

**A GOSPEL GREETING
PART 9**

TEXT: GALATIANS 1:1-5

October 26, 2008

REVIEW:

In our previous study, we learned how Paul roots the entirety of salvation in the will of our God and Father (1:4c).

In one brief phrase, Paul casts away all confidence in and credit for man's self-efforts in obtaining righteousness. He powerfully refutes any notion that salvation is the result of man's will. No man by his own efforts can rescue himself from the condemnation, corruption and captivity of his sin.

Rather, through Christ Paul teaches that believers have been united to God who is now our Father and adopted as sons (v. 2). Grace and peace flow down from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 3).

Christ gave Himself for our sins on the cross (v. 4a) to rescue us from *the present evil age* (v. 4b; emphasis mine). Moreover, He rose from the dead for our justification (v. 1).

Paul's greeting reveals how all of redemptive history pointed to and led up to the coming of Christ. Christ's death and resurrection marked the beginning of a new "age." His death and resurrection were the decisive turning point of the "ages."

The gospel announces that through faith in Christ, sinners can be delivered from the present evil age and experience the life of the age to come now! God the Father does not intend (i.e., will, v. 4c) for His people to live in bondage. Christ died to deliver sinners from bondage to the present evil age and His resurrection vindicates this truth!

The primary source of this glorious salvation is according to the will of our God and Father (v. 4c)!

Paul, therefore, commends and extols the free, unbounded, sovereign grace and kindness of God in Christ toward sinners!

Motivated by this summary of the gospel in vv. 1-5, Paul fittingly concludes his greeting with a spontaneous outburst of praise to God.

INTRODUCTION:

Two subjects of vast importance gripped Paul's mind in his greeting: the salvation of sinners and the glory of God.

In v. 4, Paul tells us that the *subordinate* purpose of Christ's self-sacrifice was to deliver sinners from the present evil age (Gal. 1:4b).

But, the *highest end* of this grand salvation is to display in the clearest and most forthright manner possible the glory of God's character (v. 5)!

Before we look at v. 5 in its context, it will be helpful to first understand what exactly is God's glory.

God's glory can be thought of two ways in Scripture (cf. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, p. 220).

A. FIRST, GOD'S GLORY IS THE VISIBLE MANIFESTATION OF THE EXCELLENCE OF HIS CHARACTER.

In a general sense God's glory refers to the radiance of His presence (cf. 2 Chron. 7:1-3; Isa. 40:5; Lk. 2:9).

However, in Galatians 1:5, Paul has a more specific meaning in mind.

It seems Paul has both the excellence of God the Father's as well as Christ the Son's character in mind, both of which are made visible in the plan of salvation.

In relation to the Son, Paul has just said in v. 4 that Christ voluntarily substituted Himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age all to the praise of His glory.

Secondly, Paul states in v. 4c that Christ's substitution and ensuing deliverance was according to the will of our God and Father.

Thus, the excellence of God the Father's character is equally manifested through Christ's deliverance of sinners.

In relation to the Father's glory that is revealed in salvation, one Bible teacher writes, "The glory consists in the manifestation of the Father's character throughout all the ages in the continual redemption of mankind according to His will. Hereby is revealed His union of perfect wisdom, holiness, and love," (Rendall, *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, p. 151).

In this grand plan of salvation, the excellence of God the Father's glory is displayed in:

- His wisdom (Eph. 3:10-11),
- power (Eph. 1:19),
- righteousness (Rom. 1:17; 3:21-22, 25-26),
- kindness (Eph. 2:7),
- love (Rom. 5:8),
- grace (Eph. 1:6; 2:7),

- holiness, justice, wrath (Rom. 3:25-26; 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:10) and
- mercy (Rom. 15:9; Eph. 2:4; Titus 3:5).

Whether Paul has only the Father in mind or both the Father and the Son is of little consequence.

Both, as revealed in his greeting, are equally God, both are intimately involved in the sinner's salvation and therefore equally deserving of all glory.

