

Return to Glory Part 4

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[0 : 00] Jesus is praying as he and his disciples travel to the garden of Gethsemane where he will be arrested.

! That's chapter 18. Keep in mind what we are studying.! This is the eternal Son of God now made flesh and he is praying for the eternal Son of God now made flesh and he is praying for the eternal Son of God.

He is praying for the eternal Father with whom he has shared glory for all eternity. Here is God talking to God.

God the Son is expressing his desires to God the Father. And the disciples are hearing this. That's how we have it. John heard it. He recorded the prayer for us.

They're hearing the Son of God pray. And we get to read it. Meditate on it. Study it.

[1 : 08] And learn from it. Prayer reveals our most precious desires. What does God the Son desire?

What does he want most? Simply the Father's glory and his glory. Remember, glory is the, as one Puritan said, the outshining of God's holiness.

It is the display of his attributes and inner being. It is the display of who he is. Glory.

He prays for the Father's glory and his glory. And to achieve both, he must die, rise again, and ascend so that he can grant eternal life to those the Father has given him.

To know God is to possess eternal life. And this God must be known by beholding the glory of God in Christ Jesus.

[2 : 23] That's where we see it. Most clearly, the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus. Our Lord's work and character reveal his glory.

And this is how he defines eternal life, knowing him and the Father. I want to tease out one more time. I want to tease out one more benefit to knowing God before we finish this section today.

Along with the second means of his glorifying the Father. Jesus longs to return to glory. And that is what the world needed most after his death and resurrection.

We needed him to return to glory. That we who see him might be saved. I want to ask you, are you looking?

Are you looking? Are you casting your gaze constantly to the glory of Christ? Continuing the means of glory in his mission.

[3 : 35] Remember, the means of glory here is, one, he gives eternal life to those whom the Father has given him. But keep in mind what that implies. It means we can't see Jesus just as another religious leader or icon.

We have to see him as more. There's no, there's no, a little bit, no. We have to see him as more. In order to really see his glory, to understand as best as we can, who he is, we've got to see him as more.

The unique son of God, God incarnate, God in human flesh. The world has never seen his like, nor will it ever see his like.

Do you know him as this glorious son of God? Do you truly know him? Here's the thing. I just want to move on.

The more we see his glory now, the more you will know him. Here's the thing. And the more you will be transformed by him.

[4 : 43] The more you see his glory now, the more, yes, you will be more intimate with him, know him. But also, the more your life will be transformed.

2 Corinthians chapter 3, verse 18. And we all with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.

For this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. Now keep it, that text, that's on page 907, I think, if you use the Bible. Keep in mind what that text is talking about.

In that context, Moses was transformed. Meaning his face shone because he would go into the presence of God on Mount Sinai.

He didn't just go once, y'all. They camped out at Mount Sinai. It was camp meeting. And Moses would go up and interview God, as it were, or be interviewed by God.

[5 : 52] And as he would go up, when he would come back down, his face would shine. It would glow. You'll find this in Exodus chapter 34, 29 to 35.

You need to read that. It's beautiful. But Paul picks up on that. And this is the context of what he's talking about. And so, but the problem with that was this.

The people were freaked out. I mean, it was like E.T. came down the mountain. And they were like, and so Moses would put a veil over his face.

So it wouldn't freak people out. But also, what Paul is saying in this text, above this text, you'll read it when you get a chance. He's saying that the glory was also fading.

It was temporary glory. When Moses go up, boom. You can't be in the presence of God without being changed. You just can't do it. Come down, put the veil over.

[7 : 00] Glory fades. Take the veil off when it fades. Go back up the mountain and talk with God some more. Now, that veil, I don't think it was, it wasn't totally dark, okay?

He wouldn't be able to see. So there had to be some measure of glory still coming through, but it was muted. It was something they could deal with.

But it had to still, it was still there. But here's what Paul is saying. That's the old covenant. In the new covenant given to us by Jesus, as we are granting eternal life, we are brought into fellowship with the Son of God and the Father.

And we are now staring wide-eyed spiritually into the face of the glory of God in Christ. As we stare at Christ's glory, now watch this, we are being transformed now, but it's not fading.

We are having a true spiritual encounter with Christ that begins to mold and shape us into his likeness.

[8 : 15] A likeness that will be completed when we see, 1 John 3, when we see him as it is, as he is. When we see him finally, we will become like him totally.

