

GLENNA SALSURY

Heavenly Treasures

Sanctification



*Discovering the
Sovereign Grace
of God Hidden
in the Richness of
His Word*

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GLENN A SALS BURY



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Dedication

To the great saints of old who loved the Word of God with all their hearts.

To Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892), England’s “Prince of Preachers” whose *Morning and Evening* devotionals have fed my spirit for more than four decades.

To the apostle Paul, whose writings reveal the mystery of grace and whose grasp on the sovereignty of God is unparalleled.

To the Holy Spirit, the One Who leads us into all truth and anoints our minds and hearts with understanding.

To the Lord Jesus Christ, Who called me out of darkness into His glorious light and gave me a hunger for His Word.

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Sanctification

Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until that day when our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. God, who calls you, is faithful; he will do this.

—1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 NLT



Heavenly Rewards and Earthly Works

*For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his
Father with his angels; and then he shall
reward every man according to his works.*

—Matthew 16:27



These words, and others with a similar ring, are often the greatest joy stealers in our Christian lives. We hear or read the phrase, “according to his works,” and instantly our own inadequacy and failures rise up to condemn us.

Stop right there for a moment. Who is the “accuser of the brethren?” The enemy is the one who comes in to tell us we have not “measured up” to God’s highest expectations. Yet we read, “If God be for us, who can be against us?...Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?...Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us” (Romans 8:31, 33, 37).

What is Christ telling us in Matthew 16:27? For what works will we be rewarded? Jesus Himself answers this question

in John 6:28-29. The multitude recognized Jesus as a great teacher sent by God. They did not understand that He was God in the flesh. These people wanted to “work” their way into God’s grace. They asked, “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” (John 6:28).

Stop right there once again. Isn’t that our cry? “What shall I do, Lord, to work the works that will please You?” Before we look at Jesus’ answer, what is your answer to that question?

“Jesus answered and said unto them, ‘This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.’” That is the Lord’s answer. Believe. The Greek word is *pisteuo*, which means “to have faith.”

So the answer is: to do the work of God is to have faith in His Son. How do we do that? Humanly, we cannot work the works of God. Faith is a gift. The Lord Himself supplies faith to those whom He has called. “For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Stop once more. Here is where confusion grips us. We can believe that salvation is a gift, but often we are taught that now that our sins are removed, we are responsible for our rewards. We are often told that there is something we can do. We can contribute to our heavenly rewards. This is simply not true. Let’s examine what the Word of God says.

In Ephesians 2:10 we read, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” God has already ordained our purpose if we are His children in Christ. We will accomplish the works for which we will be rewarded. In 1 Peter 1:4 we are told that the Father is bringing us, by the resurrection

Heavenly Rewards and Earthly Works

of Christ from the dead, into an inheritance that is incorruptible, reserved in heaven for each of us individually.

The Christians in Galatia became “works”-oriented after coming to Christ. Paul wrote to them and said, “Oh, foolish Galatians...did you receive the Spirit by faith or by good deeds....Having begun in the Spirit, are you now trying to be perfect by self-effort?” (Galatians 3:1-3 Author paraphrase).

Much more can be said on this topic. Theologians argue about our need to be “responsible laborers” in the service of the King. Yet the mystery lies in the fact that without Christ we can do nothing. Therefore, we are to look to Him by faith, believing that He will accomplish His work in us (Philippians 1:6).

The alternative is to look to our own wisdom to ascertain what works we should do and to depend on our own commitment or ability to do them. This leads to pride when we are successful in doing good works. Or it leads to constant pressure—self-inflicted—to try to accomplish enough good works to get more rewards. Or it leads to despair at our lack of good works.

When Jesus hands out rewards for service, the recipients, we discover, are actually unaware that they have done a good work! They ask, “When did we do these things for which you are rewarding us?” (Read Matthew 25:34-40.)

Count on Him. “For it is God who works in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).

Father, thank You for ordaining the works that are ours alone and for safely keeping the inheritance You have ordained for us.

What it Means to be Holy

*Follow peace with all men, and holiness
without which no man shall see the Lord.*

—Hebrews 12:14



Would you be willing to call yourself “holy?” If you know Who Jesus Christ is, the Scripture says you are holy. And the Bible clearly states, “Without holiness...no man [or woman!] shall see the Lord.”

Do we really understand what it means to be holy? It does not mean “being good” or “living a pure life” or “giving money to the poor,” etc. These actions do not make us holy.

