

Today's Sermon

The Glory of God

Romans 3:23

Pastor Phil Layton, GCBC, February 20, 2022

Please turn to Rom 3 and today our passage brings us to the banner on the wall, behind me. Front and center, Soli Deo Gloria means 'to God alone be the glory.' That's the central point of our existence as a church. This is our purpose statement: 'This church exists by the grace of God, **for the glory of God**, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities.' That's also the purpose of the universe. All things are from Him, through Him, to Him be the glory. The chief end of man is to glorify God, so man's chief problem is Rom 3:23, look at it: '*for all have sinned and fall short of **the glory of God***'

- Outline:**
- 1. God's glory is our problem when we sin**
 - 2. God's glory is our purpose when we're saved**

We're doing a series on God's attributes in Romans, today is God's glory.

1. God's glory is our problem when we sin

What is sin? John Piper says it best: 'Sin is the glory of God not honored

- the holiness of God not revered,
- the greatness of God not admired,
- the power of God not praised,
- the truth of God not sought,
- the wisdom of God not esteemed,
- the beauty of God not treasured,
- the goodness of God not savored,
- the faithfulness of God not trusted ...
- the justice of God not respected,
- the wrath of God not feared,
- the grace of God not cherished'¹ (we'll see grace in v. 24 next week)

All of those attributes are in the book of Romans, but it starts in v. 23 falling short of the glory of God being honored, or falling short of glorifying God.

Sin's problem is we fall short of praising and prizing His glorious attributes.

There's question whether God's glory is a separate attribute or the sum of His attributes, I think of it as a super-attribute or category for all the others

[1:17 – Righteousness of God](#)

[1:18 – Wrath of God](#)

[1:20 – Power of God](#)

[2:4 – Kindness of God](#)

[3:3 – Faithfulness of God](#)

[3:23 – Glory of God](#) (not a separate attribute, a sum of all the rest)

God is glorious in His power, He's gloriously kind, He's glorified in His faithfulness, all of that comes together with sin falling short of that glory. We miss the mark of His glorious law. We think of sin horizontally (others) but need to see it vertically (God). Rom 1-3 is about God's attributes and man's sinful attitudes and actions, and all are sinners in need of grace (3:24)

v. 23 says *For all* ... not some, v. 10 says not a one is righteous, but God is righteous. v. 11 says no one understands, but God is all knowing. 12 says no one does good (by God's standard), even though ch 2 says the goodness of God should lead us to repent. v. 13 says we deceive, in contrast to the truth of God in ch 1. v. 18 says there is no fear of God in their eyes, even though His wrath is revealed like ch 1 says. Sin is against God and His attributes.

Turn back to ch 1. Rom 1:17 says '*the **righteousness of God is revealed** ... v. 18: **For the wrath of God is revealed** from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.²⁰ **For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.**²¹ **For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God [NKJV 'did not glorify Him as God'] or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.**²² **Claiming to be wise, they became fools,**²³ **and exchanged the glory of the immortal God ...***

Men trade His immortal glory for images, created things over their Creator. We don't glorify the God of life but focus on what will die (grave exchange) - the God who made us in His image we trade for images that we make and things of this world. Sin exchanges the glory of the Immortal for an idol. That's not just true of statues, it's true of all sin inside. We all sin and all fall short of the glory of God. That includes not glorifying Him as He is by not being thankful. That includes the wrath of God not feared, the power of God not praised, the truth of God not sought, and the glory of God not honored

Ps 19:1 says the heavens declare the glory of God

But instead of glorifying and enjoying God, men are exchanging His glory. Sinners prize and prioritize lesser things instead of treasuring God above all. v. 22 helps fill out what the glory of God means, it's the honor of God, the praise or thanks we give to God. We sin and fall short of His glory when we fail to honor Him as God or glorify Him as He is. If we don't praise Him or give thanks to Him or give credit to Him, we sin and fall short of His glory.

Turn back to Acts 12 for an illustration of failing to bring God glory. This is what sin is, falling short of His glory, honor, thanks, not giving Him credit.

In Acts 12:21, the King Herod throws himself a party to celebrate his own glory. A **new holiday: 'Herod Day'!** ²¹ *On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them.* ²² *And the people were shouting, "The voice of a god, and not of a man!"* ²³ *Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, **because he did not give God the glory**, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last.*

That's a bad end to 'Herod Day!' But that's how bad it is to not glorify God. In Daniel 5, another saw the writing on the wall literally, how he'd sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. The word of the Lord to him said '*you ... Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart ... you have lifted yourself up ... the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, **you have not glorified...** You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting... That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain.*'²

It's a serious thing to not glorify God. God is opposed to the proud who do not glorify Him who gives them breath. The Hebrew word for glory literally meant weightiness, heaviness. So glorify His significance or importance as the God who weighs us in the balance, holds us and owns us and is over all. The Greek word *doxa* also includes a high or right view of God in praise.

