

Two weeks ago in our Palm Sunday message, I was struck by the message that the Lord was giving through me and to me. I thought I understood the concept. It was about the way man uses faith for his own selfish purposes. **The goodness of God should lead us to repentance** (Romans 2:4), but instead we so often look at it with a "what's in it for me" attitude. As I was preaching the Holy Spirit answered the prayer that asked that we see what He is trying to convey to us, and I did see. I saw how my own selfish heart was so centered on the goodness of God to ME. I was one of the crowd that welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem because of his amazing miracles. But the reason I was so excited is that I want the gifts and benefits He brings. There is nothing wrong with seeing His goodness toward us (James 1:17), but it should never stop there. It should always point us right back to the Giver's glorious nature and cause us to praise Him with our whole being. We praise God who is infinitely greater than us in majesty and glory and honor that He would even consider us.

How worthy He is of all our praise and adoration! I thought I knew this, but the Holy Spirit was showing me I had just touched the surface of something deeper than the oceans. (Ephesians 3:8) This was one of Paul's prayers, that the Ephesians, together with all the saints, and that includes us, may have the power grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ. (Ephesians 4:18) *¹¹ Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all.* 1 Chronicles 29:11 (ESV)

Worthy

There is absolutely nothing other than God that is worthy of our worship. It is good for us to periodically dwell on the attributes of God to remind ourselves of His perfections. **He is utterly just. He hates injustice.** (2Chronicles 19:7) One day the books will balance. No one really wants an unjust and arbitrary God. That would be chaos. The only One that is completely just is God, for He is the only One that knows every detail and is able to judge with full knowledge. (Hebrews 4:13) One day every injustice will be punished, either in the past on the cross or in the future in hell. (Romans 14:12) God is worthy of our adoration because He is completely just.

God is holy. The angels around the throne sing holy, holy, holy. (Isaiah 6:3) He is utterly pure. There is no evil in Him. (1John 1:5) We will never wake up one day to find He lied or deceived or had some manipulative agenda. He is beautiful in holiness.

Commented [Paul1]: Romans 2:4 (ESV)

⁴ Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

Commented [Paul2]: James 1:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

Commented [Paul3]: Ephesians 3:8 (ESV)

⁸ To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,

Commented [Paul4]: Ephesians 4:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.

Commented [Paul5]: 2 Chronicles 19:7 (ESV)

⁷ Now then, let the fear of the LORD be upon you. Be careful what you do, for there is no injustice with the LORD our God, or partiality or taking bribes.⁷

Commented [Paul6]: Hebrews 4:13 (ESV)

¹³ And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Commented [Paul7]: Romans 14:12 (ESV)

¹² So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Commented [Paul8]: Isaiah 6:3 (ESV)

³ And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

Commented [Paul9]: 1 John 1:5 (ESV)

⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

(1Chronicles 16:29) The day you see His holiness you'll be singing with those angels. His holiness will overwhelm you. If it weren't for the fact that at that moment His work in you will be complete (1John 3:2), you'd be trying to hide yourself from the contrast of your being and His. (Isaiah 6:5) God is worthy of our devotion because He is utterly holy.

He is merciful. If it were not for His mercy, you and I would never have the opportunity to know and worship Him. Jesus would never have died for our sins. We would never have been prompted by the Holy Spirit to repent, and we would justly be on our way to hell. (John 3:36) His mercy convicts us and draws us to His gift of salvation in Jesus. His mercy patiently works to sanctify us in this life. His mercy will finish the work He began. (Philippians 1:6) He is worthy of all our praise because He is merciful.

He is good. Everything He does is good. (Psalm 119:68) His justice and holiness and mercy are good. All His attributes are good. Take away one of them and He would cease to be good. But that cannot happen because He is thoroughly good. There is evil in the world, but He did not create it. He gave us freewill, and that was good. That made evil possible. We choose to go against His nature, and that makes evil actual.² The fault for evil lies at our doorstep, not His. We should ever be grateful that God is good!

