

The glory of the LORD (Psalm 8)
By Pastor Jeff Alexander (4/11/2021)

Introduction

“We do not segment our lives, giving some time to God, some to our business or schooling, while keeping parts to ourselves. The idea is to live all of our lives in the presence of God, under the authority of God, and for the honor and glory of God. That is what the Christian life is all about.”—R.C. Sproul.

God does not serve humans, although the righteous benefit from His purpose and plan. God loves His own with a *disinterested* love, which means that no one can earn nor do any deserve the love of God. His love is gracious, the free exercise of His will to do for those of His choice whatever He wills to do. Whatever He does He does for His own glory alone. Scripture shouts that God is to be glorified above all (Psalm 108:5; 115:1; 145:10–13).

This message puts the roof on the structure of the *solas* of the Reformation—the final sola: *Soli Deo Gloria*.

I. The Chief End of Man

1. What is the glory of God?

“Glory is not easy to define. It is like beauty. How would you define beauty? ... God’s glory is the beauty of His manifold perfections. It can refer to the bright and awesome radiance that sometimes breaks forth in visible manifestations. Or it can refer to the infinite moral excellence of His character. In either case, it [glory] signifies a reality of infinite greatness and worth” (John Piper, *Desiring God*, 1996, 43).

Augustine explains, “Because the face of God is so lovely, my brothers and sisters, so beautiful, once you have seen it, nothing else can give you pleasure. It [the beauty of His face] will give insatiable satisfaction of which we will never tire. We shall always be hungry and always have our fill.”

2. We were created in God’s image and thus, like Him, we have a universal compulsion to seek what makes us truly happy.

Our happiness and God’s being glorified are inseparably linked. God has put it in our very nature to pursue happiness, which, if pursued righteously, will glorify Him. However, what we determine to make us happy is crucial to our satisfaction and God’s goal to be glorified.

We were created in God’s image with the same compulsion that drives His own pursuit of satisfaction and happiness. God created all things, including humans, for His enjoyment: “*For the Lord takes pleasure in his people*” (Psalm 149:4).

3. The tragedy of sin is that self-satisfaction has become the perverted goal in the quest for happiness.

When God is neither the end nor means of one’s happiness, there is a *sin* problem. God’s original intention was that His image bearers would find full enjoyment in God Himself through knowing and serving Him.

The answer to the first question in the Westminster Catechism (“What is the chief end of man?”) is, “The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” John Piper

raises a significant question with the *and* in the answer. Do we sometimes glorify God *and* sometimes enjoy Him? Do we not glorify God most when we make *Him* the chief end or goal of our happiness? “The chief end of man is to glorify God *by* enjoying Him forever.” In the end, the Christian’s true happiness is found in *how* he is glorifying God—seeing and appreciating (Piper’s language) *the infinite greatness and worth of God*.

4. Salvation is the work of God to restore this relationship.

Salvation is a narrow gate and a very confined way (Matthew 7:14). Paul Washer accurately observes, “The person who professes faith in Christ and yet finds beauty and joy in the things that oppose the will of God should be concerned about the validity of his profession.”

God’s plan is to restore His image bearers to His original design for Adam, but in a more glorious way (Psalm 16:11; 40:8).

II. The Ultimate Expression of Glory

1. The agent of restoration—Israel vs. the True Israel.

The sinful nation of Israel failed in this plan. Thus, from the beginning God planned to make His Son the means of this restoration (Isaiah 49:3). Jesus, the true Israel, glorified God by accomplishing the will of God (John 17:4, 5; 13:31, 32; Philippians 2:9–11).

2. Because God’s redeemed people are *in Christ*, they are to share in His glory.

Believers are heirs of unfathomable grace that leads to unimaginable glory (Revelation 15:4). How will these righteous acts be revealed? They are revealed through those who live to glorify Him by doing His will in the power of the Spirit. Scripture commands us: “*Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God*” (1 Corinthians 10:31; see Matthew 5:16; John 15:8). “*You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you off-spring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!*” (Psalm 22:23).

3. We are to live out the invisible kingdom now for all the world to see (Romans 15:5, 6).

We glorify God through the invisible kingdom when we live the four simple instructions of the church found in Acts 2: 42. The church was the center of these early believer’s lives.

Lesson

Have you made Christ and His church the center of your life?

Do you assemble in obedience *to* God and *for* God?

“*O Lord, I love the habitation of your house and the place where your glory dwells*” (Psalm 26:8; 1 Peter 5:10; Romans 11:36).