

## **Talk 2 - Sanctification: The Path to God's Glory and Our Joy In Him**

**Big Idea:** Becoming more like Jesus in whom the glory of God is revealed is the path to God being most praised and us being brought to supreme joy in Him.

### **Introduction**

Yesterday evening we saw two things:

- 1) The goal of sanctification (the goal of God renewing us in His image, the goal of God calling us to be Holy as He is Holy - to be set apart for Him) **is the glory of God, and our joy in Him.**
- 2) The call to be sanctified (to be set apart for Him; to be like Him, in the glory of His holiness above all, and to imitate Him) **is a call to give God the highest praise in our lives and a call to supreme joy and satisfaction, in the glory of His holiness above all.**

And the reason why God's glory, and our joy in Him, are both one and the same is because we only praise and glorify that which we consider supremely great, and we only enjoy and delight in that which we consider supremely great as well.

So the closer we get to that which we consider the highest treasure in our lives, the greater our joy and satisfaction in that treasure. And if God is the highest treasure in the Christian life - because there is nothing greater or higher you can be saved to or brought to - to whom there is no equal, with whom there is no comparison, and who alone is glorious in His holiness above all (supremely great, power transcendent, supremacy unrivalled, worth unsurpassing, and beauty incomparable), then to be brought to Him, and to be made like Him, is to give Him the highest possible praise, and to be given the highest possible joy.

So this morning what I want to do with you is unpack for you the **path in sanctification**, to God being praised most supremely in our lives, and us being given the highest possible joy in Him. If that's the goal of sanctification, then how do we actually get there? Yes, it's by being more like Him, by being set apart for Him, and by imitating Him. But how do we actually do that? How are we brought to being more like Him?

And the answer is that the path to our sanctification, **the path to God's glory and our joy in Him, is the gospel, as it centers on Jesus - His Son.**

So here is the first point I want us to grasp this morning: the goal of the gospel is the glory of God, and our joy in Him.

### **The Goal of the Gospel: God's Glory & Our Joy In Him**

Just as this was the goal of the Exodus, the goal of the gospel is to bring His people to the glory of His holiness, above all others; to Himself as the highest treasure. And so too is the goal of the gospel!

**So understand what makes the gospel good news! What's so good about the gospel? Don't confuse the good gifts of the gospel with the final and ultimate good gift in the gospel!**

**And this is precisely what makes the gospel good news.** The chief end of the gospel is the glory of God and our joy in Him. The highest good that we are brought to in the gospel is not forgiveness of sin; the greatest treasure we are given in the gospel is not heaven, and the final

blessing in the gospel is not justification or the atonement. They are but gospel gifts that are meant to lead us to **the final and greatest good in the gospel, which is God in the glory of His holiness.**

In his book *God is the Gospel*, Piper puts it like this (and I commend this book to you): '*what makes the events of Good Friday and Easter, and all the promises they secure, good news is that they lead us to God.*' (p.42). The goal of the gospel, according to **1 Peter.3:18, For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.**

Everything else in the gospel are gospel gifts, that are meant to lead us to Him as the treasure we are being saved to, and to the one who is glorious in His holiness above all. Everything else in the gospel - all the gospel gifts - are meant to display God's glory **in removing everything, that stands in the way for us to have Him;** by satisfying everything in God that prevents us from coming into His presence, and removing everything in us that prevents us from coming into His presence.

For example, His wrath that must be averted, His justice that must be met, our guilt that must be paid for, our hardened hearts that need regeneration, our enslavement to sin that need freeing, and our darkened minds that need light. All of the good gifts of the gospel are given to lead us to Him, so that we might have God, who is glorious in His holiness above all, and so that we might be brought to praise the one who is supremely great, and enjoy Him forever.

God is the highest treasure in the gospel. And that's what makes the gospel good news; nothing less than being brought to God, in the glory of His holiness, makes the gospel good news.

And the great problem is that most believers have not grasped that God is the ultimate good; that He is the highest treasure and gift that the gospel saves us to.

