

Romans 16:27 – God's Glory in the Gospel – 06 October 2013

If you are here for the first time you, you are here on a very special Sunday, because this is the last Sunday we are going through a very long series in our church, a series through the book of Romans. This series began in February 2011, so, that's about 2 1/2 years or more ago and I want to thank all of you for sticking with this, through it all and I pray it has been a useful and a blessed journey walking through the book of Romans.

This is a great book because this is about the great news, the good news of Jesus Christ, how he came to die, to save us from our sins, in order to bring us back to God. This is a book about man's joy in God's salvation, this is about your life and how you can be brought back in communion with the great God, all because of grace, all because of love, all because God so loved the world He gave His only Son. So we are grateful to God for giving us this wonderful book, in the book of Romans.

But today we come to the last sermon, the closing message in this more than two and a half year series and I was thinking to myself what should be preached. After all, this is the last sermon, what should we focus on, what should we be looking at and I had this on my mind for weeks, I didn't quite know what to say, should I recap, should I focus on one message, what should I do? The answer is given when I go back to the Scriptures. Amazingly, it's found in the Bible again, in the very last verse of this book of Romans, it says

to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Rom 16:27

to the only wise God, be the glory forevermore through Jesus Christ amen.

And it struck me, there is no better way, there is no fitting message, than to say this is a book that must close with the glory of God because the book of Romans, while it is about God's love for us, it's about salvation given to us, it's about you and how you could be saved and blessed and become heirs and co-heirs with Jesus. While it is a lot about you, ultimately, it is about glory to God. It's about Him.

And so today, I want you to be able to see the glory of God in the book of Romans. You say, what glory? You know, glory is a word that we throw around, we use and we may not be very clear what it really means. What does it mean to have the glory of

God? What does it mean, to the only wise God, be glory? Well, it's the recognition of Who He is.

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Let's look at this passage from Moses. He says,

Moses said, "Please show me your glory ."

Exodus 33:18 ESV

Please show me your glory. He is saying, hey God, I want to see your glory, I want to understand what this means. Show me Your glory. You say, what is glory? Moses is asking this question: show me Your glory. God answered him and this is an amazing text in Exodus 34:6-7 , where it says

6 The Lord passed before him and proclaimed,
"The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger,
and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,
7 keeping steadfast love for thousands,
forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,
but who will by no means clear the guilty,
visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children
and the children's children,
to the third and the fourth generation."

Exodus 34:6-7 (ESV)

You say, what's all this about? Well, God is answering Moses' prayer. Moses is saying God show me Your glory and here, God is saying, this is My glory. You say, what is Your glory, Lord? It's to reveal to you who I Am.

God's glory is the display of His goodness and His greatness. And God is saying, this is My glory that I am merciful, that I'm gracious, that I'm long-suffering, that I'm love and faithfulness, that I am a God of forgiveness, I am a God of holiness, I am a God of wrath and justice and I am God. You say what is glory? Can I give you a very simple definition? I believe God's glory is His manifested excellence. That's it! What does it mean for God to be glorious? It means He manifests His excellence before us.

So it is the display of His goodness, His greatness; it is the beauty and the splendor of His perfection. That's what glory is all about.

So how can we see God's glory? Can we say, like, like Moses, "God can you show me Your glory?" and then we wait outside and look outside our window and wait for God to pass us by? No, I don't think you can, you need to do that today. The Bible tells us where we see God's manifested excellence. How do you know God is love, how do you know God is great, how do you know God is powerful? Well, you can see it in the creation all around us. After all, the Scriptures declare the heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims His handiwork. There's something amazing when you go to a faraway land and you behold the landscape, isn't it? Singapore is very hard, lah. Everywhere you look, it's concrete buildings, built by men. But when you go overseas, you go to great countries, where there is great scenery, something happens to you when you behold the splendor of creation. There's an awe, there's a wonder, there's an amazement, when you see the grand mountains and the beautiful skies. Why? Because these creations, are, are, are speaking to us and there's a resonance in our hearts: wow, this is amazing, this is great, this is awesome because in our hearts, we are hearing a preacher. The preacher is creation and the creation is speaking to us, day and night about the greatness, the beauty, the excellence of God. So the heavens declare the glory of God, the manifested excellence of God.

The heavens declare the glory of God ,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. (Psalm 19:1 ESV)

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For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. (Romans 1:20 ESV)

Paul likewise tells us in Romans 1. The invisible attributes, you see the love, the power, the holiness of God, His divine nature. All that is clearly perceived, clearly seen. Ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made so that they are without excuse.

