

We've been considering the glory of God in His nature and attributes—thus far we've seen His knowability, spirituality, triunity, power, knowledge, goodness, love, and justice, and this morning I want to finish our study with a final sermon entitled – The Glory of God in Christ.

That is, we behold all of the glorious perfections of God perfectly and wonderfully displayed in the person and work of Jesus Christ, Col.2:9—"For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily"—all that God is, we behold in Christ.

And so, unlike our previous studies on God's glory (where we've considered many texts), I want to largely focus our attention on a single text, John 1:18, and suggest three things within it: The transcendence of God (no one has seen God at any time); The uniqueness of the Son (the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father); The Revelation of the Father (He has declared Him).

- I. The Transcendence of God
- II. The Uniqueness of the Son
- III. The Revelation of the Father

I. The Transcendence of God

1. There are three ways "no man has ever seen God"—no man has ever seen God physically, directly, or exhaustively.
2. (1) No man has ever seen God physically—because God is a Spirit, no person has ever seen Him bodily or physically.
3. 1Tim.1:17—"Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."
4. No person has ever seen the form of God because He's spiritual, and thus unable to be seen by the natural eye.
5. Thus, whenever God revealed Himself within the OT, it was always in various symbolic ways called theophanies.
6. These were physical appearances of God such as the pillar of cloud and fire, but were not literally or actually God.
7. And so, no man has ever seen God because He is a Spirit, and as such, no person has ever seen Him physically.
8. (2) No man has ever seen God directly—by this I mean, no person can ever see or know God without mediation.
9. Because the distance between man and God is so great, no man is able to fully behold God or comprehend God.
10. This of course does not deny that man can see something of God within creation—which displays His divine glory.
11. But it does mean, had God never chose to come to earth in Christ, man never would have been able to know God.
12. The knowledge received of God through creation is only partial and vague—it's as if we only see His shadow.
13. Thus, because man and God are separated by nature, the only way man can know God is through a mediator.
14. No man can know God directly—the older way of saying this was—no man can know God immediately or directly.
15. (3) No man has ever seen God exhaustively—by this I mean, no person can see God fully or comprehensively.
16. 1Tim.6:16—"He dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power."
17. In this sense, no creature will ever see or know God—no creature (even glorified in heaven) can fully comprehend God.

18. I suggest, this is foremostly what John means when He says—"no one has seen God at any time"—no one has or can see God.
19. This is a fact that will always remain true—as long as God remains the Creator and we His creation, no man has or can see God.
20. Thus, to "see God" John really means to "know God"—no person can know God as God or in the fullness of His being.
21. This of course does not deny that we can know God—this is the point of this text—God's Son came to declare Him to us.
22. But our knowledge of God, though saving, intimately, accurate, and growing, will never be exhaustive or comprehensive.
23. Jn.6:46—"Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father"—I suggest our Savior here interprets John 1:18.
24. When our Savior says that He alone has seen the Father, He doesn't mean physically, but He means comprehensively.
25. No person is able to see the Father in this sense—this will be true of glorified Christians in heaven, for all eternity.
26. Only that One who is from God—this phrase "from God" is important—it describes Him as eternally begotten.
27. When we say that Christ is God's unique Son, we simply mean, He is "from" or "of" God—He is God of very God.
28. And thus, only God knows God exhaustively, this is an impossibility for any man (even glorified man in heaven).
29. LBC (2:1)—"The Lord our God is but one only living and true God...whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself."
30. I suggest this is what our text means—no one has seen God at any time—only God can see God (in this sense).

II. The Uniqueness of the Son

1. V18—"No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."
2. Here I want to examine two things John Says about the Son—He's eternally begotten and dwells in the Father's bosom.
3. (1) He's the Father's only begotten Son—the Greek rendered "the only begotten" is *monogenes* which is two words—*mono* (only) *genes* (born).
4. Literally, the word means "the only born" or "uniquely born one"—it refers to the eternal relation of the Son to the Father.
5. The Son is eternally born or begotten of the Father—this is another way of saying, all that the Son is, He has from the Father.
6. This is really another way of saying—while the Father and Son are distinct Persons, they share a common essence.
7. Thus, it's very evident that the Jews understood that when Jesus claimed to be God's Son He claimed to be God.
8. Jn.5:18—"Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God." Jn.19:7—"The Jews answered him (Pilate), 'We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.'"
9. And so, while all Christians are sons by adoption, only Christ is a Son by nature—only Christ is eternally begotten.
10. (2) He eternally dwelt in the Father's bosom—this is really another way of describing Him as God's only Son.
11. By "bosom" is meant lap which is a place of intimacy—for example, if you remember John reclined in Jesus' bosom.