- You haven't got the gospel right if the gospel is good news only because it gets you out of hell
- You haven't got the gospel right if the gospel is good news only because it secures your forgiveness of sins
- You haven't got the gospel right if the gospel is good news only because its your ticket to heaven

So what you end up with is a 'self-centered' gospel; where you are at the centre of the gospel; where the good news of the gospel is your salvation from sin, death, judgment, and hell. The gospel becomes a commodity that secures your forgiveness, is a ticket out of hell to heaven, and a way to escape judgment. It's not God that you want or desire or long for; you just want to avoid death, hell, and judgment.

You end up with a gospel where **you** are what's supremely treasured, where the gospel exist for your sake. And so it's no surprise that most believers live a therapeutic faith - where the gospel is good news only because it benefits 'me'.

That's the evangelical version of the prosperity gospel, where we only treasure the gospel because of what it offers us: a ticket out of hell, forgiveness of sin, righteousness secured, judgment averted, and the promise of heaven. It's all about 'me'; what's missing? God's missing. **Or** you end up with a gospel where you treasure the good gifts of the gospel and miss the ultimate gift of the gospel!

You haven't got the gospel right if you stop short of where the gifts of the gospel are meant to lead you to: election, regeneration, justification, forgiveness, atonement, and sanctification. It's all meant to lead me to God as the ultimate good. He is the highest treasure that the gospel brings me to.

### **Understand the Heart of Sin: An Exchange of Glory and a Lie about Glory**

This is why Paul defines sin this way in **Romans 1:23**; it is the reason why God is rightly angry. This is the reason why the full wrath of God is coming. **What's the problem with the human heart? Ezekiel 14:3** says that the human heart is an idol factory, where we take the glory, which belongs to God alone, and give it to another. So you read **Rom.1:23-24** (this is what is at the heart of sin: idolatry, where we deny God His glory, and exchange His glory for another) *For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened and they exchanged/swapped the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things ... v.25, exchanging the truth about God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator, who is blessed forever!*

There is none like Him; God alone is glorious in His holiness, whose greatness transcends all things, whose supremacy alone is unrivalled, whose worth is unsurpassing, whose beauty incomparable, who is the highest ideal, and who is the highest of treasures. And we take the praise and glory that is rightly His, and we give it to lesser people and lesser things. We take glory that belongs to Him alone and we give it to lesser people and lesser things; praising them, lifting them up, treasuring them, worshipping them, and living for them.

And the lie in v.25, if you look at it carefully, is the exchanging of the truth about God for a lie, where we give ourselves over to worshipping the creation rather than the creator. The lie is that the creation - the created - is far more superior, far more beautiful, far more valuable, far more worthy, and far more glorious than God. The lie is that the good gifts are greater than the giver of those gifts; the lie is that good gifts are more precious than the giver, who is the source of the gifts.

When it comes to the one being in the universe who is infinitely great and perfect, in His being and in His every character, instead of acknowledging His greatness, we have instead turned and ascribed greatness to lesser beings and to lesser things. When it comes to the one being in the universe who is infinitely valuable and perfect, in His being and in His every character, instead of praising Him, we have instead turned and praised lesser beings and lesser things.

It is like a man who walks into Tiffany & Co. and is shown a \$25k diamond ring, but instead of acknowledging the beauty, worth, and value of the ring, he starts to argue for, praise, and speak, of the far superior beauty and greatness of cubic zirconia instead. In the presence of infinite greatness, worth, and beauty, we turn and praise cubic zirconia instead.

No one gets a gift at Christmas, and having received the gift starts to praise and elevate the gift over the giver, delighting in the gift or surrendering to the gift and ignoring the giver. But that's what we're like when it comes to the one who is infinitely great, God who is the giver of every good gift.

At the heart of our sin is the taking of the praise and glory that rightfully belongs to God and giving it to lesser people and things; elevating them over the God, who is glorious in His holiness. It is, in effect, saying that all these things are a greater treasure than God. **That's at**

**the heart of sin:** being blind to what is unsurpassing beauty, being dead to what is supremely valuable, and being ignorant to what is incomparable wealth, and instead, being alive to lesser treasure.

