

The Revelation of God's Glory



David Wilkerson December 30, 2013

The Bible says it is possible for every believer to see the Lord's glory. In fact, God says he will reveal his glory to all who seek him for it. Why is it important for us to see and understand God's glory? It is because the revelation of his glory is meant to equip his people for the storms of life. According to Paul, this revelation "is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

What exactly is the glory of God? It's not some physical manifestation, though some Christians believe it is. It's not an ecstatic feeling that overcomes you or a supernatural light bursting forth. In simple terms, God's glory is a revelation of his nature and attributes. When the Lord chooses to show us his glory, it is a revelation of how he wants to be known by us.

When the Lord sent Moses to deliver Israel, he told him, "Go, and say I AM sent you." But he gave no explanation of who "I AM" was. So Moses cried, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory" (Exodus 33:18). Moses had a gnawing hunger to know who the great I AM was, the essence of his nature and character.

God answered Moses' prayer. He instructed Moses to hide himself in the cleft of a rock and wait for the Lord to pass by. As Moses waited, he saw no thunder, no lightning, no shaking of the earth. Instead, God's glory came to him in a simple revelation: "The Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression" (34:6-7).

You see, when God reveals his glory to his people, it is with a purpose in mind. And he allowed Moses to see his glory so he might be changed by the understanding of it. The same is true for us today. God reveals his glory to us so that we may be reassured in our daily walk.

Jesus Christ is the express image of who God is. The Father wrapped up all of his character in the Son. When our Lord became flesh, it was a full revelation of God's nature — his mercy, grace, goodness and readiness to forgive. "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person [personality, nature]" (Hebrews 1:3).

The same holds true today for anyone who receives a revelation of God's glory. We who are in Christ are meant to be changed into an expression of God's loving, forgiving, merciful nature. Paul said that beholding God's glory had power to transform the beholder: "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass [mirror] the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18, my italics).

Paul adds we are to keep seeking this revelation of God's glory until we become rooted in it: "That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:17-19, my italics). He's saying, in effect, "Keep seeking God's glory until the revelation bursts forth in you!"

The first effect of God's glory is a change in our relationship with him.

When Moses saw the revelation of God's glory — his wonderful nature and character — he fell to his knees and worshipped. "Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped" (Exodus 34:8). Moses was so stirred by what he saw — how merciful, patient and loving God is with his children, even those who grieve him — he worshipped in awe.

Moses worshipped here even though he wasn't full of hope for Israel. He knew the people were bent on backsliding. At that very moment, back in their tents they were hiding little golden idols they had brought from Egypt. Moses must have thought, "How will I ever be able to hold this people together? When will God's patience run out with their idolatry?"

Yet the Lord had no intention of destroying his people. This was all a "mercy test" for Moses. The Lord was asking him, "How will you represent me to the people? As a vengeful God who is full of judgment only? Or as merciful and longsuffering, always ready to forgive?"

This was the revelation of God's glory! And it set Moses' heart at ease. He immediately prayed, "Lord, you said you would forgive the iniquity and transgression of thousands. Well, here are those thousands before you. We're all stiff-necked and in need of mercy. Grant us your mercy. Pardon our many sins!" (see Exodus 34:9).

The revelation of God's glory should be the wellspring of all our worship. We ought to regularly lay claim to his glory, testifying, "Lord, I know you're holy and just, that you don't wink at sin. But I've also seen your glory, and it makes me know you're not out to destroy me.

"You don't condemn me in my struggles. I've failed so often I should have been cast aside by now. But you continue to show me how loving and longsuffering you are toward me."

During years of ministry, I experienced severe times of the Lord's discipline like a rod on my back. One such time I was being slandered terribly. After a while I was physically exhausted from the ongoing battle.

One day God directed me to Jeremiah's prayer: "O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing" (Jeremiah 10:24). Jeremiah's words became my daily prayer through that time of testing. I prayed: "Lord, chasten me and judge me if you must. But, please, don't do it in anger. If I hear one more wrathful word, it will destroy me."

Whenever I voiced this prayer, I heard the Lord's voice whispering to me: "David, if I choose to correct you, it is because I love you. This test isn't about my judgment at all. I am merciful, gracious, loving and longsuffering toward you. Now, stand still and see my glory."

The knowledge of his glory — his nature and character — carried me to a place of total rest. Indeed, once we have this revelation of God's glory, we need never again fear he will correct us in anger. The Lord carries his rod in a loving hand, and if he disciplines us it is only in deep compassion. Beloved, all who truly worship God claim the blessing of his promises. They see his glory in his love toward them, and they lay hold of that glory to settle their troubled souls.

A second effect of seeing God's glory is a change in countenance.

"The children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone" (Exodus 34:35). A person's countenance is the outward expression of their heart. In this verse, Moses' face simply reflected the glory of God in his soul.

You can bask in God's presence all you want. But it is a wholly different matter for his glory to be revealed in you. Paul testified, "It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him" (Galatians 1:15-16, *my italics*).

The revelation Moses received was glorious, but it was only a fading thing. The radiance on his face and heart was the result of getting a glimpse of God's nature. Even so, when the Israelites saw him, they knew he'd had a supernatural experience.

Today we have something far more glorious than what Moses had. We actually touch and handle God's glory. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life" (1 John 1:1). John is saying, in effect, "God revealed the fullness of his glory to us in Christ. We saw his glory embodied in a person. And we talked with him and touched him."

Today we not only see the fullness of the glory of God in Christ; it also abides in us — and it shines forth in our hearts: "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6).

"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). Who is this grace? It is Jesus Christ, full of mercy, kindness and love. "Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (2:12). Paul is saying, in essence, "This grace that abides in us is the revelation of Christ's goodness. If you will abide in him, his revelation will instruct you in holy living. It will teach you mercy, grace, tenderness and forgiveness."

A third effect of seeing God's glory is a change in our relationships with others.

Once we receive this revelation of God's glory, we can't continue in our old ways of treating others. It all must change. Paul warns, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:31-32).

God is saying through Paul, "You've seen my glory and you know my nature —that I am gracious, longsuffering, ready to forgive. I want you to express to others who I AM."

When Jesus says, "Be merciful to others, even as God has been merciful to you," the word "mercy" is from the Greek word for "misery" (misericordia). The full meaning is "to take to heart the misery of another with the intention of giving him comfort and relief." Being merciful means taking on another person's hurt. That includes those who have hurt us.

This is just what our Lord does for us. How many times has Jesus taken on your misery caused by sin, giving you comfort and forgiveness in return? How often has he wiped away your tears and spoken kindly to you through his Word? He does this for us time after time.

I ask you: How can we not find it in our hearts to take on the misery and pain of someone we know is hurting? The word "compassion" means "being affected, touched by the misery of others and determining to do something about it."

If you've had a revelation of the Lord's glory, you know what it means to taste his love, mercy and forgiveness. And you are being changed by that glory. Now, Jesus says, "Take that glory and shine it on the world around you. It is time to act in love, as your Lord has continually done for you." Amen!

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