

“Glory Forever”
Philippians 4:20-23
(Preached at Trinity, September 17, 2017)

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. This morning we bring to a close our journey through Paul's epistle to the Church of Philippi. It has been a grand, but brief tour as we've followed Paul's teaching to this church that had captured his heart.
2. Paul had several purposes for writing this letter.
 - First, Paul is writing acknowledging their gift and expressing gratitude for their generosity.
Philippians 4:10 NAU - "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned *before*, but you lacked opportunity."
 - Second, Paul wrote to calm their thoughts regarding his imprisonment. He wanted them to recognize the excellence of God's providence in his imprisonment
Philippians 1:13-14 NAU - "so that my imprisonment in *the cause of* Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, ¹⁴ and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear."
 - Then, finally, Paul wrote to provide guidance to this young church. Although he had care over many churches he had a particular love for this church. Paul was always in teaching mode; always desirous of building up the body of Christ.
 - a. He wanted them to press on, valiantly living the reality of the Gospel despite hardship or opposition to the Gospel
Philippians 1:27-28 NAU - "Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; ²⁸ in no way alarmed by *your* opponents-- which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that *too*, from God."
 - b. He wanted them to set aside selfish pride and look to the needs of others.
Philippians 2:3-4 NAU - "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."
 - c. He wanted them to remain vigilant against those who would weaken the church through the propagation of false doctrine and assaults upon the Gospel.
Philippians 3:2 NAU - "Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision"

- d. He wanted them to set aside worldly mindedness and keep their eyes fixed upon eternity and the coming of Christ.
Philippians 3:20-21 NAU - "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; ²¹ who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself."
2. As we came to **Chapter 4** we find Paul drawing the letter to a close but dividing it into several parts.
- A. **Verses 4-9** seem to be the logical close to the letter as Paul charges them to put into practice those things he had taught them, all in the imperative mood.
- B. Then suddenly in **Verse 10** Paul pauses to express his great gratitude to them for their generosity, describing their gift as being a great benefit to them both.
- C. Then, finally, he brings the letter to a close in **Verses 20-23**.
3. Paul closes with the customary greetings and blessing. But Paul also included in this benediction a wonderful doxology of praise.
Philippians 4:20 NAU - "Now to our God and Father *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen."
4. Paul often spoke this doxology in which he evoked the eternal glory of God. One would have to assume that it was a familiar doxology of the early church.
Romans 11:36 NAU - "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen."
Galatians 1:3-5 NAU - "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to whom *be* the glory forevermore. Amen."
Ephesians 3:20-21 NAU - "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, ²¹ to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."
2 Timothy 4:18 NAU - "The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen."
5. This morning I want to end our exposition of the Book of Philippians by turning our thoughts upon this verse as we consider the everlasting glory of God.

- I. We must notice at the beginning that this doxology of praise is from God's elect "Now to our God and Father . . ."
- A. Paul is addressing the people of God
1. God is OUR God. We saw this in the previous verse where Paul refers to God as "My God."
 2. As we saw last time, God is our covenant God and we are His covenant people.
Leviticus 26:12 NAU - "I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people."
Jeremiah 31:33 NAU - "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."
 3. But Paul wants us to see another dimension here
- B. Paul is our drawing attention to the unique family of God
1. He refers to God as our Father. Few recognize the greatness of this statement: "Our God and Father"
 - a. Most today presume the universal fatherhood of God. God is the father of every person. I am a person, thus God is my Father.
 - b. In addition, modern theology teaches the universal love of God. God loves all people thus God loves me.
 2. Paul stating the unique privilege of adoption as the children of God. This is the way Paul began this letter.
Philippians 1:2 NAU - "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."
 3. Paul always marveled at this
Romans 8:15-16 NAU - "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,"
 4. We share a unique position with all other Christians. Paul's words are significant.
Philippians 4:21-22 NAU - "Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. ²² All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household."
 - a. Greet every saint in Christ Jesus – all who are my brethren; all who are your brethren.
 - b. The brethren with me greet you. Some of these "brethren" with Paul were Roman soldiers. Some were even a part of Caesar's closest people. Paul says that in Christ we all share the same adoption.
 5. The family of God worships the Father

II. Paul then pronounces the grand doxology

"Now to our God and Father *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen."

A. Paul is putting this praise in the form of a declaration and a prayer –

There is no verb but it is implied. "To God be glory, Amen"

How is it that Paul is declaring glory to God?

1. God's glory is intrinsic to Himself. It cannot be added to or subtracted.

2. God is who He is.

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.

God glory is His divine essence—that which is basic to His nature.

4. God's essential glory is simply the expression of His being. Paul is saying that God is unchanging; He is eternally glorious. He is self-existent and dwells without the constraints of time. He is from everlasting to everlasting.

B. When we speak of the glory of God we are talking about the manifestation of His fullness, of His majesty, of His infinite holiness. When we speak of glorifying God we are ascribing to God all that God is.

Isaiah 6:3 NAU - "And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."

1. In this doxology Paul was charging God's people to display His glory upon the earth. To ascribe to God the fullness of His Divine essence.

2. The purpose of our being is to display God's glory upon the earth. It is why we exist.

III. How do we display God's glory upon the earth?

A. We give God glory when we reflect His divine essence

1. We glorify God when we turn our full focus upon Him and seek to turn the focus of others to Him. 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.

2. 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.

3. The chief thing a man can know is that man is for God's glory, and we are to find our purpose in Him. To find God in all of our life is to find our greatest joy in Him. Our ultimate end is to enjoy Him forever through the Gospel.

Psalms 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.

c. This is at the heart of Paul's final words in **Verse 23**. May the Lord Jesus Christ fill you with Himself.

4. Our life should be lived with a focus on giving God glory. It is the reason for our existence.

- B. We also give God glory by living in full gratitude to Him.
Philippians 4:6 NAU - "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."
1. Fallen humanity is notoriously ungrateful.
Romans 1:21 NAU - "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened."
 The word for "honor" means "to glorify"
 2. Contrast that with David
1 Chronicles 29:11-13 NAU - "Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O LORD, and You exalt Yourself as head over all. ¹² "Both riches and honor *come* from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone. ¹³ "Now therefore, our God, we thank You, and praise Your 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
 - c. To complain about your condition of life is to declare that God is insufficient.
 3. We glorify God by living a life of continual praise towards God.
 The Hebrew verb, תָּרַן can be translated "give praise" or "give thanks"
- C. Thirdly, you glorify God by living a holy life
1. This is God's grand design in our salvation – to restore us to a place of holiness
Ephesians 1:3-4 NAU - "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him."
 2. When we reflect His holiness we are displaying His glory
1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NAU - "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰ For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."

Conclusion:

1. How about your life? Are you giving God glory? Are you living this doxology?
1 Corinthians 10:31 NAU - "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."
2. This is the first purpose of your existence – to glorify God.
A failure to glorify God is evidence of not knowing Him.
Romans 1:21 KJV – "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."
3. 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. May God grant us that we might glorify Him now and forever.