

TRIUMPHANT LIVING

Taught by Dr. Bruce Bickel

“A Life of Freedom and Transformation: The Glory of God”

Session: September 13, 2013

We do not have any music to set our hearts in tune, so let's just have the quietness of our own heart be the music unto the Lord as we prepare our hearts for what He might have. Let your own heart be a song to the Lord as you prepare to have Him teach us this morning.

Gracious Father, we just do not know how to be silent; sometimes our lives are just so predicated and dictated by activity and events that sometimes, Lord, we just need to sit quietly and know that You are God. It is in these moments as we prepare for You to teach us that we just pray that You would quiet our hearts and quiet our spirits. May our face be desirous to see You; and Father would You be pleased in all of Your mercy to open our eyes that we might behold You more clearly for Christ's sake. Amen.

I invite you to turn in your Bibles to 2nd Corinthians 3. We are looking at the theme of Triumph Living, but thanks be to God Who always, always, always leads us into triumphal procession and spreads everywhere the aroma of the knowledge of Christ. That is our theme.

We are down to verses 17 and 18 but I would like to pick it up at verse 16-18 of Chapter 3, 2nd Corinthians.

“...but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”

Last week we talked about what it meant to turn to the Lord...that means you come in repentance of faith and when you do that, the veil of our ignorance and blindness is removed and we now have an understanding that we are set free from ourselves. We are set free now to worship the Lord and so we have a sense of liberty.

But the verse that I want to deal with is the next one, verse 18. “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”

Some how the Lord just impressed upon me this week to really give this some thought, and I spent a lot of time in my own quiet time just thinking. That is why I made the reference to being quiet. It was amazing what I learned when I kept my mouth shut. It was amazing what I learned when I didn't have my books open and my computer and all the resources that I normally use, the thirty hours of study I put into this; I really didn't do it that much because I just sort of sat

and meditated. It was a wonderful experience for me. It really took me in to some avenues of understanding that I had never explored before. I want to teach us those things today because I think they are pertinent for us.

One of the questions I began to ask myself is when you look at the current condition of the Church, the visible Church, it is really not what we want it to be, nor is it what it should be. When you look at the Church today, there is no power in our culture, there is very little influence, and least of all there is no reformation or revival that we had experienced in previous generations. So when I looked at the condition of the Church, I began to ask myself the question, “Why is it that the Church is so ineffective?”

I think there could be many reasons. You could talk about our marketing mentality; you could talk about all of the various things, the watering down of the gospel...I think you can list many, many different things but for me the one summary statement is this: I think the explanation of why the Church is so less impacting and less influential today is because we have failed to realize the glory of God. I think it all starts right there. Whatever excuse you want to come in for the Church, I think it all centers around that one statement about this: we have failed to realize the glory of God. That is what this passage is teaching us. In fact, Jeremiah Burroughs in his wonderful work, *Gospel Worship* back in 1647 says this: “The reason why we worship God in a **slight** way is because we do not see God in the **right** way... in His glory”

I think, Brothers, everything that is happening in the Church today is a function of our failure to realize the glory of God. That is what Paul is teaching us in this verse today. We have come to trust our own faith, we think that our faith makes a difference. We think that our moral efforts make the difference. We think that even the organizations that we form and the activities that we create...we have a tendency to think that we have relegated the cause of Christ to the creativity of man, and we are beginning to trust the creativity of man instead of realizing the absolute glory of God.

You notice in scripture that Biblical leaders longed for the face of God. What do our leaders today look for? The latest publisher to publish their book? The latest marketing tool to expand their ministry? It seems to be so much about us, isn't it? It's about us and our activity rather than the glory of God. Our failure is to realize this: who we are **in** Christ and the glory that is ours. I think that is our great failure. The failure to realize who we are **in** Christ and the glory that is ours.

Now certainly, when you look at the new testament writings, the new testament people had problems just like you and I do. The thing about it that is different is that the writers of the new testament epistles do not deal with their problems. They do not say here are the ten steps to get rid of this particular depression, or here are five steps to get rid of this discouragement. Do you know what they deal with? They remind them of ‘don't you remember who you are and the glory that is yours?’ That is what they talk about. Read all the Church epistles...the epistles of Paul; he is not dealing with their problems, he basically says, “have you forgotten who you are

and have you forgotten the glory that is yours because you are **in** Christ?” That is how he deals with all their problems. So, when you come to summarize the issue of the Church, I really think that it has to do with this very simple statement. We fail to realize the glory of God.

