

Advent Sunday #2 Encountering God's glory

I. Encountering God's glory

A. Today's context

1. California wildfires, Jerusalem, Supreme Court cases that threaten religious freedom, rising taxes, mounting social violence [as if we are at war with ourselves]:
2. If we cannot encounter God's glory in any real way, then maybe we ought to talk about other things?

B. Premise:

1. Talk about, study, theologize, appreciate, even determine to live for God's glory,
2. but can we experience God's glory in any real way this side of heaven?
3. If so, how?

C. Answer: YES!

1. **Habakkuk 2:14** *For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.*
2. **How, then, can we encounter God's glory?**

II. How can we encounter God's glory this side of heaven?

A. Faith comes first.

1. Martha and Jesus

- a. **John 11:39-40 (ESV)** ³⁹ *Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days."* ⁴⁰ *Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?"*
- b. Faith comes first

2. The priority condition

- a. Pharisees asked for a sign in order to believe
 - (1) **John 6:30 (ESV)** ³⁰ *So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?"*
 - (2) Many today want a sign in order to believe
 - (a) They want a healing
 - (b) Or a provision
 - (c) Or a miracle
- b. Jesus instructs Martha (and Thomas later) that faith comes first

3. The nature of faith

- a. **Hebrews 11:6** *And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.*
- b. Faith:
 - (1) Internal, spiritual conviction wrought by the Holy Spirit that God is glorious in His being
 - (2) Internal, spiritual conviction wrought by the Holy Spirit that God's glory is desirable
 - (3) Internal, spiritual conviction wrought by the Holy Spirit that God intends His glory to be known and loved.

- c. When the Holy Spirit has done the work of faith in the heart, that heart is prepared to see the glory of God
 - (1) Before you ask to see the glory
 - (2) Ask to have the faith

B. When it comes to glory, you'll see what your heart desires. Exodus 33:18-23

- 1. Moses and Israel
 - a. Moses and the people wanted the same thing, to see God in His glory
 - b. The people settled for serving their own desires in their own way with the work of their own hands
 - c. Moses sought God's glory on God's terms, even at the risk of His own death
- 2. God is willing to reveal His glory to His people, but only on His terms
 - a. If you set your heart on seeing God's glory, which you can and should,
 - b. Then be prepared for Him to show you His glory on His terms

C. If you want to see God's glory for yourself, open your heart, open your eyes, open your Bible and look at Jesus.

1. Why Jesus

- a. **Hebrews 1:3 (ESV) ³ *He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.***
- b. **John 1:14 (ESV) ¹⁴ *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.***
- c. **2 Corinthians 4:6 (ESV) ⁶ *For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.***

2. In Jesus you see God's glory

- a. The glory of self-sacrificing, unconditional love
 - b. The glory of unrelenting faithfulness to truth
 - c. The glory of undeserved mercy and abundant grace
 - d. The glory of impeccable justice and true forgiveness
 - e. The glory of extended wisdom and needed guidance
 - f. The glory of clear knowledge and fearless living
3. If you want to see the glory of God on God's terms, stop looking for an experience and start looking for Jesus!

D. The greatest opportunity you have to encounter God's glory this side of heaven is in the lives and faces of committed, faithful, Spirit-filled believers who are utterly sold out to Christ.

1. Paul

- a. **2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV) ¹⁸ *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.***
- b. **Colossians 1:27 (ESV) ²⁷ *To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is***

Christ in you, the hope of glory.

- (1) Not only the hope that we would attain God's glory someday
- (2) But the certainty that we would encounter God's glory in His people within the scope of our lives

2. "Love one another"

- a. One reason Jesus gives this command is because the glory of God fills and overflows in godly, relationships characterized by the love of Jesus
- b. Whatever separates you from your brothers and sisters
 - (1) What separates?
 - (a) Hurt feelings
 - (b) Unfair/undeserved treatment
 - (c) Harsh words
 - (d) Disappointment/unmet expectations
 - (2) Lay it down
 - (a) Forgive
 - (b) Surrender
 - (c) Leave it at the cross
 - (d) Love!
- c. The life and death of Jesus demonstrates this very love from God to you
 - (1) No greater love has any man than this, that he lays down his life for his friends.
 - (2) More than just physical death
 - (a) Death of self
 - (b) Death of pride
 - (c) Death of anger
 - (d) Death of arrogance
 - (e) Death of division
 - i) ***Ephesians 2:14, 16 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility . . . and might reconcile us to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.***
 - ii) Laying down our lives in love means placing them in the position of vulnerability so that others may benefit from who we are in Christ.
- d. **When we love one another like this, like Jesus loves us, the glory of God is seen in all of us and can be encountered by any of us.**

III. The glory in Advent

A. The glory of Christ come to live and die and rise again

B. The glory of Christ living and loving in His people

1. Fill your heart with Christ whose birth we celebrate in this Advent season
2. Fill the lives of those around you with His love, so that they may see His glory as well