This is why you'll see, in Ephesians 2:1-3, that our deepest problem is described in terms of being dead in our transgressions and sin, and enslaved to the world, flesh, and the devil. **We were alive to everything else but God, in the glory of His holiness, and that's what we lived for.** You read, in Ephesians 4:18-19, that our lostness is described in terms of a heart hardened towards God, minds darkened in our grasp of the truth about God, and being ignorant when it comes to God. Instead, we are alive to, and living to, fuel our sensuality, our desires, our senses, and our passions. Again, **we were alive to everything else but God, in the glory of His holiness, and that's what we lived for.**

And that's what we do in life; we take good things, like a successful career, love, material possessions, family, study, sex, and holidays, and we turn them into ultimate and supreme treasures in our lives. We consider them great, and we gravitate towards them in their greatness, we seek to be filled by them, and we become more like them as they take over our lives. Our hearts turn them into objects of worship at the centre of our lives, giving them more worth and value than they deserve, and giving them glory in our lives, because we think they can give us lasting joy, delight, security, safety, love, and fulfillment if we have them. That's an exchange right there. That's a lie we've bought into right there.

Jonathan Edwards, in speaking of the good things in our lives that replace God, that steal God's glory, and that we ascribe supreme greatness to, writes that we fail to see the joy and delights of earthly treasures as God's good gifts to us. And instead of worshipping and praising and thanking **HIM**, and giving **HIM** the glory, we instead worship His good gifts to us. We are blind to the fact that *these are the shadows, God is the substance; these are but scattered beams of sun light, God is sun; these are but streams of water, God is endless ocean.*

And so in our hardness of hearts, in our darkened minds, in our blindness, and in our ignorance, we choose the shadows, the scattered beams, and the streams, and we miss the substance, the Sun, and the ocean. We exchange the glory of God, who is the substance, the Sun, and the endless ocean, and we settle for something less.

When standing by the open ocean, you'll enjoy the ocean as you see its greatness and vastness, and as you feel your smallness against it; you don't enjoy the ocean by looking into a cup of water that is drawn from the ocean. But we trample on His glory because we say in our lives that this cup of water is a greater treasure than He is. That is the sin that condemns us: God is not who we love, with all our hearts, minds, souls, and strength. We have other gods in our lives.

God alone is not supreme, and above all, in our lives. So all, without exception, have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, in Romans 3:23. When standing before a sunrise, you'll enjoy the sunrise as you see its radiance rising over the horizon, and as you feel your insignificance against it; you don't enjoy the sunrise by looking away from it at the bush, and saying that this bush is supreme. So the reason why we are condemned, and the reason why we are under judgment, is because when it comes to the one and only being in the universe deserving of our sole praise, worship, pursuit, love, and is a treasure who is above all things, we instead elevate other things over Him.

Instead of looking to the substance, we dance in the shadows. Instead of enjoying the sun, we praise the beams of light. Instead of being in awe of the ocean, we glory in the streams. That's what we're like when it comes to the glory of His holiness above all; we have removed Him and replaced Him with lesser substitutes in our lives.

### **Understand the Goal of the Gospel: 'Seeing' the glory of God**

So if previously I was dead to God; if previously my mind was darkened to the truth about God; if previously I accepted lies about God; if previously I was blind to seeing God as supremely great, as the highest treasure, and as glorious in His holiness above all, and if previously I was alive to everything else but God, what happens now in the gospel?

- Who am I now made alive to? Nothing less than God, whose glory is supreme.
- What truth does my mind now grasp? Nothing less than God, whose worth alone is unsurpassing.
- What do I now see? Nothing less than God, whose beauty is unmatched.

Notice what we read in **2 Corinthians 4:3-6**. *<sup>3</sup>And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. [why is it veiled from us?] <sup>4</sup>The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. <sup>5</sup>For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup>For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.* Previously we were blind; now we see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.

In the song '**Amazing Grace**' there is a line that says '*was blind but now I see*'. See what? I see the glory of God: His supremacy, worth, beauty, and majesty, above all. **Note:** in regeneration, my heart is made alive to God, my blindness is removed so that I can see God in His beauty, my enslaved will is freed so that I can choose God as my highest treasure, and my darkened mind is unclouded so that I can understand the truth about God in His worth.

