

Seek Glory From God

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[0 : 00] A couple weeks ago, as we were studying the last link in the golden chain of salvation, that of God glorifying us, we saw the influence that that future event is to have in each of our present days.

And the last point made was that we ought to be setting our sights on that event of God glorifying us and actively seeking glory from God.

I had to hurry over that point, so I'd like to just say something more about it this afternoon briefly. And the first thing is just to quell any concerns of not making God's glory our chief end.

John, you told us that we're to seek glory that comes from God. I thought we were to seek God being glorified, not us being glorified.

I want to speak to that. In fact, your being glorified in that day will not detract one ounce from God's glory, but will rather contribute to His greater praise, honor, and glory, because it will be known that it's all because of Him that you have been brought all the way through that process of salvation to the point where you are perfected.

[1 : 22] You are now the image of God without sin. And so God will be glorified. Your being glorified promotes God's glory.

And so that being the case, we ought to seek being glorified by God. We ought to seek His glory and knowing that in that process, He Himself will be glorified.

So here we are, 1 Samuel, the latter days of the judges. You know, there was no king in Israel and everyone was doing what was right in their own eyes. And so we tap into that era of history and Israel.

And it's here that we meet a man that has two wives. Again, not as God had designed from the beginning. And we'll look a bit here at chapter 1.

But I want you just to look over at chapter 2 and verse 30, where the Lord says in the middle of verse 30, Those who honor me, I will honor.

[2 : 28] Now the word for honor, glory, and praise are really the same word. Those who honor me, I will honor. Those who glorify me, I will glorify.

Those who praise me, I will praise. And here God is saying, those who honor me, I will honor. That's a promise. We ought to seek the things that God promises us.

And so His promises ought to inform our expectations. We ought to be seeking then the honor that comes from God. And how do we do that? We honor Him.

So here back in chapter 1, we have the story of Elkanah and his two wives, Hannah being the one who was barren. The Lord had shut up her womb. And her rival wife, Peninnah, who had many children.

And you remember how she kept provoking Hannah just in order to irritate her as much as she could. I think this was because Elkanah had a special love for Hannah.

[3 : 27] But Hannah was barren. And so Peninnah could get at her by counting her children in front of her and in different ways provoking her.

And it went on year after year. And this poor Hannah was just not understood by the people in her life that meant most.

Her husband does not understand her. She's dejected. And he asked her the question, don't I mean more to you than ten sons? Husbands, you don't want to ask that question unless you're prepared to hear the answer to it.

We don't have an answer. And I think if she held her tongue, that was wise. But no, that was not the right thing to say to your barren wife. Her own husband did not understand her.

She goes to the temple to pray. And her lips are moving. But no sound is coming out. And the priest, Eli, doesn't understand her.

[4 : 30] He thinks she's one of the drunk women that have come to church drunk. And again, just showing you the age in which they lived and how every man did what was right. And he's used to seeing drunk women in the temple evidently.

And thinks that's what she's drank too much. And she says, no, I'm a distressed woman who's pouring out her heart to God. That was the one place that she was understood.

And what a precious picture it is of Hannah. Misunderstood by a husband, by her priest at church. But here's a God. And he understands me. And I can pour out my heart to him.

Well, the Lord heard her and gave her a son, Samuel, whom she then had promised to give to the Lord to serve in his temple. And in chapter 2, we have her prayer of thanksgiving. Rejoicing in how God had turned the tables for her.

She had been, if you will, the underdog. And God had just completely turned the tables and giving her such a son who would go on to be a leader in Israel.

[5 : 32] And so chapter 2 is her prayer of thanksgiving. And she's rejoicing in God. Verse 5, you can see how it reflects her situation. Those who are full hire themselves out for food.

There's a turning of the table. They were full. Now they're hiring themselves out for food. Those who were hungry, the low, hunger no more. She who was barren has born seven children.

She who has had many sons pines away. The Lord brings death and makes alive. He brings down to the grave and raises up. The Lord sends poverty and wealth.

