

## John 1:14-18 The Glory of the Son (part 2)

This morning, our main truth is the glory of the Son. In John 17 Jesus prayed for us; he prayed to the Father that we would receive his glory, the SAME glory that the Father has always had and the same glory that He has always had. This is why there is nothing more important than for us than to see and behold the glory of Christ. Last week we saw from our text that Jesus' glory was observed. And, his glory was FULL (it was the same as the Father's). This week, I only want to preach one truth, which I believe underlies the entire Gospel of John. This is the starting point of our understanding. The Glory of the Son is a fulfilled Glory.

The Glory of the Son is a fulfilled glory. I get this from v. 14 which speaks of the glory of the Son as “**full of grace and truth.**” And then again in v. 16: “**For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.**” It seems to me that John is speaking about a particular “kind” of glory that can only come from the Son. And further, this glory can only come down to us because the Son brings to us something we did not have before. In other words, there is something about the coming of the SON that brings fulfillment, a “fullness” (see last week) to what we must have in order to be saved, in order for someone who has fallen short of God's glory to be reconciled to God (this is all of us, for all have sinned.) This is REALLY the message of John: Jesus is the fulfillment of All the promises of God in the OT.

Now, I think John explains what I am trying to say with v. 17. He says, “**For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**” In these words, He is comparing Moses with Jesus. He is comparing the GLORY of Moses with the GLORY of the Son, particularly the fact that Jesus IS the FULFILLMENT of the law of Moses. Jesus brings to COMPLETION that which the law of Moses pointed. Jesus himself says this in the Sermon on the Mount: “**Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to FULFILL them**” (Matt. 5:17). The law of Moses is like a school teacher pointing to the truth. This is what I mean by “fulfilled glory.” So, before applying the words “grace” and “truth,” let's consider the example of Moses, and the law that came to him on Mt. Sinai. This will help us understand this fulfillment, this “fullness” of glory we find in the Son.

Let me retell the story found in Exod. 19. After miraculous signs and wonders and a great defeat of Egypt and her armies, culminating with the crossing of the Red Sea, God brought Israel to a mountain called Sinai. And he called for Moses to come up, where He would speak to him and give Israel his law . . . This included the 10 commandments, applications of these commandments, instructions for the priests and sacrifices, instructions on what to eat, how to wash, etc. This is known as the “Law of Moses.” We read that the mountain was wrapped in smoke “**because the Lord had descended on it in fire . . . and the whole mountain trembled greatly**” (vv. 17-20). And in Exod. 19:5-6 God says to Moses, “**Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among**

**all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”**

Now, in the history of OT Israel, there was no event that matched what happened at Sinai! I cannot overstate this truth! It was glorious! God had not revealed himself in such a way, with such depth, with such clarity, with such power and majesty and glory than what we see here in Exod. 19. And, this event, and this revelation came through a man . . . Moses! This is why Moses IS Israel’s greatest prophet, hands down! He is the GOAT! And he was . . . the GOAT! The people of Israel had never seen such “FULLNESS” of revelation than what happened on Mt. Sinai! And these laws that came down to Moses are called the “law of Moses.” And, these laws are wrapped around God’s covenant with Moses. This is why we can say, that at that time, God gave his covenant (which was made up of laws) to Isarel. This is called the “Mosaic Covenant.” This “covenant” falls under the “old” covenant. Today, we celebrate the Lord’s Supper through the words of Jesus who says, **“this cup is the new covenant in my blood, as often as you drink it remember me.”** He doesn’t say, *“Remember Moses.”* Why? Because HE IS the Fulfillment of Mosaic Law and Mosaic Covenant. Those events are FULFILLED in Jesus and the New Covenant. This is John’s point in v. 17: ***“for the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”***

I think of Jesus’ transfiguration. Do you remember this story? Turn to Matt. 17:1-8: **“And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.”** Do you see the parallels between what we just read in Exod. 19? Up on a mountain (Moses and Sinai). Jesus took 3 disciples (Moses took Aaron). Jesus’ face shined like the sun (Moses’ face also shined). They were terrified and trembled with fear because of the event (Israel at Sinai). Now, it soooo interesting here. On Sinai, God spoke with Moses. Here, God does not speak with the Son. What do we see? The SON speaks with Moses (and Elijah). HOW CAN THIS BE? Well, WHO is the Son? Heb. 1:3 says: **“He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature . . .”** Col. 1:15 and 19 says: **“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation . . . For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell . . .”** This is JOHN’S POINT when he says in v. 16: **“from his FULLNESS we have all received grace upon grace.”** And at the end of that experience who was left standing on the mountain? It was not Moses! It was NOT Elijah! (the greatest of the OT prophets). It was the Son! And what did God say? **“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am**

**well pleased; LISTEN TO HIM.**” (This is why we read in Matt. 28:18-20 “obey all my commands, and not all Moses’ commands.)

So, why do we listen to the Son? Why do we follow his teaching? Why do we worship Him as we do the Father? Why do we obey the commands of Christ as Israel obeyed the commands of Moses as they did under the old covenant? Why do we seek the glory of Christ and not the glory of the prophets of the OT? Because ONLY in the Son do we have “FULLNESS.” ONLY in the Son do ALL God’s promises find fulfillment! Again, this is the BIG truth of the gospel of John!

But, there is more here; particularly with the words “grace” and then “truth.” Let’s not forget that John is comparing Moses with Jesus. Look back at vv. 16-17 “**For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**” Now, at first glance, it may appear that John is saying that the law of Moses was not gracious. But, what we have NOW, in Jesus IS gracious. As if to say, “*Israel had the God of the OT. But NOW we see a different kind of God in the NT.*” You’ve heard this from Christians and non-Christians. “*The God of the OT is all about LAW. BUT, the God of the NT is all about GRACE.*” “*Israel conquers with the sword in the OT. But Jesus conquers with grace and love.*” Or, people think that grace somehow replaces law.

