

PHILIPPIANS BIBLE STUDY

Philippians 1:1-11 (d)

Lesson #4

TO THE GLORY AND PRAISE OF GOD

Open with prayer and then read verses 1 - 11

11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Phil 1:11 (NASB)

A. To the Glory and Praise of God

The single highest and greatest honor that any human, or angel, or created being has ever been granted, in this entire universe, is to be permitted to participate in the glorification of almighty God, the Father of everything.

We do this by acts of righteousness and obedience that can be seen and appreciated by all the created beings that God has made. However, there is a particular presentation procedure that has been ascribed to this honor. While it is possible for any human being to perform many great, and even momentous, acts of apparent kindness and benevolence, nevertheless, unless they are passed through the cleansing and purifying blood of Jesus Christ, they are tainted and soiled with sin, and are not presentable to the glory of God the Father. By the term "passed through the blood of Jesus Christ" I mean that they are performed from a regenerated heart, with the motivating source being that new spirit of life received as the gracious gift of God and performed for His pleasure and glory.

God himself has dictated the procedure by which His creatures may display His glory, and that is by first believing in His Son, who is the sole distributor from which all acceptable works of glorification must be obtained to be rightly ascribed to the glory of God. Otherwise they are ascribed to the glory of man himself, through his own accomplishments, which doesn't glorify God at all, actually just the opposite.

It is the realization that every good and righteous thing that exists is generated from the righteous source of God himself, (He alone is righteous) and is only distributed through His Son Jesus, that mankind may begin to understand what it means to give all the glory to God. There is no other true and pure glory in the created cosmos but that which is generated by God and distributed through His Son Jesus Christ. Period. All other is counterfeit and tainted.

The whole point of righteous and obedient behaviors performed by the saints is to visibly demonstrate, to mankind and angelic beings, the glory of the grace of God's compassion that He demonstrated by the crucifixion of His own Son, for the purpose of redeeming, and regenerating, and sanctifying His own predetermined elect, so that they, through their righteous deeds, might then visibly show that work to all creation, expressly to the glory of God the Father. (Eph 2:4-10; Mat 5:13-17).

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

(Our salvation is first and foremost for God's glorification,(v.7))

Eph 2:4-10 (NASB)

13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Matt 5:13-16 (NASB)

As children of God, as a people openly declaring our position as believers in Jesus Christ, our whole life is now a visible demonstration of the work that God has done in our lives, by turning us from the darkness of sin to the light of righteous obedience, **in the full view of all mankind, as we just read in Matthew 5:16 and many other places as well.** Jesus also told His disciples that if they would confess Him openly before mankind, both verbally and by their righteous actions, then He would gladly confess them as His followers before His Father in Heaven. And it is this very thing, this very obvious change of both thinking and behaviors, that Christ is saying **displays the glory of God** in His sermon on the mountain.

It is the stark and evident change of behaviors, that is being demonstrated before men, that is the glorious work of God, and for which He is to be praised and worshiped. He changed us, we didn't change ourselves, and that's why He is the One who rightly and justly gets the glory for it. If we don't bear the fruit of righteous change, then where is the display of the glory to which He is entitled, and for which He created and redeemed us? This is exactly why branches that bear no fruit are cut down and thrown into the fire, because they are useless to their master. (Jn 15:6)

Do you remember the parable Jesus told to His followers recorded in Luke 13:6-9? He spoke of a tree that for several years showed no fruit, and He told His worker to fertilize it and give it one more year, but if it didn't produce fruit after that to cut it down, because it was a waste of valuable soil. In a like manner the lives of those who name the name of Jesus are expected to produce righteous fruits in conformity to Jesus, (Rom 8:29; Eph 4:13) and this is expressly for the purpose of **demonstrating the glory of God the Father.**

But unfortunately most of mankind sees redemption as the focus of the creation story. By ascribing some of the process to man's own good decision, or wise choice, the glory of God is tragically denigrated by those who are the very ones who are supposed to be demonstrating and proclaiming it. By insisting to keep just a little piece of the credit for ourselves, we so taint it that it's not even acceptable to God. Like a prime cut of meat that has been dropped on a dirty floor, it may be the best cut available, but it's no longer fit for consumption because it's polluted. And so it is with the glory of God, He demands it all, unspoiled by human hands, or He deems it unfit for His consumption.

