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Thine is the Glory

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Series: Let God Be God

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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Thine is the Glory

Few incidents in Scripture had ever been more dramatic. This man Moses, a man after God's own heart, has just been through an experience no one else who has ever lived has been through. He has been called by the Living God to come up to the top of a mountain, there to spend forty days and forty nights beholding the presence of God and receiving the Word of God.

You remember the story. The cloud of the glory of God overshadowed that mountain, and for nine hundred and sixty hours, Moses sat at the feet of God Himself. You may also remember that when that experience ended and Moses, the Word of God in hand, headed down from that mountain, he was greeted, not by a sea of spiritually-sensitive saints, but by the sounds and sights of idolatry. For while He was on that mountain worshipping God, his impatient people had turned their hearts toward idols.

The result was a broken heart and broken tablets of stone, as well. It was then that God told Moses to take His people into the land He had promised them. He even promised to send an angel before them to lead them. There was, however, one stipulation. God Himself would not go with them. His reason was simple, "they are a stiff-necked people," He explained. But Moses would not take "no" for an answer. Instead, He fell to his knees, and claiming God's own words as his defense, He interceded and begged Jehovah to be their guide. God relented, and what resulted was one of the most beautiful statements ever made by God to man. It is found in Exodus, chapter 33:

And He [God] said, "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest."

So the LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name."
(Exodus 33:14,17 NKJV)

What an incredible experience. No man had ever had such intimacy with God. God had spoken to this man, the Scripture says, "heart to heart as a man speaks to His friend." You would expect that Moses would now run into his tent, get out his

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Samsonite suitcase and start packing for the journey. He had everything he needed, and God had even agreed to make the trip. But no, not Moses. He didn't want more *from* God. He wanted more *of* God. Oh, Beloved, that we could learn the difference! Where God was leading them and even how God was leading them was incidental to Moses. Only one thing controlled this man's thoughts: Knowing God! So Moses turned to Jehovah, and with all the respect in the world, but with all the intensity in the world, he made this incredible request. It is found in the next verse:

And he [Moses] said, [to God], "Please, show me Your Glory."
(Exodus 33:18 NKJV)

God's man wanted nothing but to know God's heart. He simply couldn't get enough of the presence of God. He had already spent more time at God's feet and more time in God's Word than any man who had ever lived. Still he begged for more. "Lord, show me your glory... and I'll be satisfied." That, in effect, is what Moses had just said to God. Oh, to have the heart of this man beat inside of us. God lovingly answered like this:

Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious, to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live."

And the Lord said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock.

So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by.

Then I shall take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen." (Exodus 33:19-23 NKJV)

What a God we have! He desires to reveal to each of His children as much of His glory as they can handle, but only He knows what they can handle. It was for this very reason, you recall, that Paul received his thorn in the flesh. Lest he be overcome with pride over the revelation of God's glory he had received, God gave Him a problem to cope with; so through the process of reaching out for grace to deal with that problem, God could keep Paul weak enough to be strong. He revealed Himself to Paul. But as with Moses, He revealed only enough to cause

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him to worship, never enough to cause Him to swell with pride.

Lord, show me your glory! Oh, that we would pray like that! Oh, that we desired to pray like that, to pray like this:

Dear Lord, no matter what it might take to keep me close to you after I have seen more of who you are...no matter the cost; please, Lord, show me your glory!

Just what do you know of God's glory? Do you know what it is? You hardly can ask for it, unless you do. Is glory something we give to God? If so, why does He need it? Isn't He all-sufficient? Or is glory something God reveals to us? If so, can we handle it? Or is glory a place we will someday enjoy? If so, then how can we experience it now? Just what is God's glory? And if "the glory belongs to God", then how can we "Give God the Glory"? Stay tuned for that is the object of our quest for wisdom, as we complete our look at that anthem of praise with which Jesus concluded His loving exhortation on prayer.

