

The Glory of God (Part 4): Glorifying God

How to Glorify God

Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Given 21-Jun-03; Tape #618

Many of you men have probably experienced an early speech in the Spokesman's Club manual, number six, called the "Stir to Action!" It is last one before you get to "The Complete Speech."

In this speech the speaker is suppose to give the audience reason for doing something, as well as to get them off their duffs, springing into action for whatever it is you want them to do.

If I'm going to do what I set out to do today, this is the "Stir to Action" sermon of this series on the Glory of God. It is not enough to just understand what the glory of God is; we must also actively glorify Him.

Head knowledge is fine, but it is always so much better when it is followed up by action—actually taking what you know and learned, and putting it into practice.

The churches of this world understand to a degree the idea of glorifying God—the action part of it, but as I say, to a point. Some, frankly, go way overboard in this. They have all those weird ways of expressing their glory to God, or God's Glory, or whatever. They do the highly emotional type of things where they're throwing themselves down, or waving their hands over their heads, and singing, and doing all the weeping, crying, and all the rest—it is just pure emotion. And, it goes no further than that.

If one is truly emotional and wants to express himself, that's fine. But, one gets the impression that since it happens week after week after week that it is just put on. It is what they think is expected of them. They somehow "get into the spirit." They just start shouting out their *Hallelujahs*, and *Glory Be's*. Tears come to their eyes. The praise band is up there playing and getting everyone worked up emotionally. And they are all "praising God." They do it all Sunday long.

It seems that doing this emotional praising of God is all that they understand about glorifying Him. It goes no further than that.

Is it enough to shout, "Hallelujah!" or "Praise God!" or wave your hands in the air? Is that all there is to glorifying God? We know that that is not so!

If you've been listening or reading the last three sermons I'm sure that you've come to the conclusion as I have that glorifying God is a far bigger subject than we may have imagined it was.

This sermon is one in which I hope to show that glorifying God is not necessarily this emotional outpouring—it can include that—but it is more. It is a constant, consuming task for God's elect. Listen to how I put that.

It is constant. And it is consuming. You may say (if you like, and this is true), our life is devoted,

now, to glorifying God. Here we are in the fourth sermon in this series, and I haven't given you any definition for the word "glory" from the Greek.

I'm not going to give you the definition of the (English) word "glory," but I will give you the definition of the Greek word "doxazo," which is the verb form "to glorify."

That is the verb form of the noun "doxa," which is the normal New Testament word for glory.

This is an interesting word because it is one of those words that the Apostles pulled out of literary, secular Greek, and gave it a new meaning.

"Doxazo" meant in Greek, "to have an opinion," or "to believe," or "to suspect." It was how one considered another person. That is where this "to have an opinion" comes in. It is one of those Greek ideals to have people think well of you. They wanted people to have a favorable impression of them. They would, if they had a favorable impression, "doxazo" you. This means that they would express their high opinion of you.

But, in the Bible the apostles used it to mean: "To value highly; to exalt, to magnify." You can see with these definitions how they connect to the secular word. But, the apostles put a different twist on it—to value highly, to exalt, to magnify (When you magnify something you make it bigger); "to honor, to praise (obviously), to extol, even to celebrate."

It signifies ascribing honor, or excellence, or preeminence to someone, or making someone glorious, illustrious, renown, or exalted. It is a very positive word. Everything is lifted up—built up—making somebody by your actions look good, sound good; to exalt them and put them up on a pedestal.

We can see just from these definitions that glorifying God goes far beyond just mere praise of a person—praising Him. Perhaps the definition we should key in on here as being the most significant is the one mentioned first: "to value highly." That gets the ball rolling for everything else.

Who or what we place a high value upon we cherish, we respect or we esteem. We make effort to learn about such a one. We devote our time and energies to that person, and all the things that person wants us to do. We will sacrifice whatever it takes to please that person, or to help that person. We will give our lives, or at least put our lives in danger to protect that person; and with God even to protect his honor and his name.

We will, like Paul said, imitate a person we hold in high esteem. We would even die for a person whom we cherish.

Those of you who are married, you hopefully have the kind of relationship with your spouse that you would be willing to die for him or her. And of course with God he has often asked His called to do that to prove to Him their loyalty, or to make a witness, or whatever His reasons were.