Doxology - praise God from whom all blessings flow

In Rom 1 **the wrath of God is revealed** when men don't glorify God as God, and this is also why end times wrath comes. In the book of Revelation, this is what heaven shouts out with a loud voice '*Fear God, and **give him glory**, because the hour of his judgment has come ... Who will not fear, O Lord, and **glorify your name?***' But '*they did not repent and **give him glory...***'³

To the end of time, this is **our chief end, to give Him glory** and repent of where we sin and fall short of the glory of God. Who will not glorify Him?

God's glory is our key problem as sinners, that's the 1st point for us to see.

Rom 3:23 *For all **have sinned** (past tense active verb) **and fall short** (present tense), continually in this state of falling short, past and present.*

The first verb '*sinned*' is a snapshot of a point in time when humanity fell in sin (same verb used of **Adam's fall**). The 2nd verb '*and fall short*' is like an ongoing motion camera, a live video feed of how **we keep falling short 24/7**.

Jesus said '*be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect*'⁴ – and **we all miss that mark**. 'If the law measures the distance between God and his creatures, then human righteousness is our attempt to bridge that distance by our own efforts. Paul is correct—we **all fall short ... [of] this glorious standard...**'⁵

Some may jump farther than others across the Grand Canyon but we all fall short of the other side. None of us are better or closer to avoiding death if we try to jump across. We need a bridge to cross the great divide, we need the cross to bridge that. That's where Rom 3:24 comes in after Rom 3:23.

Rom 3:24 talks about **free grace, a gift**, in the redemption that's in Christ Jesus (what He did on the cross). He alone can take us to the other side by His cross, His death and risen life. But don't miss how v. 23 levels us all at the foot of the cross. One writer says 'The harlot, the liar, the murderer, are short of [God's glory]; but so are you. Perhaps they stand at the bottom of a mine, and you on the crest of an Alp; but you are as little able to touch the stars as they ... degrees of behavior removes [our] feet not an inch from the corrupt moral ground that [we] and the worst sinner, stand on together.'⁶

The only way to glory in heaven is from God and through God

God's glorious grace takes us from our problem in sin to our purpose in life:

2. God's glory is our purpose when we're saved

Rom 11:36 *For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever.* Our purpose in life is to glorify God. God made us in His image to reflect His glory, but sin falls short of it. Isa 43:7 says God created us for His glory, that's our purpose on the planet. But all sin and fall short of it, none of us rightly give glory up; my only hope is His glory coming down.

That same chapter in Isaiah says God forgives sin for the glory of His name and Isaiah says when Messiah come, the glory of the Lord will be revealed.⁷

Jesus is God who became flesh and dwelt among men who saw His glory. At His birth shepherds saw glory, angels sang '*glory to God in the highest!*' Jesus lived a perfect life that never sinned or fell short of the glory of God. Jesus did miracles to show God's glory and died for sins that fall short of it.⁸

Jesus 'is the radiance of the glory of God' who made 'purification for sins'⁹

And He was **raised in glory, taken up in glory, and will come again in glory.**

Rom 6:4 says He was raised from the dead *by the glory of the Father.* And Rom 10 says you need to not only believe that in your heart to be saved, you must confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord. Every tongue will confess He is Lord to the glory of God the Father, Paul says in another place (Phil 2:11)

In 2 Cor 4 Paul calls this '**the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God...the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus.**'

Unlike Rom 1 where sinners exchange the glory of God for images, Jesus is the image of God and He exchanges our sin for His glorious righteousness. Rom 1 is a grave exchange (trading life with God for what will die), Rom 3 is **the great exchange** (He takes our sin and death penalty and gives His life).

He exchanges our unrighteous life for the perfect righteous life Jesus lived.

On the cross Jesus takes our sin that falls short of God's glory, He dies for it and rises again to give believers a new life and nature that can glorify God.

For from him and through him and to him are all things, to him be the glory

Salvation is 100% all from God, specifically from the work of God the Son.

Our spiritual life is all through God, especially through God the Holy Spirit.

And forever all things are to be to God's glory, the glory of God the Father.

APPLICATIONS:

If God's glory is our purpose when we're saved, **how do we glorify God?**

1. Be thankful

Rom 1:21 NKJV '*...they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful...*'

Do you thank God for creation and His common grace in this world? Are you a thankful person? That's who glorifies or honors God as God, as He is.

God says in Ps 50:23 '*The one who offers thanksgiving...glorifies me...*'

Application?