It is a very sad situation when those who are His believers think that God saved them predominantly for their own benefit, as an act of benevolence for His own apparent inability to make them able to perform up to par in the first place. Such shallow thinking is far more an affront to God's sovereign power than it is a tribute to His majestic glory. This is so childishly self-centered, and the tragic result is that it reduces the perception of God's glory to merely a loving concession made by God to man for His own inability to persuade mankind to be what He really wants them to be. In fact I've heard numerous sermons on the perpetual sinfulness of the believers and how God demonstrates His love by endlessly forgiving the incessant sinful lives of His children. Sadly, this is a true assessment of man's condition, but, is it our incessant perpetual sinfulness that glorifies God, or is it our visible repentance of sin and Godly obedience that glorifies Him?

What **glorifies God,** (repeat), is that He takes lost helpless sinners, dead in their sins and trespasses, (Eph 2:1-6) and wroughts such a change in them that they suddenly begin to shine, visibly and noticeably, like lamps on a lampstand, illuminating the whole surroundings, and in so doing, like salt on food, they give the flavoring of Godliness to the whole of creation - **to the glory of God the Father; because He's the One that did it.** This is why we who love Him, joyfully obey Him; because it glorifies Him when we do. (Jn 14:15, Mat 5:13-17)

First and foremost God saved us to demonstrate His glory, through the riches of His grace bestowed on totally unworthy sinners. **Redemption isn't about saving us, it's about glorifying Him!** How many times does the bible have to say this for us to get it? Whole denominations are seemingly oblivious to this simple biblical fact. Creation is a story about God's glory, not about man's redemption, that is simply a collateral benefit to man in the process of the demonstration of the inexhaustible glory of God.

This is the method that God has ordained by which His redeemed and chosen may glorify Him and offer Him acceptable worship, by their stark, visible, and obvious change of lifestyle and priorities, coupled with the public proclamation that it is entirely the grace of God who has wrought that change, through a regenerating of their formerly dead human spirit, and freely bestowing a whole new heart and mind, forgiving all their sins in the process. For this, God rightly and appropriately gets all the glory Himself, because it is a singular work of God, **done to visibly demonstrate His glory.**

For God, it isn't just a matter of getting His elect saved from hell, but that He has done that expressly so that they may **openly and visibly demonstrate His glory in the doing**. It is very difficult, maybe even impossible, to rightly understand the glory of God unless one rightly understands the sovereignty of God. Otherwise, the self keeps intruding into that which rightly belongs entirely to God. To try to grab even a little bit of God's glory for self is cosmically disastrous, just ask Satan.

After all, if we think that God can't, or just won't, do something on His own, but needs our help, then at least some of the credit for doing it belongs to us, right? It is this unintentional, but seriously misdirected Arminian thinking that has caused the human intrusions on the assessment of the work of God in the act of redemption. But this seemingly small, well intended, and benign error, has nevertheless proved to narrow the churches focus of God's glory entirely onto His loving forgiveness of sin, at the near total exclusion of His ability to transform and sanctify the lives of His redeemed. We glorify Him because He died for our sins, but not because He has resurrected us to new life. We seem to leave that part out entirely, or push it into the future when He returns. **To give God glory, one must be living a Godly life right now** - there is no substitute method of glorification. To those who hold to this future holiness in heaven concept, let me say that if the life you are living right now isn't a visible demonstration of the glory of God, then it is quite unlikely that you are ever going to get there. (Rom 2:13; Mat 5:20, 7:23)

B. God's Own Crucial Part in His Glorification:

Later in our study of this epistle of Philippians we will get to that very well known set of verses in chapter two that describes Christ's incarnation and His humbling Himself in his obedient observance of His Father's will for Him to be publically humiliated and brutally murdered on a cross. The section ends the account with the summary declaration:

*9 For this reason also, **God highly exalted Him**, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, **to the glory of God the Father.*** Phil 2:9-11 (NASB)

Do you see what's being said here? It is God who has highly exalted Jesus, and it is God who has given Jesus the name above every name, and therefore it is God who gets the glory for having planned, engineered, and implemented the whole process, from start to finish. Even regarding His own Son God demands all the glory, as Jesus so often stated. While God bestows a lesser glory on whom He wills, and even shares the riches of His own glory with His Son and His children, nevertheless He does not share His divine and supreme glory with any other, because there is no other.

