

Spirit Filled Living in a Broken and Fallen World
Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God!
Pastor Dave Scherrer - February 19, 2017

In the early 20th century a movement of thinkers called Secular Humanists rose into prominence. In 1973, the Secular Humanist Manifesto declared,

“No god will save us, we must save ourselves.” ~ Secular Humanist Manifesto, 1973

This manifesto is not the first time that a renowned ‘thinker’ had put humankind at the apex of creation. A critic and busy body that got famous by the name of A.C. Swinburne

“Glory to Man in the highest! For Man is the master of things.” ~ A.C. Swinburne, 1857

If you really want to go back in time Protagoras said in 5th Century BC;

"Man is the measure of all things: of the things that are, that they are, of the things that are not, that they are not. Man is the measure of all things."

Or if **you really** want to go back in time, we can go Genesis 3 and to the garden where the first beings to be made in the image of God decided that being like God was an idea worth dying for.

Here is the rub. Humankind and God cannot both be at the top of the pyramid. Secular Humanism addresses the problem by simply defining God out of existence. God the Father answers the problem by declaring Jesus Christ the supreme and sovereign Ruler of the universe. We have studied this just last year – the doctrine of “all things” – "Ta Panta" in the Greek . . .

Colossians 1:15-19 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

There is a repeating theme in all of Scripture and that is the centrality of God.

The Centrality of God: What an idea!

God is the central reality in the universe. Paul is particularly bullish on the topic. In his letter to the church in Rome he writes:

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

Man is not the center of all things. God is.

Man is not the center of all things. God is.

This has been a tough lesson for human kind. It is crucial that we show it is right for God to be God-centered and not man-centered. Many people are happy to let God exist if God will make man the highest value in the universe. But it is crucial to say that God is the most valuable being in the universe. We are quite secondary. And since God is the ultimate value in the universe, it is only right and fitting that he be honest about that; that he tell us so and that for our own good he seek our love and admiration.

Even when we carve little wooden images or make graven images out of gold to worship, we are essentially creating God and thereby making ourselves the god of our own lives. God has commanded us from Mt. Sinai, "Thou shall have no other gods before me." God is jealous for His glory and rightly so. He must not share it with anyone or anything.

Sometimes people ask, why is it right for God to seek his glory, but wrong for us to seek our glory? Why would we be vain and God be righteous? The answer is that God's righteousness and our righteousness are exactly the same—God is righteous to esteem most highly what is most valuable in the universe, namely, God. And we are righteous to esteem most highly what is most valuable in the universe, namely, God. There is no inconsistency here.

Righteousness means having a right response to what is infinitely glorious and perfect and majestic. And that is God. For us to be righteous, we must love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. For God to be righteous, he too must love HIMSELF with all his heart and soul and mind and strength. Otherwise he would be an idolater. He would be giving supreme devotion to something that does not have supreme value.

So how have we done on the whole?

Romans 3:23 says that, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Why would this falling short of the glory of God be a problem unless it was clear that God specifically made us to glorify Him and that we have failed in our destiny for which we were made.

In other words the essence of sin cannot be understood unless you begin with God and his glory. That's why people don't experience repentance like we used to. Sin is seen as what makes me miserable not what offends the glory of God. Our view of sin today is basically personal and psychological not theological. To know what sin is we must begin with God and his great purposes.

Paul has a problem that he is trying to address in chapter 10 – the idea of idolatry. The idea that there can be another god in competition with El Shaddai.

1 Corinthians 10:14 "Therefore my beloved, flee from idolatry."

Paul is concerned that pride in the church in Corinth and the willingness of some to push the envelope of ethics and Christian character in the guise of Christian freedom is a form idolatry. They are warned again by Paul to not let false pride and false gods to become a stumbling block. He uses a lesson from the past to remind the church that the nation of Israel has been doing just that for a very long time. Paul uses their common history to try to get them to learn from the mistakes of others.

Learning from others' mistakes

He goes back to the Exodus story and pulls several illustrations from that narrative; the parting of the sea, the nation being led by smoke and fire and a particularly frightening story of grumbling and death and saving faith.

Numbers 21:4-9 From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way.⁵ And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food."⁶ Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.⁷ And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away

the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸ And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live."