In this sense then, what we do to glorify God reflects how highly we esteem Him. What kind of effort we put into glorifying God will show just how much we respect God and revere Him.

If we're willing to give our all, we're showing that we place God at the very top of the highest pedestal that we can erect.

Psalm 50 is a very important place to start, I think. We have got to see why we should glorify Him, and why it is incumbent upon us to do so.

Psalm 50:15 Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me."

If someone were to save us from disaster or death—Let's say you were swimming out in the ocean and a rip tide took you. You were floundering out there, and didn't have the strength to get back to shore by yourself, and somebody jumped into the water and swam out to you, and pulled you to safety—how would your impression of that person change? What would you be willing to do for that person for saving your life?

Had it been someone you had been estranged from, would that not have healed the relationship, and put you in that person's debt? He had just risked his life for you, and saved yours!

Well, a similar thing has happened with us and God. God says that we should do the same with Him because he has, indeed, saved us. As our Redeemer, He has delivered us from futility and sin and certain death—the second death. If we had continued merrily on our way we would have ended up with all those things: a futile life, full of sin. And the only payment would be death.

And we then, because He has redeemed us, owe Him at the very least our praise and honor. But as our God we also owe Him worship, and we owe Him our very lives.

This is a type of New Testament version of the same thing:

I Corinthians 6:9-11 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

Before our calling we were all guilty of many and various sins. Maybe some of these that the Apostle just named. Some are pretty heinous. Maybe not physically guilty of these but maybe in spirit we were guilty of some of these things. Certainly when Jesus came and gave the Sermon on the Mount He expanded those Commandments to include a lot of things that go on in our minds—a lot of our attitudes.

But, what did God do? We were filthy. We were headed toward oblivion.

God reached into our lives, and plucked us out of the world. He washed us up so we were clean. He set us apart. He justified us—that is, He made us upright by imputing Christ's righteousness to us, so that before Him when we were placed before Him He didn't see the dirty, filthy person that we were. He saw the righteousness, the cleanliness, the holiness and purity of Jesus Christ.

In a word He redeemed us. He bought us. He delivered us—saved us just as it said there in Psalm 50:15. He delivered us so that we could glorify Him. What do we owe Him then? Well, Paul continues his thought. He is not finished here in I Corinthians 6.

I Corinthians 6:13 Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body *is* not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

I Corinthians 6:15-20 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make *them* members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body *with her*? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit *with Him*. Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Because God delivered us and did all these things for us—washed us, set us apart, justified us, made us as white as the driven snow you might say—we are His—body, soul and spirit. Everything we have, everything we think we have, and everything we want to be is His.

These things do not happen without a price.

We know that Jesus Christ paid for us with His very blood. But, even then it is not free. He paid for us. We are His. We are not our own. And that means we gave our lives too.

Now we are living sacrifices, living servants of God, living slaves bought and paid for.

So, Paul says here that since we are God's there should be a clear distinction—north from south, east from west, up from down—between us and the world.

God's people once joined to Him, as it says here, cannot be joined to the world—which he spiritually calls a harlot—or else they cease to be God's. That is what he talks about there in verse 16 where two become one flesh. We are already one with Jesus Christ. We are members of Him. If we go and commit some sort of idolatry with the world, then we have ceased being joined with Him, and are now joined to the world (again).

Paul says this is something that we should certainly not be doing. Obviously this would happen if we should make such a thing a practice. Paul is trying to help us to understand here that once God has made this commitment to us and done these things for us we have no choice but to follow what God wants us to do, because we're totally bought and paid for. If we do otherwise we're repudiating what God has done.

It comes down to what he says there in verse 20, "you are not your own for you were bought with a price." The only right and fitting response to being another's purchased possession, paid

for with the Creator's own blood is to glorify Him fully. This is Paul's conclusion. You were bought at a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Because God owns you lock, stock, and barrel, the only response that you should give is to glorify Him! Otherwise, you are repudiating the whole relationship.

Now, let me show you something very tragic; a very stunning example of two men who decided to do otherwise. Let's read Leviticus 10. If you know your chapters, you know that Leviticus 10 is the Nadab and Abihu story. God says something very significant to this topic (overall it is very significant) immediately after this happened. The way it is written in the Bible is that the sin occurred, the men are killed, and God immediately tells Moses and Aaron what He says here.