But, to see the Father's glory, we focus upon Christ because the full excellence of all God's divine attributes and character shines most brightly in the face and person of Jesus Christ.

In a sermon on the voluntary suffering of Christ based on Isaiah 50:6, John Newton wrote,

“The highest end of his mediation was to display the glory of the divine character in the strongest light, to afford to all intelligent creatures (cf. Eph. 3:10) the brightest manifestation they are capable of receiving, of the manifold wisdom of God, his holiness, justice, truth, and love, the stability and excellence of his moral government, all mutually illustrating each other, as combined and shining forth in his person, and in his mediatorial work. Much of the glory of God may be seen, by an enlightened eye, in creation, much in his providential rule and care over his creatures; but the brightness of his glory (cf. John 1:18; Heb. 1:3), the express and full discovery of his perfections, can only be known by Jesus Christ, and the revelation which God has given of Himself to the world by him,” (*The Works of John Newton*, “Voluntary Suffering,” vol. 4, pp. 212-213).

It is no wonder why such a glorious display of God's character in salvation draws forth Paul's deepest emotions and most fervent affection of praise to God!

In Christ the greatness of God's being, the perfection of all His attributes is most visibly witnessed.

For example, John, in his gospel writes, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth,” (Jn. 1:14).

In Hebrews 1:3, the author declares, “He [the Son] is the radiance of the glory of God...”

According to Paul, the ultimate aim of the gospel is the glory of God (cf. Eph. 1:6, 12, 14). For, in the gospel, a man comes to see the glory of God most clearly (2 Cor. 3:18). God's glory resides at the center of the Gospel's focus for in it Christ is set before the sinner's eyes in all of His grace and mercy.

As we will come to see momentarily, this focus (i.e., the glory of God) of Paul's gospel is in stark contrast to the conditional gospel of the Judaizers.

There is a second way God's glory can be thought of in Scripture.

B. GOD'S GLORY CAN MEAN HONOR OR EXCELLENT REPUTATION.

God's glory is to be understood as the superlative honor that should be given to Him by all of creation (cf. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, p. 220).

Understood from this perspective, God's glory in the context of Galatians, takes on special significance.

Three times in vv. 1-5, Paul identifies God as "Father."

By quickly deserting the true gospel, the Galatians were in effect dishonoring (i.e., failing to glorify) their Father.

This quick defection from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ is a prominent theme in this letter (cf., Burke, *Adopted into God's Family*, p. 157, Footnote, 13).

As redeemed and adopted sons, Paul was astonished (v. 6) at how quickly the Galatians dishonored their new Father.

In 1:6, he writes, "I am astonished that you are *so quickly deserting him* who called you in the grace of Christ..." (emphasis mine).

Again, in 5:7-8, Paul writes, "⁷ You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? ⁸ This persuasion is not from *him who calls you*," (emphasis mine).

Thus, one Bible teacher writes,

"The Galatians were not merely deviating from a doctrine, but were also failing in their loyalty to their Father. Indeed, this 'Father' whom the Galatians had deserted was the very one who had willed their deliverance from 'the present evil age' (Gal. 1:4) and the One to whom 'glory' (Gal. 1:5; i.e. honour) was due... For the Galatians to allow themselves to be circumcised was tantamount to entering into the community of their oppressors and 'therefore... [to come] under a different father'..." (Burke, *Adopted into God's Family*, p. 155).

Because of the excellence of God the Father's character, which is visibly manifested in salvation, nothing less than the utmost honor should be given to Him!

With this understanding of the glory of God in mind, let's now proceed to Paul's doxology in v. 5.

LESSON:

E. THE GOAL OF THE GOSPEL: GOD'S GLORY, vs. 5

1. PAUL'S ZEAL FOR GOD'S GLORY

There were two reasons why was Paul zealous for God's glory?

