

Gal. 1: 24; I Cor. 10:23-33; Glorifying God I. Identifying God's Glory II. The Reason for Glorifying God III. The Calling to Glorify God

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, what are you living for? What is the goal of your life? Or as our Presbyterian brothers would say it- What is the chief end of man? The answer is- to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. So the chief end of man- the main goal of our life is to glorify God. But this is not only the goal that we as humans should have- this is also the goal or aim of our God as well. One of the most fundamental purposes of God in both creation and in redemption is to reveal His glory! As Psalm 19 puts it- the heavens declare the glory of God. So this evening as we consider Gal. 1:24 we are going to see this theme: Jesus Christ brings glory to the Father as He works in His people.

I. Identifying God's Glory

We begin by identifying the glory of God. What does it mean that we are called to glorify God. In our text we read that the people glorified God because of Paul. What does this mean? How do we glorify God? One of the "solas" of the Reformation is that all things work together and are to be done for the glory of God alone. As we will see in our second point, the glory of God is to be pursued in contrast to the glory of man. In the OT, the glory of represented His power. The OT word "cabod" had in mind the heaviness- the weightiness of God. God's glory would shine forth from the glory cloud; which was not only a brilliant light of great worth, it was also a reminder that God is powerful and mighty. There is a significance to the glory of God. A gravitas- if you will. In other words, the glory of God means that you do not treat God lightly! You do not mess around with God and His presence- because His glory and beauty shine forth in splendor. In our passage- the glory of God is the word Doxa. Connected to our word- doxology- we can see that God's glory is something that we declare and profess. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. But what does it mean to glorify God? Well, God's glory is perfect and cannot be added to or subtracted from. To glorify God is not to add something to God that is lacking. However, when we glorify God, we are simply giving Him what He deserves. We are

acknowledging what is true! God is glorious- He is weighty and worthy of all praise! So we honor and magnify His name- we praise Him as the One who is worthy of all praise! This is the calling of all creation- and specifically the church. The saints glorify God when they thank Him and praise His name. To declare that God is glorious- that He is beautiful, majestic and mighty! There is nothing and no one with whom we can compare Him! In the OT, as I said before, the glory of God was seen most clearly in the glory cloud and in the temple where the light of God's presence would shine. But as John 1:14 reveals, we now see the glory of God shining in the Son. The person and work of Jesus is where we see God's glory on full display today. As II Cor. 4:6 echoes, we have the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the radiance of God's glory. In the High Priestly prayer, Jesus asked for the Father to glorify His own name through the work of the Son. So to come back to our passage- the way in which Paul will bring glory to God is as he declares the greatness of the Son. As Paul preaches the revelation of Jesus Christ, God's glory will be seen and acknowledged by men.

II. The Reason for Glorifying God

So why then were these churches glorifying God in our passage? They glorified God because of me- or in me as Paul put it. Somehow the work of Paul was giving these churches in Galatia the reason and the opportunity to praise God! But what had Paul done- or more specifically- what has God done through Paul that would move all these Christians to praise God? Well, remember our context. These Christians were praising God because God had turned Paul into a fit vessel- a useful instrument in the hands of God. By the Spirit's power, Saul the persecutor had become Paul the preacher! The one who had once tried to destroy the church as v. 23 puts it was now being used by God to build the church! So Paul can say- it is because of me- or because of God's work in and through me that God is being glorified! I mean- this is such a dramatic and drastic change that there can be no other explanation! Like a pauper to a prince. Or it would be like turning a mafia boss into a minister of the word! As we saw last week, there is no human explanation or reasoning for this! As Paul was set apart and called by God because God has a purpose

and plan for him- so the outworking of God's plan in Paul's life gives the church the opportunity to praise God! So the purpose of God which is at work today is using sinners who are converted by His grace to bring Him praise! God's purpose is to save a certain people- to use a specific person to bring the gospel and call the nations to repent. And yet the very vessel that God chooses to use is the opportunity to praise God for His grace! If God can save and change the chief of sinners- if God can use this former persecuted and enemy of Christ and His people- if God can change the wolf and make him a lamb- who can oppose His will! So the churches glorified God because of His work in Paul's life. No longer trying to destroy- rather Paul will plant and build. You see, there is always a reason and a purpose behind all that God does. When He sends tribulation and hardships- His divine purposes will stand! When He saves specific sinners and calls them to ministry- His glory is being put on display. Everything happens according to His purpose and has this ultimate end- the glory of God! So why should we- and why did these churches glorify God? Because He is sovereign and good! His purposes stand! He saves sinners and sends preachers! The life of Paul became a living sermon- a rebellious sinner turned into a godly saint! To apply this to us- I could ask. Is God glorified because of you? When people see the change in your life- are they given a reason to magnify His holy name? As I Peter 2:12 echoes- keep your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, so that they may see your deed deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. If someone who knew you in high school would meet you again today- after many years- would they be able to see a change? The fact is, a dramatic change and holy living gives people the opportunity to glory God because of you! So at the end of this second point I ask- is God glorified because of you? Is He praised because of His work in your life? Does your life give others the opportunity to see God's sovereign grace at work? So the dramatic conversion of Paul gave the churches of Galatia the opportunity to praise God! Once again, we see that Jesus is bringing glory to the Father as He saves and sanctifies His church! Just as He had prayed for in John 17! Glorify your Name!

III. The Calling to Glorify God

But there is one more way to apply the glory of God to our lives. Not only should our lives give others the opportunity to praise God- we should also be the ones who are glorifying God! In the second point we asked- Is God glorified because of you? In this point we ask- is God glorified by you? Earlier we read from I Cor. 10:31- whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God. Paul specifically mentions eating and drinking in I Cor. 10- but it can be applied to all of life. Whatever you do- at work or at play. In the day or at night. As a farmer, preacher, teacher, student. Parent and child- whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God. This is a calling that we all receive! It is not only our prayer that others would glorify God in us- but that He would be glorified by us! That I too would glorify God for His works! That I would honor and magnify His name for His work in me and in others! So how would we glorify God in our works? Well, we glorify God when we obey Him, worship Him, and praise Him. When we love Him and His word- when we thank Him for His works and ways. When we humble ourselves in His presence and exalt His name before others. John Chrystotom put it like this” let all things that you undertake and accomplish tend to the glory of God.” So it is that our individual salvation and specific work have this shared goal- to bring glory to God! We are called to glorify God in all things and at all times. And yet, today we have a very specific calling to glorify God in our worship. As Psalm 34 put it, oh magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His name together. And again in Psalm 86, with my whole heart I will glorify your Name forever.

As we close, the opportunity and calling to glorify God is one that we must not pass up. Note that Paul’s life and our calling is to glorify God- not man. The churches of Galatia did not praise Paul for his wonderful work or dramatic change- because it was God who changed and called Paul to this work. So it is with us- we are sent into this world with the shared task of glorifying God with our mouth and hand. It is God who redeems- God who calls- God who changes us and God who sends us. So He must receive the praise! Jesus Christ brings glory to the Father as He works in His people. Listen to these closing words from Eph. 3- now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than we ask for think, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus forever. Amen