Leviticus 10:1-2 Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the LORD [maybe like lightning] and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

Right there probably in the holy place.

Leviticus 10:3 And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying: `By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified. So Aaron held his peace.

That is an interesting sentence.

Notice how imperative it is! "I must be regarded as holy! I must be glorified!" That is a command if I ever heard one! Notice also who He addresses this to. He says "By those who come near to Me."

Under the Old Covenant the only ones allowed to come near to Him were the priests, which Nadab and Abihu were since they were the eldest sons of Aaron. They were the next in line to be High Priests.

But, under the New Covenant, who has been allowed to come near to Him? Us! You and me! We are a holy, royal priesthood.

I Peter 2:5, 9 You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ...But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Did you notice what our purpose is? In one place He says it is to offer up spiritual sacrifices, but in the other place He says it is to proclaim the praises of Him who called us. That sounds a lot

like glorifying to me.

We are allowed now to come into God's presence through the veil by Christ's blood. Our job is to proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness. You could say then that our mission as a royal priesthood—a holy nation—is to glorify God. That is what we've been called to do.

I have nine ways that we can glorify God. I think that you will be surprised by some of the specific ways that the Bible tells us to glorify Him. Some of them may be a bit surprising.

Let's begin in Luke 18, beginning in verse 35. We're going to read this whole scenario through verse 43. This is the most common way to glorify God.

Luke 18:35-43 Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw *it*, gave praise to God.

So, number one on my list of ways to glorify God is "By Praising Him." Praising Him for who He is, for His works, for His character, for His revelation to us, for His blessing. We can do this many ways. We can do it privately in prayer. We can do it in song either here in singing all together in worship, or we can do it at home. We can do it under our breath if we want to. We do it in speech with others when we're telling them about things that have happened to us. (People out in the world call it "giving your testimony." We don't have to make it like that.)

It doesn't have to be just how we were called. It could be about God saving you from the lunatic that pulled out in front of you! (That happens a lot to me, so it came first to mind.)

This is the most common way to glorify God. When you praise Him for whatever it might happen to be it should be done sincerely. It should be done thoughtfully with gratitude, and joy that He has done these things for us, and not perfunctorily—by rote with the same words all the time for the same things all the time, as if we're just reading a card.

"This is my normal prayer that I'm going to give...blah blah blah blah blah...etc." That is probably how it sounds to God also! "There he goes again...same old thing that I've heard a thousand times!"

I'm sure that He doesn't turn His ear off because He is not like that. Maybe He hopes you will slip something new in that He hadn't noticed before.

We have to remember who we are talking to here. It should be done sincerely, thoughtfully, with gratitude, and joy. We should not be just mouthing words, or like the Pharisee in the parable just doing it to be seen by others.

If we remember who we are praising it will be more genuine and heartfelt. If we remember that He is not only with us, but in us, it should be everything that it should be!

Let's go onto the next point. Let's go back to the Sermon on the Mount—back to chapter 6 of Matthew, verses 9 through 13. This is the model prayer. You all probably know this one all by heart don't you? We used to say it while kneeling around first base in little league before the game. We all had to go out there, put our hands on the bat and recite the "Lord's Prayer." That's what they did in Columbia, SC. They probably don't do anything like that today. It smacks too much of sponsored religion.

Matthew 6:9-13 [Jesus says] In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as *it is* in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

The one that I have second here is that "We glorify God by recognizing, or acknowledging His sovereignty."

This model prayer is in effect doing just that. It recognizes who God is, what He does, what position He holds, what He plans for us, and our minor part in all of this. We could say that this prayer and others based upon it as Jesus has shown us—this is the model—a kind of guide for how our prayers ought to be—are magnifying Him. We're showing Him the relationship we have to Him. We're acknowledging that He is sovereign over us. That He is everything to us. That He is Creator, our Provider, the One who guides our steps, Our Protector, Our Finisher of our Faith; He is going to do all these things for us.

By doing something along these lines in prayer, acknowledging Him, we know our place before Him.

Like we did before, let's see an example of a time where this did not happen. Let's go to Acts 12, and use the example of Herod. This is another tragic result of someone who fails to do what he should have done in this regard—failing to give God the glory.

