

Hillsdale Centennial Message

Special Message 91

Philippians 2:17 10-21-2017

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Philippians 2:17 But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18 So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

Introduction

I can’t even put into words what it’s like to be here with all of you again. It’s amazing how often Tracy and I find ourselves talking about you and remembering our time here even after 20 years. No place we’ve ever been has had an impact on us like you have.

And speaking of impact, I was looking over the timeline of milestones in the brochure, I checked out the years that I was here and noticed that there were no milestones listed during that time. I’m assuming it was just an oversight or a typo or something, but you should know, under my leadership we thoroughly discussed the wheelchair ramp idea. Now, did we actually build anything? No, not really, but we definitely discussed it – for most of two years in the deacon meetings – every month.

That’s kind of a snapshot of my leadership abilities to be honest. Getting people mobilized to actually accomplish a task hasn’t ever been a major strength for me.

In fact, just to give you an idea – last night we were talking about the time I got a call on a Friday from the school. They needed a last-minute sub to take the gym class. So I went over there. And I thought, “I’ll take these kids on a walk.” So I got them all out there, and as soon as we started walking, some of the kids took off running, like birds out of a cage. Like they had been in captivity their whole life and had finally been set free. Others walked along with me, and still others were shuffling along behind, barely even moving.

I wasn’t too worried– I figured the runners would go for a couple minutes, and then get tired and stop, and I would wave them back. That didn’t happen. They disappeared over the horizon. Who knew that Hillsdale Christian School had children who could flat-out sprint for over a mile without slowing down? I finally jogged up to the intersection and those kids are nowhere in sight. North, west, east – as far as I could see down any of those roads, no sign. I didn’t even know which way to go to look for them.

So now I've got an entire class of elementary kids strung along at every point along a mile stretch of road. By this time it's about 5 minutes until the end of class. And it was the last class of the day, so parents were arriving at the school to pick up their kids.

So I did what any responsible adult would do. I cut my losses, gathered as many kids as I could, and headed back. We showed up ten minutes late with a large majority of the kids I started with. It turned out the runners had gone to J.C. & Charlotte Bowen's house. So they were right there at that intersection inside the house enjoying cookies and milk while I was running up and down the road like the Gaderian demoniac.

That's a sample of my leadership style. Might be part of the reason why I couldn't get the ramp project off the ground even after more planning than it took to build the World Trade Center memorial building.

If Your Role is Small

I don't know if any of you feel like me – you look at the great things God has done through this church over the past 122 years and think, "That's great, but my contribution, it seems really insignificant." Maybe you haven't been here that long, and half these stories you're hearing this weekend were before your time, and you're wondering, "Does the history of a church really matter that much anyway?" Does it really matter that this building has been sitting here for 100 years, or what people did in decades past way before you were even born? It's intriguing to us, but does the Bible instruct us to pay attention to that? What does Scripture say about the significance of the history of a local church? And how does it affect what we're doing now?

Open your Bibles please to the book of Philippians and we'll see if we can find some answers. There's so much in this book that speaks to this, so we'll just kind of move through the book. We'll start what it teaches about the significance of history.

The Past: A History of Faithfulness Matters

From Day 1 to Now

Paul brings up the history of the Philippian congregation in the first and last chapter.

Philippians 1:4 ... I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

Paul explains this further in ch.4. When the Philippian church first started, right from day 1 they had partnered with Paul in the work of the gospel through financial gifts. So he's going back to the beginning of that local fellowship in Philippi up to the present (the whole lifespan of the church up to that point) and commending their faithfulness.

And that's what we're doing this weekend, right – looking back over our past? Now, the Philippian church couldn't hold a candle to Hillsdale Bible Church when it came to the timespan of their history. They had only existed as a church for about 12 years at this point. You probably have bulletins laying around here that are older than that. Twelve years doesn't even take you back to the time period of the great wheelchair ramp deliberation era of this church. The Philippian church had a relatively short history, yet it still mattered to Paul that they remained faithful in their partnership with him in the work of the gospel for that whole 12-year history.

Scripture places a very high premium on faithfulness – not only for individuals, but also for congregations. If you doubt that, just read through the letters to the churches in Rev.2-3. To be a part of a church that has not only existed for 122 years, but that has remained faithful to God, and to the gospel, and to the Scriptures for that long – that's a very big deal. And very rare, incidentally. Very few churches keep going for 100 years, and the ones that do, the great majority of them are churches that have gotten

into liberalism, forsaken the gospel, and are as dead as a doornail spiritually. So what's happened here in Hillsdale is most definitely worth celebrating.

