

Calvary's Story is Our Future Glory

I Corinthians 10: 31 – 11:1 *“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. **Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God** – even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”*

Why is it important not to be an offense to people? Because being an offense to people does not exemplify the glory of God. The New International (as cited above) states, “Do not cause anyone to stumble...”. How is it possible for this kind of action to bring glory to God? This leads my mind to another question, “What does bring God glory?” In keeping with our thought of late, the story of Calvary brings God glory! How does Calvary's story bring God glory?

In order to answer these questions, it becomes imperative that we understand just what the ‘glory of God’ is. The glory of God is His nature and character. We tend to think of the glory of something as that which brings it notice. For example: the glory of the woman is her hair. It is the long hair that brings notice to the woman. The glory of a light bulb is the light that shines from it. In a sense, this concept is true. As it concerns God, His glory is who he really and truly is. However, the glory of God does not come from man's recognition, but from the manifestation of God's own nature and character. Let us consider these two.

The nature of God is spiritual. Jesus said, that the worship of God can only be done in *spirit* and in truth. This is necessary because God is not physical. He is spiritual by nature. How often do we get bogged down in our worship because someone has tried to qualify our worship by that which is physical? The same is true in that which brings glory to God. It is not the physical act, but the reason the action is being done. This is why one can eat meat offered to idols at one point and it is ok, then in another situation it would be sinful to eat meat offered to idols. It is not the act of eating meat offered to idols that is sinful. Why? Because, the idols are nothing. How can nothing have any real affect upon something? This is the Apostle Paul's argument (I Corinthians 8). If our eating meat offends (causes to stumble) our brother, then it is wrong and will never bring God glory. Why? Because, it does not reveal the character of God.

What is God's character? God's character is ‘holy’. Holy (in the simplest form) means ‘set apart’. As pertaining to God: a thing, action, thought, etc. becomes holy when it is ‘set apart’ from anything else and ‘set apart’ to God. How can offensive living be of God? It cannot be. In order to bring God glory, we need to ascertain whether - what is thought, said or done reveals the nature and character of God. If it does, then it brings God glory.

Of all events on the face of the earth, it is the life, death and resurrection of Jesus that stand apart in revealing the nature and character of God. Therefore, they bring glory to God. In speaking about Jesus using the term 'Word', the gospel writer states the following: *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. **We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.** John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, 'This was he of whom I said, He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me. From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. **No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, had made him known.**"* (John 1:14-18)

It is Jesus who makes known the glory of God. Jesus' life has revealed to us, both the nature and the character of God. This is key toward appreciating Jesus' prayer for the unity of His disciples. John 17: 20 – 24: *"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. **I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one; I in them and you in me.** May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you love me before the creation of the world."* This was the purpose of Jesus. It was in the accomplishing of this purpose that man's salvation was provided. It was through this that man can be made complete (spiritual and holy). Praise God that He sent Jesus into the world to reveal that glory.

Note also the words of Paul in Romans 3:23, *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"* Without the glory of God, we cannot be one with Him. There can be no unity, no discipleship, nor completion of love except through the sharing of the glory of God. God gave His own glory to His Son. Jesus then, gives that glory to His disciples (those who would believe in Jesus through the message of the gospel). In whatever we think, say and do, we do it all to the glory of God.

Now we can truly be disciples. As we have seen Jesus reveal the nature and character (the glory) of God, we can then imitate that and also reveal the nature and character of God. When we imitate, we bring glory to God. Therefore it is not in anything we do, but in the true and exact imitation that we reveal the nature and character of God. Who then gets the glory? We do not put ourselves on a pedestal to be seen by man and therefore receive the glory. All that we think, say and do represents and/or reveals the nature and character of God. This is what it means to be a disciple. This is what it means to be Holy.

Read closely the 4th chapter of II Corinthians: *“Therefore, since through God’s mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. **The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness.’ Made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.**”*

...vs. 8,9...

“We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.”

What then is our future glory? We are in the process of receiving God’s glory as we have never before imagined. We are receiving the following: II Corinthians 3: 18 *“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with every-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”*

The day will come when we will be changed. For each of us, it will be in the twinkling of an eye. We will no longer need this flesh and blood, for we will be given a new body - a body that will exist in the heavenlies with God. This new body will be complete, wherein we will never again fall short of the glory of God. I Corinthians 15: 47-52: *“the first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven, so also are those who are heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, **so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.** I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, **but we will all be changed – in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.** For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”* The trumpet will sound for each one of us. For the Christian, God will complete the work He started when we became a Christian. God will give us a spiritual body that can handle His glory in the complete form as He intends for us to have.

I Corinthians 13:12 *“Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”* Each day, let us look forward to glorifying God as He changes us from our own glory to His glory. Look forward also, to the glory of God that will be given when God completes His work in you, through His perfect light even Jesus. Amen.