Acts 12:21 So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them.

Let's think about what this is. It is a very simple sentence. Think about the occasion. This had to do with making a type of peace treaty. But, that's not necessarily what I'm getting at. I want you to think about who Herod was.

Herod was the king. As kings do, they have great power, and majesty. They are wealthy. And

so everything was set up for what Herod would do. All the fawning people around him made his head grow big, made him think that his place was higher than it actually was, even though he was a king.

When this time came for this to happen, Herod was there on a throne. Everybody's eyes were on him. He had on his royal apparel, which was the finest available, with the jewelry, and regalia of the office. All these fawning people around him, looking to him, and helping him in every way, looking after his every need. They were just building him up more and more. All the circumstances were making his head grow big like a dirigible, like a zeppelin, a huge thing up in the air just floating. This was Herod's head. And then it gets worse.

He stands up and gives a speech. Even the translators use the word "oration" because this makes it sound even more pompous. He is giving an oration.

Acts 12:22 And the people kept shouting, "The voice of a god and not of a man!"

There goes Herod's head! It is getting bigger and bigger like a helium balloon. Notice the suddenness of this!—Just like a pin-prick in that balloon.

Acts 12:23 Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died.

What did Herod fail to do? He failed to glorify God!

He failed to say, "I am a servant of the people, though its king. God is the true king overall. I am just a man."

He allowed himself to be made into an idol before the people, and God said, "*Zap him! Pop that balloon!*" How important is it that we acknowledge before God that He is sovereign? Every day letting Him know that we understand our place under him.

Let's go onto the third one. This one we will find in Philippians 2, verses 9 through 11. This is the end of the section there where he talks about "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," and the sacrifice that He made. We will read the last part, which shows what happened as a result of the mind of Christ working in his life.

Philippians 2:9-11 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

My point number three is "Submission to Christ."

The Father owns us. We know that. We've been through that already today. And He has made

His Son, Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Master. He has qualified for that position as our Elder Brother, our High Priest, our soon coming King.

Our duty then is to submit to Christ and that brings glory to the Father. We acknowledged God's sovereignty in the last point. In this point, we're acknowledging the Son's Lordship over us.

It proclaims Him to be our Ruler. So, when we submit to Christ, when we bow the knee to Him, and we confess that Jesus is Lord, we let it be known, not just by our mouths, but by our actions, that we will follow Him, and obey Him, then that brings glory to God.

John 13 is part of the foot-washing ceremony. The last words that Jesus said on that subject. Verse 16 and 17 He is telling the disciples why He has done this.

John 13:16-17 Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

Now our humility as in this example—our willingness to express our submission to Christ—glorifies the Master. And then it goes right back up the chain to the Father who put Him in that position.

Point number three was "God is glorified by submission to Christ."

All right. Back to the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5. We will see another way we can glorify God. This one is "We glorify God by doing good works." (Point 4)

Matthew 5:13-16 You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

So, we glorify God by doing good works, and this leads to others glorifying Him. It is like a chain reaction. When we do something good, others see it, or are impressed by it, or it affects them in some way directly, and they turn around and give more glory to God if they understand the source of it all. Hopefully they will.

Of course, we know from other scriptures that this may go on through a whole lifetime and only make its real impression in what is called "the Day of Visitation."

God has not called us and washed us and set us apart, and justified us to be bumps on a log. He has called us, and prepared us to do good works. That is exactly what it says there in Ephesians 2:10. We're His workmanship, prepared to do good works.

And so Jesus here shows us that because He has given us this revelation, and we have all these things going for us, we are supposed to let it shine, not hide it and keep it for ourselves. Not, as

in another parable, bury it in the ground. It is supposed to express itself—come out of us in works, in deeds, in things that people can see.

Salt does no good just sitting in your salt shaker. It must be used, sprinkled on the food before it has any effect.

And the same thing is with God's way of life. Actually, truth is a better term here.

We can have all this stuff in our heads, but if it is just in our heads it is doing no one any good. Probably not doing us any good either. It has to be expressed in works and service. And then as service is given, it multiplies the glory given to God.

Let's see this in II Corinthians 9. This has to do with the gift that was being given from the Gentiles to the Judeans who were going through a famine. Paul is urging these Corinthians to do this.

