

“Glorifying Faith”

Devoted to God

Romans 4:16-21

Rev. Ted Wood

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Drawn from John Piper’s Sermon, “Faith: in Hope, Against Hope, for the Glory of God.” Romans 4:16-21. 9/26/99

1. How can I give God the most glory?

- a. Glory = *kabod* = abundance, honor, splendor; weight (only figuratively in a good sense), splendor or copiousness
- b. The aim of all things is to display the glory of God.
- c. God created me and brought me into this world to display more of his glory.
 - i. *“God predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus . . . to the praise of the glory of His grace.”* Ephesians 1:5-6

2. The best and most profound way to glorify God ... make Him weighty ... is to exercise ... demonstrate ... act in faith. Romans 4:16-21

- a. The attribute of the regenerate heart that gives rise to all other graces ... that best gives glory to God ... is faith. *“[Abraham] grew strong in faith, giving glory to God.”* Romans 4:20
 - i. Faith is the strong assurance that ... God's promises are good and ... that He can and will perform them ... and that the harder the promises seem to fulfill, the more my faith glorifies God.
 - ii. Faith gives God glory because it shows that God can and will do the great, necessary good that humans can't do. **I call this “glorifying faith.”**
 - iii. *“Why should faith justify more than any other grace? ... “Because of God's purpose. He has appointed this grace to be justifying; and he does it, because faith is a grace that **takes a man off himself, and gives all the honor to Christ and free grace.**”* Thomas Watson

3. Glorious faith’s dimensions: past, present and future

- a. Faith is trust in a Person, God ... **but it is also** trust in God to be and to do what he had promised to be and do ... **trust in God to act has He said.**
- b. Faith looks back and takes its stand on the shed blood of Jesus and the justifying effect that it has ... then it looks to the future and believe that this past work guarantees my future salvation from God's wrath as well as for my every blessings.
- c. The most glorious faith is future-oriented because that gives God the most glory.

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4. A parable about a son and his daddy at pool edge

Your daddy is standing in a swimming pool out a little bit from the edge. You are, let's say, three years old and standing on the edge of the pool. Daddy holds out his arms to you and says, "Jump, I'll catch you. I promise." Now, how do you make your daddy look good at that moment? Answer: trust him and jump. Have faith in him and jump. That makes him look strong and wise and loving. But if you won't jump, if you shake your head and run away from the edge, you make your daddy look bad. It looks like you are saying, "he can't catch me" or "he won't catch me" or "it's not a good idea to do what he tells me to do". And all three of those make your dad look bad.

But you don't want to make God look bad. So you trust him. Then you make him look good - which he really is. And that is what we mean when we say, "Faith glorifies God" or "Faith gives God glory." It makes him look as good as he really is. So trusting God is really important.

And the harder it seems for him to fulfill his promise, the better he looks when you trust him. Suppose that you are at the deep end of a pool by the diving board. You are four years old and can't swim, and your daddy is at the other end of the pool. Suddenly a big, mean dog crawls under the fence and shows his teeth and growls at you and starts coming toward you to bite you. You crawl up on the diving board and walk toward the end to get away from him. The dog puts his front paws up on the diving board. Just then, your daddy sees what's happening and calls out, "Johnny, jump in the water. I'll get you."

Now, you have never jumped from one meter high and you can't swim and your daddy is not underneath you and this water is way over your head. How do you make your daddy look good in that moment? You jump. And almost as soon as you hit the water, you feel his hands under your arms and he treads water holding you safely while someone chases the dog away. Then he takes you to the side of the pool.

- a. Earth-bound faith: I trust God to get me out of a bind or bless me, make me weightier, more significant.
- b. God must grow me out of earth-bound faith and up to glorifying faith in Him.
- c. The change begins when I become dissatisfied and in time sickened with this earth-bound faith.

5. The application of Glorifying Faith

- a. When I trust God to fulfill his promises to me **when I deeply trust Him for all this and more**, it will profoundly affect the kinds of sacrifices I make for Him and the gospel.
- b. In Genesis 13: the division of the land between Abraham and his nephew Lot.
- c. Abraham trusted God and gave it away ... and God said, "You'll get it back."