

A Leader Consumed with the Glory of Christ

By Pastor Matt Black

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Lord's Day evening

Deacon Installation of Bro. Michael Larsen

John 3:22-36

Introduction: Our text this evening come from John's Gospel here in chapter 3, and verses 22-36. We are here this evening not for ourselves, but to glorify and reflect Jesus Christ. To do whatever it takes to get make His glory known to the world.

As we ponder that, I want to share with you a story about a very interesting well-educated Greek philosopher whose name is Dr. Alexander Popaderos. And Dr. Popaderos every summer on the island of Crete taught a class on ethics for two weeks. And this particular summer just as he was getting ready to close the class, the last few minutes of the class, he said, "Now are there any questions before we go?" And just as he was getting ready to say, "OK then you're dismissed," a little man in the back of the room, a rather timid looking man, sort of carefully raised his hand and said, "Dr. Popaderos," "Yes" "I have a question" "Yes, what is it?" He said, "I'd like to know, what is the meaning of life?"

As you can imagine, people were ready to go home, and they were very irritated by this little fellow's heavy question!

Dr. Popaderos very quickly quieted the group, he said to the class, "You know, if you don't mind I'd like to answer that question." He reached into his back pocket, and took out his wallet. He took out of the wallet a little mirror about the size of a fifty-cent piece, honed down on the edges, kind of sparkling. And then he told this tale, he said, "When I was a child, I began to realize that I could have so much fun with that mirror. I would simply catch the glint of the Sun, and shine that mirror into an otherwise darkened place. As I grew older I began to learn that this is no child's toy. This is really a metaphor for my life. Now I am not the light—I am not the source of the light. I am simply a broken mirror fragment. But if I allow the sun to shine on my mirror fragment, it is amazing what light I can bring into darkness." Then he said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, that is the meaning of life."

Each of us is a mirror fragment. We are not the Light. We are not the source of the Light. We are simply a broken mirror fragment. But when we permit the SON to hit our mirror fragment, and then bounce off into the life of a darkened heart, there can be change, there can be illumination. This story sets the stage for what I want to look at in John 3:22-36 (READ PASSAGE)

John's disciples saw that Jesus' disciples were baptizing more disciples than John, and they were jealous! John certainly was not, for his purpose in life was fulfilled. His disciples wanted to be with John just because of the honor that was bestowed upon him, but John wanted to use his honor to glorify Christ. These are the last words of John the Baptist in the Bible. The only thing recorded after that is the words of Jesus when He said John was "a burning and a shining light," and the words recorded by the Gospel writer John who said in 10:42, "John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. ⁴²And many believed on him there. "

John's life message was this: Jesus Christ is worthy of glory!

Today I want to look at one truth that we all need to grasp, and that is this, "JESUS CHRIST IS WORTHY OF GLORY."

We see this in . . .

I. His POSITION

"A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven."

Before God formed the earth, or ever an angel cried, "HOLY" around His throne, there was just God. And yet in the mind of God there was a grand plan: a plan for the universe, the angels, mankind, and yes, a plan for you!

The two chief characters in the plan of God are: God and man . . .

A. Man's Position: ABSOLUTE POWERLESSNESS *"A man can receive nothing"* Lit.: "a man can take nothing to himself"

MAN IS A COMPLETELY PASSIVE BEING: POWERLESS!

Explanation: What we mean by this is that man is finite, he is dependent, he is unable to do anything for himself apart from the grace and enablement of God. We go back into Genesis and we see where man's power came from. Man cannot even exist apart from the breath of God!

Genesis 2:7 ⁷And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Psalms 8:4 ⁴What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? [The answer: MAN IS NOTHING!]

The only power we have outside of Jesus Christ, is the power to sin!

Romans 3 speaks in detail to the depravity of man, and so we say with Isaiah, "Woe is me, for I am undone." I am absolutely powerless, I am completely unable to please you in anything I do, and I can do nothing apart from you.

Application: *The fact that man is powerless in the plan of God gives God absolute glory because man cannot steal anything from God.*

I Corinthians 1: 26 - 31 says it best: ²⁶For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: ²⁷But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; ²⁸And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: ²⁹That no flesh should glory in his presence. ³⁰But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: ³¹That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Transition: That brings us to the next part of God's plan. We saw man's position, now we must look at God's position!

B. God's Position: ALL POWERFUL. *"except it be given him from heaven"*

Ex. 15:18, The LORD shall reign for ever and ever.

Matt. 28:18 All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth

Psalms 90:2 ²Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

James 1:17 Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Psalms 147:5 . ⁵Great *is* our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.

God is infinite, eternal, unchanging, and He holds all power in His hand!

Transition: Jesus Christ is worthy of Glory, not just because of His position. It is not enough to give Him Glory for His position alone, many religious people who are lost know of a God who is up in heaven, but He has never touched their lives! No, Jesus Christ is Worthy of Glory, not only because of His Position, but because of His Preeminence!