Impact of the Church

If you try to calculate the impact of the past ministry of HBC, it boggles the mind. Other speakers have mentioned all the ministry that has taken place here. All the ministry, all the sins confessed, lives changed. All the moments of worship where Christ's name was lifted up and exalted with unanimous affirmation. The countless prayers - asked and answered. All the children raised here who have gone out to other places with a godly influence. The ministry of the spiritual gifts multiplied over the years. People who have gone out from here to other places. It's just staggering to think about.

On top of all that you think about all the people reached by the missionaries you supported, and then all the people who were impacted in later generations by those converts and their children. In ch.4 Paul explains that all the fruit of everyone you support financially is credited to your account in heaven.

And the pastors. I think it's 47 pastors. And just like you heard from the others - same with me. Seminary did not teach me how to be a pastor. Hillsdale Bible Church did. When I came here, I was 30 years old, I'd been to seminary and I had everything about pastoral ministry mastered. I had it all figured out ... except for the part that involves ministering to people. I came here and you taught me that that part - that's the only part there is.

This place is like a seminary - except instead of going into debt for 10 years, you get paid. And your wife learns how to make dinner rolls that are ... I'm pretty sure the same rolls they are going to serve at the wedding feast of the Lamb at the end of the age. And the things I learned as a result of your amazing patience with me while I was here, I was able to pass on to numerous other pastors who are now leading churches all around the Denver area. And people are benefiting spiritually all around the world. And I'm just one of 47.

The Future: Focus on the Second Coming

From Now On

So yes, the past is worth celebrating - that's biblical. But no sooner does Paul glance back at their history than he immediately looks ahead to the future.

Philippians 1:4 ... I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

What God started in past, and that has gone on for 12 years, Paul was confident that good work - their participation in the ministry of the gospel, would have an impact all the way until the Second Coming. And he was right. Here we are 2000 years later benefiting from the fruit of the Philippians' giving ministry. They supported Paul, and here we are today learning from Paul's book. That's the sort of thing God does through a faithful church. There's a lasting legacy.

Paul's Focus on the Day of Christ

We tend to think maybe 10 or 20 years into the future, but when Paul looked forward, he saw one thing: the day of Christ. He says that in v.6, and 4 verses later he brings it up again in v.10 - and again in 2:16. His entire goal was for the Philippians to be prepared for the day of Christ.

That's the mission of the church - getting people ready for judgment day. That's why he spends the rest of ch.1 talking about how he would gladly endure any amount of suffering and even postpone going to heaven in order to see to it that the Philippian church remained faithful. Otherwise Paul will have run and labored for nothing (2:16).

So why does the past matter? Because God will use your past faithfulness for future fruit that will last all the way to the Second Coming. But here's the thing: that's not automatic. The degree to which that happens is conditioned on future faithfulness. The fruit of past faithfulness can be squandered by future unfaithfulness. That's where we come in in our generation.

The baton of the work of the Gospel has been handed down in this church for 122 years, and each of those generations have labored and struggled and suffered and toiled in ministry in order to deliver the gospel ministry to you intact. And now it's your turn to take that baton and maintain it and hand it off to the next generation.

The Present: Sacrifice and Service

But that won't happen by itself. If you just coast, I promise you - this church will eventually drift away from Scripture and into insignificance. Which brings us to the present. We've talked a lot about the past and the future, but we don't live in the past or future. The only place we ever exist is in the present. So what about now? What about tomorrow morning?

2:12 Just as you have always obeyed, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

Based on your great past, keep it going. Persevere. Remain faithful. And let me show you why. Turn over to ch.2 v.17 (and this is really the main thing I want to talk about tonight). Take a look at how Paul describes the ministry of the Philippians during the time they were reading the letter. How did he describe what they were going to do that next Sunday morning?

Philippians 2:17 But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.

He refers to what they were doing in two ways – as a **sacrifice**, and as a **service**. In God's eyes, that's what your present ministry here is - a **sacrifice and service**. The word for **service** refers specifically to priestly service. The priests worked full time in the Temple ministering to the people. And that's what we are – all of us, men and women – we're a kingdom of priests.

I hope you come to church on Sundays as a priest, not as a customer. Customers come to be served; priests come to serve and to offer acceptable worship.

