

BEHOLD HIS GLORY

(Sermon Summary)

Reading: John 1:1-14.

This is a great statement that the apostle John, speaking for all the apostles, makes in John 1:14 when he tells us that they saw the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. They saw the glory of the Son of God, eternal, who had made the world, the One who brings light and life. Yet now, that great Person had come in a body, in the flesh, and the apostles, and others, had been able to see Him. And there was so much to see that the best way they could sum it up was to say they had seen His glory. What then did John see that made him use the word 'Glory' about the Lord? And what can we see today?

1. John saw something worth seeing.

Something that has glory is worth seeing and experiencing. After all, something that has glory, is by definition, something unique, exceptional, that stands out from anything else. It stands out, too, in a good way. It draws our attention, our admiration, our respect, our wonder and perhaps inspires our hope and our trust. When we see something that has glory, we feel small beside it, unworthy, that there is nothing that we can add to it. Jesus Christ has the truest and greatest of all glory. For we see the best of goodness, purity, holiness, uprightness and nobility in Him and he rightly commands our respect, our love and our obedience. We see His divinity and His true identity, not in spite of Him coming in the flesh, but because He has come in the flesh. The only proper response to seeing His glory is to worship Him.

John saw all this in the Lord Jesus Christ and worshipped Him. John was an eyewitness so he knows very much what he is talking about and that he is not guilty of exaggeration. It is no wonder that the Lord drew crowds and compelled people to listen to Him. Some ended up worshipping Him. Others rejected Him.

People have great talents and great gifts. But to say they have glory would be too much. Only God should have glory attributed to Him. When Herod refused to give the glory to God he was struck down (Acts 12:22-23). It is God that is the only one who can claim our supreme attention. The proper outcome of looking at the Lord Jesus Christ is to see His glory (John 2:11).

2. The glory of His works.

We see His glory in the works that He did. This is what the disciples saw in John 2:11 when He turned the water into wine. There were so many works of power and wonder that revealed His glory to those who witnessed them. He cast out demons and He cured people of incurable things like leprosy. These left people speechless and feeling dwarfed by what they had witnessed. We often see the reaction to this was that they would glorify God, in other words, that they would praise and magnify God for what they had seen and heard (See Mark 1:27-28; Mark 2:12 & Matthew 9:8; Mark 7:37; and Mark 8:27). These works He did had such power and effect that they revealed His glory. John beheld that glory.

3. The glory of His teaching.

Whenever He spoke, people marveled at the things that He had to say and the way He said them. He displayed such wisdom in how He handled Scripture and understood the law (Matthew 7:28-29). He had such insight into the human soul and knew the innermost thoughts of people. He was able to discern the deceitfulness of people and their hypocrisy, as well as read the needs of their hearts and their longings. He knew where people had sticking points beyond which they were not willing to move. He was able to relate parables which opened up the hearts of people. He was able to speak with authority on vital subjects like how to enter the kingdom of God, what happens at the end of time, what the basis for God's judgment is. He also shows us what the heart of the King of the kingdom is.

His knowledge was so precise and accurate, that it was right to say that we could behold His glory from what He was teaching.

4. The glory of His character.

In someone else, the power and the wisdom that He had might have corrupted them. People with those abilities might have become very proud and very nasty. His character was humble and very gentle. There was love that came through all His works and all His teaching. In Him it could be clearly seen that God truly did so love the world that He gave His only begotten Son. You could see it in how He treated people. The love that could be seen in Him was so pure, so gentle, so authentic. It was such a selfless love.

The holiness of His character was such that it did not drive Him away from people but towards them. He stooped down to the needy and reached women and children. He had time for all kinds of people. He did not come across as being superior to them, He did not talk down to them, neither did He flaunt His power in a way that suggested He was saying to them in the wrong way, "Look at me".

It showed something remarkable about His character that He was not provoked to anger by the baiting of His enemies. This was all part of the glory which John beheld.

5. The glory of the cross.

All of this was summed up at the cross. John was able to see at first hand that no-one had ever suffered like this man. He was faced with such unfair criticism and such hatred simply because He had told the truth. He faced such terrible betrayal at the hands of a friend and then such a dreadful trial that was so biased and unfair. He was abused and had to endure receiving no justice from Pilate as he was manipulated by the chief priests to serve up the Lord to their evil desires.

He endured all this yet this was not the worst of what was yet to come. He had the death of the cross to undergo which He did without sinning, without reviling others. He was enduring all this on behalf of the people He was dying for. This was love indeed. John saw the glory of the Lord on the cross. He saw that which was so good, so superior to anything witnessed before. He saw something that was so full of generosity, so full of mercy and that was intended to help so many people. To behold Him was to behold One who was 'ineffably sublime'.

The Christian faith is not about the accumulation of knowledge or the correct following of religious ritual. It is about beholding the Lord Jesus Christ and agreeing with John that we are beholding glory. We are seeing something that is so worth seeing. This is glory revealed to us to save us from our sins. We are to look at Him and then share John's perspective that we are witnessing glory.