I must say this kind of thinking could not be further from the truth! Why? Well, first of all, God IS gracious! And God does not change. To save anyone from sin and rebellion against Him is to be gracious! God showed favor to Adam and Eve in the garden when they sinned. He continued to care for them and clothe them and feed them. AND, he gave them a promise that one day He would send a deliverer, a savior, a Messiah, ONE who would come and take care of their sin problem (Gen. 3:15). God was gracious to Noah as he and his family were given favor (grace) with instructions to build and enter the ark. God was gracious to Abraham by calling him and his family from a pagan and idolatrous land to a new land, flowing with milk and honey. God was gracious to Moses and to Israel in the dessert as he cared for them with Manna and water, etc. AND, what could be more gracious than for God to give his instructions, his laws, and a sacrificial system with a priesthood in order to live and worship him rightly? Even in all his sin, God gave Israel a good king in David, a man after his own heart! All of these things and more display the grace of God in the OT. Even Paul says that the law is good (law of Moses) and useful. The law was gracious!

So, what does John mean when he says that the law came through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ? He is not saying there was a ever a time when someone (OT or NT) could be saved and find favor in another way, but by the grace of God! He is saying . . . that Christ fulfilled the law. What Moses brought and delivered on Mt. Sinai was gracious. And every jot and tittle of the law was good and right. But, Moses himself was a sinful man. The words he delivered, he himself did not always keep from the heart. Yet, he and many others under the old covenant were still saved. Why? Because . . . BY FAITH they believed the promises of God. And in the meantime, they lived by the instructions of God in and through God’s laws. THIS WAS

GRACIOUS! And under that system, under the covenant of Moses, they were still saved by grace through faith (See Eph. 2:8-9).

But, they waited for another ONE to come, ONE that would bring completion, ONE that would bring fullness, ONE that would fulfill ALL God's promises of grace. Even Moses says in Deut. 18:15: "**The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen.**" (Does this sound familiar? Mount of transfiguration – "*This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.*")

Brothers and sisters, what we have today in the New Covenant does not come down to us through Moses, as great and as glorious and as gracious as he was! Moses and that system under the old covenant could not complete anything in and of itself. If THAT covenant were still in force, what would we be doing? We would do the same as they did. And the sacrifices (which were gracious) would continue forever and ever and ever and ever, and never find completion. For the blood of bulls and goats COULD NOT and CANNOT cover our sins; sins we have committed against an eternal God. Moses died. We don't even know where he was buried. But, who is Jesus and what did he do? He is the "WORD." He is the "FULLNESS." He is the "GLORY." And what did he do that Moses could not do. Unlike Moses, he was sinless. As the Lamb of God (1:29), He laid down his life as a sacrifice, a one-time sacrifice, which for all time COMPLETES and FULFILLS the gracious promise of God to save his people and give them his glory! ONLY the SON, only begotten from the Father could do such a thing! He is the grace that brings the gracious law of Moses to fulfillment. (See the Book of Hebrews!)

Brothers and sisters, the law of Moses is good. It is right. It is holy. There is nothing wrong with it, nothing insufficient in and of itself. And though it was gracious for God to give it to Moses and Israel under the old covenant, the problem with them and with us is that BECAUSE we ARE sinful by nature, and then by choice, because we are sons of Adam, we FALL SHORT of the glory of God as we break his laws both in deed and in heart. And so, God sends his Son, his only begotten Son, FULL of grace and truth to be the capstone of both! As the FULLNESS of God, he fulfills the law of Moses; He provides the final say of God's grace. On the cross, Jesus says, "It is finished." This is why Jesus can say, "**Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest**" (Matt. 11:28). Moses could only bring law, law which he himself broke as a sinful man, just like us. And, (for another day) Moses could only lead them around on the earth. But, Jesus takes us ALL the WAY to heaven where God is! That's grace!

What about truth? Was there anything untrue about Mosaic law? Of course not! But, Jesus is the fullness of truth (as God). And He brings completion to truth. And in his person and work, He reveals the truth of God in fullness. He says, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life . . .*" (John 14:6).

So, what are some applications for us this morning?

1. We must receive him. (See vv. 11-12).

2. The Son reveals the Father to us. (See v. 18). Look with me as I try and conclude our sermon this morning to Exod. 33:13-23 and the words of Moses (turn with me). He says: **“Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people.”** 14 And he said, **“My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”** 15 And he said to him, **“If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. 16 For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?”** 17 And the LORD said to Moses, **“This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name.”** 18 Moses said, **“Please show me your glory.”** 19 And he said, **“I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ‘The LORD.’ And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. 20 But,”** he said, **“you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.”** 21 And the LORD said, **“Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, 22 and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. 23 Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen.”**

Today, we remember Jesus IS the glory of God. And he says to us, **“If you’ve seen me you’ve seen the Father.”** And, He does go with us (you), by the Holy Spirit, everywhere you go in this life! He will not leave you nor forsake you. And you have this glory! As Paul says, **“We have this treasure in jars of clay”** (2 Cor. 4:7).

3. Therefore, Seek his glory! As David looked forward **“One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple”** (Ps. 27:4). To the Christian, this is our NUMBER ONE goal in this life! For ONLY in him do we have fullness. Only in him do we know the Father. And, only in Him do we receive ALL the blessings for life and godliness.

**“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us!”** Could there be anything more glorious? So, stop being selfish! Stop loving your own glory! Stop looking at the things of this world to find some “lesser” glory. Look to Jesus! Look to Jesus! Look to Jesus!