- a. PAUL WAS ZEALOUS FOR GOD'S GLORY BECAUSE GOD IS ZEALOUS FOR HIS OWN GLORY.

God through the prophet Isaiah declares, "For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; For how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another," (48:11).

God will not allow man to share in or take credit for salvation. There is a common theme that runs throughout redemptive history, which is:

God does not choose people based on merit.

In Galatians, Paul insists that no one deserves to be saved because of anything they have done (Gal. 2:16). Therefore, the entire honor (glory) for man's salvation is attributed to God's grace alone (cf. Eph. 1:6, 12, 14)!

Consider Paul's discussion of Jacob and Esau in Romans 9:10-13:

"¹⁰ And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, ¹¹ though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— ¹² she was told, "The older will serve the younger." ¹³ As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

Why did God choose Jacob? Clearly, Jacob was by no means the obvious choice. He was the younger son. He was hardly upright of character. He was a liar and deceiver. Though Esau was the older brother, Jacob gained his father's blessing through deception (Gen. 27).

Just as in Galatians (cf. Gal. 2:16), Paul's point is that if we are saved, it is not because of what we have done.

No man is saved because he is better than anyone else. It is not because we are "good" people that we have merited God's favor. On the contrary, we are saved simply because of the grace and mercy of God in Christ (cf. Gal. 1:4-5).

Thus, we cannot take any credit, boast of any accomplishment or share in the slightest aspect of God's glory!

This was the problem Paul dealt with in the Galatian churches. The false teachers minimized God's glory by supplementing Christ's works with their own (i.e., circumcision), thus acquiring honor for themselves.

Trevor Burke writes,

“The difficulty facing Paul in respect of the church at Galatia was the infiltration of agitators who were boasting of their acquired honour. This was partly based upon their success in getting the Galatians circumcised: ‘For those who are circumcised do not even keep the law themselves but the desire to have you circumcised, that they may boast in your flesh’ (Gal. 6:13...),” (*Adopted Into God's Family*, pp. 154-155).

Over against this vain boasting of man, Paul was zealous to maintain God's glory. Through his proclamation and defense of the Gospel, Paul sought to strip man of any possible credit and zealously magnified God's glory!

Consider the following words of Ralph Erskine,

“The main scope of the Gospel is, to exclude all self-confidence, and stain the pride of man, to bring in self-denial, and exalt the glory of Christ; to extol His righteousness, by which He has magnified the law, and made it honourable; to exhibit such a way of salvation to sinners, as shall most advance the honour of all the divine perfections which shine most brightly in the face and person of Jesus Christ; and to bring men to such a true and lively faith of the free grace and mercy of God in Christ, as will be the only solid root and spring of true peace, heart-holiness, and practical godliness...,” (Ralph Erskine, quoted in *Gospel Truth*, pp. 77-78).

There is a second reason why Paul was zealous for God's glory.

- b. THE SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING OF THE GALATIANS WAS DEPENDANT UPON GOD'S GLORY.

Typically at this point in his letters, Paul would give an expression of thanks for those to whom he was writing. However, no such thanksgiving will be found in Galatians.

Some Bible teachers suggest that Paul's doxology takes the place of the missing thanksgiving (cf. Bruce, *Galatians*, p. 77).

If this is the case, Paul's doxology then serves to further highlight the grievous nature of the Galatians' defection from the gospel.

In turning away from the true gospel, which exalts God's glory, the Galatians were embracing a conditional gospel, which minimizes God's glory and exalts the vainglory of man.

Calvin observes, “By this sudden exclamation of thanksgiving, he intends to awaken powerfully in his readers the contemplation of that invaluable gift which they had received from God, and in this manner to prepare their minds more fully for receiving instruction,” (*Galatians*, vol. XXI, p. 28)

Paul was deeply disturbed over the spiritual wellbeing of the Galatians (cf. 1:6-9; 4:11-[19] 20).

He understood that their spiritual wellbeing was ultimately dependent upon the exaltation of God’s glory rather than their self-glory. Thus, Paul was zealous to guard and exalt the glory of God.

