

How to Glorify God – Sunday 1st October 2023 – Roger Simpson

I heard a story about a man who lived in New York. One day he found a \$25 bill on the pavement. From that day on, he always walked with his head down. Over the course of his life, he collected 53,146 buttons, 18,651 pins, a bent back and a Mean Character !

What did he miss. ? He never saw the blossom on the trees. The warmth of the sun . Or the smiles on children's faces. Or the brightness of the stars. Because he was always looking down.

2 Many Christians are like that. We spend our lives looking down. At our problems and our struggles. And we need to look up. We need to look up to Christ. We need to fix our eyes on him. As we do that He will change us. He will transform us by his Holy Spirit.

3 Last week we looked at what it means to live a life worthy of the gospel. Worthy of Christ. Today I want us to think about how we can glorify God in our lives.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO GLORIFY GOD ?

1 we all have the same calling. to Glorify God in everything that we do. That is why we're here. The Bible says that God created us for his glory. Listen to Isaiah 43 v7 ' everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made'

2 We are called by God, not to add to his glory, but to recognise and acknowledge his glory. The basic meaning of the word glory is "heavy in weight." so to glorify God means to give WEIGHT or HONOUR to God. How are we going to do this ? can we turn to our passage for today Matthew 21 23-32.

3 Maybe you've come to church this morning with all sorts of burdens on your heart. Maybe it's to do with your work, or lack of it. Maybe you're struggling in your health. Maybe you've got problems at home. Maybe you're struggling with depression or loneliness. I want us to look up at Christ today. Learn from Him

A TO GLORIFY GOD MEANS TO DO WHAT HE SAYS. (Matthew 21 v28-32)

1. The chief priests and the elders demanded to know by what authority Jesus had come into the temple. Over-turning the tables of the money changers. And the Benches of those who sold doves. Jesus had been with them now for three years. They had seen some of the miracles he had performed. They had heard his teaching and watched his life. But still, they would not face the facts. They wanted more evidence.
 2. In taking them back to the ministry of John the Baptist. Jesus was not trying to avoid the issue. John had prepared the way for Jesus. Had the rulers received John's teaching. They would've received Jesus. Instead the leaders had permitted Herod to arrest John and then to have him killed.
if they would not accept the authority of John Baptist. They would not accept the authority of Jesus. For both, John and Jesus were sent by God, so Jesus tells them a story ABOUT A MAN AND HIS TWO SONS.
- a The man was the owner of the vineyard. In Jesus's day vineyards were often family businesses. They were in the wine business. The two sons worked for their father.. But they also worked for themselves. Because they were the inheritors of the vineyard .The father asks the first son to go and work in the vineyard. The first son says "no. "He's not going to go he's tired and busy. But then as he thinks about

it, he changes his mind and he goes.

- b The second son says yes, I will go (he even says his father sir) and work, but he doesn't. (I wonder if you have ever said that you're going to do something and haven't done it. There are many times when I have done this. I've said I'm going to do something and then I forget. I always feel terrible when I when I do this.) there are other times when I say I'm not going to do something (sometimes when my wife asks me to do something !) and then as I think about it I end up doing it.

WHAT'S THE POINT OF THE PARABLE ?

- a it's very clear. It's about OBEDIENCE and DISOBEDIENCE
 - a The story is very direct. There are those who refuse God then they repent and obey Him. . They were the tax collectors and the prostitutes. They had turned their backs on God and rejected him. But then they heard the teachings of John the Baptist and Jesus. And They had thought about it, and they had repented and believed in him. They entered the kingdom of God.
- b then there were others, like the priests and the leaders of the people. Who claimed to accept the message of God. Who claimed to treat God with respect. They had listened to John the Baptist. But then they turned their backs on him. The religious leaders refused to hear John's message, and to repent. so they excluded themselves from Gods kingdom.
- c APPLICATION Let me ask you. Are you obeying God.? Is God speaking to you about something and you are not listening to him ? Something He's telling you to do ? Or not do ? There is a saying " Actions speak louder than words " I have found it to be true in my own life " that I cannot learn New Truths from God , if I disobey what he has already told me to do'