Notice verse 18. Practically speaking, it means this: when we behold His glory, we in turn become filled with His glory. Do you see that? “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror...” What? ...the glory of the Lord. When you look at your mirror and you see yourself, what is it that Paul says you see? You don’t see yourself, you see the glory of the Lord because that is who you are. That is what we are **in** Christ. We are a reflection of the glory of the Lord; and when you look in the mirror, you take an example of your own life, you are seeing the glory of the Lord and you are not seeing yourself. We lose sight of that. We are always trying to figure out...give me ten steps to correct my situation—when you really need to realize this: this is who I am and this is what I have. I have the glory of the Lord.

Notice the example of Moses in the previous verses. The people were amazed when Moses came back from being on Mt. Sinai in the presence of the Lord. His face had this glorious shine on it and they just stood in awe of the fact that this man has been in God’s presence and his face just had this glory on it, and it was so powerful and so visible that he actually had to put a veil over his face because the people could not look at him because he was so bright...he had been in the presence of the Lord.

Verse 18 is telling us that when you and I behold the glory of the Lord, we in turn take on that glory. That is who we are and that is the glory that we have. It is the same with us. We take on that glory and it can be seen.

Now I’m not suggesting that our face is going to shine, stick with me as we work through the rest of this. But there is something about us because you and I have been in the presence of the Lord, and that ought to be obvious to the world that they see something about us that is radically different...because we have been in the presence of the Lord and His glory is part of us.

See what verse 18 is telling us? It is when you look at yourself, you see what? You see the glory of the Lord. The moment that you and I forget the glory of the Lord and God in His glory is the moment that you and I begin to trust ourselves and think that we can make a difference.

It is really about the glory of the Lord. Why do we fail to realize this? Why is it that we miss who we are **in** Christ and the glory that is ours? I think it is our failure to realize the ultimate objective of our redemption. We fail to realize the ultimate objective of our redemption. Remember, redemption means rescued through the payment of a price. In other words, it means this: when we fail to recognize the ultimate objective of our redemption, we have a low view of salvation. One of our failures is this: we have such a low view of salvation.

Let me read some verses to you to help you understand the salvation descriptions always have something to do with God's glory. Salvation is not about man's needs, it is about God and His glory. If you want to know what the gospel is, look at chapter 4:6 of 2nd Corinthians.

Here is a definition of the gospel. "For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." That is what the gospel is about. It is about the "glory of God in the face of Christ." It is not about man and His needs. It is not about your uncomfortable ness in this world. It is not about your financial situation. The gospel is about this: it is about the "glory of God in the face of Christ." Now when you and I forget and put aside the glory of God, we develop a low sense of salvation; and the real issue of why we have lost the glory of God is because we have lost the ultimate objective of our redemption; which means that you have such a low view of salvation.

Listen to these verses. Hebrews 2:10. "For it was fitting for Him from whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory,..." There is the purpose of your salvation—it's glory—it is not your well-being. It is not eternal life, it is not your blessings, it is not your forgiveness; those are all things that happen but that is not the ultimate objective. The ultimate objective is to bring you to glory. "...to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings." The ultimate objective of our salvation is God's glory.

How about 1st Corinthians 2:7? When you read what Paul is writing to the Church at Corinth, he just says I'm going to preach you something really simple, just something that is really simple. I'm not going to add philosophy, I'm not going to give you some araldite introduction into this message, it is really just a very simple message; there is no psychology to it. Here is what he said he preaches. "...but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery." See what we are talking about is the you and I are the reflection of God's glory and it is a mystery. "...the hidden *wisdom* which God predestined before the ages to our glory;..." See the gospel predestined prior to the ages for your glory, for His glory. You see, salvation is about God's glory, it is not about man's needs. When you do not understand the ultimate objective of our redemption, you create a low view of salvation because you make it very man-centered; it's about me and my needs and it is not about God and His glory. Christianity is more than forgiveness, it's more than special blessings. It's about the restoration of the glory of God **in** you and **in** me, so that when you look at yourself you are being transformed from one stage of glory to the next because of your redemption, which is the purpose of our salvation in the first place.