II Corinthians 9:6 But this *I say*: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly...

This is the same sort of thing that I was saying about the salt and the light. If you only use a little of it—that is if you only do a little work, or none at all—it is not going to come back to you.

II Corinthians 9:6-9 and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. *So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever."*

Even the works we do He has given us what we have in order to do them.

II Corinthians 9:10-11 Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have *sown* and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while *you are* enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.

He is saying that we have been enriched; we have been made wealthy; we have been given all these gifts so that it will come out in liberality—generosity—to others.

God doesn't like hoarding. God likes giving. He hoarded nothing. He is willing to give everything for our good. We see that in the example of the Son. He gave it all.

And so he is saying that since you have been enriched, be liberal in your gifts. Sow bountifully in your gifts.

II Corinthians 9:12 For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God,

He is saying that it just doesn't alleviate the famine, it goes beyond that. It abounds in thanksgiving to God!

II Corinthians 9:13-15 while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal sharing with them and all *men*, and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you. Thanks *be* to God for His indescribable gift!

You see, what he says is that all these things—the gifts—are actually just a small part of what comes back. The gift may alleviate the hunger, but it comes back in glorifying God, which is the first thing he mentions here, and they share with others; and by prayers for you! They not only thanked God and glorify Him that a good work was done for them, but then they prayed for your benefit.

Good works need to be shown, expressed, done. And it all comes back. And it all shoots up in a great pillar of glory to God.

Let's just read I Peter 2:11 because he says something similar. This is a capstone for this point.

I Peter 2:11-12 Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul [this is in a slightly different manner, but I want to bring out this point in verse 12], having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

So even when we are doing good works in the midst of persecution, or whatever is happening to us, that sows seed for future glorification of God.

This is a big point in this sermon. "We glorify God by doing good works."

"We glorify God by growing in His character." (Point 5)

Paul is telling the Philippians here how he prays for them.

Philippians 1:9-11 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which *are* by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

This point has been a theme of this sermon series.

The goodness of God is His character, which is His glory as we saw there in Exodus 33, and 34, when Moses asked God to show him His glory, and God said that He would make His goodness pass before him, and that is His character.

God is transforming us into the image of His Son. And the only way that this will happen is if we grow in holy, righteous character, which is His goodness. That in itself is glorious in its own right.

There is a glory to God's character which, just by itself, makes a witness. But, our glory reflects God's glory. And this glorifies Him further because it reveals the progress towards the perfection of His creation in us.

When we show our character—that it is growing—it glorifies God by revealing the progress He has made in us.

Let's go to John 15, verse 8. I don't want to spend a long time on this one because the other sermons have been basically about this point.

I just want to pick up this one scripture, John 15:8. He says it in a little bit different way, but it is very similar.

John 15:8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

Growing in character is not necessarily the same thing as bearing much fruit. But, they work together. If you bear much fruit, you will certainly be growing in character. And if you grow in character, you will certainly be bearing much fruit. And by doing these things we glorify God.

OK. The sixth point that I have here is from Romans 15. This is one of the ones that you might be a bit surprised about but, maybe not. This one is "We glorify God by being united as brethren."

Romans 15:5-13 Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for *His* mercy, as it is written: "For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And sing to Your name. And again he says: "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people! And again: "Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples! And again, Isaiah says: "There shall be a root of Jesse; And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, In Him the Gentiles shall hope." Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope

by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul is speaking specifically, here, about the Jew/Gentile rift in the early church. But, the principle applies to us today. Our unity is no longer necessarily our descent, or skin color, or language, or sex, or whatever category you may want to fit yourself in. But, our unity is in Christ Jesus he says.

Remember, we saw elsewhere that it says that we are members of His body. We're all one in Christ. And it glorifies God when we pass over our differences, and then act, and grow and work in unity to get the things done that He has set out for us to do.

Because, all of our differences have been made insignificant in comparison to our commitment to the relationship in Christ. Whether we are black, yellow, or white, or green from Mars, it doesn't matter in Christ, because He has called us all into one body. Those things shouldn't make any difference to any of us. But, if we allow these petty things—and they are petty—to trip us up then it is going to cause God's name to be blasphemed.