But in this life, we are still in process. Now we don't see it totally clear, but we see it clear enough. And now his character, his love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, meekness, all those great things, his love, his ability to love even his enemies, his ability to forgive, all of those qualities in Christ that we love, are being pressed into us as we continually behold his majesty and his glory.

Now listen, his glory is seen most clearly for us in all the Bible. See, the Bible becomes Christ's book. When you want to see his glory, you don't look at the sun, you do get some in nature, amen. His glory is seen, amen. But when you want to be transformed by his glory, you open Genesis. You open Deuteronomy, Isaiah, the Psalms.

[9 : 51] And those are books about him, see. If you can't read the Old Testament and see Jesus, you're reading it like a Jew. And God forbid even a Muslim.

And then you come to the gospel. Ah, and then poof, poof. He blows up so clearly when you get to the new covenant.

And once again, as we come to the word in faith, trusting in God, looking for God, listening for God, beholding Christ, submitting to who we see of him in these pages, he is doing something in our souls.

You're changing. If you've been a Christian for a number of years, you've changed.

And people who know you will tell you. You're not the same because as you have grown in your knowledge of him, intimacy with him, beholding his glory, he's gotten to work on you.

[10 : 55] We come to Jesus as we are, but he will never leave us as we are. Some of you may have watched this week, America Reads the Bible.

Anybody see that? America Reads the... Wow. Sandy. I mean, really? Y'all didn't hear about that? Okay.

This... They... Bunch of folk got together, I think mostly in D.C. And this was televised. It was on... We saw it on Pure Flix. I don't know what else it was on. But they read the entire Bible in the King James from Genesis to Revelation over several days.

They were constantly just... These were politicians, pastors, Christian workers, all kinds of folk. I don't even... I don't even know... I don't know who... Most of them, I didn't know who they were. I'm assuming they're Christians.

I don't know. I don't care who they voted for either. They read the scriptures without comment. Just read it.

[12:02] It was pretty spectacular in a real sense. Why was it spectacular? And why do I not care what side of the aisle they were on? Why does it not matter? Because the word of God has power all by itself.

God's word being read without comment, which is why we read the text before we preach, is so that you can hear it. Because he's already going to work on you just in hearing his unadulterated word. So I don't care. So I don't... Listen. Even when an unbeliever reads the Bible on TV, it's not dependent on him. The word is going forth.

In America... Now, a lot of people in America heard the word of God if they watched. It was amazing. And when they got to the new covenant, they didn't skip a beat.

They saw Jesus. The word was going forth. Because it has power all by itself to accomplish God's will. And so, therefore, when you come to the word of God in faith, trusting in Jesus, oh boy, is it more alive for you?

[13:18] It's even more alive, as it were. Because you know the center of the book. The Spirit lets us see him, and we can't help but want more.

In his presence, we become more like him. We become like him in his actions and situations. The more we... Listen, listen. Here's the problem. The more we are preoccupied, which is a type...

Do you know the word preoccupied? It's a type of worship, okay? The more we are preoccupied with lesser glories in people. The rich, the famous, the successful.

And preoccupied with glory coming from people. Liking us, admiring us, fearing us, respecting us. Thereby, we are seeking our own glory.

The more we are preoccupied with these things, the less we are able to see or even desire his glory. It's deadly to our spiritual lives.

[14:31] We become like what we worship. Just in case you think I'm making that up. It's not on the screen, but write it down.

Psalms 115, 1 through 8. Here's how the Lord puts it. Oh, I love this. Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory.

For the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness, why should the nation say, where is their God? Our God is in the heavens.

He does all that he pleases. The world, their idols are silver and gold. The work of human hands. Describe them, Lord. They have mouths, but do not speak.

Eyes, but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear. Noses, but do not smell. They have hands, but do not feel. Feet, but do not walk.

[15:30] And they do not make a sound in their throat. He's describing idolatry. Idolatry is ineffective. Because that which you worship, that which you admire so much you are preoccupied with, that's not God, is useless.

It won't do what you think it will do. But watch this. He says to them, O house of Israel. I'm sorry, back up. He said, Those who make them become like them.

So do all who trust in them. Idolatry. Now we are, now listen, silver and gold are still idols. We love jewelry.