There's no man today who can say, "I do not know there is God". Well, the Bible says you have no excuse. Just look at the sky, look at the flowers, look at the animals, look at creation. You're without excuse. In all these things, you can see God. You may fool yourself to think there is no God, but God says to you, you're without excuse, it can be clearly seen.

Isaiah tells us

And one called to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
the whole earth is full of His glory !”

(Isaiah 6:3 ESV)

Again, the glory of God is seen in creation. But that's not my point today, okay. The glory of God is His manifested excellence. You can see it in creation, but there is somewhere else you can see God's glory. And it is in the book of Romans, or if I may put it a bit more generally, it's seen in the Scriptures, it's seen in the Gospel. The Gospel is a central message of the Bible and the glory of God is seen when you go through and understand the Gospel. It is almost like taking a tour, you know you go to a faraway land, you survey the land and you are filled with awe. And when you go through the book of Romans, this is the response Paul has. The writer himself says this is an amazing reality, to the only wise God, be glory, because He gave us Jesus, because He gave us the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ, His Son. It fills his heart with awe. So, today, I know this is going to be a difficult message, I warn you first alright. It's going to be quite technical in the beginning, I hope it becomes easier in the end, but what I want to share with you is to see, as the last message in a book of Romans, as we look at the Gospel, whilst it has so many benefits for us, let's see the glory of God in it.

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In order to do that, I'm going to take you on a flight. But what we're going to do is to take a jet tour, first in a book of Romans, from chapter 1, all the way to chapter 16, to see the theme, the glory of God.

I'm not going to explain much. I'm just going to run through the verses, first, then after that we are going to organize them into logical parts, so that there is a flow, with regards to the understanding of God's glory and then we are going to find what this means to your life and my life, what is it's relevance? So let me take you first on a jet tour.

It begins with chapter 1. The glory of God is not a isolated reference in Romans 16:27. It is a theme that runs through the book of Romans, it starts in chapter 1. You see, the difficulty for us understanding a theme like this is because, over two and a half years, the sermons are all broken up, you can't quite see how it fits, but let's do it today.

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For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.(Romans 1:21-23 ESV)

So it begins with God's glory being robbed, God's glory being shamed, God's glory being dragged through the mud. The immortal God is now represented as birds and man and monkeys and snakes and reptiles. Unbelievable, Paul says.

So the Gospel tells you about a dire need, man has exchanged God's glory. Then we move on to chapter 3, where it says here,

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for all have sinned and
fall short of the glory of God

(Romans 3:23 ESV)

Again, this is with reference to God's glory.

Chapter 4 Abraham.

but he grew strong in his
faith as he gave glory to God,

(Romans 4:20 ESV)

He grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God. So there is a bright light that begins now in Romans.

Chapters 1 and 3 are really dark and gloomy because no glory, people are not worshiping God for who He is. But, chapter 4 there's a bright light. Someone believes God, someone gives glory to God. Chapter 5 tells you about the power of this glory,

So much so that when we are able to realize we stand in grace, we are related with God, in the deepest pains, you can rejoice.

Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

(Romans 5:2 ESV)

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This is a powerful thing. This is a powerful force, that when we understand the glory of God, it is so strong that we can rejoice because the glory of God will come one day, it's the hope of the glory of God.

Chapter 8 tells you this glory that is to be revealed to us.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

(Romans 8:18 ESV)

He is saying there's something in the future that is coming, be excited about it, it's coming one day. Verse 21 says,

that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

(Romans 8:21 ESV)

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we will obtain that freedom of the glory of the children of God. Verse 30 tells us about its surety, it's so sure that is written as if it's in the past tense.

And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

(Romans 8:30 ESV)

So there's that future dimension, in the glory of God, that so attracts us. As Christians, children of God, you don't live just for the here and now, you live for the future isn't it? You have an eye to the day Jesus returns. That's the glory of God. Then you look at Romans 9, where Paul says

What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory

(Romans 9:22-23 ESV)

they are vessels prepared before hand to be vessels of glory. You and I are created by God to be vessels, receptacles to show something. To show what? To show the glory of God.

Romans 11, Paul almost could not take it anymore. He says

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever . Amen.

(Romans 11:36 ESV)

before I end the letter of Romans, I just need to say this: to God be glory forever.

He is filled with awe as he journeys through Romans.

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Then we see in chapter 15.

that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

(Romans 15:6-7 ESV)

As Christians, Jews and Gentiles gathered together, we glorify God with one voice. Again, the glory of God.

Verse nine:

and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.

As it is written, "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name."

