

The Glory of God

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- [0 : 00] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, the book of Exodus, Exodus chapter 33.
- Exodus 33, and if we take as our text the words of verse 18. Exodus 33, and verse 18, where Moses said, please show me your glory.
- Please show me your glory. This evening, I want us to begin a short series entitled Vision 2024.
- Vision 2024. Because as you know, and as our in-house optometrist will tell us, if you have 2020 vision, you have perfect vision.
- But I want us to begin a short series entitled Vision 2024, because as we go into 2024, we need a vision for 2024.
- [1 : 11] Because as Solomon in all his wisdom said, without vision, the people perish. Without vision, the people perish. Therefore, we need a gospel vision.
- We need a vision for 2024. Now, as you know, and as a denomination, the Free Church of Scotland, they have adopted a vision statement. The vision statement of a healthy gospel church for every community in Scotland.
- I'm sure you've heard the vision statement before. A healthy gospel church for every community in Scotland. Now, some might be cynical about it. Some might be suspicious about it.
- Other people might be skeptical about these things. And if I'm honest, when I first heard it all, I was too. Because our vision statements and development plans and strategy documents and statistical surveys and facts and figures, are they not all taken from the world of business and marketing?
- Then how can we use them in the church? Because the church, as you know, it's not a business. It's God's house. It's Christ's church. The gospel also isn't a marketplace.
- [2 : 24] Salvation isn't really for sale. But then when you stop and think about it, maybe it is. And I say that because, you know, when Isaiah preached, when Isaiah, that great prophet in the Old Testament, when he preached to the people of his day, Isaiah preached and proclaimed that the church was a marketplace and that the gospel was for sale and that you were welcome to come to the marketplace and to receive the gospel.
- Isaiah said in those memorable words in Isaiah 55, maybe you learned them when you were in school. He had that great call, ho, everyone who thirsts, come, come to the waters.
- And you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. And you look at it and you see Isaiah was using the language of business.

He was using the language of marketing in order to present the full and free offer of the gospel. And so when we hear about things like vision statements and development plans and strategy documents, we're not to be cynical or skeptical or suspicious or shut off to the whole thing.

Nowhere to realize that we too are to possess and practice a suitable and scriptural vision for our day and our generation.

[3 : 54] We're to possess and practice Vision 2024. And so the vision of a healthy gospel church for every community in Scotland, it's a good vision to have.

Because is it not true that we want to be a healthy gospel church in our community? We want to be a people, simply the word healthy, a people that loves Jesus and loves people.

That would be a healthy gospel church. A church that loves Jesus and loves people. And so for that reason, as office bearers, and there were other people helping us well, we've been working on producing a development plan for our congregation.

Not just because we have to do it. Every congregation in the free church has to have or are encouraged to have a development plan. In fact, all of these vacancies that were mentioned this morning, if you were here this morning, all the vacancies, they all need a development plan before they can call a minister.

And that's because a development plan, it not only helps us to plan a vision for our congregation, it also helps us to put that vision into practice for our congregation.

[5 : 08] And as I mentioned, God willing, next Sunday evening, after the evening service, we're going to have a vision evening. We're going to look together as a congregation at our development plan, which is a work in progress.

It's not the final article. It's things that can be changed. It's a thing that can be developed as it goes along. It's a development plan. But that development plan, it not only states our aims as a congregation, it also shows us what we are accountable to as a congregation.

It reminds us about our roles and our responsibilities. And so do we not want to be a healthy gospel church in our community that's focused and fixated upon the glory of God?

Because that's where our vision has to begin. It has to begin with the glory of God. And so as we begin our short series of Vision 2024, I want us to plead and pray with Moses.

Show me your glory. Show me your glory. Because in order to possess and practice Vision 2024, we need to be grasping God's glory, gazing upon God's glory, and giving God the glory.

[6 : 23] In order to possess and practice Vision 2024, we need to be grasping God's glory, gazing upon God's glory, and giving God the glory.

And there are three headings this evening. Grasping, gazing, and giving God the glory. So first of all, grasping God's glory. Grasping God's glory.

If you look again at verse 11 of chapter 33, it says there, For thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face as a man speaks to his friend.

When Moses turned again into the camp, his assistant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent. Moses said to the Lord, See, you say to me, bring up this people, but you have not let me know whom you will send with me.

Yet you have said, I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight. The reason we find Moses, the man of God, grasping for God's glory is because the congregation of Israel, they had lost sight of God's glory.