A conditional gospel exalts self-effort and leads only to self-glory, which is to be accursed of God (1:8-9). On the other hand, a gracious gospel exalts God the Father and God the Son and leads to God’s glory, which is to be blessed (4:5-7).

What is it to be blessed?

The blessings of the Gospel are grace and peace, forgiveness of sin, freedom from the present evil age, freedom from the curse and condemnation of the law, justification, the privilege of adoption and coming into a personal relationship with God as Father, etc...

In comparison, the Judaizer’s conditional gospel brings man into slavery and bondage and glorifies self rather than God (compare 1:5 with 4:17).

God’s aim in being glorified through the salvation of sinners is motivated out of a genuine interest in their wellbeing.

Paul, as we have learned, states in Galatians 1:4 that Christ gave Himself on the cross to deliver us out of this present evil age so that we might belong to Him for His glory.

Paul was zealous for God’s glory because he understood that it is for our good! It is for our benefit that God is glorified in our lives!

Why? God is glorified by grace not merit. Thus, when glory goes to God, grace comes to us! On the flip side, when glory goes to man, curse and condemnation follow. Grace is what we need and glory is what rightfully belongs to God.

It is through Christ’s voluntary substitution, in accordance with the will of our God and Father, that grace flows to us and glory rises to God!

John Newton writes,

“The consummation of their happiness [i.e., miserable sinners], is a branch of the joy which was set before Him [i.e., Christ]. For their sakes, that they might be happy, that He may be admired in them, and by them, to the

glory of God, who is all in all, He voluntarily substituted Himself to sufferings and death. He endured the cross, and He despised the shame,” (*The Works of John Newton*, “Voluntary Suffering,” vol. 4, p. 213).

On the other hand, the Judaizers were zealous for their own glory rather than God’s glory! They had no genuine interest in the spiritual wellbeing of the Galatians.

The Judaizers were zealous to make new converts among the Galatians in order to exalt themselves, to make a good showing in the flesh (Gal. 6:12). Paul, in Galatians 4:17, writes, “They make much of you, but for no good purpose. They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them.”

The Judaizers were driven not out of love for the Galatians nor from a desire for God’s honor and glory. Rather, their motivation was driven by a zeal for their own self-exaltation, to establish a reputation or name for themselves (i.e., honor or glory).

Therefore, Paul opposed the Judaizers and their conditional gospel. By supplementing Christ’s work along with man’s efforts, the false teachers minimized Christ and thereby dishonored God the Father and God the Son.

2. PAUL’S CONCERN FOR GOD’S GLORY

It is significant to note that this is the only time Paul includes a doxology in one of his greetings (cf. Bruce, *Galatians*, p. 77; it is also the only occurrence of the word, glory, in this letter).

Why does Paul include a doxology at the end of his greeting?

Paul was writing to a group of churches teetering on the brink of a spiritual 9/11! He was deeply concerned that Christ’s salvation, of which he has just declared in vv. 1-5, was in danger of being replaced by a “different gospel,” (v. 6).

As such, the Galatians were turning away from their Father, the one who called them in the grace of Christ (1:6).

The present evil age in which we live is utterly indifferent to God’s glory. It is opposed to the glory of God. In Psalm 106, the Psalmist referring to Israel’s making of the golden calf, writes, “They exchanged the glory of God for the image of an ox that eats grass.” In similar fashion, Paul, in Romans 1:23, says that fallen man has “exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.”

Paul’s concern, however, was to exalt and uphold God’s glory by declaring and defending the Gospel!

The gospel doesn't contain a single reference to anything man has done for his salvation. The gospel is not an announcement about what sinners have done for God but rather what God in Christ has done for sinners.

Thus, God alone will be glorified for endless ages to come (cf. Lightfoot, p. 75). But for now, this present evil age is opposed to His glory (cf. Eph. 2:2).