**So here is my second point this morning. Understand this:** the gospel saves me to, and brings me to, God, in the glory of His holiness above all, because the gospel, as it centers on Jesus, supremely displays and reveals the glory of God. I am brought to behold the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

There's a big difference between knowing that honey tastes sweet, and tasting the sweetness of honey, isn't there? There's a big difference between knowing that Peter Gilmore's Guava Snow Balls taste divine, and actually tasting his guava snow balls at the Quay. There's a big difference between knowing about the beauty of a sunrise on Noosa beach, and actually seeing it for yourself. **One remains partially hidden from you and limited; the other is so much better, and so much greater, because you can actually taste it and see it.**

So too is the glory of God, in His holiness above all; in His unrivalled supremacy, in His unsurpassing worth, and in His incomparable beauty, as the highest treasure over all. There is nothing greater than to be brought to taste and see it. And God does it most supremely in His Son - in Jesus - for us to taste and see.

### **God's Glory is Most Supremely Displayed in Jesus**

Now one of the things you must understand is that it is impossible to see God.

- 1) Morally, we are corrupt and fallen creatures, who would be consumed before the glory

of His holiness. It's the reason why even Moses could only see His back and not His face. **Exodus 33:20**, *you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.*

- 2) We cannot see God because He alone is God and we are not – we are but creatures. So you read in **1 Timothy 6:16**, *he alone has immortality, who dwells in inapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.* Look long enough into the rising sun and you will go blind; approach the sun in all its glory, and eventually it will consume you in its fire; so too will the glory of God.

So in the Old Testament, seeing God, and coming into His presence, was always mediated; someone had to stand in the gap, someone had to be a mediator, and there had to be a means in between. (**Example:** In His works (Ps.77:11-33), visions (Ezek.1:28), nature (Ps.19:1), angels (Judges 13:21-22), His word (1 Sam.3:21), and His prophet (Moses). And the great longing in the Old Testament was to know, and see, and be brought, into the presence of the glory of God in His holiness – Ps.27. It is what sustained David in his sufferings: the glory of God in His holiness above all; that was his – Ps.63:1-2)

### **God's Glory is Revealed in His Son**

What you discover is that the partial mediated glory of God in the Old Testament is now fully revealed in the gospel as it centers on Jesus.

This is where the gospel begins. There is the revealing, the manifestation, and the incarnation of the glory of God, in His holiness above all, coming to make His dwelling among us, walking among us, working among us, and speaking to us.

- **Isaiah 40:3-5**, *<sup>3</sup>A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. <sup>4</sup>Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. <sup>5</sup>And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."*

- **Isaiah 60:1-3**, *<sup>1</sup>Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. <sup>2</sup>For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. <sup>3</sup>And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.*

- **Isaiah 66:18**, *the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory.*

**Who do we see in the gospels? Who does Jesus display in His words and works? Who does the Holy Spirit reveal to us as we behold Jesus? Who does Jesus reveal in His words and works?** It is nothing less than the glory of God, in His holiness above all; nothing less than God, in His greatness and worth, and as the highest treasure in the universe.

It is precisely the reason why John writes in **John 1:1,14**: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.* (Compare this to **John.11:40**. In raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus said to Martha, *'didn't I tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?'*)

It was previously hidden, it was previously partial, and it was previously mediated; now you are tasting and seeing it in all its radiance, in all its worth, and in all its beauty. You are beholding the substance, the sun, and the endless ocean, which IS the glory of God in His holiness.

