for about $8.00 or something and I thought it was really a great looking sportcoat. It smelled, to be sure, of smoke. But I thought it would dissipate. And I remember when the year was over and I came home and my mother first opened my suitcase, the whole thing smelled and it was months after. There wasn't even the singeing of hair, there wasn't even...and I get that every time I try to barbecue chicken or something, don't you? It burns all the hair off my fingers. My wife is in the background saying, "Heat the fire hotter." And I'm always trying to get it up to the perfect place and...but not a thing, not even the smell of smoke.

Just this, their faith was vindicated. They believed God on the edge of the fiery furnace and that's the kind of faith that honors God. That is a tremendous honor to Him when you can stand on the edge of the fiery furnace and say I trust God, when you can face a tragedy in your family, whatever it might be, and say I trust God, God is too wise to make a mistake, too loving to be unnecessarily unkind and too powerful to have anything beyond His control. Faith glorifies God.

Let me give you a fourth principle. We glorify God by fruitfulness. We glorify God by fruitfulness. This is a very important truth. Turn over to John 15:8 and these are very foundational things we're reviewing but they really do tie in to this 2 Corinthians 3:18 verse which we finished up in our series on in this idea of moving from one level of glory to the next. We glorify the Lord by fruitfulness.

In John 15:8 it is stated just as point-blank as it can be stated, John 15:8, "By this is My Father glorified that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciple." God is glorified when you bear much fruit. It dishonors God to have little fruit. I don't think there's any such thing as a no-fruit Christian. By their fruits you shall know them. I mean, I think we...we have to have some manifestation of the life of God in us but it dishonors God when we have little fruit, you know, when you have to look a long time to find a few shriveled grapes. There should be a bounty, an abundance of fruitfulness in the life of a Christian. That's what Paul was pleading for in Philippians 1:11 when his prayer was that you would...that you would be filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God. God is glorified and God is praised when you are filled with the fruit of righteousness, not when it's a now and then, here and there kind of thing but when your life is just filled with righteousness.

I mean, as an illustration of that Romans chapter 22 and verse 24 provides a very graphic insight. Here came the people of Israel, right? The Jews of the time of Jesus, the time of Paul. And who did they claim was their God? Jehovah God, and they claimed it loud and far. Everybody in that part of the world knew that they served the one true God, Jehovah God, that they believed in God. But there was no fruit in their lives. There was no fruit. Verse 21 of Romans 2, "You therefore who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one should not steal, do you steal? You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the law through your breaking the law, do you dishonor God?" And then verse 24, what an incredible indictment, "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." You are not a source of glorifying God, you are a source of blaspheming God, you are a discredit to God. You say you belong to God but look at your life...thievery, adultery, idolatry, transgression of the law, it's all there. And so, you blaspheme the name of God.

And Jesus addressed this in the Sermon on the Mount. He said, "In contrast to that kind of living, here's how I want you to live. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, your fruitfulness and do...what?...glorify your Father who is in heaven." That's not the way the Jews were living. They were claiming to belong to God. They were claiming to believe in God. They were claiming that God was their God, that they had a relationship and a connection with God and they were experiencing God's power. And the fact was the name of God was being laughed at, mocked and blasphemed among the Gentiles because of the absence of any real spiritual fruit, any real good works, any true righteousness.

In 2 Thessalonians chapter 1 and verse 11, Paul says, "To this end we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and this, that He would fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power...why?...we want goodness in your life and power in your life...why?...in order that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you." That's the whole point...so that God can receive honor and glory because of the way you live. You say, "Yes, Christ

lives in me," and people look at your life and say, "Well it doesn't look like it." You say, "Christ lives in you," it doesn't seem to me that He's very powerful, I don't see anything in your life that's particularly transcendent or divine. However, on the other hand, when people can look at your life and see the demonstration of true righteousness, that brings glory to the one who you claim as your Savior.

Now when we talk about this fruit, just briefly, I don't want to go into this because we've taught this before, but just very briefly. What are we talking about? What do you mean fruit? Two kinds of fruit, action fruit and attitude fruit. Action fruit is what you do, righteous deeds. It could be anything from leading someone to Christ, like in Romans 1:13 where Paul says I want to obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles. In other words, I want to lead some people to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. It could be what Paul calls fruit in Philippians 4:17 which is fruit which increases to your account when you give. In other words, it's giving, giving is a fruit of the work of God in your life, being generous, giving to those in need. It could be what Paul has in mind in Colossians 1:10, bearing fruit in every good work, every kind of righteous deed. It could be what the writer of Hebrews has in mind in Hebrews 13:15, "The fruit of your lips, even praise to God." Any kind of righteous good deed, any kind of righteous gift, any kind of righteous praise to God, any leading of someone to Christ, any of those things are action fruit, any righteous deed that you do, any manifestation of God in your life.