⁹ So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

The lesson must be learned again. The agenda is about God not about us. The people of Israel forgot again, they thought God should provide for their comfort. "What good is a God," they thought "that does not give us fresh water and tasty vegetables and lamb and cucumber lettuce wraps in the wilderness? After all, it is all about . . . me." And God answers their sin with death – immediate death - by way of poisonous snakes. And they get it pretty fast then. But God also sends salvation so that when they look on the image fixed to the pole raised up by Moses they are saved. They set their eyes on things above by faith and are saved. Jesus reminds us that this lesson is really about Himself.

John 3:14-15 ¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

Christ is to be lifted up. This is the point and the only point. That Jesus, the creator and author of all things is to be glorified by all things. The mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands and the stones will cry out if we fail to bear witness to the supremacy of Christ.

So to review and to ask a question . . .

Our purpose for existing: Glorifying God How do you glorify and All-Glorious God?

We are supposed to be like well-polished mirrors of God's truth to the world. Or like prisms that take the beams of God's greatness and break them up into lots of varied colors for the world to see in our actions and words. That is what every man and woman and child should devote his or her life to. That is why we live. That is our duty. Or you could say, that is God's law. To glorify God.

But for some people—most people—the words "duty" and "law" are not happy words. They tend to sound oppressive and burdensome. So it doesn't sound, then, that God is very loving. That he doesn't have our best interest at heart. Maybe he is so interested in his glory that we don't really count except as slaves to work for him.

That kind of objection has to be met. And it is not hard to meet. You meet it by asking this question: If God is perfect, complete, all-sufficient, infinitely great and glorious, and didn't create us to meet his needs, because he doesn't have any needs, then how do you glorify a God like that? Not by working for him like a slave. That would give the impression that he is weak or deficient. Not by cowering in uncertainty beneath his power. That would give the impression that he is unstable or capricious or cruel. How do you bring glory to an all-sufficient, perfect, infinitely beautiful, infinitely wise, infinitely powerful, overflowing God?

You can use illustrations from ordinary life:

- If you want to glorify a beautiful painting, you don't feel a burden to work to improve it. You simply enjoy it. You love it. You talk about it excitedly to your friends.
- Or if someone makes a wonderful meal and serves it up before you, how do you glorify the excellence of the meal? Not by putting on your apron and going out to the kitchen to make a few more dishes or add a few spices. No. You glorify a perfect meal by eating a lot and by feeling contented and saying, ahhh. In other words if it is your duty to glorify something infinitely beautiful and wonderful, that is no burden. It is a pleasure. In fact when you take from it pleasure, you show it's a treasure.
- Or suppose your duty was to glorify someone's generosity. Suppose someone was so rich and so generous that they just spilled over in love and generosity and grace and kindness to you. How

would you glorify that quality in them? Not by trying to pay them back. That would turn their kindness into a business deal. It would treat their free gift like a trade. That would not glorify the wealth of their generosity. No the way to glorify their generosity and their kindness is to be lavish and genuine in your gratitude and thanksgiving. And that is no burden. If you get a billion dollar gift, you do not groan under the duty to feel thankful. It is a pleasure not a hardship.

This chapter 10 in 1 Corinthians settles the issue in verse 31 saying . . .

1 Corinthians 10:31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

When you read this passage you might be tempted to read it as effort – I have to work harder and make sure everything is up to God's standards. That would be a huge mistake. When you read this passage you should not read effort but instead a transforming heart attitude. I simply dedicate all I do - right down to the most base of function like eating and drinking – all to the glory of God. Remember lesson 1 - God does not exist to make my life satisfied, rather I live to glorify God.

Jesus says essentially the same thing in His wonderful Kingdom Sermon:

Matthew 5:16 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.

Now do you see what all this means? It means that God is love. It means that when he created us for his glory, he also created us for our joy. How so? Because the way he seeks to be glorified in us is by making us satisfied in him. The good news of Christianity is that God is the kind of God who is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.

In sharing the truth of Christianity, Truth #1 is that God created us for HIS glory. Truth #2 is that this is, therefore, the duty of every man and woman and child—to live for the glory of God. And the wonderful thing is that this duty is not a burden. It is freedom and joy. You glorify God's beauty and excellence by loving it and delighting in it. You glorify God's power by trusting him with all the hard and threatening things in your life. You glorify God's bounty and generosity and kindness and grace by overflowing with gratitude. And you glorify God's wisdom by obeying his counsel. And everybody knows that this is no burden. This is no heavy law. This is love.

“God Is Most Glorified in Us When We Are Most Satisfied in Him” ~ John Piper

God is a God of infinite love because he wills to share all that he is with us for our enjoyment and his glory.

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