

“Glory in the Lord”

Where Is Our Glory?

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

These verses are a continuation of the thought presented in the previous section of verses on preaching Christ crucified. The text before us shows us why we do this.

This is also part of the greater introduction portion of this letter. Within this introduction we saw the issue of division discussed and the “people” following (what is called “hero worship” today) that caused those divisions. We find, in these concluding remarks on the issue of the church struggling with the issue of divisions, the outcome of that struggle, if left unchecked is glorifying man rather than the Lord. We need to get this issue right.

How we recognize who God is will have a great impact on those around us that we would like to reach with the gospel. We are to be simply a portal, a channel, for them to Jesus – that is the point of the previous section of verses we looked at in our last message – “We preach Christ crucified.” It is because of the work done by our Saviour on the cross for our sins that we have hope, both in this life and the life to come, and it is that message that others are to see and hear from us.

The glory of God, and, as our only means to glorifying him, the salvation of human souls, is the real business of life.

– C.S. Lewis, *Christian Reader*, Vol. 3 1.

Many a message has been preached on the glory of God, and maybe this will seem somewhat “assumed,” or somewhat obvious, but considering the fact that at least 86 times in the Bible the words “glory” and “God” are used, along with the 120

verses that use the words "glory" and "the Lord," it would seem the subject of God's glory is paramount for His children, even today, and maybe especially today, in this wicked world that we live where so many of even believers are so self-centered and self-serving as to not have time nor space for the Lord.

Our family is deciding where to send our 13-year-old to school. I visited a Christian school not long ago. In a moment of quiet, I asked two faculty members this question. "What is the ultimate goal of our education?" I thought I had tipped my hand with the word "ultimate."

They smiled as though they'd been waiting for this question. They said, "Our goal in this institution is to train minds of young people so that they will think critically and become fully human."

They wondered why I didn't respond more energetically, and their faces looked questioning.

I said, "I thought maybe the mission statement of a Christian school would be different than an atheistic school." They were shocked. I said, "I just thought you'd say, 'To glorify God and enjoy him forever,' or something like that."

They said, "Oh, we assume that."

I did not say, "God doesn't like to be assumed." I thought it, but I didn't say it. I say it to you, and you're getting the overflow of that emotion.

— John Piper, "God Is an Important Person," Preaching Today, Tape No. 125.

I. WHAT IS GLORY? – VS. 31

Before we approach the issue of where our glory

lies and where it is supposed to lie, it is necessary to understand what is meant in the Bible by the term "glory." We will begin with the last verse first in this message because of the point it makes – it is because of verse 31 that the other verses are there.

A. The Old Testament word for "praise" (*halal*) is translated in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) by this word for "glory" in our text – this is seen in the reference that is quoted here by the Apostle out of Jeremiah's writings

Jeremiah 9:23-24

(23) Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches:

(24) But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD.

1. The Old Testament word "halal" is one that literally means to be clear, to shine (and shout), hence to make a show, to boast. The word most often is translated "praise" and is associated with the ministry of the Levites who praised God morning and evening (Zodhiates).
2. It is used 166 times in the OT – 117 times as the word "praise" in some form, with 12 times being translated "glory"

B. The New Testament word here translated "glory" is one that means to boast in, to take joy in, to rejoice in

1. The word is used 40 times in the NT – 23 times translated “glory” (in its various forms), and 10 times as the word “boast” (in its various forms)
2. So, to give someone “the glory” is to boast on who they are and what they’ve done, and to take our joy from them because of what they have done for us. As this text shows, along with many other passages of Scripture, we boast in the Lord because we would have no real joy without Him, and no real hope without Him.

“To glory in a thing is to depend on it as the means or cause of procuring happiness” – Adam Clarke

1 Corinthians 10:31

(31) Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

2 Corinthians 10:17

(17) But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Galatians 6:14

(14) But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

II. WHERE DOES IT BELONG? – vs. 26-29, 31

A. As the Apostle Paul lays out the argument for all the glory we have to give belonging to the Lord, he makes several points that we need to observe

B. In understanding where our glory belongs, it is necessary to understand

where it DOESN'T belong – simply, it doesn't belong with us

C. Vs 26 – look around – there aren't many here (if any, for that matter) that would be considered "wise" by the world's standards (those with degrees from higher education); there aren't many "mighty" – men of power in business and/or politics; there aren't many "noble" – of noble, prestigious birth (royalty, in other words)