Now the tragedy is that man has fallen from his original condition, that is the real tragedy of this world. When you look at Genesis 2, you'll see that God said "Let's make man in our own image." That means that man was Created, something very unique in man, among all the other creatures there was uniqueness in man that did not exist in all the other creatures, be it the creation of the earth, all the things...the birds and the sea and all the things going on. There was a uniqueness about man that was unique to him because it was made in God's image. What does that mean? There are many ways of describing that.

Notice in Hebrews 1, the angels created being were not like man because they were designed to be servants of humankind, the heirs of salvation, that is why they were created. They were created to serve the unique creation known as mankind. Man had glory in his original constitution because sin had not entered so there was a glory about Adam and Eve, before sin entered in, because they had a spirit, they had a soul, and that meant they had the ability...this is what makes us unique...the ability to have a relationship with the Holy God. That is what makes us unique from a bear, or a rat, or a bird, or a fish. We have the ability to have a relationship with our Creator Heavenly Father, Who is holy. In our original constitution there was no sin that marred the face of holiness of God. Man had this initial holiness. In fact, that makes man unique is this...I think it is two things: invisibility and immortality.

Invisibility. What do I mean by that? Autopsies are always looking for what makes man unique. You know they can never find it? You can find their bones, you can find their joints, you can find their heart, you can find their liver, and you can find their organs but you cannot find their soul. It is invisible and that is what makes man unique. It is that soul that permits us to have a saving relationship to God who is our Creator. That is unique of all of creation. Nobody else has a soul that has the ability to have a relationship with the Living God.

That is what makes us invisible. Autopsies are never going to find it. Doctors try to find out what makes man unique and they will never find it. Because they are looking at the physical and they do not realize the uniqueness of that glory that was our original constitution when we were created in the Garden.

The second thing is immortality. You cannot find that. Autopsies do not discover immortality. Part of our original constitution was that we would live forever because sin had not marred or defaced it. There was no death until sin came in. We were designed to be immortal. We were designed to be invisible because you cannot find the soul and that is what makes us unique. That was part of the glory of man's original constitution. The most unique parts of us is God's unique glorious constitution cannot be seen. You see there was no defect in man, he possessed some of the glory of God; there was no corruption in man. He had some of the glory in our original condition, in our original constitution.

Notice, when you read Genesis 2. Man was made to rule, to govern, and to do this: to reflect God's glory. That is why he was made unique from all the other creation. He was the one alone who was created in His sinless perfection and perfect obedience to be the one who could reflect God's glory. We were to be His representative, the representative of His glory. Now Adam and Eve were perfect in degree, which mean this: it could be developed...this perfection and this glory was there resonant in creation because God created them to be the reflection of His glory and that could be developed. It is kind of like an acorn...you have all the resources you need, it just takes time to develop it; and you develop it in stages.

As Paul tells us in 3:18 from one stage of glory to the next, you are being transformed to bring that back...that reflection of God's glory. Just like the acorn, when you and I are **in** Christ we

have the ability to be perfect in the conditional sense; it can be progressive...we grow in it. That is what Paul is teaching us. Like the acorn who can become an oak tree.

The great calamity in my conviction, Men, is this: the great calamity of the world is not war, it is not terrorism, it is not pestilence, it is not disease or hunger, it is not even global warming...but the great tragedy of creation is the fall of man. It is the fall of man. It is human depravity. The image of God was marred at the fall of man. The

The image of God was defaced by the fall of man; but notice, it was not destroyed. It was defaced, it was marred, but like the acorn it was not destroyed. Take a look around the world. Man can be both noble at times and vile at times.

Look at Romans 3:22-23. "...even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,..." What does that mean? It means all of creation has fallen short of its original constitution which is what? Your happiness? No, it doesn't say that. It says, it is God's glory. We fall short of His glory. We often define sin as missing the mark. That's true. That is what it means in the original text. It means missing the mark. But that is not what we missed. We fall short of what? The glory of God, and when you missed the sight of the glory of God, you missed everything and that is what Paul is teaching us. We've missed the glory of God.