In fact, Jesus had some very strong words against some very religious people who considered themselves to be holy. The Jewish religious leaders kept the law scrupulously. They prayed several times a day. They gave money to the temple. They attended synagogue often.

What it Means to be Holy

Jesus said to these, “How terrible it will be for you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people’s bones and all sorts of impurity. You try to look like upright people outwardly, but inside your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness” (Matthew 23:27-28 NLT).

You will notice that Jesus indicates that these people may be doing good works, performing well. However, His concern is with their hearts. Think about this for a moment. Can you make your heart holy?

Most people today think that God grades on a curve. Therefore, if we can perform better than the worst scoundrels, we think we will probably make it to heaven. But the Lord does not look on outward appearances. Instead He says, “God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.”

Holiness demands that we be pure from the inside out. And no human being is! This is why the Lord says, “Unless you are born again, you can never see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3 NLT). The Lord Himself must open our eyes to see that Christ alone is holy. He alone is pure. He must give us His holiness. And that is what happens when we are made holy! The Greek word for holy is *hagios*. It has nothing to do with performance or good works. It means to be set apart by God to be His very own. That requires the miracle of the new birth, being born again. Only the Spirit of God can create a new heart in us. (Read John 3:1-18.)

All who believe that Jesus Christ is God and believe that He died for our sins, personally, are counted as holy, set apart for heaven. Our outward actions may not always reflect the fact that we are counted as holy; but neither will our outward actions contribute to our holiness.

Heavenly Treasures

We can rest in His grace and His life. God is the only source of holiness. “I am the Lord, who makes you holy” (Exodus 31:13 NLT). He will faithfully work, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to conform us to His image. The result is a life that does indeed reflect good works and a deep desire to please Him, to be obedient. However, this result flows from God at work in us, willing and doing His good pleasure.

Thank You, oh, Lord, that You are holy and You have stamped us with Your holiness.

Saved by His Life

For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

—Romans 5:10



Let's look afresh at what this truth from the Word of God tells us. While we were enemies of God, literally God-haters, we were reconciled to Him, to God. The word reconciled, in the Greek, is *katalasso*, which means to be “restored to divine favor,” to be friends once again.

While we were still hating Him, God devised a plan, which He enacted. He sovereignly arranged for us to be His friends. This reconciliation was brought about “by the death of His Son.” Jesus announced in John 10 that He was going to the cross to die for the sins of the sheep. “The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.... I lay down my life for the sheep” (John 10:11,15). The wages, or price tag, of sin is death. Jesus paid the debt for us. And He did this for us before we were even born into the

world. In fact, He chose us to be His own before the foundation of the world. “For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:21 NLT).

In Revelation 13:8 we read that “the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world.” Adam’s sin in the garden was no surprise to the Father. He knew that His sheep would enter into the world in a lost condition because of Adam’s sin. He sent His Son to seek and to save the lost sheep, to return us to our home with Him in heaven (1 Peter 2:25).

Look again at the Romans 5:10 text. Paul said something even more amazing. “Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” Not only did the Lord pay for all our sins before the world began. He also lived the perfectly obedient life on earth. And His consistent, holy, obedient, perfectly-righteous life counts for you and me. Though we see ourselves in a daily walk that is often sadly lacking (and sometimes outright rotten and disobedient), the Father still sees us in the Son. “Even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes” (Ephesians 1:4 NLT). When we come before the throne of God, we will come into His presence “innocent of sin and with great joy” (Jude 24 NLT).

These great truths apply to all who believe. “For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved” (Romans 10:9-10 NLT). “And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God” (Ephesians 2:8 NLT). In other words, God gives the gift of faith to those for whom Christ died, the sheep. If you

Saved by His Life

believe, it is because He reconciled you to Himself before the world began. It is these profound realities of grace that empower us to live Christ-honoring lives in the here and now.

Oh Holy Spirit, do Your sanctifying work in each of us today. And we praise You that You will indeed conform us to Your image and present us faultless and blameless before Your throne of grace.

God is our Sanctifier

*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God
your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless
unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.
—1 Thessalonians 5:23-24*



Oh, what good news this is! God Himself is our Sanctifier, the One who continually presents us as holy, set apart, counted as blameless. Our sins are no longer counted against us if we are in Christ. Day by day He keeps us blameless in His eyes.

It is interesting that the apostle Paul specifically spoke of the body, soul, and spirit as separate strongholds for potential sin. As long as we live in our physical body, we are faced with the temptations of the flesh. John described these as “the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes” (1 John 2:16). These sins tend to be in the realm of the fleshly appetites—food, drink, sexual impurities, etc.