D. Vs. 27-28 – the reason there aren't is not because God won't save them (look throughout history, both in the biblical history as well as human history as a whole), but rather because God chose to demonstrate who He is and that He deserves (and requires) the glory from mankind by choosing to show His mercy and grace to the world through the "foolish" and the "weak"

1. By doing this He has confounded the wise – He has demonstrated that true wisdom in eternal matters has nothing to do with this world's wisdom
2. He has confounded the power of the mighty and noble – what He is providing cannot be bought, born into, nor understood by mere worldly wisdom
3. He chose the "base things of the world" – only time in the NT this Greek word is used and it is in answer to the "noble" – God chose those "of no family" (literal definition), those of no value, those hated because of their race or nation, to

demonstrate His love

4. "Things that are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not" – literally, set at nought – "not merely despised, but expressly branded with contempt" (Vincent)
5. "To bring to nought things that are" – He chose all that the world holds in contempt, all that the educated, powerful, rich of this world looks down on, to bring to nothing the very things those people hold dearest. When they stand before God, it will not matter who they are, where they were born, how much money they had – all that will matter is whether they gave God the glory or not.

E. Vs. 29 – the reason God chose to present His truth and the message of the gospel the way He did is so that mankind knows where the glory belongs

1. "That no flesh" – no one anywhere in any time
2. "Should glory" – not a single boast made
3. "In His presence" – neither now while on earth nor at the judgments when mankind stands before Him

III. WHY? – vs. 30

A. Why does He deserve the glory, deserve our boasting of who He is? It's because of what He's done for us in saving us.

B. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus"

1. "Of him" – out of God – He chose you
2. This is the reason we glory in God alone, for it's because of Him that we are saved in Christ alone

C. "Who of God is made unto us wisdom" – Christ is the wisdom of God, demonstrated in His righteousness, sanctification, and redemption

1. As opposed to the wisdom the world offers, the wisdom from God is demonstrated in ways the world can never produce, and for a reason the world has no concern for – redemption
2. "Righteousness" – this points to our justification, our righteous standing with God – the only way we can be righteous is through the blood of Christ

Romans 5:19

(19) For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

2 Corinthians 5:21

(21) For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Philippians 3:9

(9) And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

3. "Sanctification" – this points to holiness – the only way we can live holy, and be eternally holy, is through the blood of

Christ

Acts 26:18

(18) To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Ephesians 2:10

(10) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

1 Peter 1:2

(2) Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

4. "Redemption" – the buying back of a purchased possession – again, it's only through the blood, through the cross, that we can be bought back

Hosea 13:14

(14) I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

Galatians 3:13

(13) Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree:

Ephesians 1:7

(7) In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Conclusion: Have we stolen the glory that only belongs to the Lord and given to ourselves or to some other person? There's a lot of "hero worship" among believers today, looking at some great person of the faith and we boast on them, and we praise them for what they've done when all that boasting, and all that praise belongs to the Lord and Him alone.

Make sure we give God the glory for what He's done before we consider giving the glory to anyone else.

"There was a cripple who spent his life in a room where he could not see the sun. He heard of its existence, he believed in it, and he had seen enough of its light to give him high ideas of its glory.

"Wishing to see the sun, he was taken out at night into the streets of an illuminated city. At first he was delighted with the bright lights, dazzled. But then he reflected on the sky, and realized there was darkness spread amid the lights. So he asked, 'Is this the sun?'

"Next he was taken out under a starry sky and was enraptured until, on reflection, he found that night covers the earth and was bewildered. Again he asked, 'Is this the sun?'

"Finally he was carried out on a bright day at noon, and no sooner did his eye open on the sky than all questions came to an end. There is only one sun! His eye was content; it had its highest object, and knew that there was nothing brighter.

"The same is true of the soul: it enjoys all lights, yet amid those

of art and nature, the soul still inquires for something greater. But when the soul is led by the reconciling Christ into the presence of the Father, and he lifts upon it the light of his countenance, all thought of anything greater disappears. As there is only one sun, so there is only one God. The soul which once discerns and knows him, knows that there is none greater or brighter, and that the only possibility of ever beholding more glory is by drawing nearer."

-- Rev. W. Arthur

-- Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The Quotable Spurgeon*,
(Wheaton: Harold Shaw Publishers, Inc, 1990)