

## HOW DO WE GLORIFY GOD? **PRAY** TO HIM!

Here we are—sermon #7 on the topic: “bringing glory to God.” Why am I spending so much time on this?

**1)** Because God **created us** to bring glory to Him! Isaiah 43:21 “This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.”

**2)** Because God **commands us** to bring glory to Him!

--We see that in the Old Testament: Psalm 29:2 “**Give** unto the Lord **the glory** due unto His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.”

--We are told that **by Jesus** in the NT: Matthew 5:16 “Let your light so shine before men, that they may **see your good works**, and **glorify** your Father which is in heaven.”

--And we are told that by **God through Paul** in the NT:

I Corinthians 10:31 “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, **do all to the glory of God.**”

**3)** Another reason is because “the glory of God” is one of the **over-arching, unifying themes** of the Bible!

You would be hard-pressed—in my opinion—to find historical accounts...or prophecies...or teachings in the Bible that don’t somehow or another point back to the glory of God!

**4)** Because **God is worthy to be praised!** Revelation 4:11 “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

--We touched on that a little bit last week when we talked about **reasons** to praise God in Ps 150.

**Ps 150:2a** “Praise Him for His mighty acts”—meaning **His actions**; His works. What acts?

--His acts of creating and sustaining the universe...and calling His people out of Egypt...and giving us His Word!

--But God’s **greatest work** was leaving heaven and coming to earth and taking the punishment for **our sin!**

**We also noted** last week from Psalm 150:2b that we are to “...praise Him according to His excellent greatness”—meaning who He is; **His attributes**.

--**Which** attributes? All of them—but especially the ones involved in the plan of salvation whereby sinners like us can **be forgiven**—and spend eternity in heaven with God!

--How can a **holy, just God**—who is perfect and rightly demands punishment for our sin—justly (fairly) **allow sinners** into heaven?

--If He **ignored sin** and didn’t require punishment, He would cease to **be just**.

--If **mankind could “work”** to be forgiven, they would get the glory for saving themselves.

And—as you hear me say often: “If you can work your way to heaven, there would be **bragging** in heaven.

And if there is bragging in heaven, **heaven ceases to be heaven!**”

--But God’s plan—in His infinite wisdom—**satisfied the holiness** of God because sin was **not ignored**—it was paid for by God Himself!

--His **compassion** and **love** for mankind was satisfied because He **provided a way** for us to be forgiven.

--And **His glory** was protected and preserved because **He gets the credit**—not us!

Romans 11:33 “O the depth of the riches **both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!** how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!”

These—and many more—are reasons why we **should** glorify God. But **how** do we go about doing that?

1) One way is to **please** Him. We talked about that a couple of weeks ago. God is honored when **we obey what** He says. **Children honor their parents** when they obey them. **Students honor their teachers** when they follow their instructions. **Athletes honor their coaches** when they do what he (or she) says to do.

2) A second way to glorify God—the way we usually think of bringing glory to Him—is to **praise Him**. We talked about that last week, and I just gave you a brief review.

3) This morning, we are going to look at a **third way** to bring glory to God—by **praying** to Him!

Please take your Bibles and turn to Ps 50. Notice vss 14-15. Here we see that when God delivers us in answer to prayer, we **should glorify** Him—in this case meaning **praise** Him. But praise is **not the only thing** connected to **praying** that glorifies God.

So...**how does praying** bring glory to God? Is it only when we “**get** what we ask for?” What if God answers with a “no”—or “wait”? And is prayer just about **asking**—or is there **more to it** than that?

### **1. Calling upon God brings glory to Him**

**How** does calling upon God—regardless of how He answers—bring glory to Him?

#### A. Because it is a declaration of our inabilities and weaknesses

**Why** do we pray? Because **we have needs** that we ourselves cannot meet! Not exactly a newsflash, is it?

--Here in Ps 50, the writer Asaph—a chief musician of King David—is used by God to remind us that God wants us to call upon Him “in the **day of trouble.**” Anyone in the Bible ever call upon God in the day of trouble?

Where do we start, right? Here are several examples (of dozens?) where people looked to God for help: Take your Bibles and turn to Matthew 8.

--Mt 8:23-25. **Why** did they say, “Lord, save us: we perish”? Because they thought they were going to drown!

--Mt 14:28-30. **Why** did Peter say, “Lord, save me”? Because he thought he was going to drown!

--Mt 15:21-22, 25. **Why** did the woman say, “Lord, help me”? Because her daughter needed healing—and she couldn’t heal her!

--Mt 17:14-16. Why did the man bring his son to Jesus? Because his son was having epileptic seizures and neither the man—or Jesus’ disciples—could heal him!

--One more; Mt 20:30-31. Why were the blind men crying out to Jesus for mercy? Because they were blind—and could not give themselves sight!

So asking God for help is a **declaration of our inabilities and our weaknesses**. And an admission of our inabilities and weaknesses removes the tendency we often have of “glorying” in our abilities and strength!