So we are priests offering sacrifices. What are the sacrifices? Not animals anymore – that ended when Jesus died on the cross. Those were a picture of atonement for sin. But the picture of atoning for sin was not the only purpose of the sacrifices. Another purpose was worship. As sinful creatures, we are not able to do anything on our own that could please God. And so God created some rituals that enabled finite, sinful human beings to offer God something that would delight him and please him and honor him. The sacrificial system. And that aspect of the sacrificial system remains to this day.

So what are the sacrifices now? If not animals then what? What does Philippians 2:17 say?

New Testament Sacrifices

17 ... the sacrifice and service coming from your faith

The sacrifices we offer, instead of an animal, are the actions that flow from living a life of faith. When you trust Jesus Christ more than you trust yourself, so that you follow his way instead of your own way, the actions that flow from that are the modern day sacrifices that we offer to God as worship. One illustration of that is later on in this same book. In ch.4 Paul is talking about their financial gifts to support his missionary work.

Philippians 4:18 the gifts you sent ... are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.¹

¹ See also Hebrews 13:16.

Other things that Scripture refers to as sacrifices include praise,²

- prayer,³
- repentance and contrition over sin,⁴
- serving the body with your spiritual gift,⁵
- love,⁶
- any good deed,⁷ and
- the souls of the men and women you minister to.⁸

All of those things are forms of acceptable, pleasing worship. They are the things that bring a smile to God. And where do those things happen? In the body of Christ. Does it ever occur to you when you get up on a Sunday morning what an astonishing thing it is that you're about to go and do something that will bring pleasure to almighty God? More pleasure than anything else that ever happens in this world?

You are Doing a Great Work!

Don't ever underestimate the importance of what's going on here in this church in the present. It's like Nehemiah when he was building the wall and he said, "**I am doing a great work and cannot go down**" (Nh.6:3)? You can say the same thing. What you're doing here as a church week after week is a far greater work than what Nehemiah was doing. Read the NT and you find that this local fellowship out here in the middle of the wheat fields, is the very household of God, the pillar and foundation of the truth, the church of the living God, , and the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is the very dwelling place of God.

It is the headquarters of God's presence from which he dispenses grace in this world.

It is a royal priesthood and a holy nation.

It is the Israel of God, and the body of the Lord Jesus Christ in this world.

It is the bride of Christ.

It is the field where God is raising up his harvest.

It's a lampstand in the Holy Place.

It is the place where the Word of life is held out to the world by saints who shine like stars in the universe in a crooked and depraved generation.

It's the kingdom of God in this place.

It's the banquet of God where we invite the world to come and be satisfied.

The church is the only hope this world has.

It's the light in this present darkness.

Anything you do that contributes to the success of the church is a far greater work than Nehemiah ever did. He was building a physical wall around an ancient city; you are building the spiritual household of God.

There is no greater work. There is no meeting going on anywhere in the world, in the White House, in Congress, in a corporate boardroom – nothing happening anywhere in the world more important than what happens inside this building – as long as you all remain faithful all the way until Jesus comes back.

One Sacrifice

Now, let me show you one more thing from v.17: I just listed a whole bunch of different sacrifices, right? But notice that the words **sacrifice** and **service** in v.17 are singular. It's not sacrifices – it's *the sacrifice*.

² Hebrews 13:15, 1 Peter 2:9.

³ Revelation 5:8.

⁴ Psalm 51:17.

⁵ Romans 12:1.

⁶ Ephesians 5:1-2.

⁷ Hebrews 13:15.

⁸ Romans 15:16-17.

The church is not just a building where a whole bunch of individuals are offering their personal gestures of worship to God. The whole church is presenting one offering. Take all the activities, all the expressions of worship, all the good deeds, all the gifts, all the faith, all the love of everyone in the whole church, put it all together, and you have Philippian sacrifice and service.

So what does the Hillsdale Bible Church sacrifice look like on a typical Sunday? What is it that rises up to heaven from this 100 year old building each week? No doubt, there are countless expressions of faith and acts of righteousness and holiness – expressions of love for God and love for one another for the sake of Christ. And all of that is mixed together with – let's face it - some unrepentant sins that contaminate the sacrifice. On any given Sunday, some are doing well spiritually, and others aren't. Some are humble and selfless, others are selfish and proud. Some with pure thoughts; others with impure thoughts. Some are focused on God, some are fanaticizing about flattening a communist or an OU fan. You gather all that together in one big pile, and that's our sacrifice that we offer to God as a church. That is the sacrifice and service coming from our faith.