Why is the world the way it is? It is really quite simple. The world is the way it is because we are the way we are. That's it. The world is the way it is because we are the way we are. What is that? We fall short of the glory of God culturally, historically, humanity, it is human depravity... that is the problem of the world. That is the great tragedy.

Forgiveness is only the beginning. Look at 2nd Corinthians 3:17-18, the verses we just read. That is what Paul is telling us. I want you to notice...go to Romans 8:29. Well, before we get there let me take you...let me explain what I mean when I say the world is what we are because of who we are.

Go to Ephesians 4:17. Paul is describing the way that we should not live. Notice, he is dealing with problems in the Ephesians' Church but he does not list their problems, he says, don't you remember who you are? Don't you know the glory that you had? That is what changes your conduct. I don't have ten steps to get rid of your problems. I'm not going to counsel you out of your depression, I'm just going to remind you who you are. So he says, don't live like this...like you used to.

In 4:17 we see this: "So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk,..." Now the word "Gentiles" there means one who does not know God, that is what Gentile means...one who does not know God...he is saying, don't live like you don't know God, you're redeemed, you have the glory of God in you because that was your original constitution and it is being reflecting again because of your regeneration. Don't live like

you don't know God. He doesn't deal with their problems, he reminds them who they are and the glory that is in them. "So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of their ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;..." Now here he is describing the world, he is basically saying this: if you are not **in** Christ, you are this...remember you are **in** Christ now so you are not that, is what Paul is saying. You are not this anymore and don't act like it. Here is how a person who is not know God acts.

First of all, they think wrong. Secondly, they understand wrong. Thirdly, they have the wrong concept of God. And the reason? Because they are wrong. Hardness of heart. People are wrong, people are wrong. That is the human tragedy. They have lost the glory of God. They think wrong, they understand things incorrectly, they have a wrong view of God. The reason is because their heart has been hardened and they do not know God; and, therefore, they are still in Adam. That is the great tragedy of man. We are in the world what we are because of who we are.

Now those of us in Christ he says, don't act like that, do not act like you do not know God. You can think correctly; you can understand correctly; you can have a right view of God because your heart has been changed. Do not act as if you do not know God.

Go to Ephesians 2:1-3. Here again he is saying, this is what you were but you are not this anymore. "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest,..."

He's saying that is who you used to be. Don't you understand who you are? You see Paul uses more than any other Biblical writer the critical literary form of contrast—this is what you used to be. Let me remind you: this is who you are now. He does not deal with their problems, he deals with their understanding of who they are **in** Christ. Because that is what changes everything; it is how you and I visualize ourselves in our saving relationship to the Lord Jesus through the Holy Spirit's work; it is that. He is saying this is who you are, and don't you understand, he says, the glory that is yours? How can you act like that when you understand who you are? You used to be this; you are no longer dead—who are alive. That is what makes you unique in all of creation. But Paul tells us, do not act like you used to.

In Philippians he refers to our body as the body of humiliation. That is a description of the contrast to our original condition. He is saying your body is the body of humiliation, contrasted in Genesis 2 to the body of glory in which you were created.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *[UNCLEAR]. Where?*

It is in the new testament. {LAUGHTER}

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *I just didn't know if you were going to give a verse?*

No, I'm not. I'm going to read Psalm 8.

Notice Psalm 8. Let me read this in its entirety. What a great Psalm. Now notice what he speaks of is the uniqueness of God's creation of who **you** are, who **I** am, compared to all of creation. Listen to this.

“Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens! From the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have established strength because of Your adversaries, to make the enemy and the revengeful cease. When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have ordained; What is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than God, and You crown him with glory and majesty!...” He's talking about Jesus and he's talking about us! You have been crowned with what? Glory! And Majesty! And the Psalmist is saying compared to all other things in creation, I just marvel at all of creation, but the thing that stands out more than anything else is the glory and majesty that You have in created man. And you have made him a little lower than God and you crown him with glory and majesty. “...You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, whatever passes through the paths of the seas...” You see he is describing the glory of man. This is our rule. This is who we are. Then he concludes with this—one great salutation. “...O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth.”