5 "I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me; 6 That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun That there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other, 7 The One forming light and creating darkness, Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these. [things] Isaiah 45:5-7 (NASB)

God said "I Am", not we are. He is the only thing that self exists. Everything else that we call the universe is simply a thought being sustained in the wilful conscious mind of almighty God. Nothing else exists whatsoever. All that God created, the entire gamut, both light and darkness, well-being and calamity, all have been created by God to display the range of his infinite glory. And in so doing, He lays the backdrop for His unimaginable mercy to be understood and displayed to vessels of mercy chosen beforehand to share in the riches of His glory. (Rom 9:22-24)

22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? 23 And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. Romans 9:22-24 (NASB)

The lesson that the bible teaches, whether popular or not, is that God created everything in the universe expressly for His own purposes, which He had predetermined, planned, and predestined to come to pass. The bible says that He made some vessels for destruction to demonstrate His wrath, and some vessels for mercy to demonstrate the riches of His glory. We are entirely His workmanship, from start to finish, and the end has been predetermined from before the commencement. It is quite amazing how furious this fact makes some people. But it doesn't change the fact that it's true and it's taught unmistakably in the pages of scripture, both old and new. The Prophet Isaiah records:

8 "Remember this, and be assured ; Recall it to mind , you transgressors. 9 "Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, **My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure**";
Isaiah 46:8-10 (NASB)

The scriptures do not portray God as a victim or defendant of His own creation, but as absolute sovereign ruler over it, in every way, shape, and manner. He is not playing catch up to overcome some unforeseen setback that befell His perfect creation, despite His earnest desire to keep it from damage. He is God, there is no other. He is totally in charge and control of the whole process, and everything that is taking place is fully part of His overall plan to display the unfathomable riches of His glory, through the playing out of every creature He has ever made, both earthly and heavenly.

It, (creation) is totally about the visible display of the glory of God, and has been created as the tangible manifestation of all His invisible attributes and glorious nature and character. To try to make the central purpose of creation about us, about man and our redemption, is to quite literally steal the glory of God, and refocus it on the welfare of man. Man is just one of the many creatures that God has created in the process of displaying His magnificent glory. Yes, we were created to be His children, and family, and worshipers, and that absolutely requires that we have some way, some means, to come to the knowledge of His glory; and creation is that means. Creation provides both the unique creatures and the **necessary training ground** for God to prepare His eternal family of worshipers. **We exist in God's creation to behold His glory and be trained as His eternal worshipers.** Do you see why the bible repeats over and over that all the glory goes to Him, forever and ever?

5 Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, and gather you from the west. 6 I will say to the north: Give [them] up! and to the south: Do not hold [them] back! Bring My sons from far away, and My daughters from the ends of the earth— 7 everyone called by My name and created for My glory.
Isaiah 43:5-7 (HCSB)
(If we are called by His name then we were created by Him for His glory)

*Ro 11:36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.
1Co 10:31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
Ep 3:21 to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.
1Ti 1:17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Now let me make a statement here that may be on your mind. From all these verses maybe it sounds to you like God is kind of caught up in Himself. Shouldn't He sort of be more humble? Lets think about that for a minute. Do we actually imagine that we are in a place to evaluate God? To measure and quantify His authority and attributes? Will we weigh Him on our scales of justice and give Him a grade? Will we call Him to account for His actions and motives? Will we demand an explanation for all the things He has done? Will we then pronounce sentence on Him for His actions? If so how do we plan to enforce that verdict?