That's why your individual role is so important. You can't just get by on the coattails of the most spiritual people in the church. Your part matters, because God looks at the whole congregation as one sacrifice.

Conclusion: Your Role – Drink Offering

And that brings us full circle back to where we started – what if your role seems small and insignificant? Maybe you don't have a very prestigious role. You're not a pastor or a missionary or a deacon or a teacher – you haven't even planned a wheelchair ramp. Nothing you do will ever show up on a list of milestones of HBC. How does Scripture teach us to think about when our contribution is small?

Can Paul help us with that? Probably not, right, because his was a massive contribution. If the Philippians were a pleasing sacrifice – what about Paul? Is his ministry like an ultra, uber, super-sacrifice? Look what he says.

Philippians 2:17 But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad**The Drink Offering**

Paul saw his role as that of a drink offering – poured out on the Philippians' sacrifice. You can read about the drink offering in Ex.29.⁹ You would take a quarter of a hin of wine – that's about a half gallon, and just pour it out on top of the lamb while the lamb was burning on the altar. The lamb was the primary sacrifice. The drink offering was kind of an added touch that made the sacrifice a little bit more pleasing. Kind of like icing on the cake of the main sacrifice.

Isn't it interesting that that's how Paul viewed his contribution? What does that tell you about the value of the ministry of the church? Because Paul's ministry is a pretty big deal, right? Do you agree? All he did was spread the gospel throughout the known world and planted countless churches and trained pastors and disciplined people and endured incredible suffering for Christ and wrote 13 books of the Bible.

And yet, as great as his ministry was, he sees it as a drink offering poured out on the main sacrifice, which was what that little, local fellowship in Philippi was doing. Compared to that, his contribution was small.

And momentary. The drink offering, as soon as you pour it out on the sacrifice, it's gone. As soon as that liquid hits the fire – pfft – it's gone. It was just an added touch to make their already pleasing sacrifice just a little bit sweeter to God.

And that's *Paul!* So if you think your contribution to the overall church is small, it is. Even Paul's was. But is that discouraging? Look what he says.

⁹ Exodus 29:38 This is what you are to offer on the altar regularly each day: two lambs a year old. ... 40 With the first lamb offer ... a quarter of a hin of wine as a drink offering. 41 Sacrifice the other lamb at twilight with the same grain offering and its drink offering as in the morning--a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the LORD by fire.

Philippians 2:17 But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18 and you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

The word **glad** and the word **rejoice** come from the same Greek word – *chairō*. Repeating it makes it emphatic. Paul repeats that same word 4 times in one sentence - I am joyful and have joy with you and you should be joyful and have joy with me, joy joy joy joy! Paul is ultra happy about being a drink offering.

Which is amazing, because we know from 2 Tim.4:6 that being poured out like a drink offering was a euphemism for death. Paul is saying, “Even if I’m about to be gone – even if my contribution to what you’re doing there in Philippi means getting my head chopped off, still, I am happy, happy, happy, happy.”

Why? Because the sacrifice being offered up from the Philippian church was so significant and important, that making even a slight, momentary contribution, if it makes that overall sacrifice more pleasing to God, is something that should fill a person with multiplied joy.

David’s Drink Offering

Now, you might be thinking, “That sounds great, but it doesn’t really seem to be true in my experience. I come to church and work in the nursery, or do whatever, and it doesn’t really do all that much for my joy.” If that’s you, it might help to spend some time considering what a drink offering actually does. It glorifies God.

One of my favorite stories when I was a kid was the one in 2 Samuel 23. We’re almost out of time, so I’ll just refresh your memory real quick. It was a dark time in Israel. The Philistines had pushed deep into Israelite territory – as far east as Bethlehem. They had taken Bethlehem. Bethlehem wasn’t really a very significant town, except for the fact that it was where David grew up. And now the Philistines have it. Where was the mighty David? He’s in a cave 15 miles away at Adullam.¹⁰ And we pick up the story in 2 Sam.23:14 when David gets thirsty.

2 Samuel 23:14 At that time David was in the stronghold, and the Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem. 15 David longed for water and said, “Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!”