(Romans 15:9 ESV)

and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God. You say, what's the purpose of salvation? Glorify God. And then lastly in verse twenty-seven of chapter 16,

to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.
(Rom 16:27)

to the only wise God be glory.

Alright, so that's a jet tour. We started from here, chapter 1,

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.
(Romans 1:21-23 ESV)

we went all the way here in chapter 16,

to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.
(Rom 16:27)

You say, okay, pastor, I am confused. Wah so many glory, so what, what, what, what's the message here. Can I try my best to organize it for you, first, before we explain the significance.

First of all the book of Romans starts with a problem. The book of Romans start with a tragedy.

Abomination of God's Glory (Rom 1 & 3)

And the tragedy is this: that man who knew God, would not worship Him as God but would exchange His glory to images of animals, and creeping things. And that's what Paul says:

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him,they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for image (Rom 1:21)

They exchange the glory of the immortal God for images such as man, animals, birds and reptiles. Notice the problem is not that they did not know God. We are absolutely guilty as charged, because we all knew God or we all know God but we refuse to worship Him. You say, how do you know we all know God ? Scripture says from the

creation of the world, God can be seen, but subtly in our hearts, we suppressed that knowledge, we will not receive that knowledge, we will not admit to it. I'm such a man like this in the past. I can see creation, I can see the beauty of the world, but I refuse to believe there is a God. Well, that's guilty as charged. And what happens is that we commit abomination, we desecrate God's Name, we shame His Name. And sin is defined here in Romans three,

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23)

as something that makes us fall short of God's glory. Sin makes us incapable of praising Him and living for Him as we should. It's about God's glory and sin makes us fall way, way, way short of that. So Romans begins with a very difficult problem: man has committed abomination.

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You know, sin is not between me and you. Sin is primarily between me and God. And that is man's problem. You are cut off from God because we would not own Him as God. But the bright light becomes, begins to come in Romans four where it says here,

Appreciation of God's Glory (Rom 4)

but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God (Rom 4:20)

Abraham grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God. What honors God today is your faith. Without faith it is impossible to please Him. He that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Faith honors God; unbelief shames God. So here we have Abraham who appreciates God for who He is. He recognizes God's greatness and goodness, His beauty and His splendor and therefore he believes. So that is the appreciation, there is a turn up.

Then we have the anticipation of God's glory. In Romans chapters 5 and 8 Paul speaks a lot about this power, this beauty about glory that so stirs our hearts.

In Romans five, we can rejoice in hope of glory. Romans 8, the glory that is to be revealed. We have anticipation for the freedom of the glory of the children of God. Romans 8:30 and those whom he justified, He also glorified.

Anticipation of God's Glory (Rom 5 & 8)

we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (Rom 5:2)
the glory that is to be revealed to us. (Rom 8:18)
freedom of the glory of the children of God. (Rom 8:21)
and those whom he justified he also glorified. (Rom 8:30)

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This is all about future things. The book of Romans is about glory, about anticipating that glory.

Number 4: we have this assurance of glory,

Abomination of God's Glory (Rom 1 & 3)

Appreciation of God's Glory (Rom 4)

Anticipation of God's Glory (Rom 5 & 8)

Assurance of God's Glory (Rom 9 & 11)

the glory of God through man is not something left up to men. God guarantees, God assures, God Himself is going to ensure that we will have or we our lives will be channels and vessels that will reflect His glory. Why? In Romans nine

to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory

(Rom 9:23)

We are told He makes known the riches of His glory, through these vessels of mercy, which He has prepared before hand. So again, God is not leaving anything to chance. There's no such thing as chance, everything is under His sovereign control, there is assurance of that. And so what begins in a mess, is going to end up glorious, that is what prompts Paul to say to Him be glory forever. That's what prompts Paul to break out in doxology.

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. (Rom 11:36)

And finally we have the adoration of God's glory.

Abomination of God's Glory (Rom 1 & 3)

Appreciation of God's Glory (Rom 4)

Anticipation of God's Glory (Rom 5 & 8)

Assurance of God's Glory (Rom 9 & 11)

Adoration of God's Glory (Rom 15 & 16)

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When we are saved, when we believe in Jesus, when we are a redeemed people, what happens is that this allows us, whether you a Jew or Gentile, male or female, of different classes, of different backgrounds, to unite together with one voice to glorify God. You say, why are you and I saved? Because God loves us, true. Because God wants to give you joy and peace, true. But don't forget: he saves us because we glorify Him as a people.

that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 15:6)

That's the purpose. That is that is doesn't that may not sit well with our man humanistic centered kind of thinking today, but according to Scripture, that's why He saves us, to the praise of the glory of His grace. And he goes on that the Gentiles might glorify God

and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. (Rom 15:9)

and he ends off, therefore, we come one full circle

to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen. (Rom 16:27)

to the only wise God be glory forevermore.

