

November 5, 2017

***Soli Deo Gloria*—Glory to God Alone**

Ephesians 1-2

Intro

- What was ultimately at stake in the Reformation?
- Our culture teaches us that God loves us most when he affirms *our* potential and abilities. This is why the Gospel is so counter-cultural.

What is God After in the Gospel? (*Eph. 1:3-14*)

- Why has God orchestrated salvation the way that he has? What are the *solas* for?
- *God's glory* is the reason he pursues anything that he does. Nothing is more important to him.

“From beginning to end nothing in the Bible is more ultimate in the mind and heart of God than the glory of God—the beauty of God, the radiance of his manifold perfections. At every point in God’s revealed action, wherever he makes plain the ultimate goal of that action, the goal is always the same: to uphold and display his glory.” –**John Piper**, “Why Expository Preaching is Particularly Glorifying to God”

“everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory” (Isaiah 43:7)

*“For my name’s sake I defer my anger; for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you...
11 For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned?
My glory I will not give to another.” (Isaiah 48:9, 11)*

“He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” (Psalm 23:3)

- For God to treat himself as if he's second to any created thing would be for him to live a lie.
- In creating and saving us for his glory, God was not seeking something he lacked...

"God is not served by human hands as though he needed anything" (Acts 17:25)

"A man can no more diminish God's glory by refusing to worship Him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling the word 'darkness' on the walls of his cell."

–C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, 46

- God is glorified when the panorama of his attributes are put on display—to the thrill of those who see him.

"God is glorified not only by His glory's being seen, but by its being *rejoiced in*. When those that see it delight in it, God is more glorified than if they only see it."

–Jonathan Edwards

How Does the Gospel Preserve God's Glory? (Eph. 2:1-9)

- Spiritual death: a hopeless and helpless condition.
 - *A motivational coach in a morgue*
 - *On the Bondage of the Will* by Martin Luther

"If I am ignorant of the nature, extent, and limits of what I can and must do with reference to God, I shall be equally ignorant and uncertain of the nature, extent, and limits of what God can and will do in me. ...Now, if I am ignorant of God's works and power, I am ignorant of God himself; and if I do not know God, I cannot worship, praise, give thanks, or serve Him, for I do not know how much I should attribute to myself and how much to Him."

–Martin Luther, quoted in *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings*, 179

- God must do all the work required to justify us *and* his grace must create in us the kind of response that receives that work. We are absolutely dependent on him.
- God saves us in such a way the he preserves the display of his glory—to our everlasting enjoyment.

“Who has given a gift to God that he might be repaid? 36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever.” (Romans 11:35-36)

- The Reformers saw *idolatry* as the main heart issue in this controversy.
 - *“An Idol Factory”*
- When you mess with the sufficiency of God’s work to save us, you begin to introduce other players who receive attention. But the main way this surfaces is that you begin to look to *yourself*.

“We glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh” (Philippians 3:3)

➤ *Stand on your head for joy*

What the Reformers saw, especially through the message of justification by faith alone, was the revelation of an exuberantly happy God who glories in sharing his happiness. He is not stingy or utilitarian, but a God who glories in being gracious. (That is why, according to Rom. 4:20, dependent faith glorifies him.) To steal from his glory by claiming any credit for ourselves would only steal away from our own joy in so marvelous a God.”
–**Michael Reeves & Tim Chester**, *Why the Reformation Still Matters*, 209-210

“...the gospel of the glory of the blessed [happy] God” (1 Tim. 1:11).

Why is This Good News? (Eph. 1:15-23)

- The *best news* you can hear is that God desires to glorify himself through you today. Is that how you hear it?

➤ *Joy vs. Weary Obligation*

POWER: Serve in the Strength of God

- Glorifying God is not mainly about what we can do for God. It's about how he can show up in our lives as amazingly powerful.

*"Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me."
(Psalm 50:15)*

- God is most glorified not when we bring our *contribution*, but when we bring our *need*. We honor God by being dependent on his sufficiency.

"Serve by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified" (1 Peter 4:11)

TREASURE: When Sacrificing Self is Gain

➤ *"Here I Stand"*

"It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:20-21)

- It can't really be called "sacrifice" when God has done everything and promises to give us everything. When we see that, we're willing to bring the nothing that we have and lay it on the altar.