

Our Hope: The Glory of God!

Scripture: *Romans 5:1-5 (NIV)*

¹ Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

Introduction

Last Sunday we started this series Our Hope. The goal behind these messages is that hope is an essential part of saving faith and that it is the spring of joy and love and courage and endurance in the Christian life. My prayer very simply is to encourage and to motivate you to put your hope in the grace of God and not in yourself or in anything this world can offer.

We briefly spoke on the ways God shows us the greatness of His glory. Today we are going into more details on the Hope of the glory of God to better understand our way to HOPE.

Eleven Ways God Shows Us the Greatness of His Glory.

God has been very good to us in the New Testament by giving us many different ways of seeing the greatness of his glory. I am going to mention eleven of these in the hope that one or several will sink into your heart and give you a longing for God's glory. I am not going to define it first, but just let the texts point you to the reality.

1. By Saying It Is Eternal

God shows that his glory is very great by saying that it is eternal. *Romans 11:36, "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen."* The greatness of God's glory is seen in the fact that it will never end. It is great in durability and permanence.

2. By Contrasting It with the Frail Glory of the World

God shows the greatness of his glory by contrasting it with the frail and temporary glory of the world. *1 Peter 1:24–25 says, "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord abides forever."*

"Flesh" in this verse simply refers to all that is not spiritual. All the accomplishments of natural man are like grass and all their glory — engineering glory, architectural glory, artistic glory, electrical glory, atomic glory, computerized glory — all our greatest human glory is like a dandelion ball compared to God's permanent glory.

3. By Speaking of Its Might and Power

God shows the greatness of his glory by speaking of its might and power. *Colossians 1:11 says, "May you be strengthened with all power, according to the might of his glory."* And *2 Thessalonians 1:9* turns it around and speaks of *"the glory of his might."* The point is not very different: the glory of God shines forth in great power, and the power of God exhibits itself in great glory.

If you want to conceive of the glory of God in its proper proportions, dwell on the scope of God's power. How great is the power of God when *Isaiah 40:12 says he "measured the seas in the hollow of*

his hands . . . and weighed the mountains in scales”; and when Daniel 4:35 says, “He does according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say to him, What doest thou?” And when Hebrews 1:3 says, “He upholds the universe by his word of power.” God is exceedingly powerful beyond all imagination, and his power is only one expression of his glory. Therefore, his glory is very great.

4. By Raising Christ from the Dead by It

He makes the greatness of his glory known by telling us that it was by his glory that he did the greatest acts of power and love in history. *Romans 6:4 says, “We were buried with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”* Jesus Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. If the resurrection is a great thing, if the eternal hope of millions hang on this great deed, then the glory of the Father must be very great. For it was the glory of the Father that burst the bonds of death and brought life and immortality to light.

5. By Repeatedly Reminding Us of the Riches of It

God presses the greatness of his glory on our minds by referring again and again to the wealth or riches of his glory. *Romans 9:22–23 says, “What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the vessels of wrath made for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for the vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory?”* God compares his glory to wealth and says that the ultimate purpose of all history is to make the greatness of that wealth known to the vessels of mercy prepared for glory.

6. By Contrasting Its Joy to This Life’s Suffering

God highlights the greatness of his glory by telling us that the joy of experiencing it will so far outweigh the sufferings of this life that they are not worth comparing. *Romans 8:18 says, “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”* No matter how much you suffer in this life, the joy of the glory of God will be so great as to make you feel as though your years and decades of suffering were as nothing.

7. By Calling It a “Weight of Glory”

God says this to us in **2 Corinthians 4:17** and adds that the glory we will experience is a **“weight of glory.”** **“For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.”** Notice, the glory is eternal and weighty; the affliction by comparison is momentary and light. Is there any heaviness in your life? Do you carry any burdens that are heavy and seem to drag on and on? The Lord teaches us that the glory of God is going to be so heavy that when it is put in the scales of your life for your enjoyment, it will make all the heaviness of this world go up like air in the balances.

8. By Linking Eternal Punishment with Exclusion from It

God causes us to see that his glory is very great by telling us that the great punishment in the day of judgment will be exclusion from his glory. **2 Thessalonians 1:9** says that at the coming of Christ unbelievers **“will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.”** But O how much greater is the tragedy and the grief going to be for the person who comes to the end of his days and has to say a farewell forever to the glory of God! Your heart was made to enjoy the glory of God. God is your real home. His glory is very great! And without it you will forever be heartsick. Don’t live a life that results in being excluded from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.

9. By Showing Us That It Will Replace the Sun

The Lord pictures the greatness of his glory for us by showing us that in the coming age the glory of God will replace the sun for our light. **Revelation 21:23** says, **“And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb.”** For now the immensity and brightness of the sun are reminders and symbols of the greatness and brightness of the glory of God. But someday we won’t need any symbols or reminders, for the real thing will swallow us up in light.

10. By Revealing It in Settings of Heavenly Worship

The Lord magnifies the greatness of his glory by revealing it to us in awesome settings of heavenly worship where it is held in proper esteem. **Revelation 5:11–14** says, **Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all therein, saying, “To him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might for ever and ever!” And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.**

Surely the purpose of giving us a glimpse into this heavenly worship is to make us feel the greatness of the Lord and the tremendous worth of his glory.

11. By Showing Us Jesus, the Perfect Reflection of It

Finally, we are made to see the greatness of the glory of God when **Hebrews 1:3** tells us that our Lord Jesus **“reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature.”** The glory of God is not merely a distant and strange thing. If we have seen Jesus, we have seen the Father! We know what the moral character of this glory will be. It will be like Jesus — full of grace and truth.

So when Paul says in **Romans 5:2** that **“we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God,”** he means for us to know and feel that the glory of God is exceedingly great. If there is any wonder, if there is any awe, if there is any admiration, or fame or praise or applause, it belongs to the glory of God. For all other glory is like grass compared to God’s.