So, this is what it is, the story of God's glory in the book of Romans begins with Abomination but ends up with Adoration.

Abomination of God's Glory (Rom 1 & 3)

Appreciation of God's Glory (Rom 4)

Anticipation of God's Glory (Rom 5 & 8)

Assurance of God's Glory (Rom 9 & 11)

Adoration of God's Glory (Rom 15 & 16)

All right, that's what we need to see in the survey of Romans. But what has it got to do with me? That's the question, pastor, so what has this got to do with me? How will this impact my life? Why are you preaching this to us today? Well, it's great to know it's all about God. It's great to know he begins in what looks like a mess, in abomination, he ends up with a redeemed people who really adores and worships Him. But what's that got to do with me?

Can I suggest a few applications as we close.

Number one: I believe that in this passage. In this look and perspective of Romans, we can understand how God's glory is our greatest good. What this means is this: what really satisfies you today, what you are looking for today, what could really fill your life today is not a car, is not a house, is not perfect beautiful looks, because these things are not for your greatest good. The greatest good in our lives is God's glory in us.

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Put it the other way round, when God pursues His glory, it will result in our greatest good. These two things, God's glory and our good is inextricably linked. There is no division, there is no divide, when God is working out His glorious purposes, we will be richly blessed. And if you really want to be blessed today pursue God's glory in your life.

I put it in simple words and if you want to be impressed, then listen to Jonathan Edwards, he puts it much better. He says

God in seeking his glory
seeks the good of his creatures,
because the emanation of his glory
implies the happiness of his creatures.

Their excellency and happiness
is nothing but the emanation and
expression of God's glory.

Jonathan Edwards

God in seeking His glory, seeks the good of His creatures, because the emanation of His glory, implies the happiness of His creatures. Now, understand he is in the seventeenth century. So English a bit (colloquial for deep, profound) and he goes on to say, their excellency and happiness is nothing but the emanation and expression of God's glory.

So, he is saying, God's glory results in my happiness and my greatest happiness is found in God's glory. Same thing. Same thing and he goes on to say,

God's respect to the creature's good,
and his respect to himself,
is not a divided respect;
but both are united in one,
as the happiness of the creature aimed at
is happiness in union with himself.

Jonathan Edwards

God's respect to the creature's good and His respect to Himself is not a divided respect, but both are united in one, as the happiness of the creature aimed at is happiness in union with Himself. So when you look at the book of Romans, it testifies to this reality. The book of Romans is about God's goodness to us, absolutely, and at the same time, the book of Romans is about God's glory. From Romans 1 to 16, God is working out our good and then from Romans 1 to 16, God is working out His glory. You get that? Or if John Piper were to help you, he would say this: we are most, oh,

God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him

Heard that statement before? It's his, it's his tagline, man. God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him. The reverse is also true: we are most satisfied in Him when God is most glorified in us. It is inextricably linked. You say why, why is this so? Why is it when God is most glorious, when He manifests Himself in His goodness and greatness, when He displays His beauty and splendor, why is it that when I see that I'm most happy, I'm most satisfied, I'm most blessed? Why?

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It's found in the reason of your creation, how you are made, how you are made. You see the Bible tells us this is the reason why you made:

Rev 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.

you are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power for You have created all things, and for your pleasure they are and were created.

Let me say this about you: you are created to worship, you are a natural worshiper, everyone worships, everyone. To those who know the true and living God we worship God, to those who do not, they may worship idols, they may worship cars, they may worship their careers, they may worship money. Some of you worship k-pop idols. That's why you have American idols. We are, we are natural worshipers and only when you worship the Right Person then you find real satisfaction.

But if you do not know God, you're always groveling, you're always searching, you're trying very hard but it can never fill that infinite void within your soul because that infinite void can only be satisfied in God. So when God pursues His greatest glory and when we know Him, it is our greatest good. And our greatest good is found in nothing less than God's glory alone. The Westminster confession of faith, I think the most famous statement from that whole confession is this:

Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.

Heard this before? I am sure you have. What's interesting, I feel, is it is man's chief end, it is not man's chief ends. It may sound like there are two things: glorify God and to enjoy Him. But no; in the mind of the theologians, it is one thing, probably. Man's chief aim is glorify God and when you glorify God, you enjoy Him. When you enjoy God, you glorify God. God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him and we are most satisfied in Him when God is most glorified in us, because God's glory is the greatest good.