Rather than having a concern for God's glory, the present evil age (as illustrated by the Judaizers) is characterized by vainglory.

Man glories in himself and is concerned with his own self-accomplishment. Like the Pharisees of Christ's day, fallen man desires to be recognized for his spiritual accomplishments.

Christ, in Matthew 23:5-6, speaking of the Pharisees said,

“⁵ They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, ⁶ and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues.”

In Galatians, Paul gives several insights into the self-glorifying predisposition of man in this present evil age.

For example, in 6:4, he writes, “But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor.”

Paul is not saying that a man who examines his performance (i.e., work) has just cause for self-glorifying (i.e., boasting in how great he is!).

For, he just stated in v. 3, “if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself,” (literally, “continually deceiving himself”). It is like the moon going around boasting of his “brilliance” only to discover that his reflection is but a dim shadow in comparison to the blinding light of the sun.

In light of the context of Galatians 6 and the letter as a whole, the idea is that apart from a proper understanding of the gospel, which humbles man and exalts God, man can easily fall prey to self-deception.

A man can be self-deceived concerning his giftedness and godliness. But, when he takes a step back and objectively examines himself and his “achievements” in light of the strict demands of the law and the gracious work of Christ on his behalf, his pride is shattered!

The believer's satisfaction (i.e., self-boasting) comes from a realization that any fruit in his life is the result of Christ alone, as Paul goes on to show in Galatians 6:13-14, when he writes,

“¹³ For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.
¹⁴ But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

The Judaizers had no concern for the glory of God or interest in the conversion of sinners. Rather, they were zealous to stockpile statistics! They took pride in and boasted of their own accomplishments at gaining converts (i.e., righteousness).

In comparison, Paul excludes such vainglory and exalts Christ and His work alone as the only source of righteousness and victory over the present evil age. In the coming ages, God the Father will show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus and in so doing be glorified for endless ages (Eph. 2:7; Gal. 1:5).

3. PAUL’S AFFIRMATION OF GOD’S GLORY

Paul’s doxology, “to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen,” is to be understood as an affirmation not a wish (εἰσὶν, indicative, rather than εἴη, optative mood, cf. Lightfoot, p. 75; Lenski, p. 31; Fung, p. 42; *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, p. 151; contra Eadie, Galatians, p. 18).

One clarification is in order. Paul’s affirmation of God’s glory should not be thought of something that he gives to God. Rather, by ascribing glory to God, Paul is acknowledging who God is and what He has done, particularly in the person and work of Christ.

Paul ascribes praise to God the Father for the gift of Christ the Son and His great deliverance. Both the Father and Son are the proper objects of our praise.

God is our Father because of Christ. It is only in Christ that God is gracious to us as a loving Father. It is only in Christ that God is no longer wrathful towards us as a condemning judge!

As previously noted, the Gospel is an announcement of God’s Fatherly kindness toward us. Thus, Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 1:20, “For all the promises of God find their Yes in Him. That is why it is through Him that we utter our Amen to God for His glory.”

God the Father is the *source* of our salvation (v. 4c). By His sovereign will, He purposed our salvation through Christ’s deliverance. God the Son is the *means* of our salvation. Christ willingly gave Himself for our sins in accordance with His Father’s will (v. 4a, b).

Therefore, in light of such amazing grace (i.e., the deliverance brought about through Christ, v. 4), Paul spontaneously erupts into an affirmation of God’s glory.

This great rescue is not brought about through man’s efforts (i.e., merit). Through grace alone apart from all efforts of our own, God has become our Father.

God will not share His glory with those who seek to gain their salvation by supplementing Christ's work with their own. Instead, salvation originates solely in God the Father's gracious will and is carried out through the voluntary, substitution of Christ.

This salvation of which Paul speaks is unspeakably great. Consequently, it is fitting for Paul to conclude his doxology with "Amen" because it is through Christ that all of the purposes of God the Father are established.

