

His Glory Fills the Earth

I want to talk about another very common phrase in the Christian vocabulary that is a difficult one to pin down: the “glory of God”.

I have read those words, sung the words, thought and said those words but do I really know what they mean?

There are many words we associate with glory: majesty, power, beauty, recognition, acknowledgement, and thanks.

The word ‘glory’ is a common word in the Bible. In the Old Testament the word is usually translated from the Hebrew word ‘kabod’, which refers to the weight or substance of something. So when we see the word ‘glory’ in the Old Testament it often refers to the weight or substance of God’s being, His name, or His essence. So God possesses supreme dignity and importance, and deserves honor.

When the Old Testament was translated into Greek, the word ‘doxa’ was used, which meant “honor, judgment, or reputation”. So when someone spoke of God’s glory they were referring to his worthiness of supreme honor.

The word ‘glory’ was sometimes associated with visible displays of light or radiance, such as thunderbolts, fire, and brightness. In Ezekiel 1:27-28 the prophet describes his vision of God this way: *“I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. 28 Like the*

appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking.”

These were the best words the ancients could come up with to describe this indefinable quality. The words depict His splendor, majesty, beauty, and brilliance. God was to be feared, or as we have come to know that word – to be respected, admired, and held in awe.

We are told in the Bible that all of Creation brings glory to God. In other words, everything about the Universe reflects the magnificence of the Creator. In Psalm 19:1 we are told that: "*The heavens are telling of the glory of God, and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.*”

Man is part of this Universe and also plays its part in glorifying God, or giving honor and importance to God. God certainly doesn't need our worship or praise or glory, but we can serve as an example of God's master craftsmanship.

To Christians, Jesus stands far above all else in glorifying God. God expressed through the life of Jesus in profound and dramatic ways, and Jesus accepted his part by acknowledging his divinity and becoming Christ Jesus, or Jesus the Anointed or Chosen One.

Although the body of Jesus was destined to be destroyed, as are all of our bodies, Jesus the Christ came to demonstrate that the Glory of God remains and is eternal. Through the Christ nature the glory

of God indwells all of God's children; it does not decay, diminish, or weaken.

Puritan author John Owens, who lived from 1616-1683 wrote: "Faith is the light wherein we behold the glory of Christ in this world."

Our mission is to allow the Glory of the Christ within us to express – yes, our own talents and skills and the glory of our humanhood will eventually erode, but the Glory of God within us will continue as we embrace the Christ within.

In I Corinthians 10:31, the Apostle Paul says: "*So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*" Jesus tells us to "*...let our light so shine before men that they may see our works and glorify our Father who is in heaven.*" (Matt 5:16). We are not to be glorified, but through the observance of our works, deeds, and service, God is to be recognized and glorified for having given us the light to let shine.

Sometimes we are tempted to adore and praise and give glory to the creature, the creation, the created rather than the Creator. We've all done it at some point in our lives: we get distracted by the glory of man and the earth and fail to recognize the glory of God. We look to earthly things, earthly relationships, the powers, talents, beauty, or the goodness we see in others or in ourselves and ignore that God is the Creator of these things that we admire.

But all things of the earth will fade, disintegrate, and die being only temporary carriers of God's glory. We can definitely express our gratitude for all we see and experience, but we can also

whisper a “Thank You God” or “Hallelujah” and acknowledge at least to our own hearts the glory that is God’s.

I think ‘Glory’ is difficult to describe because it is a concept rather than an object. To describe a piano is fairly easy, but to describe ‘beauty’ is much more difficult. We can point to things that we think are beautiful, but to put them in words is tricky.

I heard this description that I like. We can fairly accurately describe God as being Holy because of the attributes of the incomparable, infinite and perfect Love, greatness, worth, purity, goodness, and kindness. We consider God as Holy because of the sacred and distinct separateness in terms of spiritual essence and consciousness from that of Creation.

Isaiah 6:3 describes the angels as calling to one another: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty. The whole earth is full of his ... and we might have expected them to say “holiness”. But they don’t say holiness; they say “glory”.

Holy is God and the earth is full of His glory. Then one way of looking at ‘glory’ is as God’s holiness manifested into Creation. It is the means through which we comprehend God’s holiness; it is God’s holiness on display, God “going public” – that is what we called ‘the glory of God’. The glory of God then can be thought of as the infinite beauty and greatness of His manifest perfection. It is the invisible, unknowable qualities, characteristics, and attributes of God displayed in a visible way.

Yet, because we can never fully know God while in these bodies our thoughts on the glory of God will always be limited and

incomplete. There is always more to God than we can know while walking this earth, and therefore there is always more to the glory of God than we can experience.

The best that we can do is express as much of God's glory through our lives – how we treat each other, speak to each other, and think about each other. When we love each other without reservation the glory of God fills our souls, hearts, and minds. When we slip, and allow the ego to display as prejudice, judgment, fear, aggression, and arrogance, we deny God's glory.

John 15:8 says this: *When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.* To me, these words mean that we glorify God by using our talents, developing our abilities, reaching out and serving others and being willing to do God's will by becoming the best 'us' that we can be.

How can we make a difference in this world? The answer is to glorify God by being who God intends for us to be; by expressing the Christ in the unique and individual way that only we can. We simultaneously make a difference and glorify God by simply being who we are and letting our light shine before others, that they may see our good works, and glorify the Creator, not the created.

My prayer is that we allow the fullness of the Christ to move through us and express into Creation as our fullest and highest self. Let us abandon the fear and arrogance and simply be who we are, living and doing all to the glory of God.

Let us pray....