- **2 Corinthians 3:18**, *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding [what?] **the glory of the Lord**, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.* Previously one could only behold the glory of God through a veil; it had to be hidden from you, lest you die. **Now**, Paul says, you are beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus. Unveiled, unhidden, and face to face, you are seeing the glory of His holiness, and His incomparable greatness and worth; you are gazing into the sun - in the face of Jesus.
- **2 Corinthians 4:6**, *For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of [what?] **the glory of God in the face of Christ**.* The light has now dawned shining into the darkness of our hearts, so that we now see **the** light: the light of God's glory in the face of Jesus. Light shines so that we see **the** light. We now see where glory is due. And we are now seeing, and recognising, as true in our lives, and in our hearts, that God is infinitely great and worthy above all things; that we have ignored Him all our lives, and we see that He is a treasure above all treasures in life. We see that in Him is every perfection; there is none like Him, and it has come to us in the face of Jesus.
- **Hebrews 1:1-3**, *<sup>1</sup>Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup>but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. <sup>3</sup>He is the radiance [who?] **of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature**, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.* Jesus is the revelation of the glory of God, in all His radiance; shining out. And in His being He is God, in His nature. He comes to reveal God, in the glory of His holiness above all, and the death He dies is to bring us to God, in the glory of His holiness above all.
- **Colossians 1:15, 19; 2:9**, *He is the image of the invisible God ... For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell ... For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.* To see the Son is to see the unseen God in all His glory, and He's not just a picture of the invisible God. In Him **'all' the fullness of God dwells**; the very substance, the blazing sun, and the endless ocean, fills Him, which is why to come to Jesus, and to behold Him in the flesh, is to behold the glory of God.
- **John 10:30**, Jesus says, *I and the Father are one.* **John 10:38**, Jesus says, *the Father is in me, and I am in the Father.* (cf. John.14:8-11, v.9, *whoever has seen me has seen the Father*)

And it is precisely the reason why God, the Father, takes delight in the Son. The Father sees His glory in the Son! (Matt.3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22; 2 Peter 1:17 – this is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased, in whom I delight, and **whose work alone brings me supreme pleasure**).

### **God's Glory in Our Lives is Secured by His Son**

So in the entire universe, **WHO** is the object of God's joy? **WHO** gives Him the most delight and pleasure? It is not me, or you, but His Son, who reflects Him; who is glorious in His holiness, in His being, and in all His works.

So if the Son is the very radiance of the Father's glory, and if the Son is the fullness of the Father's glory in the flesh, it shouldn't surprise us that the Son also works to secure His Father's glory. Whose glory would Jesus pursue? Whose glory could Jesus pursue? None

other than his Father for there is none greater. And so everything the Son does, He does to magnify His Father's worth, value, and supremacy.

Jesus does all that He does to magnify, and reveal, the glory that He shares with His Father, which is why the Cross is the supreme display of the glory of God because in going to the cross, He is securing praise for the Father, and He is bringing even greater glory to the Father.

- **John 17:1-3:** in going to the cross, Jesus says, *the hour has come, Father, glorify your son that the son may glorify you*; that men and women might be brought to eternal life. *V.3: and this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.* The lifting up of the supreme greatness, and worth, of the Son, in His death on the Cross, is to highlight the supreme greatness and worth of God! (Jesus doesn't say, 'Glorify me! Lift up the supreme greatness of **the Son**, in His death, so that people will be saved to YOU, the only true God'. But instead He says, 'Lift up the supreme greatness and worth of **my death** so that **YOUR greatness, and worth, above all things might be seen as the only true God; so that people might see and be brought to YOU as the supreme treasure in the universe!**') Eternal life is to be brought to see and know the only true God, who is above all, none like Him, no other beside him. Jesus glorifies the Father by magnifying the Father's worth by dying to secure God's praise in our lives, by bringing us to Him. Compare this to John 21:9: the death of Jesus was to glorify God; **John 12:27-28, Jesus says, for this purpose I have come, Father, glorify your name.** The death of the Son was for the purpose of bringing glory to the Father.

It's the reason why the death of Jesus was a pleasing aroma, a fragrant offering, and a sacrifice to God (Ephesians 5:1). How can the slaughter of Jesus, at the hands of sinful men at the Cross, be a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God? How can the death of Jesus be pleasing to the Father? It is precisely because it brings Him glory; greater glory than if Jesus had not died. Because, in dying for sinners to bring them to the Father, and in dying for sinners to secure praise for the Father in our lives, God is most glorified. Or, as Hebrews 2:10 puts it, Jesus goes to the Cross to bring many sons to glory. God created them for His praise and glory, and Jesus dies to secure that in our lives.