He humbles and He exalts. He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap. He seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor.

So this was her testimony. The Lord had seen her poor and needy and had lifted her up and had honored her with a son who had become God's prophet and priest in Israel.

[6 : 42] But we notice her praise extends beyond her own situation. She's not just thanking the Lord for what happened to her. She puts it in terms that outreach her own experience and objectify it as something that's true of God in many people's lives.

She understands this is not a rare or exceptional thing in the way God deals with people. Rather, she acknowledges that this is just one of His ways.

There are people in this congregation that if you came up to me and told me of some unusual kindness that you received from one of these people, I wouldn't say, oh, really?

You did? I would rather say, you know, she's just like that. That's just her way. In other words, that's her habit. That's the way she is. She's just constantly showing kindness to others.

And that's what Hannah is doing here. She's received this amazing mercy from the Lord. But she's saying, you know, that's not just something rare for me. That's something, that's just the way God is.

[7 : 53] The Bible talks about the ways of the Lord. I wonder if we know God well enough to know what are His ways? What is something that is just the way that He is? It's His nature.

And that's what she's saying. It's His nature to do this, to honor the lowly, the despised.

She honored God. Remember, the promise of the Lord is, if you honor me, I will honor you. She honored God in her asking. I'm barren, Lord, but I'm asking you because I believe that you could give me a son.

And honoring the Lord in her asking, He honored her in His giving. And so her very words here echo throughout subsequent history.

It's interesting that we have David who went from being what? A humble herder of sheep to being what? The exalted shepherd king of Israel. And He takes Hannah's very words and incorporates them into Psalm 113 because He too sees that this is just the way our God is.

[9 : 02] He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap. He seats them with princes, the princes of His people. He settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children.

You see the reference back to Hannah, the barren woman as the happy mother of children. And these were Hannah's words of praise when the Lord turned the tables for her and honored her and lifted her up.

You remember the Virgin Mary does virtually the same thing when she, a poor, humble maiden from backwater village of Nazareth, and nothing good comes out of Nazareth, is suddenly elevated to be the mother of Messiah.

And so she too uses much of the language of Hannah in just saying this is the way our God is. He's like this. My soul magnifies.

This is Luke 1. My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior for He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant herself. From now on, all generations will call me blessed.

[10 : 12] You talk about honoring the humble. Nobody knows about her. Here we are reading about her, talking about her. Indeed, all generations until Jesus comes back will be calling her blessed.

So she too sees this way of God in treating her, but also in treating others. The mighty one has done great things for me.

He's brought down rulers from their thrones, but has lifted up the humble. The Lord delights to honor, to lift up, to praise, to glorify the lowly.

It's something our Lord Jesus often repeated in His teaching. We have it recorded several places in the gospel accounts, and if it's recorded several places in the gospel accounts, we know that He did many more works and preached many more times than what's recorded, then He probably used these words over and over.

You're familiar with them in two of His parables. He ends the parable, Luke 14, 11, for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted, lifted up.

[11 : 26] He used it at the end of that parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector going into the temple, and the Pharisee boasts about himself, exalts himself, and the poor tax collector beats his breasts and won't so much as look at heaven and cries, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

And that man, not the other, went home justified before God, and then those same words, for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and everyone who humbles himself will be exalted.

God delights to exalt people, to glorify people, to honor people that honor Him. The Lord Jesus said in John 12, 26, My Father will honor the one who serves me.

Why would God tell, why would Jesus tell us that? Well, part of the reason is that we might be motivated to serve Jesus, to know that God the Father will honor the ones that serve Jesus.

Here we are not honored for serving Jesus. Here we're despised and rejected for serving Jesus. But be encouraged. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

[12 : 35] And so you see how that becomes an incentive to our serving of the Lord. This idea of God one day is going to glorify us. It's to have an influence upon our service to the Lord, even here and now.

And who embodied this principle more than our Lord Himself? Despised and rejected of men. He humbled Himself and honored His Father. How?