II. His PREEMINENCE (Verse 28-35). *"He must increase, but I must decrease"*

Col. 1:18 ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

PREEMINENT in His Sovereignty. *"He that cometh from above is above all."*

Eph. 1:20-23 [God has set Jesus] at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: ²²And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, ²³Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Col. 1:15-17 ¹⁵Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: ¹⁶For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: ¹⁷And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

Illustration: This does not mean above, like the sky, it means above in POSITION or AUTHORITY! Example: The Court of Last Appeals. There is NO ONE HIGHER!! No one else to appeal to!

PREEMINENT in His Speech. *"For He whom God hath sent speaketh the Words of God"*

Hebrews 11:3 ³Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

Jesus Christ simply spoke things into existence. Everything exists because of His Words!

Hebrews 4:12 ¹²For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

His Word is the only thing that can change you! Many Christians think that they must have some dynamic physical experience to change. They must have a vision, or “feel” something. My friends, the most dynamic experience awaits you in the Word of God, and God is not doing anything to anyone anywhere apart from the Words of Jesus!!! Jesus Christ is Worthy of Glory because of His Preeminent Speech!

His Speech is Preeminent!!

Psalms 119:18 For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.

Matt. 24:35 ³⁵Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Matt. 5:18 ¹⁸For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

PREEMINENT in His Spirit. *“For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him”*

Jesus Christ was unlike any man that walked the earth because He had the Spirit of God without measure. Even while on earth His preeminence was shown in His Spirit.

Col. 1:19 For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell;

Luke 4:18 ¹⁸The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me

John 1:14 ¹⁴And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

John 1:15-18 ¹⁵John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. ¹⁶And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

¹⁷For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

¹⁸No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

PREEMINENT in His Sonship. *“The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.”*

Illustration: I love my wife—priceline story. I surprised her with this big fancy hotel in downtown Chicago, and she didn't need to know but I didn't pay even close to what it was worth. In fact she knows now, but I paid less for that than in a regular hotel. Candy bars and water. I am willing to do any thing for my wife because I love her so much, but nothing compares to the love that the Father has for the Son!!

Psalms 2:7 ⁷I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

Acts 13:33, Heb. 1:5 also quote this verse.

Explanation: Jesus Christ was not created or made, but in eternity past (this day) or, in the eternal day the Father begat the Son. Jesus Christ is the

eternal Son of God, He has always been the Son of God. There has always been a relationship of love between the Father and the Son.

Mark 1:11 And there came a voice from heaven, *saying*, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Explanation: Jesus Christ is the Object of God's Love. God created us to give a Bride to His Son, and Jesus Christ is the . . . Rev. 13:8 Lamb slain from the foundation of the world!

Transition: Jesus Christ is Worthy of Glory, because of His Position, and yet He transcended that Position, and is Preeminent on the earth, and He is also Worthy of Glory because of His Plan!

III. His Plan.

Plan of Rejection. *He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him"*

Romans 5:12 ¹²Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned

God does not choose to reject anyone

Ezekiel 33:11 As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live:

Yet he has no choice, for we have chosen to reject Him! He prepared Hell for the devils, NOT FOR YOU!

Matt. 25:41 ⁴¹Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

And so John says, if you have not believed, then the wrath of God is already upon you!!

Even the perishing of the wicked gives Jesus Christ Glory, or else it would not be a part of God's plan. It shows His holiness and the character of God. And those who say there is no hell, do not know the character of God!!

And yet, the Scripture clearly states that that *the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

Plan of Redemption. *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life"*

1 John 5:12 He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Conclusion: Are you a broken mirror fragment reflecting the Gospel?

At this time I'd like to ask Bro. Mike Larsen and Mrs. Dawn Larsen to come forward.

Installation of Bro. Larsen as Deacon

We come today to install Bro. Mike Larsen into the deaconate of our church. He is a servant. A man that has proven himself to be blameless.

The qualifications for a deacon are laid out in I Timothy 3

8 Likewise *must* the deacons *be* grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; 9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. 10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless. 11 Even so *must their wives be* grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. 12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. 13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Bro. Larsen, are you living a blameless life, and do you uphold the biblical requirements for this office? (I do)

Mrs. Larsen, is your husband blameless, and do you fit the qualifications of a wife of a deacon, and are you willing to support him in this role? (Yes)

Now Bro. Larsen has already been ordained as a deacon, but we want to confirm that ordination tonight as he takes up service for our church.

We read in Acts 6

And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. 2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. 5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: 6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid *their* hands on them.

I'd like to ask our two other deacons Bro. Gary Johnson and Bro. Mike Klikas to come forward at this time. Let's have a prayer of confirmation at this time that Bro. Larsen would be set apart for the ministry of the deaconate among us.

(Have Gary and Mike pray, and then close)

Presentation of Certificate

Presentation of Books

Closing Hymn: 400 Take my life