Your investments, money, all kinds of things become idolatrous. That which you are preoccupied with, that which you admire so much and begin to get your identity from, that's not God.

That which makes you get up in the morning and you can't wait to be known. You can't wait to be seen. You can't wait to be respected. You are demanding it.

[16:48] That is what you, that is death. And that kind of idols, those are idols now, they will not produce.

They won't make you what you want to be. What you need to be. Now we're talking to, he's writing to the Jewish people. I'm talking to Christians. Friends, we have the same issue.

We're dealing with the same problems. When we crave lesser glories, we do not grow in grace. Our sins continue to dominate us. Our attitudes are selfish.

We fight among ourselves. We pursue our pleasures above God's will and we pursue what is easy rather than pick up our cross and follow Jesus. You will not be transformed by them.

They will leave you the sinner that you are. You won't grow in grace. Example, it isn't easy to seek to make peace with people who have hurt us.

[17 : 54] It's so much easier to be angry, bitter, and just plain cancel them. But his glory compels us to reach out.

He didn't just leave us in our sins. He came for us. When you see the glory of Christ and he begins to transform you, you can't just sit there and do nothing.

When you've hurt somebody or they've hurt you and you have opportunity to try to make it right.

Especially in the body of Christ. Why do churches split?

Why are our families split? Why does it mean divorces within the church of God? Because we're not seeing his glory. We're preoccupied with our own glory, our own will be done, and our own way.

I'm trying to help somebody. I don't know who's out there. But listen, get your eyes off of you and what you think you need and put your eyes on him and see him as he is.

[19 : 02] He will transform you. He will work in you. And there's some things you can't fix. Amen. And even if you try, you may not fix it. But do you try? The glory of Christ, the forgiving one, moves us to want to forgive others.

We forgive as we have been forgiven. That only happens when we're seeing his glory, when we're knowing him and being transformed.

I'm convinced that many places and many churches, and there are many people who just don't see Jesus. Some of them aren't saved, true.

They're just churchgoers. But some of them are saved, but they got their eyes on the, they've been, the world keeps pulling. Worldliness is real. It keeps pulling their eyes away from Jesus.

Listen. Rather than living like citizens of the kingdom of God, strangers and aliens, we are more citizens of the world whose glory we desire.

[20 : 14] Why are we not crying out like Moses? Show me your glory. Remember that? In Exodus, he cries out, show me your glory. Now keep in mind, this is Moses we're talking about.

Moses had seen God's glory at the burning bush. When God, the bush burned, didn't, wouldn't consume him, and God spoke to him, take your shoes off, you're on holy ground. Remember that? He had seen God's glory when God delivered his people out of slavery from Egypt by sending 10 plagues against the Egyptian gods, showing that he's really God, and wiping those guys out, and then when they got to the Red Sea, God said, I ain't done yet.

Come here. He said, people, my people, come here. Parts the waters. Then he says, Pharaoh, you try to come through too. Whoosh. He had seen God's glory.

So what's happening in Exodus? He's greedy for more. You see, when you see the glory of God, you want more. You can't help but cry out, Lord, show me.

[21 : 19] Show me Jesus. Let me see Jesus. I want Jesus. I don't want popularity. If you give it, amen. If you don't, amen.

I don't want riches. If you give it, amen. If you don't, amen. Just give me Jesus. Amen. That's how you know you're seeing the glory.

You're hungry for more. You're hungry to bow before him. You're hungry to be with him. You're hungry.

Sunday morning worship in particular is not a chore for you. You come running. You come running. Can't wait to get here.

When you go home and you open your Bible and you want to hear his voice. You don't want to go a day without hearing his voice. You want to see and you're walking and living and doing all that you do.

[22 : 17] You do it for his honor. You work for his honor. You go to school for his honor. You play for his honor. Everything in your life revolves around seeing him and knowing him and making him known.

But that's only if you're seeing the glory. What are you looking at? Are you preoccupied by your own glory and desire for an easy life and desire for more prestige and honor?

Are you looking at somebody else's glory? Mesmerized by the rich and famous and all that they have and don't have? We got TV shows full of that stuff.

whose glory do you see? Now lastly, the second thing, the second way.

Now he glorifies the Father by giving people a relationship with himself which is eternal life. All right? That's one. But then he says one more thing. He says one more thing and he says he glorifies him by completing the work.