But behind that action fruit there is attitude fruit. And what is that? The fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. Where you see a life filled with love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control there is evidence that God is there. If I say Christ lives in me and my life is without love, without joy, without tranquility, then who is going to believe that my God is a transforming God, right? What kind? God doesn't need that kind of press, that's what He got from Israel and the result was they blasphemed His name.

What God wants, first of all, is attitude fruit and then action fruit. Listen to this little thought, if you have action fruit in your life without attitude fruit, that's hypocrisy. You're just doing things on the outside that don't come from the heart. What God wants is that you walk in the Spirit, the Spirit produces attitude fruit, attitude fruit results in action fruit. And when your life is characterized with much fruit, then God is glorified.

You know people like that whose lives are godly, you look at their life and you honor Christ for what he is doing in their life. You can see Christ in them, you can see God in them. That's what we call a godly person.

Number five in our little list, and we'll just give you a few more tonight. We glorify God, we move from one level of glory to the next, by praising Him...by praising Him. And this is a very simple but a very important and basic concept.

Praise is fitting, Scripture says. It is a noble expression on the part of every Christian. We should be engaged in it and are if we're faithful to the Lord at all times. Listen to what it says in Psalm 50 verse 23 and I'm going to quote it from the old Authorized because I think it's such a clear quote. "Whoever offers praise glorifies Me...Whoever offers praise glorifies Me." Simple principle. That's true worship, when you offer God praise you're glorifying Him, you're honoring Him. Glorifying means to honor, to show respect, to lift up, to exalt.

In Psalm 86 we read, verse 9, "All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord, and they shall glorify Thy name." It's a form of worship. They'll worship by glorifying Your name. Verse 12, "I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord, my God, with all my heart and will glorify Thy name forever." It's a matter of worship. It's a matter of giving thanks, that's praise, that's glorifying to God.

In Psalm 92 just at the very beginning of that Psalm, the first two verses, we hear an echo of similar things. "It is good to give thanks to the Lord and to sing praises to Thy name, O Most High, to declare Thy loving kindness in the morning and Thy faithfulness by night." That's just part of glorifying God. Every time you praise God, thank God, exalt Him, glorify Him, you are doing what pleases God.

In fact, we remember, don't we, in John 4 how the Father has sought true worshipers who would worship Him in spirit and in truth. And a part of that, of course, is lifting Him up and giving Him glory. As the psalmist says in Psalm 95:5, "Come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker, for He is our God and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand." We need to bow. We need to praise. We need to worship. We come together on the Lord's day to do just that...to offer our praise and to offer our worship to our worthy Lord, our worthy God.

First Chronicles chapter 16, "Sing to the Lord all the earth, proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day, tell of His glory among the nations. Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength, ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name." That's praise.

Now, let me just give it to you very simply. Praise has three components, three simple components. Number one, reciting God's wonderful works...reciting God's wonderful works. That's praising. Just the litany of what God has done, it's sort of like what Habakkuk did in the third chapter of that little prophecy where in the midst of his trouble nothing really changes circumstantially but he just starts to remember what God has done. He just starts to look back and recite all of the incredibly mighty delivering acts that God achieved and accomplished. And here he is in the midst of this little time of fear and anxiety and he starts to say things like, "God comes from Teman and the Holy One from Mount Paran," and he's reaching back and remembering some of the historic events. "His splendor covers the heavens, and the earth is full of His praise. His radiance is like the sunlight, He has rays flashing from His hand and there is hiding of His power. Before Him goes pestilence and plague

comes after Him. He stood and surveyed the earth; He looked and startled the nations. Yes the perpetual mountains were shattered. The ancient hills were collapsed. His ways are everlasting. I saw the tents of Cushan under distress, the tent curtains of the land of Midian were trembling."

He talks about the Lord raging against the rivers and against the sea and he talks about the Lord riding on Thy horses, on Thy chariots of salvation, the bow was made bare, the rods of chastisement were sworn. Thou hast cleave the earth. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers. The mountains saw Thee and quaked. And he goes on with all the stuff that God has done from creative history right on. And when it's all done and he has recited all this litany of God's achievements he says this, "Though the fig tree shall not blossom and there be no fruit on the vine, though the yield of the olive shall fail and the fields produce no food, though the flocks shall be cut off from the fold and there shall be no cattle in the stalls." In other words, though everything in the world goes haywire, everything in the earth goes wrong, though everything you can count on, everything that's dependable, everything that's fixed stops, yet I will exalt in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. The Lord is my strength and He has made my feet like hinds, or goat's feet and makes me walk on my high places.