12. Well, John is here using this imagery figuratively to underscore intimacy—the Son, from eternity, reclined in the Father's bosom.
13. He fundamentally means—there's no person who can know the Father like the Son, who dwells in His bosom.
14. The Father sees (or knows) the Son uniquely, the Son sees (or knows) the Father uniquely, and the Spirit sees (or knows) the Father and Son uniquely.
15. Now, let me point out the obvious—the reason why Christ is able to declare the Father is because of who He is.
16. Because He's God's Son, and thus possesses the very same essence, He is obviously able to reveal Him to us.
17. Now, before we come to consider the final phrase of Jn.1:18, let me point out one last thing about Christ dwelling in His Father's bosom.
18. I want you to notice it's in the present tense—"The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father"—not WAS but IS.
19. In other words, when John wrote this gospel, the Son was still in the bosom of the Father, the reason being—this is an eternal and essential reality.
20. Brethren, this is one of the most difficult topics of the entire Christian religion—the relationship of the two natures of Christ in one Person.
21. In time the second Person of the Godhead assumed to Himself a real human nature made of a body and a soul.
22. This human nature was joined to His divine nature, and yet, Christ's divine nature is not exhaustively stuffed into His human nature.
23. Theologically we maintain the Son's divine nature is uniquely joined to His human nature so as to make one Person.
24. But the incarnation in no way limits His divine nature—Christ as Man was limited to time and space—He was finite.
25. But as God He was never limited to time and space but is infinite—it's for this reason Christ was both created and uncreated—finite and infinite.
26. Thus, as Christ walked on this earth, He was, according to His divine nature, all the while in the bosom of the Father.
27. And it's because of this, Christ is perfectly qualified to make the Father known, because He and the Father are one.

III. The Revelation of the Father

1. The Greek word rendered "has declared" literally means "to make known or clear" from it we get the word exegesis (which refers to the explaining of a text or passage).
2. The Son came into this world to exegete or explain the Father—He came into the world to make the Father known (notice three things – What He reveals, How He reveals, and Why He reveals).
3. (1) What He reveals—He's come into the world to declare the Father—that is, to make His character known to man.
4. Now before I go any further, I think it's proper at this point to remind you that Christ is one Person with two natures.
5. He is truly Man and truly God—two natures in one Person—it's for this reason He can multiply food and yet be hungry; He can raise people from the dead and yet die.
6. There are things that Christ did that do not reveal to us the character of God, such as grow tired, hungry, or die.
7. God cannot grow tired, hungry, or die—these are things that are strictly true of His human nature and not divine.
8. But what John means is, every moral activity performed by Christ (in His words and works) reveals to us the character of God.
9. Simply put, the Son of God took on human nature, so that we can behold the character of God in greater clarity.

10. Jn.12:44-45—"He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me."
11. Jn.14:8-9—"Philip said to Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us. Jesus said to him, Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, Show us the Father?"
12. What does our Savior mean when He says "he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me" but, they share the same nature.
13. When we see Christ, we see God in flesh, and thus, all that He does reveals to us the very nature of God the Father.
14. Our Savior does not mean, the Father has a body, but He does mean, that He Himself possesses the same nature as the Father.
15. To hear Christ speak and to watch Him work, is to hear and behold the Father—to see Him is to see the Father.
16. Now, before we move on to How He reveals, let me remind you that in showing us the Father He also shows us Himself.
17. That is, because the Father, Son, and Spirit all possess the same nature or essence, they each possess the same glory.
18. Perhaps another way of saying it would be—Christ came to earth to reveal or declare the nature (essence) of God.
19. Jn.1:14—"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."
20. When John says, "we behold His glory" He means the glory of the Word, or the glory of the only begotten of the Father.
21. In other words, while the Son became incarnate to reveal the glory of the Father, His own glory is also revealed.
22. And yet, because of the essential order of the Trinity, the Son comes into time not to glorify Himself but His Father.
23. (2) How He reveals—here I want to suggest three primary ways in which Christ declared the character of God.
24. (a) By His teaching—that is, Christ explained the Father to us, by all that He said as the great Prophet of the NC.
25. Heb.1:1-3—"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person."
26. While God revealed Himself through the prophets in the OT, He has given the final and fullest revelation of Himself in Christ.
27. It's for this reason, throughout our Savior's ministry, He constantly told His hearers, He received His words from God.
28. Jn.8:26—"I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him"—that is, as He eternally dwelt in His bosom.
29. From eternity, the Son not only saw the Father (in that He perfectly knew the Father), but He also heard the Father.
30. Put another way—Christ knows the plans and purposes of the Father uniquely, just as He knows the Father uniquely.
31. Christ came to reveal two necessarily related things about the Father—His Person (character) and Plan (of redemption).
32. And one obvious way this is done is through His words—Christ is the great Prophet who came to reveal the Father.
33. This in no way downplays the OT prophets, for it was the Spirit of Christ who spoke through them (1Pet.1:10-11).
34. But it does say, that Christ came to provide the final and fullest revelation of God, through His own ministry and that of His apostles.