By being obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He honored His Father. Therefore, God has what? He has highly exalted Him. He's exalted Him to the highest place and given Him a name above every name.

The same thing. Because whoever humbles Himself, God delights to exalt. And He did it with His own Son who had honored Him in His obedience unto death.

This is just the way God is. This is His nature. He honors those who honor Him. The Father glorified His Son and He is going to glorify you.

[13 : 41] And if we are children, then we're heirs. Heirs of God, co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings so that we might also share in His glory.

You see, we're not wrong to set our eyes on that day when we will share in His glory, when He will glorify us. It's what He's promised us.

And what He promises us are things that we should seek after. And so in John chapter 5, you know, I mentioned, I think, if you remember, that we're all glory seekers, but it all depends on who we're seeking that glory from is the big difference.

If we're seeking glory from men, well, we will be humbled. But if we are seeking glory from God, we will be glorified. And there in John chapter 5, Jesus says to the religious leaders of His day, you refuse to come to me that you might have eternal life.

How can you believe in me if you accept praise from one another and yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God?

[14 : 58] How can you ever come to believe in me if your main interest in life is receiving honor and glory from men and give no effort to receive the glory and honor that comes from the only God?

And later on in John's gospel, we read of those that loved the praises from men more than the praise from God. You see, we're not only to seek the praise that comes from God, we're to love it.

We're to love it so much that the praises of men and the honor from men mean nothing compared to the glory, honor, and praise that comes from God.

And so He's told us throughout the Bible, He's a God who honors those who honor Him. Promise after promise, illustration, statement after statement, example after example.

And it's all meant to motivate us to love and seek that honor, glory, and praise that comes from Him. Just a couple passages that we had to rush over before.

[16 : 04] One is in Romans chapter 2. The Apostle Paul pounds this drum again, and it should correct us if we think for some reason that seeking the glory that comes from God is sinful.

Here he says it's true of all those who will inherit eternal life. He's talking about the judgment to come in Romans 2.6 when God will give to each person according to what He has done.

Now He breaks it down into two camps. There will be two camps in that day, and what they have done will be shown, their faith will be seen by what they've done. And so He deals first with those who had faith.

To those, verse 7, who by persistence in doing good seek what? Seek glory, honor, and immortality. He will give eternal life.

If seeking glory and honor and praise was sinful and wrong, God would not reward them with eternal life. No, that's a positive thing.

[17 : 09] By doing good, they were seeking God's glory, God's honor, that God would glorify them, and God would honor them and give them immortality, and indeed He will give them eternal life. But, verse 8, for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.

There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil, first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. But what will there be for the others? Verse 10, but glory, honor, and peace for everyone who does good, first the Jew, and then for the Gentiles.

But God does not show favoritism. So, again, this is something we are to be seeking, glory, honor, peace from God. And it marks every believer.

You look at the end of the chapter. Who is the true Jew? Verse 28 of chapter 2, a man is not a Jew if he's just one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical.

No, a man is a Jew if he's one inwardly, and circumcision is that circumcision of the heart by the Holy Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise, there's that word again, honor, glory, is not from men, but from God.

[18 : 24] So we're meant to be prodded on for the glory that comes from God. You remember the letters that Jesus wrote to the seven churches in the book of Revelation, and they spell this out even further.

Listen to what God holds out in way of promise to everyone who overcomes. You know, he says that at the end of each of the letters, to him who overcomes. I'll give the right to eat from the tree of life, or I'll do this or that.

Listen to what he promises to those in Sardis. Well, first to those in Laodicea. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my father on his throne.

So what happened when Jesus humbled himself even unto death? God the Father exalted him to the highest place. Where was that? That was on the throne of God with God the Father. There was honor and glory to the utmost.

And what will happen to overcomers? Well, Jesus says, I'll give them the right to sit with me on my throne, which is what? It's more of a bench. It's not like you got the Father's throne and the Son's throne.

[19 : 31] There wouldn't be room. No, it's viewed as a bench, and the Father sits on it and the Son's at his right hand. And now Jesus says that, I will let him sit with me. So it's just showing that we share in this honor, this glory of ruling and reigning with Christ for all eternity.