The Amen serves two purposes in the conclusion of his greeting.

a. THE AMEN COMPLETES HIS PRAISE.

By adding the *Amen*, Paul is attaching a sacred seal or solemnly confirming the truth of his praise to God, "Let it be!" (cf., Lenski, *Galatians*, p. 32; Fung, *Galatians* p. 43).

Unable to give words to the unspeakable truths and realities of the gospel, Paul bursts forth in spontaneous praise and concludes with Amen. "I don't know what else can be said. All glory to God alone! Let it be!"

John Chrysostom noting the purpose of the Amen writes,

"Another reason for it is the exceeding astonishment into which he was thrown by the magnitude of the gift, the superabundance of the grace, the consideration who we were, and what single moment of time. Unable to express this in words, he breaks out into a doxology, sending up for the whole world an eulogium (i.e., a formal expression of praise-J.F.), not indeed worthy of the subject, but such as was possible to him," (*Galatians*, *NPNF*, vol. 13, p. 6).

This present age, along with its vainglory will pass away. But, God's glory will endure forever. Isaiah 51:6, 8b declares,

"Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will never be dismayed...my righteousness will be forever, and my salvation to all generations."

God will never cease to manifest his glory through Christ throughout eternity (Rev. 21:22-25). Thus, the Amen completes Paul's doxology. God alone is worthy of never ending praise! Let it be!

There is a second purpose for which the *Amen* serves.

b. THE AMEN SERVES AS AN INVITATION TO THE GALATIANS TO JOIN WITH PAUL IN GIVING PRAISE TO GOD.

F. F. Bruce writes, “As this letter was read in the churches of Galatia, the hearers would add their ‘Amen’ to Paul’s at the end of the doxology, thus endorsing the ascription of glory to God...,” (*Galatians*, p. 78; cf., Ridderbos, *Galatians*, p. 44; Fung, *Galatians*, p. 43).

It was the Galatians duty to express their *Amen* after having just been reminded of the vital truths of the gospel. By calling the Galatians to join in the *Amen*, Paul challenges them to conduct themselves in a manner that is in step with the truth of the gospel (Gal. 2:5, 14).

As we have seen, because the Galatians were in the process of deserting the true gospel, they were not giving glory to God but rather to themselves. Paul, who is the Galatians spiritual father (cf. Gal.4:19), is calling on his spiritual offspring to honor the chief Head of their family (Burke, *Adopted into God’s Family*, p. 158).

Because the Galatians owe their entire salvation to God alone, they are obliged to give supreme honor and loyalty to Him. But, by their defection to another gospel, the Galatians were bringing the true gospel into disrepute and thereby dishonoring their Father.

Paul, then, at the very beginning, affirms the glory of God in the gospel and invites the Galatians to join with him in showing the same honor to their Father as he has shown since his conversion (cf. Gal. 1:11-12; Burke, *Adopted into God’s Family*, p. 158).

We would be amiss if we failed to understand that Paul’s invitation is in reality God’s invitation. Hereby, we see the incredibly gracious heart of God the Father for sinners. Even though the Galatians were guilty of dishonoring the one who called them (v. 6), God continues to extend His invitation to them.

Thus, Paul is saying to the Galatians (and to all who seek salvation by works of the law), “Galatians, join with me in praising God by allowing His will and purpose to have full affect among you. Salvation and glory belong to Christ and God the Father alone. Let it be!”

How could the Galatians do anything less than give supreme honor to the One who endured such a dishonorable death so that they might be honorably adopted into God’s family (Gal. 4:5)?

Thus, one Bible teacher concludes,

“All this being true, how can life be anything but an endless song of praise to Him? God is eternal, and that song of praise to Him will never die away. So let us too join in it, and set our seal to it with the ancient word of truth- Amen; thus it is, and thus it shall ever be,” Stephen Neil, *Paul to the Galatians*, p. 21).

