

“Giving God Glory”
Romans 4:18-22
(Preached at Trinity, February 3, 2008)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Verses 18-22** Paul is describing Abraham’s faith. God told Abraham to look up and count the stars. Of course the stars are innumerable. God told Abraham that such would his seed be, that he would be the father of many nations.
 - A. God was talking to a childless couple. Abraham was now 99 years old and Sarah was 90.
 - B. God spoke as if it was accomplished – **Verse 17**.
“I have made thee a father of many nations”
“God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.”
 - C. Everyone knows that 99 year old men do not father children. Even more, 90 year old women are long past the age of bearing children. We would even say it is impossible for a 90 year old woman to conceive. We have no record in modern history of such a thing ever happening.
 - D. Yet, God declares it as being done. God is all powerful. Nothing is impossible for Him. He speaks and things come into being.
2. Abraham demonstrated the nature of genuine faith.
Romans 4:18 – “Who against hope believed in hope”
Romans 4:20-21 – “He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; ²¹ And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.”
Faith enabled Abraham to believe the promise of God’s Word.
Faith enabled Abraham to believe the Word of God alone
Faith enabled Abraham to believe the Word of God in spite of appearances to the contrary.
Faith enabled Abraham to believe the Word of God with confidence and assurance
Faith enabled Abraham to believe the Word of God and act upon it
3. Before we leave our examination of Abraham’s faith there’s one more passage I want to direct your attention to.
Romans 4:20 – “He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God”
4. What does it mean that Abraham was strong in faith giving glory to God?
5. As we’ve seen Abraham’s faith thus far it focused primarily on the negative.
He was not weak in faith even though he was 100 years old and Sara 90.
He staggered not at the promise of God though unbelief.
6. Now we come to the positive.
He “**was strong in faith, giving glory to God**”
 - A. The verb here is actually in the passive voice. It should be translated, “He was made strong in faith.”

- B. It can actually be translated “in faith” or “by faith.” Both are true. God made him strong “in faith” and he was then strengthened “by faith.”
7. He then adds, “giving glory to God.” This is the essence of faith. True faith is that which gives glory to God. And that faith that gives glory to God is faith that is strengthened. Lloyd-Jones – “As we give glory to God we shall be made strong ourselves, and our faith will be strong.”
8. When Abraham received the promise from God he did not look at his weakness or his infirmity; he looked at God. True faith looks to God. Weakness always comes when we take our eyes off of God.
9. What does it mean that he gave glory to God?
This morning I want us to consider this question.
When we talk about God’s glory we mean a couple things.
- I. First when we talk about God’s glory we mean the glory that is intrinsic to His being – His essential glory.
- A. This is the glory that is basic to His nature
1. God’s glory is the essence of His divine being.
 2. It is the manifestation of His attributes.
 3. God’s essential glory can’t be added to or diminished. It is who He is.
- B. When Moses asked God to show him His glory listen to what God says,
Exodus 33:18-20 – “I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. ¹⁹ And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. ²⁰ And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.”
1. What did God mean, “I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee?”
 - a. God was telling Moses I’ll teach you of my Divine essence.
 - b. Moses said, “I want to *see* thy Glory.” God says I’ll show you all that I am. I’ll show you My goodness, My grace, and My mercy.”
 2. What did we see when Christ came into the world?
John 1:14 – “And the Word was made 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.”
 3. God’s glory is His attributes: goodness, mercy, grace, truth, etc.
- C. Second, when we speak of the glory of God we are talking about the manifestation of His majesty
Isaiah 6:3 – “And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory.”
- II. For Abraham to come to faith he would have considered God
- A. Abraham would have examined God’s attributes, God’s glory.
1. The eternity of God – that God is.
 - a. Abraham did not have the fullness of understanding that God revealed to those who came after Abraham.
 - b. Surely Moses had a greater knowledge as God revealed Himself as Jehovah – the Great I Am.
 - c. But Abraham know something about God as the self-existent, eternal God.
 2. Abraham would have considered the majesty of God

- a. God is full of splendor and magnificence
- b. The person who truly meets God will see Him as all glorious
- 3. Abraham would have considered the omniscience of God
 - a. God is all knowing – His knowledge is limitless
 - b. He knew all about Abraham – his past, his future. He knew Abraham’s future descendents, each and every one.
 - c. No one can count the stars but God can. He made them.
- 4. Abraham would have considered the Omnipotence of God – God is all powerful – His power knows no end, no boundaries. God is able to do whatever He pleases.
- 5. Abraham would have considered the Omnipresence of God
- B. As we’ve seen, by faith Abraham looked to God alone. He considered God rather than himself or his circumstances.
 - 1. Abraham would have considered these attributes that define the person and character of God.
 - 2. Knowing these things by faith would have had an effect upon Abraham. He “was strong in faith, giving glory to God”
- C. Looking to God in all His glory He knew that God would be faithful to his promises
 - 1. He trusted that God’s promises are reliable
This is based upon the character of God
 - 2. As Abraham reflected on the character of God Abraham knew that God would keep His promises.
 - 3. As Abraham reflected on the character of God he knew that God was able. He is all powerful. Nothing is impossible for Him.
 - 4. This is the nature of faith – to know God and to trust Him.
- D. This must be the nature of our faith – this is the nature of true faith
 - 1. Knowing the character of God we trust Him
 - a. If He has promised to save all who trust in His Son we believe Him
 - b. If we know that He is present and He has an eternal plan and He is faithful then He can be trusted in all things.
 - c. If He has promised that He loves us and is working all things for our good we can trust Him. We need fear nothing.
 - 2. This is vital to our proper relationship with God – to know Him and then to trust Him based upon that knowledge.
 - 3. Of course, our faith rests upon Christ