The realm of the “soul sins” include sins of the mind, the will, and the emotions. The Greek word for soul is *psyche* and

is often translated as *mind*. Jesus said that “whosoever looketh at a woman to lust after her” has already committed adultery (Matthew 5:28). The sins of our mind certainly include envy, pride, jealousy, adultery, and even murder.

Additionally, the “soul sins” include failing to choose to do the right thing (*willpower*) and often willfully choosing to do the wrong thing! “I don’t understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I don’t do it. Instead, I do the very thing I hate” (Romans 7:15 NLT).

Our emotions also create sin problems. We experience anger, worry, frustration, and other negative feelings that are not God-honoring. Thus, our soul life involves the mind, the will, and the emotions. Even the human spirit in us, though renewed by the Holy Spirit, still is drawn toward the way of the world. His Spirit is always jealously wooing us into submission to His view of the world (James 4:4-7).

It is only the faithfulness of the Spirit of God in us that continues to save us from utter ruin. “Now the God of peace... make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ” (Hebrews 13:20-21). It is His work, not only in our redemption, but in our daily sanctification, that allows us to come before the throne of grace boldly.

“For it is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). It is the Lord Himself Who has committed Himself to the work of conforming us to the image of the Son. Those whom He chose before the world began are predestined “to be conformed to the image of His Son” (Romans 8:29).

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Oh, what a Savior! He has not only saved us from the condemnation of eternal death, but He has also guaranteed that we will not be ashamed of anything in our lives when we stand before Him! “Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed” (Romans 9:33; Romans 10:11). It is He who is able to keep us from falling and Who will present us faultless before His throne, with joy (Jude 24).

Lord, the Sanctifier of the saints, we praise Your Holy name.

Living Stones

*The stones used in the construction of the
Temple were prefinished at the quarry,
so the entire structure was built without the sound of hammer,
ax, or any other iron tool at the building site.*

—1 Kings 6:7 NLT



This is a fascinating truth. When King Solomon ordered the building of the magnificent house of God, the temple in Israel, there was to be no sound of human effort as the stones were assembled. All of the chiseling was done before the temple was assembled. Each stone was designed for its perfect place in the architectural plan God gave to Solomon (1 Kings 6:1-37). And after each stone was fully prepared, it was brought to rest in its assigned place in the temple.

What message might the Holy Spirit be giving to us as New Testament believers in this Old Testament truth? Remember, “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true...” (2 Timothy 3:16 NLT).

How might the experience of those “stones” be significant for us in our daily lives? The apostle Peter provided us with some marvelous truth about this. He wrote, “And now God is building you, as living stones, into His spiritual temple (1 Peter 2:5 NLT). The apostle Paul understood this reality. He explained that Christ is the head of His body, the church, and “under His direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly” (Ephesians 4:16 NLT).

The Greek word for temple is *naos* and it means “a dwelling place, an inner sanctuary.” In the Old Testament the glory of God dwelled physically in the temple of Israel. Today the glory of God dwells in His people through the indwelling Holy Spirit. Paul wrote, “Don’t you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16 NLT).

The day is coming when all the saints will be gathered together to form the fully completed body of Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:14-18). The home of God (His dwelling place) is now among His people...“the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple...” (Revelation 21:3, 22 NLT). This becomes reality in the glorious day when we as living stones will be assembled together. “Yes, dear friends, we are already God’s children, and we can’t even imagine what we will be like when Christ returns. But we do know that when He comes we will be like Him...” (1 John 3:2 NLT).

Until that glorious day, we who are alive are still in the quarry! We are being chiseled, cut, and polished in order to be fit into the place which Christ has prepared for us. This is the “prefinishing” work of sanctification, which involves the chastening, cleansing work of the Spirit. “My child, don’t ignore

Living Stones

it when the Lord disciplines you, and don't be discouraged.... No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it is painful!... So take a new grip with your tired hands and stand firm on your shaky legs..." (Hebrews 12:5, 11-12 NLT).

As Charles Spurgeon said, "All this is Christ's own work! Each individual believer is being prepared and polished, and made ready for his place in the temple; but Christ's own hand performs the preparation work.... Our prayers and efforts cannot make us ready for heaven, apart from the hand of Jesus, who fashions our hearts aright. No, we must be made perfect here—all that Christ will do beforehand; and when He has done it we shall be...brought to the heavenly Jerusalem to abide as eternal pillars in the temple of our Lord."

Oh Lord, help us embrace Your polishing hand today.