I've asked these absurd questions to make a point. You see we immediately recognize that there aren't any answers to these questions. Because the problem isn't with the difficulty of finding answers but with the very act of asking the questions. The clay pot doesn't get to question the motives of the potter who made it. The child doesn't get to demand justification from his parents for why they had him. He might be glad or he might wish they never had, but nevertheless that was their choice as parents. Right away we see that not every child that is born will have equal opportunities and equal situations, but that is the lot of every being. Yet regardless of our status or situation we all have responsibilities and boundaries set for us to live within.

As human beings we will not all have the same wealth, the same health, the same social status, the same skills, and so on, but we do all have certain boundaries and parameters within which we are to live out our lives. Just like the human body needs all the parts, even those unmentionable ones, so the creation of God requires many diverse parts and functions to carry out the immense plan of creation to train up His children to maturity. We don't all get to be king, some of us have to be servants in this lifetime, but like Jesus, who emptied Himself of His eternal glory with His father and became, for a time, a lowly human servant, likewise all of us are called to demonstrate lowly **obedience to Him** before we are permitted to share **glorification with Him.** (Rom 8:16)

16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. Rom 8:16-17 (NASB)

What so many seem to miss, or object to, is the thought that glory, from man's point of view at least, most often first includes humility and suffering. Not to the same degree, and not always physical, but always as designed by God to test and purify His children for the ultimate position He has predestined them to inherit. For God to share the riches of His glory with any creature, that creature must first be made to comprehend and appreciate the value and great responsibility that this honor carries with it. Just like a responsible parent won't give their children toys that can hurt them, or that they can hurt others with, likewise God does not bestow honor, glory and responsibility on children who do not understand the full ramifications of just what it is they have inherited.

An understanding of the sovereignty and glory of God would seem to be an indispensable characteristic for anyone to be considered suitable to share in that glory. Therefore, we can see that understanding God's glory isn't just a nice thing some of His children might or might not do, but rather it is a mandatory prerequisite for the qualification to share in it.

As long as there are humans on earth, in this present age at least, there will be those who see man as the **central theme of creation**, and God as the agent of man's well being, man's salvation. I can't even imagine God sharing His glory and authority with anyone who is so childishly naive and misdirected as to really believe that man, and not God, is the central character in the biblical account of creation. Actually, I suspect most would deny that they believe this, but nevertheless, their thinking, speaking, and priorities prove it to be true.

Any church, or body of members, or individual person for that matter, who actually truly believes that the number of church members is more important to God **than the holiness of those members**, then that church, or person, is woefully misdirected, and doesn't know a thing about the glory of God, or His absolute sovereignty over His creation.

If you don't know that God created you, and redeemed you, for the purpose of **visibly displaying His glory in your life**, then you are ignorant of His whole purpose for your existence in His eternal creation plan. This whole thing that we call the created universe isn't a great story about mankind, but a great revelation of the infinite glory of God; visibly demonstrated through the lives and actions of **all** His created beings.

A wise leader does not put authority in the hands of ignorant little children, but in the hands of trained and mature adults, who have labored long and hard in the word of God, to learn all they can about Him, both **who He is** and **what He desires**. And the scriptures teach, from beginning to end, that God demands that we love Him with all our hearts, and we give Him all the glory for everything, because He is both worthy and entitled in every possible respect.

CONCLUSION:

There is no end to the discussion of the glory of God, and we could go on for eternity. I realize that I haven't even scratched the surface with this meager presentation, but an understanding of the glory of God **begins** with the understanding of His absolute unique self-existence, His total and unquestionable sovereign authority, His perfect and unchallengeable holiness, His predetermined plan of creation, and His absolute control over its circumstances and its final outcome, and **His own specific purposes** for creating everything in the first place.

It is from this starting point that meager man may begin to examine and rightly appreciate the infinite, eternal, inexhaustible, unimaginable riches of the glory of the almighty One who calls Himself "I Am" and there is no other.

Indeed, what is man that such a God would even be mindful of him, and yet, this God has intentionally created this man, uniquely, as the specific living being which is capable of understanding Him, both intellectually and emotionally, and thereby made capable of comprehending His glory, which then results in the acceptable worship and loving companionship that He desires, forever and ever and ever. Amen

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