"Thine is the Glory." That is the title of today's study. Our outline will take this abbreviated form:

- I- Glory Defined
- II- Glory Returned
- III- Glory Expressed
- IV- Glory At Last

I- GLORY DEFINED

The first question we must answer is simply this: What is the glory of God? What is it Moses saw? What is it Moses wanted? What is it Moses received? Why is it Moses had to have it? Just what is the glory of God?

If it is possible, using only the passages we have just reviewed and others that are extremely familiar, let's at least begin to define the glory of God. Our procedure will be to outline the obvious principles. Let's look at them:

1- We know that the glory of God is related to the presence of God. In Scripture, every revelation of God's glory was accompanied by His presence.

That is why whenever the glory cloud appeared, the people knew that they were in the presence of God. That is why, when Moses asked God if he could "see His glory", God hid Moses in the cleft of a rock while He "passed by". So God's glory is not some

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indefinable abstract theological consideration. Whatever the glory of God is, we know that it has to do with some expression of the essence of God Himself, for whenever His glory appeared, He was there.

2- Though the glory of God is transparent, it is overwhelming; though it is unseen, it is recognizable.

When Moses returned from his second trip to receive God's Word, he did not even know that his face was literally aglow with the glory of God. The people could not see the glory; but they could not miss the fact that it was there. It was transparent, because it was God emanating from Moses' face; but it was overwhelming, because the presence of God, even filtered through the life of an imperfect saint, possesses a quality no other commodity on earth can approach.

3- We know that the glory of God is not only a representation of the person of God, but that it is, in effect, an expression of His very nature.

So when Moses asked to see God's glory, God handed Moses as it were, a card with His name on it. For the name of God is a tangible extension of the nature of God. It is His nature as understood in finite terms. So God said, "Moses, here's my glory; I AM mercy. I AM grace. I AM compassion. I AM, Moses, all that only I AM can be." The glory of God, then, is the nature of God in a way His people could understand.

4- Apparently the glory of God must be received in degrees, relative to the spiritual capacity of the one receiving it.

When Moses asked to see God's glory, God told Moses that He could not reveal it all, but He could reveal that portion Moses could handle. So He allowed Moses to see a fraction of His nature. So He did for Paul, as well. Paul wrote in II Corinthians 3:18, that God, through His Spirit, using His Word, desired to reveal His glory to every saint, in ever increasing splendor, from one degree of glory to another. In other words, God's glory is imparted in stages, and those stages will be determined by the capacity of each saint to receive it. Moses saw more of God's glory than any man before him. This was no accident. Moses had a greater capacity to receive it than any man before him.

5- Apparently God gives us His glory in increasing measure when we ask for it.

Moses was a man after God's own heart, and God spoke to

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him heart to heart, as a man speaks to his friend, yet still it was only after Moses clearly asked to experience more of God's nature that God responded.

We have only touched the surface, but what we have seen will allow us to at least begin defining the glory of God this way:

The glory of God is God's revelation of His own nature or character to His own children, the degree of which is determined by their capacity to receive it, and their willingness to ask for it.

II- THE GLORY RETURNED

There is, however, a second part of the definition. For if God's glory is God's way of revealing His nature to us, then how can we give God glory? Surely we do not need to tell Him who He is! No, but we do need to return it to Him if we are to a) allow it to accomplish its intended purpose, and b) increase our capacity to receive it. So then, though glory is something we receive from God as we come to understand who He is, it is also something we return to God because we understand who He is. So the more of God's glory we experience, the more of His character we appropriate, the more we must praise Him, the more we must honor Him, the more we must glorify Him.

That is what Jesus meant in the model prayer when He said, praise the Father like this: "Thine is the glory!" That is, incidentally, why we are looking at this subject in such detail. It is a commandment from the lips of Christ Himself to honor God by giving Him glory. The Psalmist expressed it so beautifully in Psalm 29. There he said this:

Give unto the LORD, O you mighty ones,

Give unto the LORD glory and strength.

Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the
LORD in the beauty of holiness. (Psalm 29:1-3)

To give God the glory due Him, then, is to worship Him for who He is. You receive God's glory by spending time in His Presence and in His Word, asking Him to show you who He is. You give that glory back to God by falling on your face in utter awe at who He is and worshipping.

III- GLORY EXPRESSED

That is what God's glory is. That is how we receive it, and that is how we give it back to Him. So critical is it that we not

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steal His glory, or miss His glory, or take lightly His glory; so tender is that glory, so uncompromising is that glory, that God has designed a specific pattern in Scripture for expressing that glory to us and for imparting it back to God. It is important that we understand that pattern for our worship to be honoring to God, and for our preparation for heaven to be complete. Here is that pattern, in oversimplified terms: (You can see it illustrated on the cover of this lesson.)

1- God the Father reveals His glory through God the Son.

John 1:14 says it clearly:

And the Word became 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. (NKJV)

In other words, when man saw Jesus, he saw all there was to see of the nature of God. All of God's grace was manifest in Jesus. All of God's truth was evident in Jesus. God sent His Son to Earth, not only to die for our sins, but also to reveal to us as He did, His very nature in human form, lest we design for ourselves a god for ourselves out of our image, rather than His. So it was that the angels sang in that blessed moment that transformed history:

Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men! (Luke 2:14 NKJV)

The angels were saying that the perfect revelation of God to man had come to earth, making it possible at last for man to fully return to God the glory due His name. God manifested His character in the person of His Son as He could do in no other way. So Paul wrote in II Corinthians,

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (II Corinthians 4:6 NKJV)

All God ever wanted man to know about Himself He revealed in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Father's way of revealing His glory.

2- God the Son, as He went back to glory to be with the Father, released the responsibility for demonstrating God's glory to the Holy Spirit. Thus it was written of the Spirit in John 7:

He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

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But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

(John 7:38,39 NKJV)

When Jesus went back to His state of glory, that is, when He took off His cloak of humanity, and returned to be a total expression of the nature of God without the limitations of the flesh, He assigned His task of communicating glory to the Spirit, who now could express the nature of God internally in the life of every believer at the same time. And He does. The Bible says it this way in I Corinthians 2:

But as it is written: *“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”*

But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

Now we have received, not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

(I Corinthians 2:9-12 NKJV)

God’s nature is revealed to God’s child through God’s Spirit. That is His vehicle for demonstrating who He is in our age. But be careful. The Spirit of God is the vehicle, not the object of that glory. Do not glorify the Spirit. You will grieve Him if you do. For God, you see, also has just as clear a plan for returning the glory as He does for receiving it. It is this:

3- The Spirit never receives glory. He always gives the glory to the Son. We were not meant to praise the Spirit for the work of the Son. We were meant to praise the Father for sending the Spirit to reveal the Son. John gives us this expression in John 16:

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.

(John 16:13,14 NKJV)

4- But just as the Spirit does not keep the glory, but passes it on to the Son, so the Son does not keep the glory, but He in turn

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uses it to honor the Father. Thus wrote Paul in Philippians 2:

that at the name of Jesus every knee should (will) bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

(Philippians 2:10,11 NKJ)

It is why Jesus prayed:

Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may Glorify You, (John 17:1b NKJV)

The Son was asking the Father to demonstrate His character through that cross, so that men and women would, in turn, glorify the Father. Glory must be returned to its source to be complete. The Father demonstrates His glory through the Son who, in turn, reveals His glory to the church through the Spirit. As the church, in the Spirit, glorifies God, the Spirit will not accept the praise of the saints; He gives the glory to the Son, who always, in turn, glorifies the Father. It is a perfect picture of why we, as believers, must never steal the glory of God. Even the Son and the Spirit are careful not to keep for themselves what was intended for the Father. That is why when someone compliments you on something God has done through you, you must be careful to lovingly give the glory to God. If you steal the glory or if you hide the glory, you interrupt the glory cycle; and so God cannot be glorified in you to the maximum, nor can your capacity to comprehend who He is be stretched to its limits. Never, never, never steal the glory of God. HIS IS THE GLORY. Not some of it; not most of it; all of it. And whatever we keep, like the manna of old, turns rancid and spoils. Like a fragile, breakable bottle that is only of value if returned to be recycled, God's glory is only of its true value when returned to the source from whence it came.