For what is Jesus doing in His death for sinners, in being a substitute for our sin, in taking the wrath of God on Himself, in redeeming us by His blood, and in making atonement for our sin? **He is securing glory for His Father**, and He is magnifying the glory of His Father **by bringing us to the praise and worship and delight in the Father, as supreme in our lives, as glorious above all things, as our highest treasure, and as God, in the glory of His holiness alone in our lives.**

This is what makes the gospel supremely glorious; this is what makes Jesus supremely glorious, **for He alone is the glory of God, in His holiness above all revealed, and in whose work alone brings us to the glory of God, in His holiness above all things.** The Father looks at the Son at the Cross; He is the very radiance of His glory, the very image of His being, and the fullness of His being, crucified there for you and for me, and He is pleased. And God is pleased because His glory is being secured, His worth is being upheld, His justice met, and His power displayed. Sinners are brought to praise Him, rebels are forgiven and brought to Him, and enemies are made sons and daughters in His home. Oh, what lengths God goes to, to secure His glory in our lives; that He should crush His Son to do it!

That is what makes the gospel glorious: the Son reveals the glory of God in His holiness, there is none like Him. And, in His Cross work, brings us to glorify, and praise, God in His holiness; removing every obstacle that stands in the way of us knowing Him, in the glory of His holiness. You are brought to supreme greatness, and brought to the highest treasure you can be brought to.

### **The Gospel Brings Us to God's Glory & Supreme Joy in Him**

In the gospel of the Son, we are not just seeing the substance, we are not just seeing the sun, and we are not just seeing before us the endless ocean. We are being brought to the substance, we are being brought to the sun, and we are being brought to the endless ocean in Jesus, who is the very glory of God.

**This is why the goal of the gospel ultimately is to God's glory and our joy in Him.** For in securing glory for Himself in our lives, and in securing praise for Himself in our lives, we are being brought to the highest joy possible because we are being brought to the one true God above all, who is glorious in His holiness, power transcendent, supremacy unrivalled, worth unsurpassing, and beauty incomparable; all found in Jesus, His Son. We are brought to glorify, and praise, Him in His greatness.

Remember what I said yesterday, about greatness and joy, and about glory and joy? **We praise that which we consider supremely great in our lives. And the closer we get to that which we consider supremely great, the greater our joy and satisfaction in their greatness.** We only enjoy praising what we consider supremely great in our lives. We only enjoy being in the presence of supreme greatness, we delight in being in the presence of what we hold to be a supreme treasure in our lives

Watch a football game. Every time you see your team score, you yell out, and you feel joy. Every time you see them pull off an impressive move, you shout even louder, you praise them even more, and you feel even greater delight. And what would bring you even more delight would be to sit on the front bench, right behind your glorious football team, as they played. Being in the presence of greatness, and being where our treasures are, not only brings them the highest praise because you are there to praise them, it also bring us the greatest delight and joy because we are in the presence of what we consider supremely great: our highest treasure.

**So too is the goal of the gospel.** For in securing God's glory and praise in your life, you're being brought to the greatest joy you can know; for you're being brought to nothing less than supreme greatness in God; you're being brought to nothing less than God, who is the highest treasure; you are being brought to nothing less than God, in the glory of His holiness above all. **He gets the praise and you get the joy; He gets glorified and you get to enjoy Him.** (Matthew 13:44 says to find Jesus is to find joy. Matthew 25:21 says to be rewarded by the master in his house is to share in his joy)

**And it all centers on the gospel of Jesus, who supremely displays the glory of God above all, and whose work brings us to the glory of God.** Which is why, in the gospels and in the epistles, Jesus is held up as supremely glorious. He is the highest treasure; He is the pearl of great price that you sell everything for to get (Matt.13:46); He is the hidden treasure in the field that you sell everything for to get (Matt.13:44); He is yoke that gives rest for your souls (Matt.11:29); He is the rock (Matt.7:24-25); He is the bread of life that will fill your hunger, giving you life forever (John 6:48, 50, 58); He is the living water that quenches your every

thirst (John 4:13-14); He is the light of the world that shines in the darkness (John.8:12); He is the resurrection and the life (John 11:25); He is the good shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep (John 10:11); He is the lamb that was slain for our sin (John 1:29); He is our peace who reconciles people to each other and to God (Eph.2:14); He is the one in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are (Col.2:3); He is the infinite power of God (1 Cor.1:24); He is the beginning and the end, who holds the keys of death and Hades (Rev.1:17-18); He is the lion of Judah who has conquered all (Rev.5:5); He is the shepherd who guides us to living waters (Rev.7:17); and He is the divine warrior who vindicates His people and crushes every enemy (Rev.19).