2. Honor God above all the world

Rom 1:23 talks about how sinners exchange the glory of the immortal God for things of this world. When we're saved from sin that falls short of God's glory, the flip side is we're not to put anything of this world above God. We aren't to trust or treasure any created thing more than the Creator. What do you prize or prioritize most? Don't exchange the glory of the immortal God for things of this mortal life. Falling short of God's glory as #1 is serious sin

2:7 *to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life...* So this is a mark of believers, they've turned from seeking sin to now seek God's glory and honor, His immortal eternal life. Seek first His kingdom. Seek His glory and honor above all. If by grace through faith you do in this world, it never ends in a world to come

Application?

3. Trust God's promises

Look at Rom 4:20. God gave a Abraham promise that was hard to believe by what Abraham felt, or knew. ²⁰ *No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God,* ²¹ *fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.'*

Sometimes what we feel and know makes it hard to trust God's promises. We walk by faith not by sight, but faith glorifies God when we're fully convinced God is able to do what He promised. Where do you doubt? Any unbelief is sin that falls short of His glory, but faith gives glory to God.

Application?

4. Rejoice in hope of glory to come

5:2 *Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we **rejoice in hope of the glory of God.***

Hope is forward-looking faith, and here it gives us confidence, even joy. v. 3 says '*Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings...*' How does the hope of the glory of God help us rejoice in hope, even in sufferings? Look at ch 8 where he comes back to this again. **8:18** *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with **the glory that is to be revealed to us...*** Then he talks about the coming glory after this life and the glorified resurrected bodies to come, v. 30 says for all God predestined and justified will be glorified, made for glory. ²⁴ *For in this hope we were saved.*

We can rejoice He's working all things for His glory and our good, v. 28. From Him, through Him, to Him are all things, to Him be the glory, 11:36.

Look at Rom 9:23, as we think about our purpose when we're saved, this is God's purpose in saving us, 9:23: *in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—*

This is God's purpose, and should be our purpose. Rejoice in hope of glory.

It's by the riches of His glory God supplies all our needs, Phil 4:19

5. Be a Unified and Welcoming Church

Look at Rom 15. This is what Jesus prayed for in the upper room '*The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one,*²³ *I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know...that they also...may...see my glory...*¹⁰

The glorious love within the Trinity is to be seen in church unity

15:5 *May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such **harmony** with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus,⁶ that **together you may with one voice glorify** the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁷ Therefore **welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.***

Application?

6. Glorify God by Praising Him

One last purpose statement in v. 9: *in order that the Gentiles might **glorify God for his mercy.** As it is written, "Therefore I will **praise you** among the Gentiles, and*

sing to your name.”¹⁰ And again it is said, **“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.”**

¹¹ And again, **“Praise the Lord ...”**

Notice we’re to praise Him among the nations, like the Bible says ‘*Declare his glory among the nations...tell of his salvation from day to day*’ Ps 96:1-2. This is what evangelism and missions is about, spreading the glory of God in worship around the world, as sinners who fall short of glory become singers. When we pray for or pay for missionaries, we’re spreading the glory of God.

When the church gathers for worship, God is glorified if we truly sing to Him.

Other Psalms say “*Give unto to the LORD the glory due his name. Worship the LORD...everyone says ‘Glory!’*” (Ps. 29:2, 9 NKJV). “*Sing the glory of his name; make his praise glorious!*” (Ps. 66:2a). But the best statements on why we praise God’s glory are from the same Paul who wrote Romans, this is how he starts Ephesians talking about salvation by Father Son, and Spirit, past, present and future, 3x it’s all ‘*to the praise of His glory*’ (Eph 1:6, 12, 14).

Philip Ryken writes: ‘Whenever we worship God, we do what we were made to do. In our prayers and praises we declare that God alone is glorious. How else can you glorify God?...Glorify God with your art and music, by what you make and what you perform. One man who did this was Johann Sebastian Bach, who signed his compositions “S. D. G.,” which stands for *solī Deo gloria*, “to God alone be the glory.”... Even if you are less talented...you can give glory to the same God. Glorify God in your play by resting in his goodness. Glorify him in your work by working with all your strength. Glorify him in the menial tasks of the home. God receives glory whenever a dish is washed, a floor is mopped, a newspaper is recycled, or even a diaper is changed in his name. In short, glorify God in any and every activity of life by doing it in his service and according to his will. “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31)... “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen” (Rom. 11:36).’¹¹

¹ <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/sin-prefers-anything-to-god>

² Daniel 5:22-30 NKJV.

³ Revelation 14:7, 15:4, 16:9.

⁴ Matthew 5:48.

⁵ Bruce Barton et al., *Life Application New Testament Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 2001), 592.

⁶ Kenneth Boa and William Kruidenier, *Romans*, vol. 6, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 107.

⁷ Isaiah 43:7, 40:5.

⁸ John 1:14, 2:11, 12:23-24, 13:31, 17:4.

⁹ Hebrews 1:3.

¹⁰ John 17:22-24.

¹¹ Philip Graham Ryken, *Discovering God in Stories from the Bible* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1999), 21–27.