Our adoration, praise, worship, devotion, and gratitude should always flow to Him because of who He is. He is worthy. And when our adoration or praise or worship or devotion is placed anywhere else, we are sliding into idolatry. We are putting something unworthy before the One who alone is worthy. "If I put things between me and Christ it is idolatry. If I put Christ between me and things it is victory!"¹

Live Worthy

We should live in daily awe that such a perfect One would set His love upon us. The Scriptures exhort us to live in a way that is worthy of the calling we have received. (Ephesians 4:1) This was another of Paul's prayers: ⁹ *And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.* Colossians 1:9-10 (ESV) Why should we? Because He is worthy. It's not that we get some good from it, though we do. It's not to gain respect from our fellow believers. It is simply because He is worthy and therefore it is only right that we live in a way that is worthy of Him. (1Thessalonians 2:12)

Commented [Paul10]: 1 Chronicles 16:29 (ESV)

²⁹ Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him! Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness;

Commented [Paul11]: 1 John 3:2 (ESV)

² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

Commented [Paul12]: Isaiah 6:5 (ESV)

⁵ And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

Commented [Paul13]: John 3:36 (ESV)

³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

Commented [Paul14]: Philippians 1:6 (ESV)

⁶ And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Commented [Paul15]: Psalm 119:68 (ESV)

⁶⁸ You are good and do good; teach me your statutes.

Commented [Paul16]: Norman Geisler

Commented [Paul17]: Adrian Rogers

Commented [Paul18]: 1 Thessalonians 2:12 (ESV)

¹² we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

When we don't live in a way that is worthy of Him, it is usually because we have found an idol that we have given our worship. It can be self, man, religion, respect, wealth, or any number of things that capture our heart. Those things are never worthy and don't deserve our adoration. If we put them first, we have accepted a lie.

When we realize what has been done for us so that we might live in this holy and merciful God's presence, it should cause our hearts to put Him first in everything. (Psalm 116:12-14) "The Christ filled life is the self-emptied life."¹ We should desire to live in a way that is worthy of Him, which means in ways that glorify Him. How can we glorify God?

Glorify

We glorify Him with our gratitude for delivering us, especially for deliverance from sin. ¹⁴ Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High, ¹⁵ and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me." Psalm 50:14-15 (ESV) ²³ The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me; to one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God!" Psalm 50:23 (ESV)

One surprising way to glorify God is **by praying His will into the earth**. When we pray according to His will, God acts in the earth and His glory is revealed. Jesus said, ¹³ Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. John 14:13 (ESV)

Bearing fruit glorifies God. To bear fruit can be seen as growing in the fruits of the Spirit. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. John 15:8 (ESV) If you are a follower of Jesus, one who is learning from Him, you will become more like Him. This glorifies the Father, because Jesus' life was a revelation of the glory of God. (Hebrews 1:3, John 1:14) People will see the holiness of God, the mercy and goodness of God in your life. (2Thessalonians 1:11-12)

You can also **glorify God by obeying the calling** He has put upon your life. ⁴ I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. John 17:4 (ESV) Jesus prayed that He had glorified God by carrying out His God given assignment. We all have a God given assignment, and when we carry it out faithfully, we glorify God. (Ephesians 2:10) I admire the way Mac and Kim carry out that assignment at Rainbow Acres as caregivers. I know God is glorified as they love the ranchers and care for them with God's love. We can glorify God by thanksgiving, praying His will, bearing fruit, and living out the calling He has given us.

Commented [Paul19]: Psalm 116:12-14 (ESV)

¹² What shall I render to the LORD for all his benefits to me?

¹³ I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD,

¹⁴ I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people.

Commented [Paul20]: Hebrews 1:3 (ESV)

³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Commented [Paul21]: John 1:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Commented [Paul22]: 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 (ESV)

¹¹ To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, ¹² so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Commented [Paul23]: Ephesians 2:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Humility and Suffering

Jesus' path to exaltation was the road of humility and suffering. Though He intrinsically had the attributes of the Father, as a human being He showed us the way we need to go. Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death. (Philippians 2:8) It is the generous and loving nature of God that wants to exalt those He loves, but He cannot exalt that which is evil. Therefore, we have the gift of salvation and the process of sanctification. Jesus showed us the way.