We have Him, and His truth in common, and that should be enough to unify us under Him. Let's see that in Colossians 3.

Colossians 3:9-11 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.

So, where do our petty differences come after that? They shouldn't be there at all. OK. The seventh one we will find back in Haggai 1, verses 7 and 8.

Haggai 1:7-8 Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the LORD.

So my seventh point is "We glorify God by participating in His work."

In each age, God's work is a little bit different as He moves His plan along. However, one thing that remains the same is that He calls certain people out of the world to help Him do it.

They are His tools, and agents in finishing that part of the plan that He is trying to accomplish at that time. That is you and me. God says that He is glorified when we do our share in the work.

Now we in the Church of the Great God don't talk about doing a work a lot, because the phrase has come to mean, "preaching the gospel only" under Herbert Armstrong.

Maybe that is a bit of an exaggeration, but that was a great deal of the work (during Mr. Armstrong's ministry) supporting Mr. Armstrong, and going on television and radio, visiting foreign leaders in lands around the globe.

And so we have had to in a way change our lingo, change the way we talk about things, but it doesn't mean that there is no work being done. There is a work in preparing the Bride.

I know there are people out there who still believe that the Church of the Great God is not doing a work. But, that is a falsehood. This is the work that God has given us to do.

God can give other churches of God other works to do, because they are also His people in those groups as well. There must be things for them to do. But for right now, He has split people off into various places, and given them specific works to do.

So, we should do the work that He has given us to do, and not be concerned with another person's sphere of work, sphere of activity, and sphere of accomplishment elsewhere. It is not our job.

God says here in Haggai, "I brought you people back to build me a temple. Now do it so I can be glorified."

We can say the same thing about us, God has brought us to this specific point in time, and this specific church, now do it. Do the work and it will glorify God.

Let's notice our Lord and Master's own testimony in this regard.

John 17:4 I have glorified You on the earth. [How did He do that?] I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

So, participating in His work, and getting it done, glorifies God.

The eighth point—maybe another of the surprising ones—is found in I Peter 4. Maybe it won't be surprising to you after the things that we ministers in this church have taught.

"We glorify God by suffering."

I Peter 4:12-16 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you*, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. [Let me repeat that!] or as a busybody in other people's matters.

(I just thought of this...do you know that people think that being a busybody is a small thing. But, Peter ranks that up there with murderers and thieves, and other evil doers! I don't know why I said that, but it just made an impression on me as I was reading it here again. I don't know. I will just go on from here, because it is taking my train of thought elsewhere.)

I Peter 4:16 Yet if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

It is not usually a happy thought to think about glorifying God by suffering, but if we ever are persecuted for the faith, our steadfast perseverance and faithfulness to God will glorify Him. As Peter says that at the same time God is being both blasphemed, and glorified. We want to make sure that we are the one glorifying Him, not blaspheming Him.

We need to set it in our hearts that we will be the one glorifying Him by our firm devotion, and our unwavering commitment to the death if necessary.

And that is my ninth point: "Yes, we can even glorify Him by our death."

Let's go back to John 21. I don't know if you ever noticed this. When Jesus was talking to Peter and John by the sea there, He mentions this.

John 21:18-19 Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry *you* where you do not wish. This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God.

Faithful martyrdom, or even dying in the Lord, glorifies Him. You can say that our faithful death is the final act of a finished product.

God is glorified in that one of His saints has finished his course, and won.

Psalms 116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD /s the death of His saints.

That seems odd to us. We don't look at death that way. But as I said in another sermon a few years ago, "Death is just the end of the beginning of a far more glorious and eternal life."

If you believe in God, and you believe in His purpose, and you have a firm hope of His resurrection, then death is just the final act of a finished product to be brought up later, glorified, and eternal.

Let's conclude in I Corinthians 10 because many of you may have thought I would have used this earlier. I wanted this to round everything out. This is really the sum of the matter. I've given you nine points. There could have been many others.

I Corinthians 10:31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

I just gave you a few specific ones. But, everything we do should be done with the idea in mind

to bring glory to God.

Our lives should be walking, talking billboards that reflect God's glory for all to see and hear, and by this God is glorified. We need to keep this constantly in mind. Every thought, every word, every action should bring God glory. And as I said elsewhere in the other sermons—in turn, He will glorify us!