Sifted as Wheat

Satan has desired you that he may sift you as wheat.
—*Luke 22:31*



You may recall the circumstances surrounding these words spoken by Jesus to Peter. Just before the Lord went to be crucified, Peter proclaimed his commitment and unwavering allegiance to the Lord (Mark 14:29). Yet the sovereign Lord, Who knows our end from our beginning, told Peter that this was not what would happen. And, of course, Peter eventually denied even knowing the Lord.

Let's pause there for a moment. Have you sometimes made promises or commitments to the Lord only to see yourself fail? Have you had a deep desire to be faithful or to be consistent in your walk with Christ, only to end up being inconsistent or even rebellious?

Sifted as Wheat

If you answered “yes” to those questions, you will identify with what happened to Peter. In his fleshly enthusiasm and his earthly sense of strength and willpower, Peter felt certain he would never be among those who would “scatter” when the Shepherd was smitten on the cross (Mark 14:27).

But the Lord says a strange thing in answer to Peter’s bold commitment. He calls Peter by his earthly name. “Simon, Simon, behold Satan has desired you....” The Lord knows Peter’s weaknesses. Peter doesn’t know his own weaknesses. And the Lord is about to reveal to Peter how weak he is in his human efforts to be faithful. Jesus explains to Peter that Satan, the evil one, has asked permission to test him, to reveal Peter’s true colors as a weak, unfaithful follower of the Lord. And the Lord Himself has consented to this! Even in light of what was coming, Jesus said to him, “But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen and build up your brothers” (Luke 22:32 NLT).

Oh, what hope we have in the midst of our battles with our flesh! The Lord Himself has prayed for us and continues every moment to intercede on our behalf (Romans 8:34). He will sustain us because He alone is the Author of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). And after we have suffered in our flesh and learned of our own weakness and turned to the Lord afresh, He will use us to strengthen other believers who are struggling in their weaknesses. What grace God extends to us.

The Greek word for sift is *siniazo* and it actually means to shake. When farmers wanted to separate the good grain from the chaff, they shook the wheat in a sieve. The large kernels remained in the net or sieve, while the unusable chaff fell to

the ground. This is a picture of what the Lord is doing in our lives every day. He uses our circumstances, our fleshly lusts, and, occasionally, even Satan himself, to shake us. His purpose is to preserve us, to keep us from “falling to the ground” amidst that which is unusable.

The apostle Paul experienced his own battles with his flesh. “No matter which way I turn, I can’t make myself do right. I want to, but I can’t” (Romans 7:18 NLT). And Peter must have told Paul about his agony in denying the Lord. In response to the agony of failure, Paul penned these words of encouragement to us:

If you think you are standing strong, be careful, for you, too, may fall into the same sin. But remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can’t stand up against it. When you are tempted He will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it.

—1 Corinthians 10:12-13 NLT

Paul went on to tell us that God the Father is the One Who comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When others are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

You will recall that after Christ’s resurrection, in the garden of Gethsemane, an angel spoke to Mary Magdalene and the other women who were present at the empty tomb. The angel’s specific words were, “Go your way, tell His disciples and Peter that He has gone before you into Galilee...” (Mark 16:7).

Sifted as Wheat

Isn't the Lord gracious to us, one by one? He knows us by name and extends His ongoing love and forgiveness to us in the face of our greatest failures.

Oh Lord, what love. Help us to receive it.

In the Presence of His Glory with Exceeding Joy

*Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling,
and to present you faultless before
the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.
—Jude 24*



Sometimes it seems we do not believe the incredible, life-giving truths and promises of God's Word even though we read them and hear them. These truths out of the little book of Jude are some of the least understood by the saints of today.

Jude was praising the Lord, Who keeps us, watches over us, guards us, and protects us, even from our own sins and failures. He has set a hedge of protection around us, and Satan himself cannot touch us except the Lord allows it (Job 1:10, 12 and Luke 22:31-34). We will be brought safely and securely before His throne of glory. We will not fall away. (The Greek word for falling is *apostasia* which is apostasy, defection from the truth, forsaking the Lord.)

In the Presence of His Glory with Exceeding Joy

The reason we will never fall away is that “He who has begun this good work in us will continue to perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

The means by which we are being kept, or safely hedged in, is the power of God. We are “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:5). The Greek word for power is *dunamis*, the root word for dynamite. God’s might is keeping us. His strength—not ours—is keeping us.

It is good to remember that faith is a gift. We are kept through faith, and even our faith is supplied by Him. “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God” (Galatians 2:20).