[7 : 34] They had taken their eyes off the Lord. They had moved their focus and their fixation from the Lord to themselves. They had become focused and fixated with their own individual lives and their own idolatry.

And we know that because, boys and girls, the previous chapter speaks about the golden calf. The previous chapter, chapter 22, if you have the Pew Bible, you'll have the heading. It's the golden calf incident.

Well, you remember Moses, he went up Mount Sinai to receive the law from the Lord and to get instructions on how to worship the Lord. But while Moses' back was turned, the faithless and fickle congregation of Israel, they decided and they demanded to worship something else.

And in that 40-day period, while Moses was on the mountaintop receiving the law, the congregation of Israel, they were at the bottom rescinding the law. Moses was receiving the law.

They were rescinding the law. Because in their casual and consumeristic commitment to the Lord, the congregation, you read it in the chapter, the congregation. They turned from worshipping the Lord to worshipping a golden calf.

[8 : 50] Which, as you'd expect, it angered the Lord and it angered Moses, the man of God. To the point that when Moses came down Mount Sinai, he broke the two tablets of stone which the law of the Lord had been written upon.

And after that, after the congregation had been punished, you read through chapter 32, after the congregation had been punished and Moses prays for their forgiveness, the Lord pardons the people of Israel and then the Lord speaks to Moses from the pillar of cloud at the tent of meeting.

And we're told there, we read it earlier, that the Lord would speak to Moses face to face as a man speaks to his friend. And it was as the Lord spoke with Moses, as they spoke to one another, Moses pleaded for the Lord to lead the congregation of Israel forward.

He wants them to be led forward. We read there in verse 13. Now, therefore, this is Moses speaking to the Lord at the tent of meeting. Now, therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight.

Consider too that this nation is your people. And he said, my presence will go with you and I will give you rest. And Moses said to him, if your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.

[10 : 14] You know, at that moment, Moses, the man of God, he knew that leading the congregation of Israel through the wilderness towards the promised land, it was going to be the greatest challenge of his life.

Leading this congregation was going to be a great challenge to Moses because Moses knew that he was going to spend, maybe he didn't know at that point, that he was going to spend 40 years dealing with this congregation, dealing with their sins and their stresses and their sicknesses and their sufferings and all their sorrows.

He was going to deal with this redeemed and yet rebellious congregation. And Moses says to the Lord here, in verse 15, if your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.

If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. Moses didn't want to go another step forward. He didn't want to go another step further.

Moses didn't even want to look into the future with this congregation of Israel if the Lord wasn't with him. If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.

[11 : 32] And you know, you listen to what Moses prayed and you think, well, that's what we should be pleading. That's what we should be praying as a congregation at the beginning of another year.

Because as we face the sins and sicknesses and sufferings and sorrows of this life, we can't take another step forward. We shouldn't go another step further.

We shouldn't even look into the future if the Lord is not with us. We should be pleading and praying like Moses. If your presence will not go with us, do not bring us up from here.

If your presence will not go with us, do not bring us up from here. And you know, you read this. I love this passage in Exodus 33. And you read it and you think, it's no wonder Moses goes on to plead and to pray to the Lord, show me your glory.

Show me your glory. But you have to remember who is saying this. This is Moses, the man of God.

[12 : 39] Moses has already seen God's glory. He sees God's glory almost on a daily basis at this point. He meets him at the tent of meeting. But Moses has seen God's glory on a number of occasions because Moses had seen God's glory at the burning bush when it was not consumed.

The boys and girls, they're learning that just now in Sunday school. The burning bush where it was not consumed. And God's revealed his glory to Moses there. Moses had seen God's glory in all the plagues in Egypt.

He saw God's glory in the Passover. He saw God's glory in the parting of the Red Sea. He saw God's glory in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night that led them all the way to where they were at this moment at Mount Sinai.

Moses had seen God's glory on a number of occasions. But here's the thing. Moses wasn't content on going further or a step forward.

He wasn't content on looking to the future on previous or past experiences. No, Moses had this passionate pursuit for God's glory now.

[13 : 48] Moses was grasping for a fresh glimpse of God's glory. Moses had this hunger and thirst for a renewed vision of God's glory.

Moses was looking and longing for God to display and demonstrate his glory in the life of his congregation, Israel. Because Moses knew that nothing would encourage him, nothing would enable him to persevere in ministry for the next 40 years apart from the presence and the promise of God's glory going with him.

