

We are in the middle of a series about the promises of God. We aren't covering all the promises of God, but we are covering five of them. We have looked at the promises of righteousness, heaven, and freedom from slavery to sin. Today we have another great promise from God, the promise of glory.

I want to start by asking you to think back on when you were a child or teenager. What did you want to be when you were growing up? I imagine you heard that question a lot over the years of your childhood. It is a common question of adults to children. And if you were like my sons, your answers changed from year to year or even month to month.

Maybe you wanted to be a police officer or a firefighter. Maybe you wanted to be president of the United States. Maybe you wanted to be a soldier or a cowboy or a nurse, a doctor, an astronaut, a ball player. Maybe you wanted to be a mother or a father. Maybe you wanted to drive earth moving equipment or be a railroad engineer. Maybe you wanted to be a singer, an actor, or an artist.

These days an answer that is increasingly mentioned by children and teenagers is that they want to be famous. This often repeated reply has caught the attention of social scientists. And some have studied the motives behind this desire to be famous. From my reading, let me give you three reasons that lie behind the desire to be famous.

One reason some want to be famous is that they want to be rich and enjoy a carefree lifestyle. Their assumption is that being famous and rich go hand in hand. Fame doesn't always lead to riches. Nor do riches always lead to fame. The two do not always go hand in hand. But the perception of the young is that they do. And some want to be famous because they believe it will mean being rich, with an active carefree lifestyle to give with it.

A second motive for being famous is in order to help people. They want to use fame, and the influence that often comes with it, to make a positive difference in the world. We see famous people doing such things as helping starving children in third world countries, starting foundations to discover a cure for a disease, or working to improve laws and policies for the good of all people. We see famous actors, sports figures, musicians, and ex-presidents using their influence to make the world a better place.

While that seems a good motive, it isn't necessary to be famous to make the world a better place. God needs you to make a difference right where you live. If you are living for Jesus, you will be making a difference in your family. Your family will be making a difference in your neighborhood. Your church will be making a difference in the community. We don't have to be famous to change the world.

A third motive for being famous is simply to be known and valued. People want the attention that comes from fame and the respect that often comes with it. They want the pride of being recognized when they walk down the street. This pride is not a good pride, but sinful.

The word fame doesn't appear in the Bible. But a word that is similar appears a lot. That word is glory. People want to be famous because they want glory.

God has promised us glory. There is a glory for us. But it needs to be the right glory. What is glory? Glory is the reason for God's fame.

God's glory is expressed as light.

At one point in the life of the prophet Moses, he asks to see the face of God. God said no because if a man saw the face of God, he would die. We have enough trouble looking at the very bright lights of earth. There are plenty lights that would blind us if we stared at them long enough. The sun, a welder's torch, even a bright light bulb can be dangerous to look at. The light of God's glory, being unworldly is so bright that you wouldn't just go blind if you saw it. You would die.

This manifestation of God's glory was seen in Jesus too, by some of His apostles.

Matthew 17:1-2 (NIV) After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.

When Jesus' face shown like the sun, the apostles had to avert their eyes. But the light of God's glory, displayed in Jesus, showed Him to be the Son of God.

God's glory is expressed as power.

When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, God sent Moses to the king of Egypt to demand their release. The King of Egypt, Pharaoh, refused, time after time. So God displayed His power to the Egyptians, first in a series of miraculous plagues and then by destroying the Egyptian's army with a powerful miracle. God said it like this.

Exodus 14:4 (NIV) ". I will gain glory for myself through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD (**Yahweh**)."

The power of God's glory is revealed in His miracles. This expression of God's glory is also seen in Jesus. Look at the book of John, recording Jesus turning water into wine.

John 2:11 (NIV) This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

God's glory is expressed as importance.

This is implied by the other two. God uses the light and power to reveal His glory to us. In this way we know that God is important, even dangerous. Because of who God is, you dare not take Him lightly. You dare not disrespect Him. You dare not ignore Him.

We manifest the importance of God when we give Him glory. We give God glory when we express how important He is to us. We see this at Jesus' birth. The angels sang this in the presence of the shepherds...

Luke 2:14 (NIV) "Glory to God in the highest..."

When we tell God how much we love Him, we are giving Him glory. When we praise God for who He is, we are giving Him glory. When we thank God for His faithfulness, mercy, kindness, and love, we are giving Him glory.