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You know, when you think about God's glory, it's amazing. We, we don't quite understand what it means today. We still find a lot of satisfaction in material things and in ourselves, and so on and so forth. But when this flesh is removed when we get to heaven, some people wonder what we're going to do in heaven. Are we going to drink tea, play tennis, watch movies? I don't know what movies we're going to watch but when we get to heaven what are we going to do? I do not know, but whenever I turn to Scripture, whenever I look at the book of Revelation, it seems to me, this is the ultimate preoccupation of the people of God: they behold God's glory and they praise God's glory because God's glory will be our greatest good. You say, eee, so boring every day sing. Well, it's because we have not yet understood nor comprehended the exceeding greatness and splendor of the glory of God. Therefore you're looking to do earthly things in heaven. Aah no, I think in heaven, it will be quite different; God will be your everlasting joy and portion and that is what satisfies you, for all of eternity.

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I say to you today preaching of God's Word, if you are teaching Sunday, you are teaching Bible studies, you are doing teaching of God's Word, you are starting in Christian scholarship, can I encourage you today don't, don't read so much as to find out about you only, or to find out how I can improve only, the chief thing when you look into the Scriptures, is to see God, because when you see God, when we preach God, when you hear God today, when you know God today, this will be your greatest good. That's what blows your mind away, that's what changes your life an encounter with the living God through the Scriptures.

So it should be a mirror that shows up our lives, true, but more than anything else, it should be a mirror that reflects God glory and you will be satisfied in His presence. Now, let me put this another way: God's glory is our greatest good. You see that in Romans. At the very same time, idolatry is spiritual suicide. Think about it: If God's glory is our greatest good, then anything else than God's glory is suicidal to us. Idolatry is a suicidal exchange of God's glory for things that do not work. What is idolatry? Idolatry is worshiping anything other than God. It can be an image, it can be a stone, it can be a tree, it can be a mountain, it can be your car, it can be your career, it can be yourself, it can be your wife, it can be your children. Idolatry is anything material or mental, that you worship apart from God.

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And when you do that, because your soul is so vast, your soul is so insatiable, it needs nothing less than God, you will be dissatisfied, you will always, always be struggling and not be at rest in peace with your own self. You start to destroy your own life. This is very clear in Romans 1,

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.
(Romans 1:21 ESV)

for although they knew God, this is again with reference to men, this is about you and I, this is about people today who do not follow the Lord Jesus Christ.... although they knew God, they know instinctively, there are no true atheists in this world, there are none, there are professing atheists but they're no true atheists because deep in their hearts they know God. You say, how? Again, Romans 1:20, from the invisible things, the invisible attributes of God are seen in the creation.

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.
(Romans 1:21 ESV)

Even though they knew God.... they chose not to honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking, their foolish hearts were darkened. So, when man rejects God, not because they are ignorant of God, when man rejects God, refuses God, their minds begin to be darkened. Now they still can be PhD students, they can be professors, they can be very smart people in their careers, but spiritually speaking they become darkened and futile, fruitless in their thinking and what happens next is that they became fools,

Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

(Romans 1:22-23 ESV)

and it is an extremely foolish thing for a man to worship an idol instead of God. You think about it: you may be here, you're not a Christian, you've never been to church, but I urge you, even right where you are, think about it: can it be that the God who created us become something that is below us? An elephant, a cow, a pig, a monkey, and you say, oh, this is my God! Ridiculous! Think about it, but that happens

absolutely throughout the world because man's heart is darkened. When you see someone worship an idol, he's not seeking God, the opposite is true, he is running away from God, he may bow to a statue but he is actually running away from God. The irony of idolatry, distorted worship. Now, what happens is you begin to commit spiritual suicide, because

Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

(Romans 1:22-23 ESV)

now that you exchange the glory of God into corruptible images, God gives you up over to your own lusts.

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

(Romans 1:24-25 ESV)

You do not want Me, you do not want to worship Me, I will leave you to your own devices. And when He leaves us to our own devices, man who is hungry and searching in his soul is always looking for something. He looks for things that would destroy him. He's like a man who is drinking saltwater or seawater in order to quench his thirst. He is thirsty, but he is drinking saltwater exacerbating his dehydration.

So what happens is that God gives them up. They worship a lie, they worship the creature and so, God gave them up to dishonorable passions. What kind of dishonorable passions? Look at these verses,

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

(Romans 1:26-7 ESV)

They abuse relationships. Natural relationships they go to homosexuality. This is what it is in a short word, this is about homosexuality. And we have today said homosexuality is in our genes. It's it's of circumstance, we can't help it. No, you can help it. It's a spiritual decision. Sure, genes may influence things, circumstances, environment may influence it, but ultimately, it is a sign of someone who is given over to their own devices and lust. Homosexuality brings along with it due penalty.