He is the highest treasure. What more could you want. You've arrived at the substance of all things, you've come to the blazing sun, you've come to the endless ocean.

He holds the highest name under heaven: *for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)* His name is everything glorious and great that we long for, that satisfies us, and that brings us joy. For His name is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). He is the tower of your refuge, He is the rock that stands forever, He is the eagle who carries you, He is the consuming fire, He is the whirlwind and the tempest, He is rivers of delight, and He is the light by which we see light. **Every name is found in Jesus; that's who you have been brought to praise and enjoy. Is there anyone or anything greater that could give you more joy?**

Can you see why the gospel, as it centers on Jesus and His saving work, is so central to everything we hold dear as believers? It reveals the glory of God above all, and it brings us to the glory of God above all. **It reveals God** in His infinite greatness and worth and beauty, **and it brings us to God** in His infinite greatness and worth and beauty. There is nothing greater or higher that you can be saved to, or brought to, than to glorify the one who is supreme in His greatness, and to enjoy Him who is supremely great forever. We are brought to praise Him, who is the highest treasure in the universe, and enjoy Him as our highest treasure forever. It doesn't get any better or any higher, and this is what makes the gospel supremely good news: brought to God's glory, and supreme joy in Him.

### **God Secures His Glory by Working to Make Us More Like His Son**

And so it follows; if the gospel, as it centers on Jesus, reveals the glory of God and brings us to the glory of God, then there is no greater glory God can secure in our lives, and no greater praise He can secure in our lives, than by making us more like His Son. For the closer we get to becoming more like that which we consider supremely great in our lives, the more our lives are filled with their greatness, **the greater they are magnified and praised**. The greater the glory they get (e.g. the closer I get to playing or sounding like LeBron James or Pachelbel), the greater praise they get. Their beauty shines even more, and their greatness is magnified even more. **Imitation is the best form of praise.**

So the path to God being most glorified and praised and magnified in our lives is when we are becoming more like Jesus, who is supremely great; when we become more like Him, in the glory of His holiness; to be Holy as He is Holy; to be set apart, for Him who is Holy; to worship, Him alone who is above all; to be filled, in your life, with Him who is supreme, and to become more like Him!

For the closer we get to Him in His likeness, and the greater He consumes and fills my life, the greater He is praised. When every aspect of my life reflects Him, He is praised even more. For

example, teenagers plaster their rooms, with posters of those whom they hold to be great in their lives. They dress like them, think like them, and speak like them; they give glory to their heroes. So to the Christian: the more your life is filled with Jesus, the more you are like Him; the greater His glory shines in your life, the greater He is magnified in your life.

It's the reason why, in saving us to Himself, we are born again in the image of Jesus, who is the glory of God, because you cannot be brought to anything greater or higher in worth, value, beauty, greatness, majesty, and power (**2 Corinthians 5:17**) Can there be anyone greater, in whose image you are born again to?.

It's the reason why the sweep of New Testament passages speak of the goal of maturity as being made more like Jesus; to be filled with Jesus, to grow into maturity in Jesus, to be renewed in the image of Jesus, and to be more like the Son.

