

The Glory of The Gospel

Sunday 29th October 2023

➤ This week some glory died - Sir Bobby Charlton. The glory of winning the 1966 World Cup in an England shirt died this week. The glory of an unparalleled football career died this week. In 2016 Manchester United renamed their South Stand as the Sir Bobby Charlton Stand, but the glory of the man stands no more, it is gone, it has died. All that remains is a statue and the fading glory of countless flowers.

Then this morning the death of Matthew Perry at 54 (actor from the 90s TV sitcom, Friends) was announced. His glory was his ability to make people laugh in spite of chronic personal insecurities. And now his glory is gone.

➤ In verses 18-22 Paul makes it clear he spent minimal time with any of the other 12 apostles, save Peter and James the half brother of Jesus. After which he headed further north of Israel into adjoining Syria and beyond into Cilicia (which is in the south east of modern day Turkey).

In the space of 17 years he only spent 15 days (not even 1%) with any other apostles – those who God called and gifted to start the New Testament Church. So why give us all this data? Well, how would you go about proving that you are a genuine part of a work of God and preaching the only Gospel of Jesus Christ?

➤ In Galatians 1:23-24 Paul offers proof made up of two parts. Let's see the first,

But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy."

No one spends their energy trying to destroy something and then about turns to instead build it up, and that through the public ministry of preaching. Paul was no Nicodemus coming secretly to Jesus in the night. This was a full on public one-eighty with his whole former reputation trashed by his own actions.

➤ This first part is vitally connected with a second part of the proof in verse 24,

And they glorified God in me.

▶ THAT is the proof. **To believers, when they hear of the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and they only give glory to God.** That description in verse 24 is what this whole section hinges on. And here's why. Let me lead you through some of Peter's writings, some words from the prophet Isaiah, a Psalmist before ending with the vision God gave John in Revelation.

▶ In 1 Peter 5:10, Peter says,

God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus

Notice that the gospel calls us to step into His eternal glory – not improve our passing glory.

▶ Then in 1 Peter 4:11

[...] that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

▶ The glory belongs to Jesus forever and ever – not us. And then come with me to 1 Peter 1:24 where he reminds us why the glory is not ours,

“All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away,”

▶ **In other words your glory will die with you.** Whether you are Bobby Charlton, Matthew Perry, Jose Rosique, Lewis Butler, Keith Dulley, Graham Edwards, Matthew West, Roger Ndjoku, or Samson Meller. At best it might be a memory in the minds of some who remain in the land of the living. But it will never go with you. Your glory will never last.

Isaiah 42:8 we read,

I am the Lord, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images.

You should know with confidence God will not give His glory to another. Nothing and no one will take His place. Not matter what power we might ascribe to an idol God will not allow any to take His glory.

This is not the selfish act of a self-indulgent God but an act of grace by the God of whom it is written in Psalm 86:10, 'For You are great, and do wondrous things; You alone are God.'

➤ So when we try to live a life of self-glory. A life where we try to become our best self. We do two things that are equally destructive. (1) the best we can be is what we make ourselves to be - in other words we dismiss God's standards and make our own. So we in turn become the god of our destiny and as for God Himself? Well, He's dead!

➤ (2) we attempt to carry this ever-improving version of ourselves and all the glory that brings - the adorations, the friends, the followers, the fans, the fame, the publicity, the financial reward (and after we're gone, the fading flowers).

Some of you are literally dying under the weight of your own glory or dying in the absence of even just a small amount of self-glory.

So how does the gospel help?

Well the gospel calls you to give all the glory, all the credit to Jesus Christ the Son of the living God who bled for your sins that you might be called children of God.

That means the One who is worthy of all glory is the one who gets it.

➤ When we get all the glory we die and it dies with us. When we give all the glory to our heroes they die and it dies with them. **When we give all the glory to Christ alone... We. Live!** As John wrote in 1 John 4:9, '...God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.' and Christ lives in us.


The gospel of Jesus Christ is quite simply a matter of life and death and nothing less. In short the call of the gospel is to give up your glory and give the glory up to Him.

Back in verse 24 of Galatians one, when Paul says, ‘And they glorified God in me’ none of the other believers nor even Paul himself gets any of the glory – only God. Not only is that a sign of the true gospel, but it is the downside up version of glory that we desperately need.

 **The gospel is calling you to live by returning your glory to its rightful owner.**

Revelation 4:11 gives us the perfect description of why Jesus is worthy with words that ring out throughout heaven itself,

“You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.”

 How shall we spend our glory and turn it back to Him?

1. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved
2. Pray God removes your glory
3. Tell God of your struggles
4. Give Him glory where you are
5. Walk humbly with your God – (ask for help, celebrate others, always be learning (not telling), own your mistakes, forgive, listen, accept praise and criticism with grace, get out of your comfort zone, practice gratitude, practice generosity)