You see the Psalmist is saying, I take a look at creation and I just marvel at its beauty; but then I ponder this: You actually created us to be more glorious than all of Your other creations? How majestic is Your name, how excellent is your creation! All the scripture does constantly, Brothers, is remind us of who we are and the glory that is ours. When we forget the glory of God, we will come up with a weak plan of salvation because we make it very, very man-centered. The gospel is not about you. The gospel is about God and His glory, it is not about me and my needs. It is about God and His glory.

Romans 8:29. “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son,...” Now what does that image of the Son contain? Glory! Do you see that? The Son contains the glory of God, the gospel is what? The glory of God in the face of Christ! That is what the gospel is about. If you want to see the glory of God, you look at the face of Christ! The gospel, the message that we've preached to salvation is about God and His glory, not man and his needs. It is about the glory of God in the face of Christ. When you and I are preaching Christ and Him crucified, we are teaching the glory of God. That is the message of the gospel. “...so that he would be the firstborn among many brethren;...” You and I are the brethren. He is the firstborn; you and I are brethren. We are brothers with Christ and, therefore,

we are being conformed to Him image; that means we are taking on more glory just like the acorn, there is potential for us to become more glorious. It is there, it is resident in you because of our regeneration.

Now one thing I would say is—and I say this sensitively—don't argue about predestination. That verse is not about predestination. I believe in it but some people do not. That is OK. The issue here is not whether or not you believe in predestination; the issue here is the glory of God. It is about God's glory. The reason I say do not worry about predestination is because those who believe in it, like myself, and those who do not, like some of you, neither one of us is showing God's glory very much. So quit arguing about predestination. It is about the glory of God. You are being conformed to what? Not to be a predestinate! You are being conformed to the image of God and all of His glory.

The issue of Romans 8:29 is God's glory. It is not about theological preferences of predestination vs. non-predestination. You see whatever side of that coin you hold, and I am a strong believer in predestination, I just need to show it more; and those who do not need to show it more—neither one of us should very often. We need to make sure that we are doing that correctly.

Yes?

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *And 8:29, I grapple with that, that He also glorified...that it is truly in the past tense. I'm thinking often times of salvation as being the three past tenses: justification, sanctification, glorification is one where we are in heaven our glorified body and yet he speaks here about glorified in the past tense.*

Past tense but it has present tense reality. When you look at the verb there is an event in your life, past tense in your life that has present reality—that is the glory of God.

Look at Ephesians 4:21-24. “If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which is *the likeness of God* has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” In other words, you are saying this: put off, put on, and put away. Put off the old stuff because that is not who you are anymore. Put on the new stuff because that is who you are, and put away the old tendencies that you had. Put off, put on, and put away. He does not deal with their problems. He deals with their understanding of who they are **in Christ**. He says, don't you remember who you are and the glory that you have? Put away that stuff because of the glory that you have. Put on the new stuff because of the glory that you have. Put away those old tendencies because of the glory that you have. He is always reminding us of who you are and the glory that you have. He doesn't deal with their problems. He deals with their understand of our relationship to a loving God Who created us in glory.

Colossians 3:10. Glory is restored to the image of God's Son. "...and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him..." Do you realize what happens when you are restored to the original of the glory that you had prior to the fall? That is who you are, Brothers, that is who we are Men. That is what is going on in our lives—being transformed from one stage of glory to the next. That means this: all of this is the result of one single act on God's part; and that is regeneration. The new humanity is being transformed into His likeness because of regeneration. That means that God takes the heart of stone that that was insensitive to spiritual things and He gives you a heart of flesh. That is something that God does to us. All this is the result of regeneration.

What matters is what God does to us, not what we decide for Him. See the difference? Modern evangelism is: are you going to decide? How can a dead man decide? A dead man cannot do anything. What does a dead man need? Life! Life! Which comes first life or faith? Life! A dead man cannot do anything. We need to preach the doctrine of regeneration, not the doctrine of decision-making. The real issue is not what I decide, the issue is what God has done to me so that I can decide? We do what God has done to us! That is regeneration. We have such a weak view of evangelism because all we do is offer evangelism as 'would you like to have eternal life and be forgiven?' That has nothing to do with evangelism, it is a consequence not the purpose. The purpose is this: it is the restoration of the glory of God, and when we lose sight of the glory of God all the issues of the Church become tenable because we lose our power.