And the same is true today. The same is true today. We need to have this same plea and this same passion for God's glory.

We need to be grasping for a glimpse of God's glory. We need to be looking and longing to see God's glory. because we can't rely upon past experiences and previous encounters.

We can't rely upon revivals in our congregation and our community in a bygone era. Because, you know, if we're going to persevere in 2024, we need the presence and the promise of God's glory now.

[15 : 09] We need the promise of God's glory now. We need to be praying with Moses, pleading with Moses, show me your glory. Show me your glory.

Show me your glory. And you know, you say those words and you think, well, what is God's glory?

What is God's glory? We're talking about seeing God's glory, but what is God's glory? That's what I want us to think about secondly. I want us to think about gazing upon God's glory.

So in order to possess and practice this vision 2024, we need to be grasping God's glory. But we also need to be gazing upon God's glory.

Gazing upon God's glory. Look again at verse 18. Moses said, please show me your glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name, the Lord, the one who keeps covenant.

[16 : 14] And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But he said, you cannot see my face for man shall not see me and live.

When Moses pleaded and prayed to gaze upon the fullness of God's glory, the Lord, the amazing thing is the Lord didn't have to reveal even a glimpse of his glory to Moses.

The Lord doesn't have to reveal even a glimpse of his glory to us or to anyone. And yet the Lord graciously revealed a glimpse of glory to Moses here.

But also he's revealed a glimpse of his glory to us in his world and in his word. The Lord has graciously revealed a glimpse of his glory to us in his world and in his word.

In his world because Psalm 19 reminds us the heavens declare the glory of God. The skies proclaim his handiwork. But also in his word because the word of God became flesh and dwelt among us.

[17 : 28] Why? So that we would behold his glory. But the Lord didn't, you know, the Lord didn't have to reveal even a glimpse of his glory to Moses or to us or to anyone.

The Lord didn't have to do it. There is no need for the Lord to reveal his glory to us. And yet as the Lord said to Moses, I will be gracious verse 19, I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

I will give you what you don't deserve and I will withhold from you what you do deserve. The Lord has graciously given and gifted to us a glimpse of his glory both in his world and in his word.

But as we said, what is God's glory? What is God's glory? The Greek word for glory, boys and girls, the Greek word for glory is doxa, which is where we get the word doxology from, which is a word of praise, a word of giving glory to God.

The Hebrew word for glory, this is question four, is kavod, which means heavy or weighty. It expresses the idea of filling a whole place with God's presence because God's presence is heavy.

[18 : 56] God's glory is heavy. It's weighty because, you know, when God is present, his glory fills the entire place.

When God is present, his glory fills the entire place. But what is God's glory? We're asking this question, what is God's glory? Theologians describe God's glory in two ways.

God's intrinsic glory and God's ascribed glory. God's intrinsic glory and God's ascribed glory. God's intrinsic glory is the sum and substance of all of who God is, which is very hard to describe because God, as you know, he's altogether glorious.

In fact, the way in which the Hebrew describes God's glory, it's fascinating how it writes it. It writes the word glory twice. The verb is repeated beside one another and it emphasizes that God is gloriously glorious.

There are no words to describe God's glory. Our English language, our Greek language, not even the Hebrew language, it just emphasizes the same word twice. He is, God is gloriously glorious.

[20 : 16] God is gloriously glorious. Therefore, there's nothing that we as finite, flawed, and failing sinners can do or say to add to God's intrinsic glory.

We can ascribe glory to God by loving God and praising Him and worshiping Him and serving Him, but we can't ascribe intrinsic glory to God because He's already gloriously glorious.

You can't fill what's already full. And that's what we're being told here. You can't ascribe intrinsic glory to God because He's already gloriously glorious.

And so when we ask what is God's glory, what we're really asking is, well, what is God? What is God? Because God is gloriously glorious.

God is gloriously glorious. And you know, that question, what is God, it obviously brings us back to the catechism, question four. And I love that story about when our catechism was being compiled in the 17th century.

[21 : 29] You remember there were all these theological giants and geniuses, they were all down in Westminster and London and they were there for the assembly. This assembly to produce and publish the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Westminster Catechisms larger or longer and shorter.

And I always find it amazing that it was in Westminster where all our members of Parliament meet. That's where they were compiling the Confession of Faith. But when they came to the question what is God, they understandably had difficulty putting an answer to that question.