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

(Romans 1:26-7 ESV)

You suffer for. It goes on, it's scary and since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, so on and so forth.

And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice.envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness.gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

(Romans 1:28-31 ESV)

Whole list. Now this is really amazing because when I was younger, I was always thinking about countries around Singapore and there are countries in Southeast Asia that are steeped in idolatry. I mean, I see many of them worship, they are very pious looking people, but, how come in those countries, there is so high, such high rates of prostitution, of sexual crimes, of gay people, homosexuality is rampant, I thought they should be a very reverential people. I understand now: that when you are in a country full of idolatry, it is not a mark of a people who seeks God, it is a mark of a people who runs from God, refuses God. God gives them up to their darkness and therefore that country, the people are steeped in the ways of sin that will ultimately destroy them.

Idolatry is spiritual suicide. Young people, who do you worship today? Do you know that the choices you make, who you worship, what you worship today, will influence your life tremendously? It makes a big difference.

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So we see that God's glory is our greatest good and the flip side of it, idolatry is spiritual suicide.

I recommend to you today, a very simple thing and that is please live for God's glory, because that's the best thing for yourself, because He's worth it, because He made us, He saved us, He gives us so much, today live for God's glory.

You say, what does it mean pastor to live for God's glory? Does it mean I have to be a missionary, does it mean that I have to quit my job and go to Timbuktu to share the Gospel? Maybe some of you may be called to do that, but I suspect not many, not all. So how does it mean, how do we live out the glory?

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Yesterday, I was with our in a discipleship group and I I was reminded of this beautiful chart. I thought it's so appropriate. What does it mean to live for God's glory? Very simple. It's about circles of priority. It starts from here, in God, to family, to work, to others. So in the realm of God, we have quiet time, we have obedience, we have Bible study, Scripture memory. In family we need to love our family, we need to have financial responsibility, we need to have fun times, we want to encourage our people, in a family spiritually. In the workplace, we talk about our Christian ethics and work, how we should be responsible, and so on and so forth. Then you have others, such as discipling, evangelism, recreation, fitness and so on.

Wow, this is a great chart, because this is a very good look at what it means to live out God's glory and the direction is from left to right from God, to family, to work, to others. But as I was looking at this chart, I shared with the group, the reality, however, is we don't do this. What is the reality? Would you all like to tell me what is, so is number one, in theory number one should be God, number two is ? Emm so difficult? Number one is God, number two is... family, number three work, number four, okay, this is what theoretically should take place, but practically, what takes place? Number one, sorry (pastor waits for an answer) others, number two (waits for an answer and someone says) work, number three, family, number four, God. Do you believe so ? Think about it, if it is true for your self alright.

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The reality is that it is the opposite direction. We like to focus on things maybe in church. How we look in church, how hard we serve in church, how many ministries we are in church, then we look at how we work. Work is above family, we want to look good in our workplace, we want to be successful, family next and then maybe God, if you have time, in the middle of the night, oh, late at night you give Him five minutes of your quiet time.

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You say why aaah? Strange because theoretically we can all agree to this flow, very biblical. Ephesians 5, very biblical. But why, in practice, is it the other way around? I suggest to you the reason: when you live this way you live for the glory of God (pastor shows a chart with the arrow pointing, starting from God, left to its right leading towards others). But when you live this way from right to left you live for the glory of self. Why? Because these things are the things that other people can see (he points to a circle around the word "Others"). This is where other people cannot see (he points to a circle around the word "God").

So in a very subtle way, whilst we may do ministries in church, in the name of God, really a lot of times, it can be driven by a need for self significance. Therefore, this is first (he points to a circle around the word "Others"), then how I look in the working world is important, that's second. Family, nobody sees, third. Spiritual life, I can fake it, fourth. This is the subtle thing: who do you live for? Who are you living for? Jesus said, in the same way, let your light shine before others.

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

(Matthew 5:16 ESV)

Now this is not saying Christians should not be about good works. We should be about good works, but the purpose is so that people may see our good works and give glory to our Father which is in heaven. I point out this verse because in Matthew 6, I didn't put out the verse, but in Matthew 6, Jesus seems to say something that contradicts what He said; because in Matthew 6, Jesus says do not do your works before men to be seen of men. Huh, I thought we need to let our light so shine before others, that they may see our good works. The reason is this: in Matthew 5, Jesus says, do your works before men, if your intention is to give glory to your Father; but

in Matthew 6, he says, don't do your works before men, if your intention is to be seen of men, to receive glory of men.