There’s a second aspect of how calling upon God brings glory to Him, and it is this:

#### B. Because it is a demonstration of our trust in God and His Word

When we call upon God for help, it is not just because we **can’t help ourselves**—it is because we believe **He can** help us! Look again at Matthew 20:31. **What** do they ask for? Mercy! In vs 32, we see Jesus’ response.

--Did Jesus **know** what they needed—and wanted? Of course! But He wanted them to be specific about their need...and acknowledge their inability to meet that need. We see their response in vs 33. Prayer is not just about admitting our inabilities and weaknesses, though—it is about trusting in God’s abilities and strength!

--They couldn’t **give themselves** sight, but they knew **Jesus could give** them sight. So **they asked** Jesus for their sight—and **they received** their sight! We see that in vs 34.

And—if we worked our way back through Matthew in the passages we just looked at—we would see a demonstration of their faith in Jesus and His ability to do what they themselves could not do! We’re not going to do that, but I do want us to go back to Matthew 8 and look at a couple of other examples.

--Notice Mt 8:1-2. Did the leper come right out and say, “Lord, heal me”? He didn’t, did he? But...he needed to be healed and he knew Jesus could heal him! “Lord, if thou wilt”—‘you have the ability to cleanse me!’

--Jesus’ response? “I will; be thou clean.”

--One more, look at Mt 8:5-6. Did the **centurion ask** for Jesus to heal his servant? Not exactly—but that is certainly what **he wanted!** Did the centurion **believe** Jesus could heal his servant? He certainly did!

--Now vs 7. Notice the response of the centurion in vs 8 – “but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.” In vs 10, Jesus holds up this man as **an example** of faith. But...we need to be careful not to **glorify the man** for his faith—and forget to bring glory to the One who did the actual healing!

Is our faith always as strong as this centurion’s? No—sometimes our faith is weak! In Mark’s account of the man with the demon-possessed son, he said to Jesus in **Mk 9:24** “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”

What was Jesus’ response? Was it, “No; your faith is too weak?” That wasn’t His response, was it? **He healed** the man’s son—even though the man’s faith was weak! And that serves as an example to us to come to God when we have needs—even if we are **struggling with doubts of God’s willingness** to meet those needs! Our faith should not be in **our faith**—or in **our prayers!** It should be **in God** and His Word!

What about you? Do you call upon God in the day of trouble? He wants you to—and when you do you bring glory to God—even if He doesn't give you the exact answer you want! How? Because praying is a declaration of **your inabilities and weaknesses**—but also a demonstration of **your trust in God and His Word!** And both point away from you—and to Him!

Next, let's consider a second way that praying brings glory to God. Prayer is not just about "asking and receiving"—it is also about **confessing** our sins! **2. Confession of sin brings glory to God**

Please take your Bibles and turn to Psalm 51. In the way of background, Psalm 51 was written by David after committing adultery with Bathsheba—the wife of one of his top military men. As a result of this affair, Bathsheba was pregnant with David's child.

In an attempt to cover up his sin, David called Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, in from the battlefield and sent him home to spend time with his wife. Uriah refused to do that, however, because he didn't feel it was right for him to be at home when his fellow soldiers were on the battlefield. So Uriah slept at the king's gate instead.

Since "Plan A" didn't work, David had to come up with a "Plan B." What was "Plan B"? **Have Uriah killed!** How did he do that? By writing a letter to the leader of his army—Joab—which said: "...Set ye Uriah in the **forefront** of the hottest battle, and **retire ye from him**, that he may be smitten, and die." (II Sam 11:15)

Joab—being more loyal **to David** than he was **to God**—unfortunately did what David said. Uriah was killed and humanly speaking, no one knew what **really happened**—except David and Joab.

**But God**, of course, **knew**—and David (of all people) should have known **that God knew!** And in II Samuel 11:27, we read this sobering declaration: "But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord."

What happened next? Did **God have David** killed—the proper punishment under the Mosaic law for adultery and murder? **No**; He didn't! God—in His goodness and mercy—uses the prophet Nathan to confront David about his sin. And this Ps was David's confession. Many Bible scholars believe Ps 32 is a sequel to this one.

So...back to the question at hand: 'How does confession of sin bring glory to God'?

First... A. It is an agreement with God that **we are sinful**

Is mankind sinful? Yes; God tells us that multiple times in His Word!

--I Kings 8:46 "... (for there is **no man that sinneth** not,) ..."

--Eccl 7:20 "For there is **not a just man** upon earth, that doeth good, and **sinneth not.**"

--Romans 3:10 "As it is written, There is **none righteous**, no, **not one:**"

--Romans 3:23 "For **all have sinned**, and come short of the glory of God;"

So when we confess our sins, we are agreeing with God that He is right—**we are sinful!**

David does that here in Psalm 51. Notice David's agreement with God that he had sinned.

--End of vs 1: "...blot out **my transgressions.**"

--Vs 2 "Wash me thoroughly from **mine iniquity**, and cleanse me from **my sin.**"

--Vs 3 "For I acknowledge **my transgressions...**"

--Vs 4 "Against thee, thee only, have **I sinned...**"

--Vs 9 "Hide thy face from **my sins...**"

No blaming others—and no excuses! David in essence is saying, "I agree with you God—I'm a sinner!" And agreeing with God about our sin brings glory to God—not ourselves!

