Glory to God Alone

This morning, we continue our study of the great biblical truths that were recovered during the Protestant Reformation: Scripture Alone, Faith Alone, Grace Alone, and Christ Alone, all to the Glory of God Alone. What these doctrines have in common is that they all find their meaning in Jesus Christ and him crucified. As the apostle Paul wrote, *For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2.)*

The Glory of God

> *Isaiah 42:8 ESV, "I am the Lord; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols."*

- Our God is a jealous God and will not share his Glory with another. God makes man in his own image, but man can't make God glorious; He is Glory, being in himself glorious! God is greatest good and how can God share his glory with something or someone lessor than himself? This would mean the God would be an idolator and not God.

- To begin with, we need a proper definition of God's glory. The glory of God not only calls attention to the quality of his character, but it also highlights the pleasing experience of admiring his character. The Scriptures use the word *"light"* to convey God's presence, we see this in the Shekinah Glory in the OT, which means "He caused to dwell." There is a connection between the objective Glory of God's presence and the subjective experience of joy that follows.

> *Psalm 97:11-12 ESV, Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!*

- We read of God revealing his glory to Moses in Exodus 33:18 where Moses pleads with God, *"Please show me your glory."* The Lord grants Moses' request, however, he cannot display a full measure of his glory, since it would kill Moses. Therefore, God places Moses in the cleft of a rock and covers Moses with his hand as he passes by, and God removed his hand so Moses could only see his back.

  Moses sees a light so brilliant that when he descends from the mountain his own face will continue to reflect the glory of God. However, the reflection of God's glory on the face of Moses faded, but there is the glory of God in the face of Jesus that never fades away. 2 Corinthians 4:6 ESV:

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." The very glory of Christ that is shone in our hearts.

- The word for Glory means *weighty or* reverent. Are we to approach God in a cavalier way. R.C. Sproul said that there are three major issues under attack in the church today: 1) The person of Christ, 2. The gospel and 3) Worship.

- George Barna wrote an article, *What Millennials Want When They Visit Church.* Barna asked Millennials why they do or don't think that attending church is important. What shocked me the most in the results of the survey was that one in three simply find church boring (31%) and one in five say it feels like God is missing from church (20%).

    - The reason this struck me, was that every time that God has revealed himself in the Scriptures, there were some who fall on there faces, some have experiences of joy, some cry and wash the feet of Jesus with her tears. But I have NEVER read in scripture that God was boring.

    - So to be relevant to the culture, the *"seeker sensitive"* movement was started where now entertainment of the so called *"seeker"* replaced the Glory of God in worship. I'm all for evangelism outreach but when we gather together on the Lord's day, it is worship to the Glory of God alone!

- **Before the battle of Jerico Joshua sees the pre-incarnate Christ**, Joshua 5: 13-15*, "When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" 14 And he said, "No; but I am the commander of the army of the LORD. Now I have come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, "What does my lord say to his servant?" 15 And the commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so."*

- Joshua asked the wrong question; the question was not which side the Lord was on but was Joshua on the Lord's side. There is much debate concerning worship today, should we sing exclusively Psalms, traditional Hymns, contemporary Hymns etc. This is the wrong question; the question we must ask is whether our worship is pleasing to the Lord, is it God centered, rather than man centered. Is it based on the truth of Scripture as we are to worship God in "spirit and truth" (John 4:24). Does our worship glorify God or entertain man.

Paul writes, "Romans 12:1-2 ESV, "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

- It is hard to make a clear distinction between, Psalm, hymns and spiritual songs, as they overlap. A psalm can be a hymn and vise versa. However, this does not mean that we must only sing Psalms. What about the Hymns in the new testament, such hymns as the Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55) and the Benedictus (Luke 1:68–79). Fragments

of other New Testament hymns seem to be embedded in the letters of Paul (Eph. 5:14; Col. 1:15–20; 1 Tim. 3:16).

The Chief End of Man

- **The Westminster Shorter Catechism**

> *Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?*
> *Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.*

  - Notice that the catechism has the chief end of man broken up into two sections. One speaks to man's chief end and the other to man's chief happiness, which is to seek to Glorify God. The first section has to do with our actions, that in all that we think, speak or do should be to the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31 ESV, *"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."*

  - The second section has to do with our chief desire, as the Psalmist writes, Psalm 119:14 NIV, *"I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches*." *Psalm 73:25-26 ESV, "Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."* The Psalmist's chief desire points to his true happiness in the enjoyment of God alone.

  - C.S. Lewis said, *"The most valuable thing the Psalms do for me is to express the same delight in God which made David dance."*

Reverent Worship

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 ESV, *"The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."*

  - Notice the preacher says, *"Fear God*" and the Psalmist writes, *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.*

  - **What are the affections?**

    - The faculty or inclination of the will that is called the heart - it is a desire of liking or disliking that moves the soul. Holy affections are "strong desires" for the Glory of God alone. Holy Affections are more than just emotions because they're based upon "Spirit and Truth" and we must worship God in Sprit and Truth. Holy affections result in action or what Edwards called the mind choosing.

