

What Good is Glory?

† shameful glory (vv.31-33)

† glory unashamed (vv.34-38)

In the Name of Jesus, our glorious, suffering Savior, dearly redeemed children of God:

We had to laugh at our last Voters' meeting. One of the men said, "My wife asked if we could turn up the thermostat; it was cold in church." Another raised his hand and said, "My wife complained it was too hot." Men who really love their wives, how do you pass a motion on that?

Not so many years ago a Judge Samuel Sewall in Maine, wrote in his diary, "The communion bread was frozen pretty hard and rattled sadly in the plates." Imagine ministers forced to wear several coats, a hat and mittens while preaching. One preacher in Kittery, Maine, would send his servant to the meetinghouse to see how many had braved the snow. If only six or seven came, he'd invite them to the parsonage to hear the sermon there. Worshipers brought little foot stoves, filled with coals, while their children huddled by their mother's feet beneath the pews. Until people kept forgetting them and a few churches burned down. Some brought dogs to curl at their masters' feet. One man brought his warmth in a bottle, snored so loud during the sermon, the deacons dragged him off to the tavern.¹

So why is it so hard for modern Americans to get in a warm car and come to worship in comfort we can adjust with a thermostat? Has "*the love of most grown cold*," as Jesus prophesied? Could it be that we agree with Jesus' lead disciple? Maybe we don't know, **What Good Is Glory?**

† shameful glory (vv.31-33)

Peter proves that if left to ourselves, we vote with our feet for **shameful glory**. It's what really attracts people – then and now. Modern theologians spin stories about how we got the Bible, yet refuse **glory** to God the Holy Spirit for inspiring it. It must be inerrant and infallible if it's God Word. But when it calls human pleasure sinful and damning, people give **shameful glory** to false teachers who make them feel good. Their admirers ignore the facts. Jesus' lead disciple was an inglorious braggart.

Far north near Caesarea Philippi, Jesus had asked His disciples, "*Who do people say that I am?*" Folks gave different answers, but Peter said it right, "*You are the Christ.*" Were they shocked when Jesus *warned them not to tell anyone about him*²? Yet the Lord would be even more alarming.

*Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the experts in the law, be killed, and after three days rise again.*³² *He was speaking plainly to them.* They believed that Jesus was *the Christ*, the Messiah long promised by God to His chosen people of Israel. How could He be "*rejected*" by their own religious leaders? And He used a word that literally means *tested*, then shoved *aside*! For Jesus to "*be killed*" was too horrendous to consider. In fact, Peter missed the rest: "*...and after three days rise again.*" Imagine Peter earnestly going over to Jesus as one would a friend who needed some serious advice, then rebuking Jesus for saying such a thing. The Holy Spirit's Greek original doesn't just say that Jesus looked at His disciples, but that he literally "*knew*" them. Jesus knew they needed to hear His rebuke of Peter: "*Get behind me, Satan! You are not thinking the things of God, but the things of men.*" These were His future apostles!

¹ Morgan, Robert J. *On This Day*. Copyright © 1997 by Robert J. Morgan. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) Used by Permission. All Rights Reserved. DailyReader Copyright © 1999-2001 by Jeff Wheeler and Craig Rairdin. Laridian.

² W.P. ~ Wartburg Project – Mark popular review (w/o footnotes) the Bible text unless stated otherwise. [M.C. 3/1/2015]

The peak of Jesus' popularity passed with the feeding of the 5,000. Many left when Jesus told them it was necessary to believe in Him. Their stubborn hearts wanted a Messiah of power not passion. The crown, yes, but not the cross! Peter's satanic feelings prove Jesus' wisdom for waiting near the end for His prophecy of the suffering He would endure for us. Don't we default to Peter's **shameful glory**? A broken promise for our career? Wanting to be the most popular kid no matter who gets hurt? Disappointed or departing if church doesn't make us happy? Do we dare deny seeking **shameful glory** instead of Christ? How easily we relate to Peter's desire for Jesus to be the conquering hero so we don't have to suffer for Him. But this is why we need the season of Lent to repent of this sin too. Only as co-heirs in Christ's suffering can we be co-heirs of His glory. Our Lord says through His Apostle Paul: *"Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory."* (Romans 8:17 NIV84) Christ gives...

✝ **glory unashamed** (vv.34-38)

This is another reason I believe the Bible with all my heart and soul. It keeps convincing me no one could make this up. Who would start a religion by picking sorry sinners like Jesus' disciples? Who would invite sinners like me to be set free from my own guilt and shame? Who could imagine such patience, such perseverance by the Master Teacher, God's own Son, to give **glory unashamed**?

He called the crowd together with his disciples and said to them, "If anyone wants to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. Is that any way to start a new religion? Or is this the way that God the Creator continues His mercy? It began in the Garden of Eden with the promise of the Savior who would suffer Satan's bite, but then crush that cruel serpent's head. Jesus would suffer and die on the cross to shed the only innocent blood that could wash away our idolatrous desires for good days and vain glory. And in order to help us appreciate His prevailing grace, our Lord gives each of us a special cross tailor-made for us to pick up and follow Him. Christian crosses are not illness or heartache even non-believers suffer because sin came into the world through Adam. Christian crosses are what we endure for being Christians such as ridicule of friends or challenges coming to worship.

My Lord Christ does not sugarcoat anything: *"For whoever wants to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake and for the gospel will save it. ³⁶After all, what good is it for a man to gain the whole world yet forfeit his soul? ³⁷Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? ³⁸In fact, whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."*

In the early 1990's, I was invited to a gathering of community leaders – teachers, clergy, law enforcement, retired mayors – to talk about keeping kids off drugs. A local public official opened her keynote with a joke about Jesus Christ. As she spoke, I kept recalling these words of my Lord Jesus. Finally she called for "one more question," and I realized I could not sleep unless I spoke up for my Savior. What a coward! I had to hold onto the chair in front because my knees were shaking. Jesus helped me: "We all are concerned about keeping kids out of trouble. My own background – I'll spare the details – easily ends up in drugs. There was one Person who literally kept me alive. You began with a joke about Jesus Christ. I don't believe we should take away the only Rock these kids have to hang onto." When I sat down, she nervously back pedaled with patronizing remarks about the value of faith-community. Afterwards a retired police chief and young realtor both thanked me for speaking up.

Kneeling at the cross, struggling under our own, strengthened by grace and mercy – we enjoy faith's favorite blessing: **glory unashamed**. You see, Jesus is *"not ashamed"* to call us His own. And when He comes again in glory with all His holy angels, earth's glory will fade in the brilliance of God. **What Good Is Glory?** None in man, but all in God. Let us ever walk with Jesus. Amen.