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Living for the glory of God is not just what you do. My point is this: living for the glory of God is why you do what you do; and you will know, if you really have the right motivation to do what you're supposed to do when you look at the circles of priority. Is it left to right, or is it, right to left.

G Campbell Morgan says:

The deepest passion of the heart of Jesus
was not the saving of men,
but the glory of God;
and then the saving of men,
because that is for the glory of God.

G Campbell Morgan

The deepest passion, this is about Jesus, alright, he says this about Jesus, the deepest passion of the heart of Jesus was not the saving of men, but the glory of God and then, the saving of men, because that is for the glory of God.

This is a profound statement, because keyword is deepest. Jesus obviously has passion for souls. No doubt about it. In Matthew 9 when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion towards them. But G Campbell Morgan is arguing, whilst that is a true passion, there is an even deeper passion and the deeper passion is the glory of God and the glory of God so drives Jesus, that He goes about the saving of man. He saves man, because it brings glory to God.

The greatest motivation for evangelism, greatest motivation for worldwide missions, greatest motivation for living out the glory or the purposes of God, is that we want to glorify Him. That's what Romans is about, it is not about you, it is about God. Yes, it will include you, but primarily it's God and when the Gospel goes deep into your heart to see how God is gracious, how God is good, how God is holy, and yet He gave you His Son. If that goes into your heart and soul, it changes your life and you go out with a great motivation and a drive to bring glory to Him. That's why we need a glimpse of His glory. So live for God's glory.

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One more application: is a very simple one, and it is to have faith in God. Hah, so simple? Yes, but pastor what you really mean by this? It means this: the book of Romans explains the mystery of the world. You say, what is the mystery of the world? The mystery of the world is this: why did God allow sin? So messy. I mean, he could have saved Himself all that trouble isn't it? And that question is so real because last week in our Q&A session, this is a question that was put up, that we have maybe fifteen, twenty questions. This is one of the questions that I thought I'll share with you and it is this: Hi Pastor Jason, I want to ask you is Satan is so, I ask you if Satan is so evil and causes so many problems, why didn't God just destroy Satan at the very beginning? Good question. Maybe, I ask you another question: then why did God make create Satan in the beginning? Isn't it easier, don't even let him exist. Could God have done that? Absolutely.

So why did God create Satan, then why did God allow Satan to fall and then why did God allow Satan to come down to earth and allow sin to penetrate the earth. Why? And because we don't understand why, we start to think maybe God forgot. Maybe God fell asleep, maybe God didn't care as much, because it caught Him by surprise, He didn't know Satan will turn in this way. Really? But Jesus was slain before the foundation of the earth. My suggestion to you, is that God allowed Satan to fall, God allowed Satan to influence the world, God allowed sin to be in this world, not because He stopped being sovereign, not because He didn't know what was happening, but because He's working out something far greater. He is working out His amazing glory and somehow through the drama of sin and redemption, it brings Him greater glory and this is what God is about.

Now before you think this is a game to God, I think I need to caution against that, because in our minds, we think, well, this is the way God shows His glory, so it's a game to Him. No it is not a game to Him. We don't quite understand it, but it is definitely not a game to Him, because He had to give His Only Son, Jesus Christ. It's a real price, heavy price that God has to pay through His Son. But even the giving of His Son, the slaying of His Son is to work out for eternity, a greater appreciation of the glory of God, because if there is no sin, if there is no sacrifice, if there is no salvation, we wouldn't know the grace of God, we wouldn't have a glimpse, any idea what it means for God to love us. You know this world, six thousand years old, if the Lord tarries, maybe another fifty years, maybe one hundred, I do not know. But when human history is in a sense wrapped up and consumed into eternity, this would seem like a vapor, and all that has happened, is a credit to the praise of the glory of His

Name and for all eternity, God's Name will be praise like never before.

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So, it looks messy, it looks really messy when man exchange the glory of God. If I were to give you this problem, how would you solve it? Don't know, let it be, let us die in our sins, but in God's amazing wisdom,

He moves,

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

(Romans 1:21-23 ESV)

He moves,

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

(Romans 3:23 ESV)

He moves,

Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

(Romans 5:2 ESV)

He moves,

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

(Romans 8:18 ESV)

He moves,

And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

(Romans 8:30 ESV)

and throughout the book of Romans He is saying,

I'm moving,

What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory

(Romans 9:22-23 ESV)

I'm moving,

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever .
Amen.