What matters is what God does to us, not what we decide to do for Him. What we do is what God has done to us.

2nd Peter 1 says we are partakers of the divine nature. Do you look at yourself like that? Do you realize what Paul is saying? He is saying when you were regenerated by God's Holy Spirit and He gave you new life **in** Christ, you now believe. The first evidence of your salvation is your belief. Belief does not save anybody. It is the first evidence. But God has regenerated you. When you believe, He says, "Do you now understand who you are?" You are a partaker of the divine nature, that is who you are. That is part of the glory that you have; a partaker of the divine nature.

Hebrews 2:10-11 says that we are one in nature. We are one in nature with Christ Himself because of our regeneration.

First John 3:1. We are called what? Sons of God. "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God..." (Notice this.) "and *such* we are." We forget the "and *such* we are." We talk about yes, I'm God's child but remember this: "and *such* we are." That is the reminder here, that is the emphasis, that is the passion he is bringing—"and *such* we are." Do you realize that you are participating in a divine nature and *such* that we are? "For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him." You should not expect the world to know you because you are a reflection of the divine nature and they think wrong, they understand wrong, they have a wrong view of God because they are wrong, because

of the hardness of their heart and you should not expect them to understand anything that you talk to them about. That is why when you preach the gospel, it has to be the gospel of regeneration and not decision making. It is about the glory of God in the face of Christ. Everything centers around the glory of God and when you and I lose sight of the glory of God we become weak because we now say it depends upon me and everything is based upon the creativity of man.

Hebrews 11 tells us this: God is not ashamed to allow us to call Him “God.” Now take the other side of the coin. We are called Sons of God and *such* we are. The other side of the coin is this: God is not ashamed to allow His marred creation, which He has regenerated, to come back and call Him “God.” Do you realize the privilege we have? We can call Him “God.” The reason we can do that is because His glory has been restored through regeneration and sanctification. The reason that He allows us to call Him “God” is because the glory has come back and it has been restored through our redemption, through our regeneration. Do you see that?

The reason that we can say, “yes, I’m a child of God and the reason that God permits me to call Him “God” is because that glory has been restored in you, the glory that was in creation that was marred by sin. That is why the gospel proclamation is so powerful, it has to be about the glory of God and not the needs of man. If it is just about the needs of man, we are just going to make some decision to say, “I’m OK.” Then you miss the whole point. The whole point of this...the glory has been restored. The glory has been reconstituted, the glory has been brought back and that is why Paul says this in verse 18: “But we with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord.” Brothers, that is what you see when you look at yourself. You see the glory of the Lord, you are being transformed into the same image. What image? The glory of the Lord is the image you are being transformed into.

From glory to glory. In other words, you are like the acorn; you have all the potential, you have all the glory of God just shine in you. It is there and you and I are being transformed from one stage of this glory to the next. The reason God permits you and I to come into His presence and say, “You are my God, You are my Father” is because of this: He has restored His glory, He has brought back His glory into His unique creation of man. And that is the gospel and the work of Christ.

What is the gospel? The gospel is the message about the glory of God in the face of Christ. The end result of the gospel is the restoration of the glory of man to reflect the glory of God. That is the end result of our redemption. When I mentioned the fact that we have such a low view of salvation, here is the end result of salvation—to restore the glory of man to be the reflection of the glory of God. That is the message that changes lives. And Brothers, my opinion—my conviction—my opinions mean nothing so let me say it is my conviction; my conviction is this: the problem with the Church today is this: we have lost the ultimate objective of our redemption, which is the restoration of the glory of man to be the reflection of the glory of God.

May it be so for Jesus’ sake, and all the Brave Men said, Amen.

Let's pray. Father, we thank You for such a powerful verse; so much came out of that. Father, if I have said anything that is inconsistent with the text, inconsistent with the intention of this passage, if I have said anything that is inconsistent with Your glory, Your nature, Your attributes, or Your character—Father would you just be gracious and forgiving of us and remove that from our minds and allow us to see, more than anything else, our life is about one central thing and that is the restoration of Your glory in us to be the reflection of Your glory to the world. May it be so for Jesus' sake. Amen.