This is what we were created for. We were created by God for God's glory. We were created to experience the glory of God and manifest that glory to the world. When we experience the glory of God and recognize it back to Him, we give glory to God. And this is why we were created. We were created for the glory of God.

God has glory and deserves more glory from us because of all He is and does. God is by nature the most important person in the universe. His glory deserves notice and appreciation. God's glory is manifested as light, as power, and as importance.

We see the glory of God in Jesus. When Jesus rose from the dead, two of the first people He appeared to two of His disciples as they traveled to a nearby village. They did not know it was Jesus. Jesus engages them in conversation about His own suffering on the cross.

Luke 24:26 (NIV) "Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?"

And foretelling His future return to earth Jesus says...

Luke 9:26 (NIV) If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

But this sermon is about God's promise of glory for us. Where is our glory? Our glory is not by seeking personal fame.

The three reasons I mentioned earlier for wanting to be famous are all sinful reasons. In fact, any reason for wanting earthly fame is sinful. The focus is still on the wrong person. Even the motive of wanting to change the world still starts with you being famous. It is still about you. You are the center of attention. You are the center of your fame. And that, at its heart, is sin.

God's purpose in creation is His own glory as God, the creator of heaven and earth. God created us for Himself, for His agenda. God's agenda is His glory. God created us for His glory. God saves us in Jesus for His glory. God expects us to live for His glory.

But where is our glory? Listen, our glory is tied up with the glory of Jesus.

Romans 8:16-17b (NIV) The (Holy) Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ,...

When you put your faith in Jesus for salvation, God adopts you into His family. You become a child of God and a brother or sister to Jesus. That means what Jesus inherits, we inherit also. Look!

Romans 8:17 (NIV) Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Right now most of the world thinks Jesus was just a Jewish man who lived 2000 some years ago and then died... and is still dead. People believe his followers made up these (Bible) stories about him doing miracles.

You and I know the truth. God has revealed the truth to our hearts that Jesus IS the one and only begotten Son of God. We know that Jesus died on the cross according to God's plan. We know that God raised Jesus from the dead and made Him both Lord and Christ. We know that Jesus ascended up into heaven and is returning in the same way one day. We know these things. We have faith in them. We live our lives in service to Jesus based on these truths.

But the world just laughs. The world makes fun. The world calls us fools. Some even call us a danger to society. That message will become more persistent in the decades to come.

But one day... one day... Jesus will appear in the clouds and descend to the earth. He will come in glory manifested as light and power. With Him will be angels. And He will gather to Himself all of His followers, dead or alive. What a sight it will be! What glory will be His!

How will people feel then? How will those feel who have willfully rejected Him? First they will be in awe of the sight of Him. Then when they find out who He is they will be shocked. And after a bit of realization hits they will be afraid. For they will remember how they disregarded Him.

And then with Him they will see us. Maybe the ones who called YOU a fool will see you with Jesus. And the glory they see in Jesus, they will see in you.

Here is the promise. We get glory when Jesus is revealed.

But that day is not here yet. And so they laugh. They make fun of us. But don't be surprised that they do so. Expect it. Expect to suffer ridicule or worse, persecution, for the name of Jesus. But don't let it defeat you. We participate in the sufferings of Jesus and we will participate in His glory.

Romans 8:18 (NIV) I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

(Colossians 3:4; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 4:12-15; 5:10)

That glory is not yet revealed. But it is coming. It is coming with Jesus. Oh, how we look forward to His returning. We anticipate it with joy, even in the face of suffering. For we know who holds the future. We don't know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future. When Jesus appears to the whole planet, we will be revealed to be the adopted children of God. His glory will be our glory. His vindication will be our vindication.

Until then, don't cave. Don't buckle. Don't water down the truth to accommodate the world. Don't be embarrassed by their rebuke. But suffer happily for Jesus, for when Jesus appears, you will share in His glory.

Invitation:

Has God revealed a bit of His glory to you today? He did not show you His glory as physical light or power, but did He speak His glory to your heart as spiritual light and power? Did He tell you that Jesus is the Savior you need?

Today, admit to God that you are a sinner and in need of a Savior. Receive Jesus as that Savior and turn your life over to Him as your Lord.