III. Then Abraham gave God glory

Romans 4:20 – “He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God”

- A. Remember, you cannot add to God’s intrinsic glory
 - 1. God is who He is
 - 2. You cannot make the sky blue. You can cover it up but you cannot change it. You cannot make water wet. It is what it is.
 - 3. You cannot give or take away God’s glory. He is who He is.
 - 4. What does it mean then that Abraham gave God glory?
- B. We give God glory when we manifest Him upon the earth – when we reflect Him
 - 1. We glorify God when we turn our full focus upon Him and seek to turn the focus of others to God.

2. Abraham considered the truths about God and worshipped Him because of who He is.
 3. As Abraham consistently trusted in the character of God he continually magnified God by his life. This is what it means to give glory to God.
 4. No place was this demonstrated more than when Abraham brought Isaac up to Mount Moriah at God's command to sacrifice him.
 - a. To sacrifice Isaac would be to kill the son of promise
 - b. Yet Abraham knew that God would be true to His promise.
 - c. By trusting God even when the circumstances might cause him to doubt magnified his faith in God and gave God glory.
 - d. Being strong in faith Abraham knew that God would fulfill His promise even if it meant raising Isaac from the grave.
- B. The first question in the Shorter and Spurgeon's Catechism
What is the chief end of man?
Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.
1. The chief thing a man can know is that man is for God's glory, and God is for man's enjoyment.
Psalm 16:8-9 I have set the LORD always before me: because *he is* at my right hand, I shall not be moved. ⁹ Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.
 - a. David was saying, "In everything I do I give attention to God. I am totally absorbed in Him. Therefore my heart is glad and I am filled with rejoicing.
 - b. Spiritual maturity is giving all attention to God – considering Him in all that you do. Seeking to know Him more.
 2. Our life should be lived with a focus on giving God glory. It is the reason for our existence.
- C. How do you give glory to God who is already all glorious?
1. We give God glory by declaring that glory throughout the earth
1 Chronicles 16:24 – "Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvellous works among all nations."
 - a. The catechism reminds us that this is one of the purposes of our being.
 - b. We are to declare the greatness of God's glory to others
 - c. We do this with our words and with our life. We demonstrate that after considering God's character He is worthy of our life, our service, our worship. He is worthy of our full attention.
 - d. Abraham would have told Sarah, We are old and it is impossible that we should bear a son, but God said we will and I believe Him. Abraham's faith became Sara's faith
Hebrews 11:11 – "Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised."
 - e. We give glory when we reveal how glorious He is. We reveal how glorious He is when He is our focus in all things. He is our full source of joy and contentment.

2. We give God glory by living in full gratitude to Him – Listen to David **1 Chronicles 29:11-13** – “Thine, O LORD, *is* the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all *that is* in the heaven and in the earth *is thine*; thine *is* the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. ¹² Both riches and honour *come* of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand *is* power and might; and in thine hand *it is* to make great, and to give strength unto all. ¹³ Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.”
 - a. You demonstrate gratitude by being satisfied with God.
Contentment with thanksgiving reveals God’s glory in your life.
 - b. To continually seek other treasures is the height of ingratitude
3. You glorify God by living a holy life
1 Corinthians 6:19-20 – “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? ²⁰ For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”
 1. When you seek to reflect the purity and holiness of God you glorify Him before others.
 2. Listen to the words of Peter
1 Peter 2:12 – “Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

Conclusion:

1. Abraham did not add to the glory of God. He testified to it. He was strong in faith trusting God’s word. In doing so he gave glory to God by declaring the greatness of it to others. His witness has served to encourage others.
Hebrews 12:1-2 – “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, ² Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith;”
2. How about your life? Are you giving God glory? A life glorifying to God is a life that is strong in faith and a life that will grow stronger in faith.
Romans 4:20 – “He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;”
3. You give glory to God by declaring His greatness through your life.
You give glory to God by demonstrating your gratitude to Him through your life.
You give glory to God by living a holy life, a life of obedience to our glorious God.
4. This is the first purpose of your existence – to glorify God.
A failure to glorify God is evidence of not knowing Him. Remember Chapter 1.
Romans 1:21 – “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”
5. How wonderful it is to glorify Him. We must exalt Him, praise Him, worship Him. And we must reflect His glorious attributes in our lives. We reflect Him turning away from ourselves and turning more and more towards Him.