Jonathan Edwards argued that true religion, in a great part, consists in holy affections

- True worship is directed toward God, *Psalm 37:4 ESV, "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart."* In contrast to those having the appearance of godliness. 2 Timothy 3:5 ESV, "having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people."

- Edwards writes, *"There are false affections, and there are true. A man's having much affection, doesn't prove that he has any true religion: but if he has no affection, it proves that he has no true religion."* (Works of Jonathan Edwards 2:121)

    - *Edwards writes that affections are, "Primarily founded on the loveliness of the moral excellency of divine things; a love to divine things for the beauty and sweetness of their moral excellency is the first beginning and spring of all holy affections. (253-65)*

- **Godly fear or reverence is a Holy affection.**

    - CS Lewis writes in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe:

      "Aslan is a lion--the Lion, the great Lion."
      "Ooh!" said Susan, "I'd thought he was a man. Is he--quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion." "That you will, dearie, and no mistake," said Mrs. Beaver, "if there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they're either braver than most or else just silly."

      "Then he isn't safe?" said Lucy.

      "Safe?" said Mr. Beaver. "Don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King I tell you."

The Priesthood of all Believers

> *1 Peter 2:9 ESV, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."*

- In the Roman Catholic Church, they have the sacrament of the Holy Orders for those who enter into "full time Christian ministry." Christians were separated into two classes of Christian ministry, the "secular" and the "religious" callings. In Ephesians 4:11-12 ESV, Paul writes, *"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry."* Christians are to be "salt and light" as they are involved with the world. Paul is not only speaking of the ministry in the church, but he is also saying that we all have the ministry of the church in the world. In response to this division of the secular from the sacred, the Reformers taught the biblical doctrine of the *Priesthood of all Believers.* That all believers have a calling to glorify God in their vocation. Luther said, this is ministry, that a shoemaker makes a good shoe and sells it at a fair price. How do we use our gifts and talents in a way that Glorifies God and ministers to our neighbor.

- Eric Liddell was a Scottish Christian runner in the movie, Chariots of Fire. There is a scene where his sister asks him why he runs, where Eric responds, "*I believe that God made me for a purpose, God made me fast and when I run, I feel his pleasure and to win is to honor him."*

    - Richard Phillips writes of Lindell in his book*, The Masculine Mandate, "In doing what he was born to do in a way that honored God, the most important thing was not that Liddell felt God's pleasure but that he brought God pleasure; he pleased God. Likewise, Christian men should use their God-given abilities to the uttermost, seeking to give God pleasure through the labors we offer up to Him. . . . Jesus reminds us that when we stand before Him, the great issue of our lives will not be what achievements we compiled, what honors we won, or what riches we amassed, but how humbly we glorified God and served our fellow man day to day."*

Soli Deo Gloria (Monergism)

- The Reformation influenced the culture that was captivated with the Glory to God Alone. Johann Sebastian Bach and George Friedrich Handel, two of the great composers during this time signed their scores with the abbreviation, "S.D.G.," standing for *Soli Deo Gloria* which is the Latin term for "Glory to God Alone."

- This was a culture that was captivated with the grace of God, that did not just make salvation possible, but a grace that grants the assurance of salvation. If we're truly saved by God alone through grace alone, then who is to receive all the glory? The apostle Paul writes, "1 Corinthians 15:10 ESV:

    "*But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me."*

    - This was not just the grace in regeneration but also in all other saving graces. Sanctification wasn't a form of *Quietism* or a *Let go and Let God* in our sanctification.

    - Philippians 2:12-13 ESV, "*Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."* In our sanctification, we're working out what God is working within by the Holy Spirit. He is the sanctifier.

- Monergism means one working, which means that regeneration is God's work alone. For the Reformers, regeneration preceded faith. As we learned last week, that for the semi-Pelagian, regeneration was dependance on the will of man which is call "decisional regeneration." John 1:13 ESV, *"who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."*

Is there any injustice with God?

- After Paul says in Romans 9 concerning Jacob and Esau:

    "Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand: 12 not by works but by him who calls—she was told, "The older will serve the younger."[d] 13 Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."[e] What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! 15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."16 It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy." (Rom 9:11-16).

- But some will ask the question, “why is not God merciful to everyone” Is there injustice with God? God does not show partiality. You see, this is a man centered Theology, as soon as your say that we deserve mercy, it is no longer mercy, it is justice. You will either glorify God in His mercy or you will glorify God in His justice, but you will NEVER receive injustice with God!

- *Matthew 20:10-15 ESV "Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?’"*

- This is the most humbling of doctrines because it is saying that your Union with Christ in the decree of God is not based on anything in you, Romans 9:16 ESV, "So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy." It is a mystery as to why God chose to save you, other than for His Glory.

What does Glory to God alone Worship look like?

> *Revelation 5:9-14 ESV: “And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.” Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,*
> *to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”*
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> *And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!” And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.”*

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