I can tread the precipices with the same security and safety as a mountain goat, no matter how dangerous the times because I trust my God. If everything in the world goes array, I will trust Him. Why? Because in reciting the history of what God has done in the past he remembers the tremendous power and deliverance of God. That's the benefit of praise. When you begin to recite everything God has done, your problem seems fairly small.

Secondly, you not only in praising God recite His works, you recite His attributes. And you see this in the psalms. You see this in the prophets...the recitation of God's attributes...Psalm 46, Psalm 66, Psalm 90, Psalm 96, many other places. And you just begin to run down the record of all of God's great attributes. Here you are in the middle of your little problem and you remember that God is absolutely powerful, that God is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, that God is immutable, never changes, that God is all wise, perfectly just, holy, righteous. You just go all down those attributes...He is gracious, He is filled with loving kindness, His mercy reaches higher than the heavens. And you begin to go through all of these things that are true about God. And as you recite all of that it changes your focus. It changes how you view life. You'll begin to trust God in a greater way.

Praising God has a tremendous built-in benefit to the one who does it. So we recite God's wonderful works, we recite His attributes and the third component is we say thanks for both...we say thanks for both. Having a thankful heart. It is a sin not to be thankful, isn't it? It is, it is a sin to be ungrateful to God. And I think of that, I always remember and I hadn't planned to say anything about it, but I always remember that amazing account in the seventeenth chapter of Luke where Jesus healed those ten lepers. And they were all crying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." And verse 14 He saw them, He said to them, "Go and show yourself to the priests. And it came about that as they were going they were cleansed." Now one of them, not ten, nine, eight, seven, just one...when he saw that he had

been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice. How did he glorify God? He fell on his face at Jesus' feet and gave Him thanks. And Jesus said, "Were there not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found who turned back to give glory to God except this foreigner?" He was a Samaritan. "And He said...Rise and go your way, your faith has saved you." Ten were healed, one was saved...came back and said thanks.

How sharper than a serpent's tooth is an ungrateful child...certainly an ungrateful child of God. As Joab when he fought against Rabbah, sent for the king that he might carry away the crown of victory. So the Christian when he wins any battle sends for Christ that He may wear the victor's crown. Gives Him all the praise and all the glory. As the silkworm when she weaves her wonderful work hides herself under the silk and is never seen, so when we have done anything praiseworthy, we give the praise to God. That's living to the glory of God. We glorify Him when we recite His record of deeds and His attributes and thank Him for both. You know, if this is a way of life for you, if this is a pattern of living for you, it's going to have a dramatic effect on how you view your circumstances and how you handle your trials no matter how severe they are.

Number six, we glorify God by prayer...we glorify God by prayer. John 14, one of the most wonderful sections in Scripture because it is the legacy of Scripture given to those who belong to Him just before He left. And I want you to know that in this particular section the disciples were greatly distressed because Jesus was leaving and they were frightened about that realization. Where would they turn when He wasn't there? He had given them food when they needed food. He had calmed the storm when they needed the storm to be calmed. He had provided safety when they needed safety, truth in their ignorance. He had given them everything and now He was leaving. And He said, "Don't worry about it." John 14 verse 13, "Because whatever you ask in My name that will I do." Just because I'm not here physically doesn't mean I'm not here, just because I'm not around to do what you need done doesn't mean it won't get done. Whatever you ask in My name I'll do it. Why? "In order that the Father may be...what?...glorified in the Son."

Do you know why the Lord answers prayer? You say, "Yeah, to give us what we want." No. Say, "Well to give us what we need." No...no, that's superficial, that's just the beginning. The real reason that He answers prayer is to put Himself on display. He answers prayer so you can glorify Him. When you prayed for someone to be saved and you've prayed long and passionately, maybe for years and God awakens that dead heart and that person embraces Jesus Christ, your first response is to cry out to God with gratitude, isn't it? To thank Him. And so you glorify Him. And when you're in a situation where your resources are limited and you don't know where you're going to turn and the Lord wonderfully and graciously provides for you, your immediate response having prayed for His provision is to thank Him and praise Him for what He has made available to you.

You see, the person who doesn't pray isn't necessarily going to be destitute...God is still gracious. The person who doesn't pray may have everything he needs, he just won't praise God for giving it to

him, he just won't understand that this is all from the Lord. He's just really not a part of that process.

I mean, imagine, you go to a Bible study and somebody gets up and says, "I want to tell you that Robert So-and-so was saved." And you hear somebody say, "Oh thank the Lord, how wonderful...Oh, isn't God wonderful, isn't He good?" And you know that person had been praying for that individual. While another person who sat there and listened to the person say Robert So-and-so was saved just kind of looks around and wonders where the refreshments are. Why? Because they're not involved in the prayer process. So God didn't put Himself on display in their life because they never gave Him the opportunity to do that because they weren't a part of the petitioning.