[23 : 31] Verse four. I glorified you on earth having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. Now I couldn't help but marvel at God's design here.

God gave Jesus a work to do. Sound familiar? God gave Adam a work to do in the garden. He was to cultivate the earth. He was to glorify God by cultivating the earth. Imaging God and everything he did in his work, in his leisure, in his family. He was to spread the knowledge of the Lord throughout the earth.

That was what he and Eve were supposed to do. But they sinned against God and turned to their own glory. Remember what did the enemy say?

You will be like God. They wanted their own glory. The glory of being like God. By the way, we call that humanism. But it's really just life without Jesus.

[24 : 35] Life without God. You seek glory. You always seek glory. You just seek your own. And so Adam failed. And so all his posterity, everyone came out, every human being coming after Adam is born in that condition of rebellion against God being glory hounds for ourself.

In Romans 5, Paul calls Jesus the second Adam. The first Adam was the head of the human race who failed.

Jesus now comes as the head of a new human race. A new people. A new creation who looked the same as everybody else.

But there's difference here because there's glory in them. The spirit of God resides in them. And they've been made new creations. And they have a new purpose now to honor the creator in everything.

The first Adam did not accomplish the work. The second Adam accomplished the work by going to the cross. He accomplished the work that the father sent him specifically to go to the cross.

[25 : 52] And Jesus, on the night of his betrayal, on the night of his arrest, on the night before the crucifixion, he looks up to the father and says, I've done it.

He's, he's, no, he's, he's, even before he did it, he did it. It was a done deal. Jesus saying, it's a done deal.

I'm going. I said, there's no turning back for me. I have accomplished the work you've gave me to do. Believe it or not, God has given you a work to do too.

It's not like Jesus' work. That's one time. But you have a work too. What is it? I don't know. Walk with the Lord and he'll show you. You got things he wants to accomplish through you.

The question is, are you, are you busy telling God, no, this is what I want. Excuse me. No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, I know this is, yeah, this is good.

[26 : 58] Hallelujah. We love the Bible. Amen. Thank you, Jesus. But I want, what I want to do with my life is this, and I will, and I will brook no interference, Lord.

It's my way, Lord, or the highway. If you don't do it my way, I'm out of here. You think Christians don't talk that way? You think some of you don't talk that way?

We tell God what we want, and if he doesn't do it our way, we're done. See, and our way always includes no suffering, no rejection, plenty of money in my pocket, you know, like Bruno Mars, he's got my, you know, never mind, you know, that's a song he sang anyway.

You know, we, our way is always easy. Don't get me wrong, there's nothing wrong with having a plan for your life. Please do. Think about what, your gifts, and abilities, and talents, and ability, think about that.

What do you want to do with your life? But here's what you do. You go to God and you hold it loosely. Listen, I'm going to tell you a little secret.

[28 : 08] You don't know this. When Stanley and I moved to Washington, D.C. to plant a church, I told the Lord, I want to stay here and die here. I want to pass to this church for 30 or 40 years.

I want to bury them and I want them to bury me. That's what I said to the Lord. Let's see. Then there came Miami.

Well, Lord, I want to stay here for, okay, I'm getting older now, so maybe not 40, but 30 years, 25 or so, and then you hold your plans loosely so that God doesn't have to pry your fingers off of them.

And thank God he brought me to a place where I was able to hold stuff loosely. I tried, believe me, I tried to tell God no, and then I realized that's a bad idea.

God's plan for you is better than your plan for you. God's work for you to do is better than the work you're coming up with. It may not be a straight path. A friend of mine is about to be installed in a new church and I'm going to be taking part in that service.

[29 : 23] I might be preaching, I don't know yet. But his path to that church was through hardship, public hardship and disgrace that he did not deserve.

But that was God's path. He has a, your job is to accomplish whatever work God puts in front of you in his name.

Do it all for the glory. Do it whatever he puts in front of you. Do it. Do it according to the word and do it that he might be exalted in you.

Not just full-time ministry, everything. you're an artist. Do it. Magnify him in that. You, you, you, you going on the finance.

Do it. Do it for him. if you're working at Walmart. Do it for him. For his glory.

[30 : 29] You'll be blessed. You'll be walking around Walmart helping people. Can I help you?

People run, some people run away from you in Walmart. That won't be you. You'll be like walking to people. Can I help you?