Maybe he got to reminiscing about back when he was a kid, taking care of the sheep – all the times he would go to the well and get water. And now here he sits in a cave while his hometown is occupied by Israel’s enemies. So he gets to daydreaming out loud, “Man I’d love to be drinking from that well in Bethlehem right now – instead of sitting in this cave.” I don’t think he intended for anyone to respond, he was just sort of wishing out loud. But there was a group of men there who were so loyal to David that his wish was literally their command.

It was 3 of his mighty men of valor. They were his Seal Team 6 – an elite special forces group of 30 men who never lost a fight, never failed in a mission, and they were incredibly loyal. Three of those guys hear David say this, and they start heading west. Imagine walking about the distance from here to Enid, except through extremely rough terrain in enemy territory. They finally make it to Bethlehem, and they’re scoping it out.

“What do you think, guys? Do we try to sneak in somehow, or just charge up there and try to break through?” Well, as usual they choose the latter. They figure, “We will just attack, and if we die, we die.”

So these three guys attack the Philistine guards, and it’s a massive fight. Swords swinging, bones breaking, blood flying everywhere, and finally they break through. Then they fight their way to the well,

¹⁰ It is often assumed this happened during the time David was hiding in the cave of Adullam in 1 Sam 22, but it also mentions a fortress, which may be a reference to the incident in 2 Sam.5 when the Philistine came after David right after he was anointed and he went to the fortress. In 1 Sam.22, the men were just coming to David.

which is the most heavily guarded spot in town – the water source. Another big fight, and these three men take the well.

“All right guys, here’s the plan – you draw some water and we’ll stand at your back and fight off whoever comes.” So he lets down the bucket, draws up some water, and fills a skin full. “All right, I’ve got the water. Let’s roll.” “Um, slight problem – we’re totally surrounded.” “So he ties that skin on his belt, pulls the sword from its scabbard, the three men go into a full sprint into what looks like it might be a weak point in the Philistine line, and it’s another major fight.

They work their way back to the gate, they make it out of Bethlehem, and disappear into the forest. Once they are clear, they stop to bind up some of their wounds so they don’t bleed out. And I’m guessing at this point they’re pretty thirsty, after all that fighting. But they will die of thirst before they will touch this water they are carrying. So they go find some other water for them to drink. Finally they make it back to Adullam.

“Where have you guys been?”

“Sir, we brought you something.

Enjoy.”

I remember when I was a kid I loved this whole story – except for the end. I never liked what happens next.

Philippians 2:16 ... he refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out before the LORD. 17 "Far be it from me, O LORD, to do this!" he said. "Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives?" And David would not drink it.

I always hated that part. Just drink it. Enjoy it! At least let someone else drink it – don’t dump it in the dirt.

What does he do that? They risked their lives to get that water. And David just takes all that and dumps it out on the ground? Now all their effort is for nothing? Wasted?

No. Just the opposite. Why did those men risk their lives to get David that water? Because it was some kind of super water? No. It was ordinary water, but they made it special by risking their lives to get it for David. They wanted the honor of having done something significant for David.

So then what did David do? When it says David poured it out, that word for pouring is the word for a drink offering. David was pouring it out as a drink offering. Normally a drink offering would be wine, because it had to be something of some value. But in this case, the water worked because it was of special value. And so David used it to worship God by pouring it out to him as a drink offering.

He wasn’t wasting their effort; he was doing them a great honor. They wanted the honor of getting water for the king, what they got instead was a far greater honor – the water they got was used to glorify God in an act of worship. They had taken ordinary water and made it special, and David took that special water and made it sacred, by turning it into it a drink offering.

That’s what a drink offering can do. It can take something of limited value and make it sacred, and give it eternal value by turning it into something that honors God. Paul dreamed of his life becoming like that water that David poured out into the dirt. Paul was saying, “Even if I die in this process, and my contribution to the sacrifice of the church is just a small, momentary extra little drink offering poured on top, I will die a happy, happy, happy, happy man.”

And you, with your little contribution to this church, can have that same joy. And what doubles that joy yet again is the fact that you are on both sides of that joy. As an individual serving in ministry, you have Paul’s joy of being the drink offering, and as a part of the church you have the Philippians’ joy of being the main sacrifice that is the greatest, most important thing in the entire world.

For the Glory of God

Let’s close by looking at how Paul ends this book in 4:20 and ties it all together.

Philippians 4:20 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

That is not just religious lingo thrown in to end the book. This is the purpose of everything he's written in the book. Everything Paul has been saying about their past history, their present ministry, their future legacy, and Paul's little role in all that – all of it is for one purpose: to glorify God.