IV- GLORY AT LAST!

Now do you see why heaven will be glory? Now do you see why we sing, "Oh, that will be glory for me, glory for me, when by His grace I shall look on His face... that will be glory for me.?" Because what heaven is, is the place where man, freed at last from the shackles of sin, will become like Him at last. Like Him in what way? We will be "like Him" because we will "see Him as He is". We will be in our "glorified bodies", that is, without sin,

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and will be beholding His glory, that is, all that He really is, at last. Now we are seeing Him through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now we know in part. Then we shall know Him, (what He is really like) even as we also are known. That will be glory for me. That will be glory for you. We will behold His nature without interruption day after day. And what will be the result? We will glorify Him day after day. We will inhale, moment by moment, the realization of all God is; thus, we can worship Him, unhindered, for who He is, moment by moment, day upon day, with never an interruption for that endless eternity to come. I say “day after day”, because there will be no night...for the glory of God will be the Light.

At least three things, then, ought to capture our thoughts as we close. When we pray, Jesus said, “Pray like this: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name...” Once you’ve prayed, Jesus said, close like this: “Oh, Lord, Thine is the Kingdom... Everything and everyone is yours to do with as you please. Oh, Lord, Thine is the power. You have the might to go with the right. And oh, Lord, Thine is the Glory! If Thy Kingdom is to come on earth as it will be in heaven, then Lord, all the glory belongs to You!”

Thine is the Glory! That means, first of all, that all of eternity will be spent receiving and returning glory. Ought we not, then, to spend more and more and more of our time on earth doing on earth what we’ll be doing in heaven: beholding who God is and giving Him all the glory for who He is? Lesson number one, then, is this: Practice glorifying God. This world is your training school for eternity.

Secondly, be careful not to steal the glory of God. Churches steal the glory of God by advertising themselves as necessary tools to interpret or express the nature of God. Beloved, “the heavens declare the glory of God.” Fools! Paul said; therefore, we are without excuse. Men steal the glory of God as well. They steal it by seeking glory for what God has done; they steal it by keeping silent when men seek to glorify them instead of God; and they steal it by implying that God can do something through them He cannot do through others. Fools! God Himself has said, if need be, He’ll raise up stones to declare His glory!

Thirdly, start looking up. This world is not our home. We are pilgrims in a foreign land, on a journey to a country so beautiful,

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so bountiful, so glorious, that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither has there entered into the heart of man an adequate picture of the glory that awaits us in heaven. Start teaching your children about heaven. Start sharing with your friends about heaven. Start singing songs about heaven. Start worshipping God for heaven. One reason so many of us are so affected by the traumas of this earth is that we are not infected with the sheer anticipation of glory. We act as though it's okay to refer to in passing, but we act as if it just may not be all its advertised to be, so we keep it kind of quiet. Beloved, if someone gave you a palace, would you keep it quiet? Beloved, if someone gave you an unlimited bank account, would you keep it quiet? Beloved, if someone cured you of every illness you've ever had, would you keep it quiet? Beloved, if someone raised you from the dead, would you keep it quiet? Of course not.

Well, that's what heaven is. God has a palace built with your name on it in heaven. God has unlimited treasures laid up in store for you in heaven. God has taken away every trace of sickness and sin and sorrow in heaven; and God has taken death and cast it into the lake of fire, and resurrected you to life eternal... and heaven will be where it will all take place. And these seemingly endless years on planet earth will be as a passing moment in the light of the eternity that awaits us.

Heaven will be glory! All of God will be revealed to us day upon day. And we will return that glory in praise and adoration day upon day. Heaven will be glory. So sing it! Shout it! Love it! Live it! Pray:

Oh, Lord, thine is the glory. Thine is the glory forever and forever and forever. Amen.

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