Prayer is really designed so that when God acts you're going to know He acted. That's why we're not fatalistic, even though we believe in a sovereign God who will work His own purposes. The reason we pray is not so we can change God's mind about what He's going to do but so that we can give Him glory when He does it because we're involved in that process. When you pray in My name based upon My merit in union with My person and My purpose and for My glory, I'll do it. God will put His glory on display, He'll put His power on display. I remember years ago there was a guy here in our church who used to make prayer requests and write them in a notebook. And we were meeting over in the Family Center then, we didn't have this part of the campus built. He came to me one Sunday and he said, "I'd like to know, Pastor, if you have any prayer requests, I'd like to pray for four or five things," and he took out his little spiral notebook. And I mentioned them and he wrote them down, and wrote them down and wrote the date in the left hand column that they were written in this little book. And then it was a few weeks later he came back to me with the same little book, more things written in it now and he said, "I'd like to just check off those requests, I've been praying. Could you tell me how they all worked out?" And I gave him a series of answers and he wrote a little date in the right-hand column with a little note about what the Lord had done.

And I asked him, I said, "How long you been doing this?" He said, "This is book nineteen." Now there was a man who had seen God display Himself. I mean, if you said to him, "Has God ever really shown Himself powerful in your life?" He'd say, "Yes, would you like to see my shelf?"...and just start filing through. See, if you're not engaged in that kind of petition, then you're not engaged in that kind of experience of seeing the power of God manifest. Prayer glorifies God because it puts Him on display and then you glorify Him in response to that display.

Well, so many other things could be said. I'm going to mention one more. We glorify God by bringing others to Christ. We glorify God by bringing others to Christ. Look at 2 Corinthians 4:15, and by the way, there are many others that are specifically stated as means of glorifying God we don't have time for...but look at 2 Corinthians chapter 4. We're going to get to this, this will take us back kind of to the vicinity of our text. In 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 15, Paul again here defending the legitimacy of his apostleship among the Corinthians because it's under assault by the false teachers, says, "For all

things are for your sakes. If you think I'm in this for myself, you're wrong." And that's exactly what they were accusing of...him of. If you think I'm in it for the money or power, prestige, or some kind of favors, you're wrong, "Everything I do is for your sakes. All things are for your sakes." What is it that you want? "In order that the grace, saving grace, which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God."

Now there are perhaps a number of facets to what he is saying but let me put it as simply as I can. He is saying everything I do is to provide an opportunity for saving grace to spread to more and more people so there will be more and more people glorifying God. Paul is saying, "I do what I do in order to add one more voice to the "Hallelujah Chorus." Every time you lead someone to Christ, another voice is singing hallelujah, another is praising and glorifying God." I can glorify the Lord in my own life, I can lead someone else to Christ by God's grace and that means two are glorifying Him. We continue to do that through life and we multiply the "Hallelujah Chorus."

So the Apostle Paul says you'll glorify the Lord when you spread the message of saving grace and God in His mercy saves. And more and more people will express their thanks to God's glory. Now in fact that has to be the most potent way to glorify God because it's a multiplication, it gets beyond me to someone else and doubles the potential of glorifying Him. As you think about how you use your life, keep this in mind, that everything you do in the end should be so that the grace of God which saves could spread to more and more people so more and more people will be able to glorify Him. And God is most glorified in the salvation of a soul because that really puts His power on display.

So, we all with an unveiled face, the obscurity removed, looking at the glory of the Lord shining to us in the face of Jesus Christ through the pages of holy Scripture, seeing that blazing glory and moving from one level of glory to the next and being changed into the very image of Christ by the Holy Spirit. This is fitting. The Lord wants glory in His church. He wants to reveal and manifest His glory in His church even as He did on the face of Moses. Let's close with a couple of Scriptures. Ephesians 3:21, a benediction, "To Him be the glory in the church." Boy, what a mandate. He wants glory from His church. "To Him be the glory in the church, even in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever..." and we all ought to say amen to that. And Philippians 4:20, "Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever...and everyone said...amen." Amen.

Father, we thank you for the reminder again tonight of this foundational principle of Christian living...to give You glory. And there are many things we did not say. We glorify You by our unity. We glorify You by our obedience. We glorify You by our moral purity. Father, in every way possible we want to live to Your glory. We want to reflect the glory of Christ and be transformed into His image by the Holy Spirit. This is our prayer. This is our desire. "Oh to be like Thee, dear Jesus, my plea. Just to know Thou art formed fully in me." That's our prayer. And we pray that You will fulfill in us by Your Spirit in Christ's name. Amen.

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