Notice that in Jude 24 it is the Lord Himself Who presents us to the heavenly Father. He, our Bridegroom and our Advocate, will personally escort us to the throne. We will have a personal audience with the Creator of the universe!

It is at this juncture that many sermons have been preached on the dangers of this day. Many claim that if we have not been a “faithful, responsible” Christian, we will be ashamed when we stand before the Father. But what does Jude 24 tell us? The Lord will present us faultless before the throne. The Greek word for faultless is *amomos* and it means without blame, unblemished. I wonder if we believe this could be true.

We are sometimes told that because of our failure to accomplish enough good works or to have lived a consistent, faithful life, we will be ashamed at the throne of grace; yet Paul told us, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). Again, in Romans 9:33 and again in 10:11, “Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”

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Our salvation, from start to finish, is all of Him. We do not contribute, in ourselves, one iota to the redemption process nor to the sanctification process. We are saved from the wrath of God by the death of Christ on the cross. And we are saved from a life of performance and self-effort by His sinless life, which counts for us (Romans 5:10; 1 Corinthians 1:30).

If we are in Christ, by faith in His shed blood, we are counted as a “good tree” and a “good tree” cannot bear evil fruit (Matthew 7:18). Our flesh may fail, but we are viewed as in Christ, faultless and blameless. What a promise!

Lord, we celebrate the fact that You alone keep us, protect us, and guard us from the enemy. And we thank You for the promise that You have arranged for us to appear before the Father, faultless and blameless.

The Secret of Obedience

*Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.
—James 4:7-8*



In addition to these exhortations from James, we could add hundreds of others from the Old and New Testaments. “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:18); “Quench not the Spirit” (1 Thessalonians 5:19); “Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22); “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord” (James 4:10).

You, no doubt, can think of many others. Don’t be envious. Give your money cheerfully, don’t gossip or backbite. Don’t judge. Obey the laws of the land. Love your wives. Submit to your husband. Don’t lose your temper. Be kind, gentle, patient, longsuffering.

Are you exhausted yet? Depressed? Feeling hopeless, condemned, sinful, a bit of a failure? If your answer is yes, then you

are normal. As believers, even though we think we understand the grace of God, the exhortations from the Word often create extreme discomfort in us. Why is that?

St. Augustine wrote, “God has given us commands that we cannot perform in order that we might know what to ask of Him.” In other words, the Lord has outlined the daily attitudes and practical actions that He has designed to bring us the greatest peace and joy while we are on this planet. Yet our flesh often rebels against these exhortations because our flesh is focused on the lusts of this world, the pride of life. As believers, our only response is to confess the weakness of our flesh and ask for the strength of His Spirit in us to lead us into the life of true joy and peace.

Besides rebellion, another response is equally dangerous. Many believers think that through “self-effort and discipline” they are capable of living the daily Christian life. And if they are successful in being outwardly obedient, humble, etc., they often become proud of their own performance and very judgmental of those who, in their eyes, are failing to live the life of a believer. This, of course, is just another form of sin.

The question may then arise, “Well, then, how do you know that your obedience is from the pride of the flesh or the work of the Spirit?” Here’s how we know. There is no good thing in us (Romans 3:10-20). And Jesus said, “Without me, you can do nothing” (John 15:5). If any good thing unfolds in our lives, it is His work, not ours. His grace keeps us from falling. Every good gift (patience, love, longsuffering) comes down from the Father above (James 1:17). Therefore, whenever we are walking in the Spirit it is a result of His power and His grace. We cannot take credit for one ounce of obedience and right living. And the Lord

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has a reason for that. He does not want to share His glory. “He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:30).

Another powerful, yet rarely understood truth about these exhortations to righteousness, is the transforming power in their very existence. The Scripture says that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

The true meaning of *hearing* is to hear in one’s heart and to obey. The Word is anointed with power and when we are exposed to it, it actually transforms us. We experience the faith, the power, the ability to respond because of the hidden power in God’s Word. This is the essence of responsibility. This empowerment is manna, the daily provision by which we are obedient and walk in the Spirit.

Lord, give us the grace to come to You and to Your Word, day by day. May Your Name be glorified.

For His Glory

*That we should be to the praise of His glory,
who first trusted in Christ....
—Ephesians 1:12*



This is an amazing truth, worthy of much pondering and meditation on our part. The apostle Paul clearly stated that we are “predestined, according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will,” to have one calling in this life: that we should bring praise to the glory of God (Ephesians 1:11-12).