And people walk up the store going, man, that was customer service here is amazing. They might even put you on the wall of a picture. Jesus can be glorified in you through whatever work he's giving you to accomplish if you will do it beholding his glory, doing it in his name.

Can I get that amen? Just one. Amen. Well, I'm just about done now. Now, your Christian life may be boring, routine.

I get up in the morning, I read my Bible, quickly by the way, and I say a quick prayer, I get in my car or I jump on a bus, whatever, and I go to work or class, whatever it is.

And you do that week after week after week. And after a while, you keep saying, is this all there is? Go to church on Sunday here in England.

[31 : 42] Exceptional message from Pastor Kevin. And that's it. I go home.

I race to the buffet first because I got out of time and get to the buffet. Get to the buffet, I eat lunch, I go home, I'm so glad I got out of church early so I can do what I want to do. And you go, and you begin to say to yourself, is this all there is to the Christian life?

You're bored because you're not seeing the glory. You're not pursuing a relationship with Jesus whereby he's revealing himself to you.

That's why you're bored and it happens. It happens to all of us. It happens to pastors. But when you wake up and realize that in all that you're doing, Jesus is there.

when you open this book and you start looking for Jesus, I don't mean just read a passage. You stop and you man, he said, where is Christ in this passage?

[32 : 50] What is Jesus doing in this passage? How is God revealing himself to me and how is he showing me myself? Is there a sin for me to confess? Is there a promise for me to hold on to in the name of Jesus?

Is there somebody I need to share this with? Oh, how is he equipping me to bear witness to my neighbors and co-workers and fellow students? How is he equipping me?

Oh, I got something to share. Listen, when the joy of the Lord begins to bubble up in you because you see the glory, you can't help but tell people about Jesus. Why don't we witness?

We don't see the glory. Jesus says to the Father, the last thing he says to him, and this is where we close again.

Glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. He comes full circle. Verse five. Father, I'm getting it done.

[33 : 58] On the cross, I will yell, it is finished and it will be finished. I've already said I've done it but I'm going to really do it at the end here. I'm going to get it done and when I do, Father, I'm coming home.

When I do, Father, glorify me. Listen, he's not, he's not, this is not a request here really. He's asking from what he's due. Return me to the glory.

Return me to what I've always had. Return me to what I was with you before the world began. He's the only one who deserves the glory. Only one.

The only one. And he said, I'm coming. Open wide the gates that the king of glory may come in.

He's coming and he's coming again. And when he comes again, brothers and sisters, no, there won't be no up and down seven years in there and coming back, no sneak attack.

[34 : 56] When Jesus comes, the rapture is the second coming of the living God. And Christ will come and the whole world will see his glory. And that's it. He's going to wrap it up.

And so will we be ever with the Lord forever. Forever, ever, ever. We're going to talk more about that in a few, few weeks.

Jesus says, Father, give me what you have. And yet God says in the Old Testament, I will give, will not give my glory to another.

Yet Jesus says, Father, I want the glory. Even Jesus is totally crazy and a blasphemer. Well, he truly is the son of God who is returning to what is rightfully his.

The Trinity is real. And he goes there in glory with our humanity for us. That you might look and behold a man who is more than a man.

[36 : 14] A man bearing your likeness, but someone who is in the likeness and the image of God representing you so when you fail, you don't have to wallow in the dirt.

I'm such a worm. I'm so, no, I can't. You don't do all that stuff. When you fall, you look up and see him at the right hand of the Father looking at you with his arms open wide saying, I'm here.

Lord, restore the glory. Forgive me and restore glory. And he'll do it. Because he's there for you.

And every day, let him change you a little bit more. You don't change yourself. He's doing the work. You're just doing the looking. Keep looking and surrender yourself to him.

[37 : 23] Father, thank you for the glory of Jesus. Thank you, Father, that you pursued your glory through your Son that all the earth might see the glory of the one true God.

Now help us, Lord, to represent you well. Fill us with your Spirit. Give us eyes to see your majesty, so that we are transformed, that we are moved, that we are full of your joy, that whatever trials we face, Father, we can have our eyes on something bigger, something better, something more lasting, and that is the majesty and glory of Christ for which we are destined to be with you.

Help us. Use us. touch this city and this nation with your glory through your people.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. Amen.