(Romans 11:36 ESV)

I'm moving,

that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

(Romans 15:6-7 ESV)

I'm moving,

and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name."

(Romans 15:9 ESV)

moving towards what end? Moving to the end, where God will receive the glory.

to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

(Rom 16:27)

So when life seems like a mess, when the world seems like a mess, this is the message from the book of Romans: you can trust Him.

I don't understand, why Satan will be allowed, I don't understand why sin is allowed, I don't understand why there is the setting aside of Israel. Well, it's for the glory of God and ultimately for also your good. Believe in God.

I say this because, there are some of you today going through trials and difficulties of life and you are wondering why. Well, I can't tell you exactly why, except to say, believe in God, He is always working out His glory through your life, even through the deepest pains and He is working out something for your good so that you will be

able to say, the afflictions I suffer today is just a momentary light affliction, compared to the weight of the glory of God that will be revealed. So today, let's thank God for His amazing grace. We end the book of Romans and the book of Romans really is about the Gospel, about amazing grace, how He loved us and gave us His Son Jesus Christ and really, that's the only way any man could be saved, because that is the only way, where we would say, no man can boast, because it's all about grace. And when we go to heaven, if I see you there, and when we see each other there, we will sing about God's grace and the drama of the Gospel today, on this earth, is a reason for us to reverberate glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. It is God's greatest glory, it is our greatest good.

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If you today are here and you do not know Jesus, there's only one way for you to be saved, not by your efforts, because you will boast, there's only one way and that is through Jesus Christ, so that no man may boast. Would you turn from your sin and believe in Jesus? That will be for your greatest good, and that will be for God's glory.

Let's bow for a word of prayer together. This morning, we looked at the glory of God, in a sweep through the book of Romans. I know it can be a very arduous journey. I know it can be tough, there is so much to think about, there is so much to look at, but this is my goal, I pray by the Holy Spirit, you will have a sense of awe, you will have a sense of amazement, you would see the magnificence, the excellence of God in working out His glory, and therefore, working out for your good.

And just like in Joshua, the words that say, "Choose you this day, whom you will serve." The challenge to all of us today is the same, choose you today, whom you will serve. Remember God's glory will be your greatest good and idolatry is spiritual suicide.

Time stamp in audio 0:48:11.5.

Who are you living for today? How is your family, folks? It's a very practical question. How's your family? Because I think this is one of the acid tests to who you are serving today, self or your Savior. Not saying that you cannot serve in church, I'm not saying you should not be involved in ministry. But do you see that living out the glory of God is in your workplace and in your home as well, that's where Christ must be seen, that's your calling. That's how you are the salt of the earth, the light of the world, that others may see your good works. How you treat your mom, how you treat dad, how you treat your wife, the children, your parents, how you work with subordinates and

colleagues. They're not the mundanes, they are not the seculars, they are spiritual, that is what it means to live out the glory of God. It is to do that even when no one notices, it is to do that when no one sees, because you're not living for self, you're not living for man's applause, you are living for the glory of God.

Are you going through pains and sufferings and trials of life? It doesn't make sense to you, life has absolutely no sense for you. I tell you what, in this life, it may not make sense, you may be in this mess till the day you die. But when you open your eyes, and see God in His glory and splendor, it will all make sense, because you will look back and you will echo the words of Paul "This momentary light affliction, has indeed worked out for me a greater weight of glory, praise God from whom all blessings flow."

That which you are longing for, craving for in life, you are empty, you are dissatisfied, it is all to be found in the glory of God. Daily life aspire and dream of saying, God draw me from near to Your glory, let me see You in the pages of Your Scripture. Dear friends, if you today do not know Jesus, God saves us for His glory, and therefore, there's only one way by which you can be saved, through Jesus Christ alone, so that for eternity to come glory goes to Him, not us, so that no man may boast because it is not of works, it's all of grace, and God wants you simply today to honor Him by faith.

He that cometh to God must believe that He is and is a Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Turn from your sin and believe in Jesus, for salvation and life. Father this morning we thank You and we pray that You will allow us, as we have this panoramic sweep of the glory of God through the Gospel of Romans, really appreciate the splendor, the beauty of Your manifold perfection. Words of men fail, they can do no justice but by Your Spirit, would You inspire in us, a heart of gratitude and amazement and awe, that we would truly sing, How Great Thou Art. And when we are ruptured, enraptured by this wonderful superb glory, then change our lives, so that we find our all in all in You alone. So dear God, speak to your people today, to those who need to be saved, would You bless their hearts that they would come to Jesus and for that we would be grateful and we pray all this now in Jesus Name, Amen.