

“Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” — John 12:21

Until notified otherwise, all gatherings have been cancelled due to “safer at home” regulations ordered by the state of California.

Sermon

“To the praise of his glory..”

What do you praise? What do you applaud and commend and love to talk about?

I don't know about you, but I could list a lot of things under these headings: my wife, my kids, my grandkids, my friends, the church at Folsom, other brethren that I know and have known, even my favorite teams, my car, my painting of the “Boys of Summer” (1955 Dodgers).

I'm “proud” of a lot of things. I find it easy to talk about them, “praise” them, and applaud them. But above all — *I hope!* — **I praise God and give him glory.**

After all, what is our main role as Christians? What is the primary mission of the church? What is our ultimate purpose as human beings?

There's a clue in Ephesians 1 — speaking of God, Paul uses the expression, three times, “*to the praise of His glory*” (1:6, 12, 14).

Our purpose should match God's purpose and God's purpose is to bring glory to himself. Think about it:

- Why did God create us? Isaiah 43:7 — “everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”
- Why was Pharaoh allowed to come to power? Exodus 9:16 — “*But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.*”
- Why did God rescue Israel from bondage? Psalm 106:8 — “*Yet he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make known his mighty power.*”
- Why did Jesus come to earth? John 17:1 — “*When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you...*”
- Why will He come again? II Thessalonians 1:9-10 — “*...when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.*”

Everything God does and has done is designed to bring glory to Himself.

What is “glory”?

In the Hebrew OT, the word is *kabod*. Its primary meaning is *weight and substance*. A man of wealth would be referred to as *kabod* — a man of substance. His wealth and dignity commanded respect and honor, and this was called *kabod*. So, *weight, substance, wealth, dignity, noble bearing and honor* are all part of the meaning of “glory” (*kabod*). Later, the concept of *brightness or luminance* was added: I Cor. 15:41, “the glory of sun, moon & stars.” The new body will have a “glory” — a magnificence or splendor — of its own.

God's ultimate purpose is for us to glorify Him — to assign to Him all the honor, adoration and riches of glory that He deserves. He created man to reflect that glory and to return it, but man failed (Genesis 3). He then sent Jesus to image that glory (Jn. 1:18; Heb. 1:3-4) — and Jesus didn't fail. John 17:4.

But some object to the idea that God has done all to bring glory to himself. Doesn't that make God self-centered? And doesn't He teach against being self-centered?

While God made us in his image, it is a huge mistake to view God in human terms. God is not human. He does not have a human ego, nor human inadequacies, imperfections, or shortcomings. There must be some other reason He seeks His own glory.

- It's not because he *needs* our praise — read Psalm 50:9-12 (“*the world and its fullness are mine*”). And we can't increase God's glory; that would be like shining a flashlight on the sun to try to make it brighter.

So, why does He seek glory for Himself? The answer is that only by giving God his rightful place can we possibly understand life and enjoy it. God wants us to enjoy life but we do that only when we enjoy Him. The psalmist said in Psalm 16:11, “*in your presence there is fullness of joy.*”

We can take this a step further: God *must* seek His own glory, or he can't be for us — and God *is* for us.

Psalm 62:8 — “*Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.*”

Psalm 126:3 — “*He is God, awesome God, Creator, Sustainer, almighty God.*”

Romans 8:31 — “*What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*”

God *must* preserve His own glory, or He would not be God! What does it mean for us?

1. **Life itself is a great blessing.** Psalm 139:14 — “*I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.*” Your life is a blessing. You are here for a purpose. Your purpose is to find the particular way that you, with your individual talents and abilities and opportunities can bring glory to God. That's why you are here. Praise God for life! And every life is precious to God.

- It's difficult to make that point and ignore the application to the widespread, appalling practice of abortion. Before I finish this issue of the *View*, the number of abortions *this year* will be more than *10 million* (according to the World Health Organization).

2. **In giving us life, God has given the gift of Himself.** We are made in His image, in His likeness. II Peter 1:3-4 says we are “partakers of the divine nature.” In some sense, we are like God. That's hard to get the mind around. (See Psalm 8:4-9) We praise God for the dignity He has given us as human beings.

3. **God desires to be glorified in His saints.** So, what does He do? He gives us blessing upon blessing. Stop right now and count your *physical* blessings...

4. But God has gone so much further. He has given us the gift of himself in a far more meaningful way than anything we have in our flesh. **He has given us Jesus, grace and truth.** John 1:17-18. “He has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing...” Ephesians 1:3.

So, what is the outcome, the takeaway of all of this “theology”? What does glorifying God look like? What are we doing when we do it?

