

Grace, mercy and peace be unto you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Today I begin the second section of the current sermon series *The Meaning of Life*. Parts one and two of this series dealt with who we are. Now the attention turns to why we are here. Parts 3 and 4 hope to deal with that topic. Part 3 is about how we are created as vessels of God's glory. Part 4 will be about how we are created to have the same life that God has. So let's get started.

Without God the world would starve in pointless sadness, so the world needs the presence of God here below. When God reveals himself in creation, we call it *the revelation of his glory*. The glory of God is his *presence* among men. When the two-year-old wakes up from a nap, climbs out of the little bed, removes his diaper and walks out into the living room where parents are entertaining guests, we say there he was in all his glory. He was fully revealed to everyone there. Glory involves a *revealing or revelation*. When you hear a musical piece that moves you like few have, you say that piece was glorious. Its glorious because it *revealed* more of the power of music than most other pieces were able. Sometimes we say a play, musical, or movie is glorious and what we mean by that is that particular production *revealed* more of something about life or the human condition than most others we have seen. When the Lord reveals his presence to the world, we say he comes in his glory. It, too, is glorious. The presence of God in creation is called his glory. Paul writes about this in his first chapter of Romans;

For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. Romans 1:20

Creation itself reveals something of the nature of God and declares his glory. The flaming seraphim in heaven are recorded as calling out concerning the Lord's glory;

**Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory. Isaiah 6:3**

While it's true the earth is full of God's glory, we still need a *personal connection* to him. We need God with skin on. He fulfills that need by placing us into his creation;

**Bring my sons from afar
and my daughters from the end of the earth,
everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made. Isaiah 43:6-7**

When it says God created us for his glory, he did not create us just to show how great and powerful he is and all others should grovel before him. He did not do this for the sake of his own pride. It was not a matter of his ego. Again, it was for us to reveal in ourselves the person of God into his creation. This happens in two ways. First, God created us in his image so that we would be able to reflect his nature in the world materially and physically in such a way that he would be revealed, exposed, seen, and beheld in us. Second, he wanted us to reveal his glory to the world by bringing his goodness along with us.

Here is an all-encompassing verse from 1 Corinthians that sums up this idea;

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31

Everything we do has the intent of revealing God to the world. That's quite a task! Again, Paul speaks about God's glory revealed in us;

And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:18

Here Paul assumes we will grow spiritually, and the farther along we get the more able we are to reflect the presence of God to other people. The thing we especially grow in is God's goodness and his love. Jesus speaks about how our bearing God's goodness in the world will bring about further glory back to the Father;

In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16

We sang that song in Sunday School, *This Little Gospel Light of Mine*. That is the right idea, especially the part about it pointing the way to heaven. Jesus ups the stakes even more in this next verse;

And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matthew 5:47-48

Okay – Jesus is just taking it a little too far, right? Perfect? Nobody's perfect. Well ... Remember the part from last week where I made the point that in Christ we are already perfect in God's eyes? Jesus here encourages us to grow into that perfection as best we can already here in our earthy lives. Paul brings it home for us with this final thought on God's goodness in us;

Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God. 2 Corinthians 7:1

There's that part about being perfect again. We may shudder at that, but it isn't as though we have to do this all by ourselves. Everything starts with Jesus who makes all this possible. The prophet Isaiah spoke about that long before Jesus was born;

**In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." Isaiah 40:46-47**

John the Baptist was that voice in the wilderness. In Jesus was found the glory of the Lord. To cap it all off, the writer in Hebrews speaks about the glory of God in Jesus;

He [Jesus] is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, ... Hebrews 1:3

We have been baptized into Jesus. We have put on Christ. We are now the representatives of God on earth. He wants very much for us to be good representatives, revealing his presence into the world by displaying his goodness to all people and to his creation. Paul leaves us with this final thought;

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10

We pray God empower us by the Holy Spirit to make all this a reality in our lives. Next week I hope to cover more on the life that God has for us to live in, enjoy, and share. Until then, the peace of God guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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