CONCLUSION:

As we consider the gospel and its ultimate focus, the glory of God, let us remember:

1. LEGALISM PRODUCES PRIDE; THE GOSPEL PRODUCES HUMILITY.

In light of the truth of the gospel, how can anyone find reason to boast? How could anyone seek to exalt themselves in light of the gospel and the glory of God?

A legalist glories in himself whereas as a grace-filled believer glories in Christ. Calvin wrote, "...we must hold this as a universal principle: whoever glories in himself, glories against God," (*Institutes*, 3.13.2).

As believers we need to recognize that we are prone to think of ourselves more highly than we ought (cf. Rom. 12:3). Though we are delivered from the present evil age, something of a legal disposition still resides in us. We are often inclined to take credit for our accomplishments.

So, we need to be humbled for our sins in a gospel-way! Through the gospel we are brought to an understanding of God's love and kindness toward us (cf. Rom. 2:4; 5:6, 8; Eph. 2:7; Titus 3:4; 1 Jn. 4:10).

It is through this recognition of God's love that produces a godly sorrow for our sin. Thus, out of love for God, we humble ourselves, turn from our sin and recognize that all glory and credit belongs to God alone.

2. THE GOSPEL SHOULD ALWAYS LEAD TO WORSHIP!

Calvin writes,

"It [i.e., the doxology] must at the same time be viewed as a general exhortation. Every instance in which the mercy of God occurs to our remembrance, ought to be embraced by us as an occasion of ascribing glory to God," (*Galatians*, vol. XXI, p. 28).

Just as the Lord's salvation of Israel led the Israelites to praise God for their rescue from the Egyptians (cf. Exodus 15), so the Lord's salvation in Christ led Paul to praise.

However, it is possible to be intellectually convinced that the gospel is true and yet not believe it personally or be moved deeply in our affections. If this is the case, we need to repent and ask God to open our eyes (Eph. 1:15-23) that we might see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:4, 6).

For Paul, the gospel was not a mere theological idea. This spontaneous explosion of his heart springs from a deep well of spiritual experience.

He was profoundly aware that he was an unworthy sinner for whom Christ died to deliver (Gal. 1:13-15; 1 Tim. 1:15).

He knew firsthand what it was like to be held in bondage to sin and the shackles of legalism (Philip. 3:4-6). He speaks of Christ in Galatians 2:20 as one “who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Thus, Timothy George notes,

“To contemplate who God is and what he has done in Jesus Christ is to fall on our knees in worship, thanksgiving, and praise. We study the Bible and the great doctrines of the Christian faith not out of vain curiosity, nor merely to increase our intellectual acumen and historical knowledge but rather that we might come more fully to love and enjoy the gracious God who delights in our praise. As Calvin put it so well, ‘So glorious is his redemption that it should ravish us with wonder,’” (*Galatians*, p. 88).

The gospel always leads to praise and thanksgiving like this:

We praise, we worship Thee, O God,
Thy sovereign power we sound abroad:
All nations bow before Thy throne,
And Thee the eternal Father own.

Loud alleluias to Thy Name
Angels and seraphim proclaim:
The heavens and all the powers on high
With rapture constantly do cry,

O holy, holy, holy, Lord!
Thou God of hosts, by all adored;
Earth and the heavens are full of Thee,
Thy light, Thy power, Thy Majesty.

Apostles join the glorious throng
And swell the loud immortal song;
Prophets enraptured hear the sound
And spread the alleluia round.

Victorious martyrs join their lays
And shout the omnipotence of grace,
While all Thy Church through all the earth
Acknowledge and extol Thy worth.

Glory to Thee, O God most high!
Father, we praise Thy majesty,

The Son, the Spirit, we adore,
One Godhead, blest for evermore.

Glory be to God, the Father,
Glory be to God, the Son,
Glory be to God, the Spirit,
Great Jehovah, Three in One,
Glory, glory
While eternal ages run! (*Puritan Papers, vol. 5, pp. 126-127*)

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