

I. BEHOLDING THE GLORY OF GOD

- A. Beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of all godly desires.

24 Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father, even though the world does not know You, I know You, and these know that You have sent Me. 26 I made known to them Your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them." (John 17:24-26)

- B. John 17 takes place before Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension. After speaking to His disciples and praying that they would not fall away in the coming shakings (His death and future persecution of the saints), Jesus sets His eyes on the future ingathering of all believers through the Church's and apostles bold witness.

- C. When He prayed the High Priestly prayer, He set His eyes on you. He set His eyes on me. And the groan of His intercession essentially was this: "Father, if I go to the Cross, I want something more than worker-bees! I want something more than a project to make Me look good! I want them to experience the depths of Our glory and love forever! I want to be one with them and they with Me!"

- D. Jesus was interceding from the place of *desire* for the future promise of all believers becoming One in Christ, beholding His glory, and encountering the truth that the Father loves them as much as He loves Jesus. Jesus' prayer is still being answered.

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 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. (2 Cor. 3:17-18)

II. WHAT IS THE GLORY OF GOD?

- A. What produces the inward experience? How does authentic heart transformation take place? Why should we desire Jesus and to voluntarily lay down our lives for Him? Why should we desire to proclaim Him to others?

- B. In 2 Cor. 3:18, Paul was declaring that transformation takes place in the heart of men, not just by changing our actions, but by beholding something--the glory of God. That which we behold (set our mind, eyes, spirit on) we become like.

- C. Beholding God's glory is the source of inward experience of a life of godliness, and the never-ending fuel of prayer, missions, and 100% obedience to Jesus.

- D. What is the glory of God?

1. Exodus 33-34: Moses beholds God's glory

18 Moses said, "Please show me your glory." **19** And he said, "I will make all my **goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The Lord.'** And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. **20** But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." **21** And the Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, **22** and while **My glory passes by** I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. **23** Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen." (Ex. 33:18-23)

5 The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and **proclaimed the name of the Lord.** **6** The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God **merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,** **7** keeping steadfast love for thousands, **forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty...**" **8** And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped. (Ex. 34:5-8)

- E. Moses beholds God's glory and records *who He is* and *how He feels about us*. God declares to Moses that His glory is His goodness and His name--it's His goodness, kindness, graciousness, mercy, forgiveness, justice, zeal, etc.
- F. Our emotional DNA changes when we come into contact with WHO God is and HOW He feels about us.

"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence..." (2 Peter 1:3)

III. MESSENGERS OF GLORY

- A. The primary way to raise up disciples is by their beholding of the glory of God.
 - 1. External reforms alone will never work when we were made as image-bearers to behold God and reflect His nature. **Right thinking produces right feeling produces right acting.**
 - 2. "...for all have sinned and **fall short of the glory of God...**" (Romans 3:23)
 - 3. **"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory (NKJV), glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."** (John 1:14 ESV)
 - 4. *The low view of God entertained almost universally among Christians is the cause of a hundred lesser evils everywhere among us...with our loss of the sense of majesty has come the further loss of religious awe and consciousness of the divine Presence.¹*
 - 5. If we behold God to be mostly stingy, frustrated, angry, etc. we will live stingy, frustrated, angry, etc.

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is **freedom.** (2 Cor. 3:17)

3 And even if our gospel is veiled, **it is veiled to those who are perishing.** **4** In their case the **god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.**

¹ Tozer, A.W. *The Knowledge of the Holy*. San Francisco, CA: Harper pub. 1961, p. vii

Cultivating a Burning Heart for God's Glory

6. Genesis 3 -- Satan is responsible for this blindness *in concert with* humanities depravity. Satan led humanity astray in the Garden with Adam and Eve, but humanity did it *in concert with* Satan's leadership.
- B. God's primary objective is to be glorified. Satan's primary objective is to mock, belittle, distort, the glory of God.
- C. There is a full-scale war against the glory of God. Satan's objective is to make the glory of God foggy and muddled. Satan's work is thwarted when God speaks into a darkened world.
- D. What is the gospel? What is the good news? It is the "***light of the gospel of the glory of Christ***"
- 5 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 4:3-6)***
- E. Apostolic messengers are raised up by continual contact with the glory of God. The Father's intentions are far more glorious than giving us the right set of Bible facts to pass the test and enter Heaven. He is still taking believers on the road to Emmaus, discovering the love, zeal, and glory of God in the face of Christ throughout the Scriptures.
- F. Jesus is our starting point and our culmination. He is the fullness. He is not just a means to an end, but the end in itself. Salvation is the entry point. The glory of God is the eternal aim.

IV. CULTIVATING BURNING HEARTS: SIT, GAZE, SING, PROCLAIM

- A. Throughout the Bible the glory of God has been made known to a people who postured their lives to receive. The early Apostles gaze themselves to *prayer, the ministry of the Word, worship, fasting, radical giving, 100% obedience* "***that Christ may have preeminence in all things***" (Col. 1:18) (see Acts 1:14; 6:4; 13:2-3; Eph. 5:19).
- B. Sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to His teachings (like Mary of Bethany, Lk. 10:39), and gazing and beholding His glory through prayer (2 Cor. 3:18) and by the Spirit illuminating His Word, produces messengers who will stand with unveiled face and sing and proclaim His glory and worth to the nations.

11 For from the rising of the sun to its setting My name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to My name, and a pure offering. For My name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts. (Mal. 1:11)

"...for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." Acts 4:20

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (Hab. 2:14)