How can you define, how can you describe an eternal being who is gloriously glorious? How can you put that into words? And so when the Westminster assembly, when they couldn't put pen to paper, they decided to pray.

And when one of the young men in the assembly stood to pray, in the course of his prayer, he said, God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

And that's the answer we've come to love and learn in our catechism. That's who God is. That's what God is. He's a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

[22 : 59] He is gloriously glorious. And so when we ask the question, what is God's glory? We're really asking, what is God? Because God's glory is God.

God's glory is all that God is. Because God is gloriously glorious. And it should blow your mind. If it doesn't, you're not understanding that God is gloriously glorious.

We're not to grasp the beauty and the glory of God, because he is gloriously glorious. But when Moses prayed here and pleaded to gaze upon the fullness of God's glory, we see that the Lord graciously allowed Moses only to see the goodness of his glory.

He wasn't allowed to see the fullness. He was only allowed to see the goodness of his glory. The Lord said, I will make all my goodness pass before you.

I will make, that's what it says there in verse 19, I will make all my goodness pass before you. If Moses had seen the fullness of God's glory, he would have died.

[24 : 08] Because as the Lord goes on to say, he says, no man shall see me and live. So if Moses, he was only given a glimpse of God's glory to gaze upon, because any more than a glimpse of God's glory was too holy to handle, too much for him.

And he would have died. And you know, that's why Isaiah, you look at other men in the Bible who got a glimpse of God's glory. Isaiah, when he gazed upon the glory of God in Isaiah chapter 6, Isaiah's response was, woe is me, for I am undone.

I am a man of unclean lips. When the apostle John was given a glimpse of God's glory to gaze upon, as he stood in that revelation of heaven, when John saw, he said, when I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.

My friend, if Moses had seen the fullness of God's glory, he would have died. But God in his grace, he only allowed Moses to gaze upon a glimpse, just a glimpse of the goodness of his glory.

A glimpse of the goodness of his glory. But tonight, the glory of the gospel is that we are able to see more than Moses saw. We are able to see more than Moses saw.

[25 : 37] Moses was only allowed to gaze upon a glimpse of God's glory. And yet, John tells us in the New Testament that when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, when God became man, we were all enabled to see the fullness of his glory.

Because it was the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. It was all of God's glory in its fullness. And it was full of grace and truth.

It wasn't a glimpse. It was the fullness of God manifest in the flesh. It was God's glory in all its fullness, full of grace and truth.

And you know, my friend, the glory of the gospel is that we have seen the fullness of God's glory in the person of Jesus Christ. What's more is that God has graciously and mercifully, if you're a Christian tonight, God has shone into the darkness of your sinful heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

That's the beauty of it. That glory has been revealed to you. You have seen His glory. You have seen further than Moses saw.

[27 : 00] So here's the application. If Moses was only able to gaze upon a glimpse of God's glory, but we have had the privilege of gazing upon the fullness of God's glory in the person of Jesus Christ, then we should be more passionate than Moses in our pursuit of God's glory.

We should be more passionate than Moses for the presence and promise of God's glory. We should be more passionate to grasp a glimpse of God's glory than Moses was.

We should be more passionate as we look and long to see God's glory. My friend, we should be praying in our prayers and pleading as a congregation saying, Lord, I beseech thee, show me, show me thy glory.

That should be our longing above everything else that we would see God's glory and see his glory working in our congregation and working among our community.

Because in order to possess and practice Vision 2024, we need to be grasping God's glory. We need to be gazing upon God's glory. And ultimately, we need to be giving God the glory.

[28 : 24] glory. We need to be giving God the glory. That's what we see lastly and very briefly. Giving God the glory. Grasping God's glory, gazing upon God's glory, and giving God the glory.

Moses said, please show me your glory. Please show me your glory. glory. The American theologian and writer, A.W.

Tozer, he once said, God is looking for men and women in whose hands his glory is safe. God is looking for men and women in whose hands his glory is safe.

And by this, Tozer meant that God is looking for men and women who will have a passionate pursuit for God's glory. Because God is not looking for men and women who have a passionate pursuit about promoting and publicizing and praising their own name.

God is not interested in that. God is looking for men and women who are passionate about promoting and publishing and praising the name that is above every name.

[29 : 44] Because as our Bible reminds us, there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved, except the name of Jesus Christ. And there is no other name at which every knee will bow and every tongue will confess in heaven and on earth and under the earth, except the name of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, God is looking for men and women in whose hands his glory is safe. God is not willing to share his glory with anyone or anything else.