35. Jn.1:17—"For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ"—that is, all that the OT commanded and promised, was realized in Christ.
36. (b) By His living—that is, within our Savior's life, in His miracles and treatment of others, we behold the character of God.
37. Thus, what I want to do for the next few minutes, is briefly walk through the gospels, pointing out three divine attributes evidenced in the ministry of Christ.
38. (i) His knowledge—over and over again, our Savior was able to read the minds and motives of His enemies and disciples.
39. Jn.2:23-25—"Many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man."
40. Though many people outwardly professed to believe in Him, He knew that not all of them inwardly did believe.
41. (ii) His power—this is seen in a number of ways within His miracles—in multiplying food, casting out demons, and raising the dead.
42. But I want point you to one incident which graphically displays the power of God over all things within creation.
43. Mk.4:39-41—"Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, Peace, be still! And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"
44. (iii) His love—now, the love of God is evidenced in Christ's ministry in a number of ways but let me suggest just one, and that's compassion.
45. If we had to summarize our Savior's interaction with the masses with a single word, I would suggest—compassion.
46. Over and over again, we read of our Savior that He had compassion on the multitudes, for their physical and spiritual needs.
47. Matt.9:36—"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd" Matt.14:14—"And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick."
48. Christ was moved with compassion because he felt pity, concern, and kindness for them—or, He loved them!
49. You know, I've never truly understood how certain Christians can deny that God has compassion and concern for all men.
50. We need look no further than Christ Himself—Christ is described as moved with compassion for the multitudes.
51. And yet, I hear someone object—But Christ was a Man, and thus, He was only moved to compassion as a Man.
52. Well, it's true Christ was a Man, and it's also true He felt the human emotion of compassion as a Man—perfectly!
53. But remember, Christ came to reveal the Father, and thus to see Him is to see the Father, or behold His character.
54. Now it's important to remember, that God does not have emotions or passions, but He is Mercy and He is Love.
55. Remember, God's attributes are not in Him as passions but perfections, they are not true of Him, but they are Him.
56. O brethren, behold your God! Full of grace and mercy for poor and needy sinners! O dear sinner look no further for a reason to come to Him!
57. (c) By His dying—by this I mean, we not only behold the character of God in our Savior's life but in His death.
58. This is to say—our Savior came into the world to declare the character of the Father as evidenced in redemption.
59. Jn.12:27-28—"Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, Father, save Me from this hour? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father glorify Your name."

60. Here we learn the Father glorified His name, He made His glorious name known, in the sufferings of Jesus Christ.
61. Every perfection of God is glorified in Christ—in His cross and in His crown—justice, love, mercy, and grace.
62. Ps.85:10—"Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed"—that is, in the cross of Christ.
63. John Calvin—"In the cross of Christ, as in a splendid theatre, the incomparable goodness of God is set before the whole world. The glory of God shines, indeed, in all creatures on high and below, but never more brightly than in the cross."
64. J.C. Ryle—"In Christ's words, and deeds, and life, and death, we learn as much concerning God the Father as our feeble minds can at present bear."
65. (3) Why He reveals—I trust this is rather obvious—the Son came to reveal the Father that we might know the Father.
66. Exhortation 1—Let us thank God for Christ—why did the Father send His Son into this world but to declare Him.
67. Brethren, we need to rightly understand the incarnation—God became a man to make known to man, who God is.
68. And all this means, that God truly desires to be known by man, otherwise He would have never sent His Son.
69. This is why His Son came to earth, this is why He lived among us as a Man, and this is why He's left the account of His life in the gospels.
70. It was so that He would make known to us, the Person, plan, and purposes of God to save sinners through the gospel.
71. Exhortation 2—Let us learn from Christ—this is in some sense the entire point of this sermon—How can we learn about God?
72. We can study creation which displays the glory of God—we can read about His divine perfections in the Scriptures.
73. But nowhere is God's glory more evident than in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ—He came to declare Him.
74. You know brethren, I fear many Christians are slaves to their feelings—they view God in relation to their feelings.
75. But surely, we know, our feelings are not trustworthy—we feel God is for us one minute and against us the next.
76. And thus, we mustn't look to our feelings but to the facts of Scripture when it comes to thinking about God's character.
77. And listen to me, my dear Christian friend, nowhere is God's character more fully revealed than in Jesus Christ.
78. Let us not trust ourselves, nor let us trust the opinions of men, but let us learn about God from His only begotten Son.
79. If you remember, we began these series of sermons on God's glory with the prayer of Moses in Ex.33:18—"Show me Your glory."
80. Well, there's a sense in which this was the prayer of every OT saint through the ages, that God would show us His glory.
81. And then, 2,000 years ago, in the fullness of time, He sent forth His Son, born of a virgin, to show us His glory.
82. Exhortation 3—Let us love Christ—dear brethren, we can hardly grasp the unique and moral beauty of Christ!
83. Thus, we should love Christ, not only because He is God, and not only because He came to reveal the Father to the world, but that He savingly revealed the Father to us by His Spirit.
84. Matt.11:27—"All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."
85. Notice there is a unique knowledge (no one fully comprehends the Father but the Son and no one fully comprehends the Son but the Father), and there is a unique revelation (outward and inward).