Commented [Paul24]: Philippians 2:8 (ESV)

⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

When Judas had left the Upper Room, Jesus said, ^{31b} *"Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. ³² If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once.* John 13:31b-32 (ESV) He was speaking of His crucifixion. Notice that Jesus' glorification was for the purpose of glorifying God. (John 17:1) It is the same with our glorification, the purpose should never be selfish, but that God might be glorified for His goodness and patience and love that we receive.

Commented [Paul25]: John 17:1 (ESV)

¹ When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you,

It was a humiliating way to die, but it was obedience to the Father and trust in His direction. ⁹ *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,* Philippians 2:9 (ESV) God exalts those who obey Him in complete trust and faith. That is the path of humility, knowing that God knows better than us. ¹⁰ *Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.* James 4:10 (ESV) He exalts the humble because they will use that exaltation to glorify Him, and that is only right for He is worthy. Glory and exaltation apart from the desire to glorify God is evil. (Isaiah 2:11) It is the opposite of humility.

Commented [Paul26]: Isaiah 2:11 (ESV)

¹¹ The haughty looks of man shall be brought low, and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.

When we think of exaltation we should think of the cross. God's idea of exaltation is often the opposite of man's. ¹⁵ *And he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.* Luke 16:15 (ESV) Jesus saw the cross as glory because it revealed the heart of the Father and thus glorified the Father. Man saw it as a curse. (1Corinthians 1:23) Jesus saw it as a path to glorifying the Father.

Commented [Paul27]: 1 Corinthians 1:23 (ESV)

²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,

⁶ *Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.* 1 Peter 5:6-7 (ESV) Peter connected the humility that comes before exaltation with trust in God for our daily concerns. If we trust God in humility, we know that we don't have the answers, but He does. We won't try to solve our problems on our own, we'll look to God. Jesus trusted the Father even in the agony of crucifixion. Peter believed what he

was writing. Jesus had predicted that Peter would glorify God in crucifixion as well. (John 21:19)

Suffering is an integral part of glorification. That is because it is through suffering that we lift our head from the rut of daily routines and become serious about our relationship with God. *¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.* Romans 8:17 (ESV)

How do we suffer with Jesus? I want to be glorified with Him because I want to glorify God. What a high and holy privilege! (Philippians 1:29) We suffer with Him when we stand for the truth of the Word and face the consequences the world heaps on us for that stand. It can be emotional and/or physical abuse. It is anytime we pay a price for belonging to Christ and seeking to glorify God. (1Peter 4:16)

Conclusion

We should be living to exalt the name of the One who loved us and gave Himself for us because that sacrifice reveals who He is. *¹ I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. ² My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad. ³ Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together!* Psalm 34:1-3 (ESV) We can't exalt His name if we are afraid to speak His name. **To exalt His name means to tell of His goodness and love.** It is to speak of His attributes. It is to share testimonies. It is to praise Him for who He is. *² I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.* Psalm 138:2 (ESV)

Are we following Christ's example of living for the glory of God? I thought I was but as I shared the Palm Sunday message, the Lord revealed to me that in so many ways my life is about what I'm getting out of it. I want to be sold out, 100%, seeking God's glory alone. If that means suffering with Him, may He give us the grace to stay faithful under that suffering. It certainly means humility, and may He continually show us how far we have to go. (Philippians 3:13) God doesn't just want a place in our life, He demands and deserves preeminence. By the grace of God may our lives be for the sole purpose of exalting and glorifying the only One who alone is worthy!

¹¹ Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth! Psalm 57:11 (ESV)

Questions

Commented [Paul28]: John 21:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."

Commented [Paul29]: Philippians 1:29 (ESV)

²⁹ For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,

Commented [Paul30]: 1 Peter 4:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

Commented [Paul31]: Philippians 3:13 (ESV)

¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,

- 1 Goodness of God leads to _____.
- 2 Why is God worthy of our adoration?
- 3 How should we then live?
- 4 Why don't we live like that?
- 5 How can man glorify God?
- 6 What is the path to exaltation?
- 7 Does God want you to take it? Why?
- 8 What did Jesus see in the cross?
- 9 Contrast God's concept of exaltation and man's.
- 10 How do we suffer with Jesus?