He is never going to be second or secondary. So we are learning in the commandments, number one is number one because God needs to be number one. Number two is number two because God is not number two.

So God is not willing to share his glory with anyone or anything else. God is looking for men and women whose life song in this world. And you know, I think this should be our life song day by day, our waking moment.

Psalm 115, my life, Lord, not unto us, not unto us, Lord, but do thou glory take unto thy name in for thy truth and for thy mercy's sake.

[31 : 03] Our life is for the glory of God. Our chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. And you'll be reminded that even on Wednesday evening, we touched on those reformations, solas.

We're talking about salvation and how we're saved. And we said that our salvation is explained to us in sola scriptura, scripture alone. And it's by sola fide, faith alone.

It's through sola gratia, grace alone. It's in sola Christos, Christ alone. But it's all, all solidao gloria, to the glory of God alone.

Our salvation is all solidao gloria. It's all to the glory of God alone. My friend, God is looking for men and women in whose hands his glory is safe.

Therefore, we need to ask ourselves, does God find these men and these women in Barvis Free Church? are we men and women in whose hands the glory of God is safe?

[32 : 20] Are we men and women who have a passion to pursue and promote the glory of God? Are we men and women who seek to give God all the glory?

That it's not unto us, not to us, but do thou glory take? Are we men and women who strive to ascribe and attribute all the glory, honor, and praise to God?

Because in order to possess and practice Vision 2024, that's what we need. We need men and women in whose hands the glory of God is safe.

We need to be grasping God's glory and gazing upon God's glory and giving God the glory. Because as our Bible teaches us, that whatever we do, in the name of Christ, we're to do it all to the glory of God.

It's all to the glory of God. So let's leave here this evening praying with Moses. Lord, I beseech thee, show me, show me thy glory.

[33 : 36] And may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. Lord, help us to echo the words of thy servant.

And say, Lord, I beseech thee, show me thy glory, that thy glory would fill this place. And there would be not unto us, Lord, not to us, but do thou glory take, that the glory would be thine in the saving of sinners, that the glory would all be thine in the building up of thy church.

And Lord, we pray that thou wouldst have all the glory in everything. We realize, Lord, that we cannot grasp or even attain or even understand the glorious nature of who thou art.

But we bless and praise thee that it has all been revealed to us in the person of Jesus. Help us then, we pray, to see him more and more, to love him more and more, to serve him more and more, all to his glory.

Forgive us, Lord, we pray, when we are selfish, when we are self-centered, when we seek to take glory to ourselves. O Lord, forgive us and cleanse us and renew us and refresh us that would ultimately be all to the glory of God and the furtherance of his kingdom.

[35 : 04] O Lord, that he would increase, that we would decrease, that we would be as nothing and that thou, O Lord, would be everything to us. Go before us, we ask.

Lead us into the week that lies ahead, a week that we often say is unknown to any of us. But Lord, we give thanks that this is where we are found. Do us good and we ask for Jesus sake.

Amen. Amen. We're going to bring our service to a conclusion this evening. We're going to sing the words of Psalm 115.

Psalm 115, page 394 in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 115, singing from the beginning down to the verse 9.

But before we sing, I have four questions. Question one, what did Moses ask God that he would see? God's glory.

[36 : 16] Good job. What did the Israelites worship instead of God? Golden calf. You're on the ball. what is the Greek word for glory?

Good job. Dox, you're all wide awake. What does the Hebrew word for glory mean? Heavy. Very unusual word, isn't it? Heavy.

How God fills the place with his glory. Well done. Get some extra pizza at YF. So Psalm 115, singing from the beginning down to the verse mark 9.

Not unto us, Lord, not to us, but do thou glory take unto thy name e'en for thy truth and for thy mercy's sake. We'll stand to sing, if you're able, to God's praise.

praise. Amen. Not unto us, Lord, not to us, but to the glory take, unto thy name e'en for thy truth and for thy mercy's say.

[37 : 34] O wherefore should the heathen say, where is their God now gone, but our God in the heavens is, what pleased him he hath done.

There I know silver are and gold were confidence as they be.

Must have they, but they do not speak, and eyes but do not see.

Ears have they, but they do not hear, no test but savor not, and speak but handle mouth nor walk, nor speak they through their throat.

Like them their fingers are unknowen, on them their trust have built.

[39 : 22] O Israel, trust the word the Lord, he is their help and shield.

the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore. Amen.