B TO GLORIFY GOD MEANS TO DENY OURSELVES Philipians 2v1-13

He tells them four things

1. DON'T DO THINGS from selfish ambition or vain conceit .v3. we're not to put ourselves first. Nothing wrong in Ambition itself. Ambition is the desire to succeed. There is nothing wrong with that. But it's when we want to succeed at the expense of others. What is vain CONCEIT ? It's self importance. It's the desire to be number one.(story about a flight that was cancelled. Single agent looking after everyone. Long line of passengers. Angry passenger pushes his way to the desk.' I have to get on that flight. And it has to be first class.' I'm sorry , she said ' I've got to help these people first. And then we will work out something for you.' He was very angry. Said very loudly."DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHO I AM "" without hesitating. The agent smiled. Grabbed the PA system. " may I have your attention please. Her voice could be heard throughout the whole airport." we have a passenger here. At Gate 14 WHO DOES NOT KNOW WHO HE IS ' if anyone can help him with his identity . Please come to gate 14.!") That man felt he was so important. We can all feel that I am more important than someone else. We must be humble .how do we do this ? By looking at Jesus Christ.
2. But "DO REGARD OTHERS AS BETTER THAN YOURSELVES" V3 How do we do this when we know we are better than they are (some people who I know that I am better than. There are other who I know are better than me) Then my pastor explained " consider others as MORE IMPORTANT than yourselves.
3. DONT merely LOOK OUT FOR YOUR OWN INTERESTS.
4. DO LOOK OUT FOR THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS. What is it that spoils our relationships with others.? At the root of it all is PRIDE. and the opposite of pride is HUMILITY. We are to have the mind of Jesus Christ.v5.

The same attitude of mind that Christ Jesus had. Look at Jesus.

5. So though he was in very nature God, he didn't use that to his own advantage , rather he made himself nothing taking the nature of a servant. (I have always been struck by the little phrase in Johns Gospel, when Jesus is in the upper room with his disciples. John tells us that "he knew that the father had put all things under his power, and that he has come from God, and was returning to God. So what did he do? He got up from the meal, took off his outer garments and wrapped a towel around his waist and washed his disciples feet! it was because he was secure in his own identity that he was able to serve others.

APPLICATION

- a If we are secure in our identity in Christ, that will give us the power and the desire to serve other people instead of ourselves. And we glorify God when we serve others and DENY ourselves. What does this mean in practice?
- b how can we put others first? We can show little acts of kindness each day for people. Even strangers! We can encourage people and thank them. We can go out of our way to serve them, and if Jesus Christ prompts you to ring someone up, or visit them or drop them a line go and do it. Keep reaching out to others with the love of Jesus Christ.

C FINALLY TO GLORIFY GOD MEANS TO DRAW ON HIS POWER. Read V12-13.

1. what does Paul mean when he says work out your salvation with fear and trembling? How do I workout my salvation ? it is to WORK OUT what God has already WORKED IN YOU
2. God has already given us his salvation, his freedom, his forgiveness and his power. This is all in Jesus Christ. It's Inside us. We have now got to work it out. Draw on his power.
(Ursula and I have electric bikes. Battery with power in it. When we go cycling up in the hills ,as we did the other day in the Hills .And we come to a big hill we have to cycle. But as we do , the power in the battery kicks in and we can get to the top of the hill. We even tried cycling up the hill to the Bastille but in the end it was just a bit too steep for us !!)
3. God needs our Co operation. With his Grace. On Wednesday I was chatting to one of our sons. He is a pastor in Cardiff. He goes regularly into the prison. He wrote this. Today I had the joy of meeting a man who has recently left prison. He came to a service I led in prison over a year ago, and he responded then to my invitation to receive prayer. I had forgotten that I prayed (quite unusually!) for him to receive the gift of tongues, and today he explained how he had received it on his own soon afterwards. On his wing (with the recovering drug addicts), they experienced a remarkable season where he led times of prayer and bible study. People would ask him for prayer, even without knowing he was a Christian, just because of the way he carried himself! He is now looking to join Citizen Church and is living about 200 metres from one of our church buildings. He had drawn on the power of Jesus Christ.
4. So let's Co operate with him.

CONCLUSION.

Don't look down. Look up to Jesus Christ. Learn from Him. Stay close to him. DO What he says. DENY yourself . Think of others as more important than you are DRAW on his power that is at work in you.

LET US PRAY.

1 DO what he tells you. Mary said that to the steward when the wine ran out. Is God telling you to do something. Is he telling you not to do something? Pray.

2 DENY yourself. Put others first. Marriages. Someone in your family. At work. Someone you can express your appreciation for. Pray.

3 DRAW on his power. Some situation you're facing. Draw on his power this week. Pray.