What does this really mean, Lord? And how is this accomplished? The Greek word for glory is *doxa*, to bring honor or praise, to worship. In other words, if we are alive in Christ, the purpose for our daily existence is to be the kind of person who causes others to worship and praise Jesus Christ, the Lord God of creation.

For His Glory

That is a humbling assignment. And the danger, it seems, would be for us to dare to assume that we are capable of doing this! Rather, our response probably needs to be a beseeching petition, “Oh Lord, glorify Yourself in and through my life today, please.” And then go about our responsibilities with a heart and mind focused on Him.

In 1 Corinthians 10:31 Paul wrote, “Whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.” This is helpful in a practical way. We can examine our motive for doing what we do in a given situation. If our motive is primarily self-centered, our activity will probably not cause onlookers to marvel at the Person of Christ.

Herod Agrippa I (son of Herod the Great, who was on the throne when Jesus was born) provides a sobering example of one who was totally self-absorbed. “Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne” and gave a speech. “And the people shouted, ‘It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.’ And immediately an angel of the Lord smote him because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms” and died (Acts 12:21-23).

The Lord is jealous over His glory. He will not share it. Rather, we are to remember that our very existence, the fact that we have the breath of life, is because of God’s grace. Our health, our daily bread, the roof over our heads, the ability to serve Him, are all manifestations of the glory of God. He is the Creator of all beauty, the Source of all life, the Supplier of our faith.

If there is a secret to having our lives reflect His glory and bring praise to His name, it may well be found in 2 Corinthians 3:18, “We all, with open face, beholding... the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Heavenly Treasures

In other words, when we focus on the Lord's incredible glory—His goodness, mercy, and kindness toward us—our own lives shine. We are a reflection of what we focus on, day by day.

Too often it seems there is an emphasis placed on “what would Jesus do.” This results in our own mental gymnastics to figure out what we think Jesus would do in any given situation. Sometimes that is a dangerous approach to living the Christian life. Only the Holy Spirit knows what Jesus would do, and the Lord often did things in an unpredictable way. When He went into the temple of God and cast out the money changers and flipped over all their tables and chairs, some onlookers must have been shocked (Matthew 21:12).

So our desire to live to His glory is best fulfilled by focusing on Christ Himself, the Word of God, and a life of worship. He will, in turn, give us daily wisdom and grace to reflect His glory in ways that only He has in mind.

Lord, thank You for placing Your glory in our earthen vessels that others might see You and worship You as the Lord of all glory. “God would make known the riches of His glory... which is Christ in you...” (Colossians 1:27).

The Faithful One

*And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse;
and He that sat upon him was called "Faithful and True."*

—*Revelation 19:11*



Do you sometimes lose heart because of your lack of faith? And as a result of that sense of our own “faithlessness,” we often become discouraged or depressed. The root cause of this negative experience is our focus. When we look at ourselves and have expectations about our own faith and faithfulness, we are often disappointed in what we see.

The Lord has given us a completely different way to live during our sojourn here in alien territory. It is He Whose name is Faithful. He is the One Who is Faithful to us. That is His promise as our Shepherd. He knows we are sheep, dumb and vulnerable.

In Hebrews 12:2 we are told how to live. “Looking unto Jesus, the Author and the Finisher of our faith.” We know faith

is a gift (Ephesians 2:8-9). Who gave us this gift to believe in Christ as Savior? The Lord Himself (James 1:17). Who will bring our faith to fullness, perfection, and completion? The same One Who authored faith in us will finish this work of faith.

In Philippians 1:6 Paul promised, “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” It is the Lord Himself Who is faithful to accomplish His will and His work in our lives. In I Thessalonians 5:24 Paul again told us, “Faithful is He that calleth you who also will do it.”

So, is it possible that we are looking for faith in “all the wrong places”? We are called to “look unto Jesus.” He is Faithful. We are called to place our faith, our expectations, our hope, in His faithfulness, never expecting any kind of positive performance from ourselves. We will never be disappointed in His faith! And we can trust Him to accomplish in us what we can never live up to in our own self-effort or attempt at goodness. “For it is God who works in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).

Perhaps we experience weak faith because our faith has been misplaced. True faith is simply to believe in His faithfulness in our lives, day after day. “For all men do not have faith. But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you and keep you from the wicked one” (2 Thessalonians 3:2-3).

Lord, enlarge our faith that we might believe in Your faithfulness. May we dare to believe Your Word. Anoint our ears and hearts to hear Your Word as truth. “If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful...” (2 Timothy 2:13).

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