- **Colossians 1:28**, *Him - Jesus we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.* The supreme goal in Paul's ministry, and at the heart of his proclamation, is none other than Jesus - the image of the invisible God - in whom the fullness of God dwells. To what end? To see them presented as being mature in Christ. Because that is what most glorifies the Father; that is what most praises Him, when His children look like Him, in the glory of His Holiness.
- **Ephesians 4:13, 15**: Paul works to equip the people of God for the work of ministry; so that the church - the body of Christ - might be built up towards maturity **that is marked by fullness in Jesus, and growing up in Jesus, who is the head.** The church is not just the body of Christ, but a body becoming more like Jesus because there is nothing greater that brings praise to the Father. For the people of God are reflecting nothing less than God, in the glory of His holiness above all things; they are growing up, to be filled in their lives by what is their supreme treasure: God in the glory of His holiness, revealed in His Son. (2 Corinthians 8:23)
- **Ephesians 3:14-19**: There is nothing higher or greater that you can pray for people (that God, in His supremacy, might consume and fill their lives) than praying that they will be brought to fullness in God. And it takes place as Jesus dwells in your heart and the glory of His gospel fills you more and more.
- **Romans 8:28-29**, *<sup>28</sup>And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup>For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.* What is the good that God is so working to bring about in our lives? What is His purpose for those who love Him? It is the good, the highest good, the greatest good, and the ultimate good that God is working to secure in my life, in all things. His purpose is to conform me to the image of His Son, so that I might be the first, among many others, in His family; a community that reflect the likeness of Jesus, His Son, who is supremely glorious, and who is the very image of the glory of God in His holiness. There is nothing greater that will bring God more glory than sons and daughters who look like Him, and who reflect the glory of His Son. There is no greater praise or glory that God gets than making us more like His Son.
- **1 Corinthians 15:49**: Even in speaking of the final resurrection body, we are reminded that we are going to be raised to bear the likeness of Jesus.

If the glory of God, in His holiness above all, is supremely revealed in the gospel of His Son,

and it is the Son that saves us to, and brings us to, the glory of God, it also follows that God is most glorified when I become more like His Son, who is the glory of God Himself (Compare this to Ephesians 5:1, that tells us to be imitators of God, as His children. And you do it by walking in the footsteps of Jesus, and being filled and overflowing with the grace He showed you, in bringing you to the Father.)

Being filled, with Him who is supremely great; having my life consumed, by Him who is unsurpassing worth; and becoming like Him, who is incomparable beauty, is the path to God being most glorified and praised and magnified.

### **In Making Us More Like Jesus We Are Brought To Supreme Joy in God**

And so it follows that this also is the path to supreme joy: God secures our joy by working to make us more like Jesus, His Son. **Why?** What can bring you more joy and more satisfaction than being filled, with Him who is supremely great; than to have my life consumed, by Him who is unsurpassing worth; than to become like Him who is incomparable beauty? Is there anything greater in the universe that God can give you, and bring about in your life?

There is no greater joy than becoming more like that which you consider supremely great in your life. Remember what I said yesterday: the closer we get to becoming more like that which we consider supremely great and hold to be our highest treasure in life, the greater they are praised and magnified, **and the greater our joy and satisfaction in their greatness.** (For example, the closer I get to playing or sounding like LeBron James or Pachelbel, the greater joy and satisfaction I get. The more they fill my life, the greater my joy and satisfaction.)

It's precisely because God is securing His glory in my life that I am brought to the highest joy I can know because I am being brought to Him who is supremely great; being filled in my life, with Him who is unsurpassing worth; becoming like Him, in His unmatched beauty. In making us more like Jesus, God is not only securing His praise and glory in our lives, He is bringing us to supreme joy in Himself.

**Imitation is not only the best form of praise; imitation also brings us joy.** No one imitates that which they don't consider great; we all live to imitate greatness. And the closer we get to becoming what we consider great and what we consider a supreme treasure in our lives, the greater our joy, and our satisfaction, in their greatness.

So understand this: the path to God being most glorified and praised and magnified in our lives is also the very same path that brings us to the highest joy we can know. **Because in being brought to Jesus, and in becoming more like Jesus,** who is the highest treasure, who is supreme greatness, who is the name above every name, who is the substance, who is the blazing sun, who is the endless ocean, and who is God, in the glory of His holiness above all, you are being brought to the highest joy you can ever know.

The gospel, as it centers on Jesus as the glory of God, **is** the path to God's glory and our joy in Him; revealing God in all His glory; bringing us to God, in all His glory, and making us like God, in His glory.

### **Conclusion**

God is most glorified in us as we become more like Him, in the image of His glorious Son. And we are brought to the highest joy and deepest satisfaction in Him, who is supremely glorious,

and the highest treasure above all things. That is the goal of the gospel, and the path to God's glory and our supreme joy in Him.