Simple: we praise God. Praise is the *natural result of being happy, feeling joy, appreciating something or someone.*

- What do you do when you get a gift that you've wanted for a very long time? *You begin to express your joy, delight.* Another word for that is, you express your praise for it and the one who gave it to you.
- What do you do when you talk about someone you think is wonderful, beautiful, powerful, neat, cool, or awesome? *You praise!*
- We praise rivers, lakes and mountains; ego snow; African violets and bougainvilleas; Chevy trucks and 7 lb bass; Dodgers, Yankees, the Rams and even the 49ers and grand slams in the bottom of the ninth when you were down by 3 and grandparents praise their grandkids.

See? We always seem to have the words to express ourselves, when we *love* something. Nothing holds us back. In fact, we can only be completely *happy* when we praise what we find praiseworthy.

- C. S. Lewis made the point: “...praise is not just stuck on the end of joy; *praise is the completion of joy.* If we feel something is worthy of praise, we won't be happy until we praise it...”

Praise is the verbalizing of our love for something or someone.

Conclusion

I'm sure you get the point. God is worthy of all glory and honor and praise. How do you know if you are giving God the glory? Stop and think about what you talk about most often. And think about what you think about when you are viewing something awesome and beautiful.

“Culture”: the attitudes and behavior characteristic of a particular social group

Imagine what??

Memes abound during this crisis, but not all of them have been either humorous or helpful. One of those was the ill-advised decision to get a bunch of A-list celebs together to sing part of John Lennon’s “Imagine.” The clips were spliced together, and the final video was *supposed* to help relieve the country’s frayed nerves. Yet “Imagine” isn’t an inspiring song for most of us. People are dying but we’re supposed to “*imagine there’s no heaven*”? This just shows how out of touch with reality these ivory tower celebrities are. Even the liberal online news blog, *Slate*, agreed it was horrible. Their headline reads, ***A Video of Celebrities Singing “Imagine” So Bad It Can Bring Us All Together in Hatred (Twenty-two hideous performances, ranked).***

Screen Time Squared

You would think that kids would relish this stay at home thing; after all, not going to school or playing sports gives them much more time to spend looking at their screens. I wonder if that’s true, though. I’ve observed that many of our young people at Folsom actually like it when they have to give up their devices, at least when it’s just for a little while. Habits can become a prison of sorts. When you have the means — I.e., a phone in hand — there is a compulsion to look at it. Rarely do you feel better after looking at whatever you looking at. I have reason to believe that a lot of the “drama” (meaning hurt feelings and jealousies) are sown through social media apps. With all this time on their hands, I wonder if they’ll wish they could get away from their phones for awhile. Maybe it’s time for parents to restrict phone use, if you are not doing that already.

— dp

Monitoring Mental Health

What it is: Whether you’re under mandatory stay-at-home orders or simply being required to socially distance, you’re probably concerned about how your children’s mental health will be impacted by being cooped up.

Why it’s valid but can be mitigated: 93% of Gen Z and Millennials report being impacted by COVID-19 (up from 63% last week), and we’re sure the statistics are similar for Gen Alpha (those born after Gen Z). Their daily lives have been disrupted, and they’re likely inside and away from fresh air and friends, relatives, teachers, etc. — more than they ever have been. This can lead to feelings of depression, loneliness, and anxiety, even in young kids who don’t know how to interpret, express, or deal with those feelings. Besides asking your children questions that help them assess their mental state, check out this pediatrician’s [practical tips](#) for counteracting the mental effects of social distancing. And because this situation is just so unknown to us, remember that counseling may be even more important than ever.

Bread: a Metaphor for Our Time

As the nation holds its breath and waits to see what will happen next in the fight against #covid19, the latest self-soothing measure has become [bread baking](#). Google has seen a massive surge in people searching for bread recipes, especially ones for beginners or that only require pantry staples as ingredients.

Bread making is an apt metaphor for our time: It requires patience, for example, as the bread rises; trust that the yeast will activate; care as it’s kneaded, and kneaded again. Baking bread together might help you navigate the time indoors with your teen as you teach them a lifelong skill and also have the opportunity to talk about how God’s Word talks about bread.

In particular, you may want to reference the story of Elijah and the widow (1 Kings 17). (This recipe for “[Widow’s Bread](#)” doesn’t even require yeast. Ed. note: this is a recipe for unleavened bread, *dp*). As you make bread together, talk about the virtues of trust, faith, and generosity—and what we know about God’s provision, even in the most uncertain of times.

— *From Culture Translator*