David didn't just **acknowledge his sin** in his prayer, though. His confession also brought glory to God because... B. It is an acknowledgment that God is the **sin-forgiver**

We see that in this Psalm too, don't we?

--**Why**—in vs 1—does David ask God to have mercy upon him and blot out his transgressions?

Because God is the only One who can do that!

--**Why**—in vs 2—does David ask God to wash him and cleanse him?

Because God is the only One who can do that!

--**Why**—in vs 7—does David ask to be purged and cleaned and washed?

Because God is the only One who can do that!

--**Why**—in vs 10—does David ask God to create a clean heart within him?

Because God is the only One who can do that!

And acknowledging that God is the only One who can blot out our sins...and wash us...and cleanse us...and purge us...and create a clean heart within us certainly brings glory to God—not us!

What about you? Do you believe the two things David said about God: 1) that you are a sinner; and 2) that you need to be forgiven by God? We'll come back to this thought in a little bit.

How does praying bring glory to God? **1. Calling upon Him** is a declaration of our inabilities and weaknesses—and demonstrates we trust in Him and His Word. **2. Confessing our sin** to Him indicates our agreement with Him that we are sinful—and acknowledges our belief that God is the sin-forgiver.

Lastly, **3. Communion with God brings glory to Him**

Before we look at **how** communion with God brings glory to Him, I want to explain... A. What communion is

By communion, **I'm not talking about** the ordinance we observe once per month—usually the first Sunday of the month—whereby we **commemorate Christ's substitutionary death** on the cross for us by eating a small wafer of unleavened bread and drinking a small cup of grape juice.

What I'm talking about is having **heart-to-heart communion—conversations**—with God. It's somewhat difficult to explain because we don't physically **see God** with our eyes—or **hear His voice** in our ears—when we spend time conversing with Him.

Fanny Crosby captured that thought well in stanza 3 of her song, "I Am Thine, O Lord":

*"O the pure delight of a single hour that before Thy throne I spend,*

*When I kneel in prayer, and with Thee, my God, I commune as friend with friend."*

More important than songs, of course, is what the Bible says about communing with God.

--David in **Ps 4:4** "Stand in awe, and sin not: **commune** with your own heart upon your bed, and be still."

--Jesus, I believe, expanded on this "heart communion" with God in **John 4:23-24** "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father **in spirit and in truth**: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. <sup>24</sup> God is a Spirit: and they that **worship Him** must worship Him **in spirit and in truth**."

--Paul—in Philippians 3:10—talks about knowing God on a personal level—not just knowing about Him.

--And in **James 4:8**, we see there is a **drawing near to God**—where He also **draws near to us**: "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you...."

B. How communion with God brings glory to Him

So how does communion with God bring glory to Him? Should be pretty obvious, right?

When we spend time with God, we indicate our belief that He is a "friend" worth getting to know!

--How do we get to know **people**? By spending time with them, right?

--In August, we got to know the Hermans better because they spent a whole week here for VBS

--The workers also got to know one another better because they spent time together

Dave, while cutting wood yesterday, said something to the effect of "I don't like you guys; you're a bad influence on me." I could have understood if he said that about Justin and Chris—but he said it to me, Don, and Art! But...because I've spent time with Dave, I know him well enough to know that he actually does like us!

**How** does getting to know God glorify Him?

**1) When we spend time with God, He changes us—and that brings glory to Him!**

**John 15:5, 8** "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. Herein is my **Father glorified**, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." II Corinthians 3:18 says nearly the same thing.

As we spend time with God, He changes us—He makes us more Christ-like. And as we are made more Christ-like, God gets the glory!

2) When we spend time with God, He comforts us by giving us peace and rest

--Stanza 1 of Ron Hamilton's song "The Secret Place" points to this: (Pg 176)

*"I've found a secret place of comfort and release, A special place of healing, a quiet place of peace. And everyone who dwells there finds rest beneath God's wing. In the shade of His pavilion, new strength He always brings."*

Again, songs are good reminders, but what does the Bible say?

Jesus—in **Mt 11:28** (which also happens to be on the cover of your bulletin)—says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you" what? Rest!

Do you spend time with God, communing with Him as "friend to friend"? If not, you're missing out!

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So what would God have us do with what we've heard this morning?

Praying brings glory to God, doesn't it?

1. So one thing we need to consider is **do we pray?**

We have not because we ask not!

2. But prayer is not just about asking and receiving, it is also about confessing our sins. If we are going to change and grow and sin less, we need to confess our sins. And when we do that, I John 1:9 reminds us that "He is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

3. Third, are you spending time with God to commune with Him and get to know Him?

--Many of us—far too many of us—are willing to give up time for others—and ourselves—but have little time for God!

Why is that? It may be because you are not a child of God! How do we become a child of God?

John 1:12 "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power [authority] to become the sons of God.

What happens when you **receive** Christ? You have the Son!

And what happens when you **have the Son?** You have life—meaning eternal life!

But, "he that hath not the Son hath not life."