What does he promise to those in Sardis, chapter 3, 4, and 5? Remember, most in Sardis had a reputation that they were alive. Oh, she's got to be a Christian. Oh, he's a Christian.

Look, he goes to church. We heard our brother tell about how many times he was baptized and went to church and he was not a believer. Well, most of those in Sardis had a reputation for being alive, but they were dead.

Yet, he says, you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they're worthy.

He who overcomes will like them be dressed in white, and I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my father and his angels.

[20 : 36] Now, how's that for glory? Men might speak well of you here on earth, but that's often so fickle that they praise you one day and they're cursing you the next.

But what is it to have the Lord Jesus praise you and own your name before his father and his angels? In all of his glory, Isaac Watts says, then will he own my worthless name before the father's face and in the new Jerusalem assign my soul a place.

That's honor. That's glory that is promised to those who overcome. And what are men's praises compared to this? You know from reading the Gospels and the book of Acts that the Jewish leaders excommunicated any believers in Jesus.

And they were saying, we are the true people of God. We Jews. You Christians are no longer God's people. You're no longer part of the Israel of God.

You are rejects. You're rejects. You've blasphemed God by trusting in Jesus. And so they put them out of what they called the people of God, the Israel of God.

[21 : 52] Listen to what God promises to these who suffered such persecution on earth. The Lord Jesus says in Revelation 3, 9, I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan who claim to be Jews, though they are not, but are liars, I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you since you have kept my command to endure patiently.

What a turning of the tables. In this life, the Jews excommunicated them, said, you do not belong to the people of God. We're the people of God.

And Jesus says, for your suffering, persecution, and honoring me by clinging to me, even though men cast you out as evil, I'm going to make those people who claim to be Jews but were really a synagogue of Satan come and to acknowledge that I have loved you.

I've not cast you out. Me, when I am glorified in that day and I'm upon my throne, that's when they will have to come and they will see you with me and they will acknowledge that I have loved you.

Again, what honor to be with Jesus in that day and to have it made clear that He has loved us and does love us.

[23 : 17] So Paul says, set your minds on things above. That surely includes that day when we will be glorified with Christ. He says, set your mind on things above, not on earthly things, and when Christ, who is your life, appears, you will appear with Him in glory.

He's coming not in quietness like He came the first time. He's coming in power and great glory and when He comes, you're going to be with Him. And so His glory will be shared with you as you appear with Him in glory.

People seek honor by hobnobbing with important people. They like to be seen with important people as if that will maybe make other people think more highly of us. What will it be to be seen to be with Him, the Lord Jesus in that day as mine and He claiming me as His when His glory is shining and we share in it and are openly seen to be His bride, His people, His loved ones.

So let's more, live more for that day until He comes and takes us to Himself when He shall glorify us. And so we ought to be living and seeking and loving that glory that comes from Him wanting to hear Him say one day, well done, good and faithful servant.

Why would He have that in Scripture if it's not meant to encourage us to seek that glory? We seek God's honor by honoring Him. We seek His praise by praising Him. We seek His glory by glorifying Him in all that we do.

[24 : 59] So let's sing that song. I'm not ashamed to own my Lord. That's what Jesus promised. You don't be ashamed of me in this wicked and adulterous generation and I won't be ashamed of you in that day of judgment when I come to judge the world at the end.

It's number 429. Let's stand and sing 429. Lord, we thank you for telling us these things and telling them to incentivize us, to motivate us, to urge us on, to live for that glory that comes from the only God.

Thank you that one day just as sure as we are standing here now, by your grace we'll be standing on the right hand of the Son of Man and He will be with us and we will be with Him and He will honor us and we'll know that that honor is all due to Him and we'll cast our crowns before Him and we will rejoice that we didn't live for the wrong honor.

Help us then not to live for this world's praise but to live for that praise that is eternal as you delight in your people for all eternity in that day.

We praise you in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.