I said a minute ago that being a drink offering is significant because it glorifies God. But glorifying God is a phrase that we hear so often in church that it can lose meaning. So let's make sure we understand that, because everything I've said so far depends on that.

You can't make God more glorious than he already is, but you can make him more glorious in the eyes of people, and that's what it means to glorify him or magnify his glory. It means to make God's glory more visible to people – which is absolutely the best thing you can ever do for mankind.

So what is God's glory? God's glory is all that is wonderful about God that can be known and experienced by us.¹¹ And his glory has a lot of facets. For example, one facet of God's glory is his amazing love. Another facet of his glory is his tremendous power. Some other facets are his wisdom and patience and creativity and gentleness and knowledge and faithfulness and perfection and eternity - he never came into existence and will never go out of existence.

There is also the fact that he forgives those who repent, and redeems those in bondage, restores that which was ruined, strengthens the weak, and cares for the helpless. That's what he is like.

He is also the Author of life. He's the Source of all beauty, all pleasure, and all goodness. He is a person, with awareness, emotions, will, intention, desire, and motivation, and he communicates – he reveals himself.

He is never limited to any location, never contained by any space, and his presence is available wherever his children are.

He never sleeps, never grows weary, never makes a mistake, is never surprised, never even slightly frustrated. He has total, sovereign authority over all things, and his decisions can never be overturned by anyone. He has no rivals, nothing threatens him, and he never runs out of anything. He listens to the prayers of his people and responds to them. And like a father he cares for us, provides for us, guides us, teaches us, disciplines us, and loves us. Those are all facets of God's glory.

And another thing that's true of him - he is easy to please. A child can do it. He is a refuge for those who are in trouble, and soothes the soul of the brokenhearted. He searches the hearts of men and knows our thoughts and actually cares about them. He is the final Judge to whom every human being who has ever lived must give an account. He decides every person's eternal destiny. He determines the course and outcome of human history. He is self-existent – the only being there is who actually possesses the power to exist in himself – not dependent on anything else. He not only created everything, but he sustains all things – so they remain in existence only by his power. He is transcendent – the only thing in existence that isn't part of the creation. And yet he became a part of the creation 2000 years ago. He is both above and beyond the creation, and at the same time as nearby and as close as your own breath.

He is supreme and the highest standard in every category. All movement in his direction is an ascending and all movement away from him is a descending. He makes promises to his people and always keeps them. His presence satisfies the human soul like food and drink to the body, and is always more rewarding and more satisfying to the human soul than any pleasure of any sin.

He hates evil.

He only does good things.

He is beautiful.

He is awesome.

He is holy.

He is generous.

He is just.

¹¹ The Greek word for glory - *doxa* – literally means brightness or radiance or splendor. The Hebrew word – KOVOD – literally means heaviness or weightiness. Both words are used the same way – to refer to that which is amazing or impressive about someone. In the Greek language if you want to talk about what is impressive about someone you use the imagery of what shines out from them – that which you can see. And in the Hebrew language if you want to talk about what is impressive about someone you talk about what is weighty and substantive about him.

He is merciful.

He is a rewarder of those who trust in him.

He cares for us like a shepherd, like a mother, like a father, like a king, and like a friend.

He has a special love for the humble and lowly, and he hates the proud.

He is worthy to be feared and served and obeyed and praised, trusted, hoped in, and worshipped.

To know him is to want to obey him.

And to fear him is to love him.

Those are some of the facets of God's glory. Any time you do anything to make any of those attributes of God more visible to people, you are glorifying God. And that's the purpose of everything we're doing in the church – past, present, and future.

The best thing that could ever happen to you, the highest contribution you could ever make in the world, is to contribute to the success of the church, because it is in the church where God makes his glory known. No matter what it costs you – even if it costs you your life, it's worth it. Pour yourself out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from the faith of this church – take the water of your life and dump it out. Pour yourself out. Give everything to this effort.

Your life is water from Bethlehem, it's a half gallon of wine – pour it out. Keep it, and it will count for nothing; pour it out, and it will glorify God as a drink offering.

So dump your drink. You won't lose anything – there are free refills in heaven. But for now, spend time thinking through the eternal value of your little, momentary, contribution. Your water. Think through the fact that God has enabled you to take that ordinary water and make it something eternally sacred. That's how you participate in the rich history of this church, and take all that past faithfulness and leverage it for future glory through present priestly service.