

We Preach Christ Crucified

A six-session Bible Study by Carol Geisler

Lesson 5b: “Father, Glorify Your Son” (continued)

“Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you.” John 17:1

Opening Prayer:

Heavenly Father, you were glorified in the obedience of our Son, our Savior, and in his death on the cross. We pray that we, by the power of your Spirit, might glorify you in lives of love and service in Jesus’ name. Hear our prayer in the name of Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Recalling Lesson 1: The Penalty and the Promise

Jesus took the *penalty* of death onto himself, suffering death in our place. In exchange, he has given us the *promise* of forgiveness and life.

Recalling Lesson 2: Crucify Him! Foretold and Fulfilled

The Savior *fulfilled* all that the Old Testament Scriptures had said of him. The Lamb of God “was *foreknown* before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you” (1 Peter 1:20-21).

Recalling Lesson 3: It is Finished!

Those things commanded by God in the Law were a shadow of the things to come. Jesus finished our salvation by the shedding of his blood on the cross. Those who have received this salvation have been “crucified with him.”

Recalling Lesson 4: The Word of the Cross

God chose what is weak and foolish in the world’s eyes to bring about our salvation – a baby in a manger who grew up to become a helpless victim on a cross and rose from death as our victorious Lord.

Recalling Lesson 5a: A Theology of Glory

The Christians in Galatia were caught up in a struggle. Was their hope of future glory found in Christ or in their obedience to the Law or in a combination of the two? The apostle Paul steered them away from putting trust in their own efforts – what he called “another gospel.” Such thinking was called by Luther “a theology of glory.”

INTRODUCTION TO LESSON 5

Glory, however we might define it, astonishes and amazes us. It surrounds athletes and heroes and others whom we admire and honor. We would like to have a little of it for ourselves. Glory

will be ours one day through faith in Christ Jesus. Paul spoke of this rich mystery of our future, “which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). But so often we want glory now – without suffering, without bearing the cross, without trust in Christ. We want to earn and achieve God’s favor and his glory on our own, by our own efforts. These fruitless attempts to put ourselves right with God, without the cross of Christ, are sometimes referred to as “the theology of glory.”

THE THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS

Read Matthew 4:1-11

[1] Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. [2] And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. [3] And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” [4] But he answered, “It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

[5] Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple [6] and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you,’ and “On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.” [7] Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.”

[8] Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. [9] And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” [10] Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.” [11] Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him. (ESV)

In verses 8-9, what does the devil offer to Jesus? All the kingdoms of the world and their glory”

What does Jesus have to do to “win” such a prize from Satan? “Fall down and worship me”

What is Jesus’ response? “Be gone – for you shall worship the Lord your God and him only”

God “highly exalted” Jesus and bestowed on him the name that is above every name” (Philippians 2:9). Read Matthew 26:39 and 42.

[39] And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” (ESV)

[42] Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” (ESV)

Jesus reigns now in exalted glory, but what had to happen first? His suffering and death (“cup” he had to “drink”)

Read John 14:8-11

[8] Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." [9] Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? [10] Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. [11] Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. (ESV)

Philip wanted to see the Father. What was Jesus' response? "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father"

The mighty power of God was hidden in the helpless weakness of the baby in a manger in Bethlehem, and in the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross. **This is the theology of the cross, the saving truth that God is hidden, and revealed, in the suffering and weakness of the cross.** The cross, an instrument of suffering and death, is where we see the mighty, saving power of God: "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Read 2 Corinthians 12:9.

[9] But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (ESV)

What does God tell the apostle Paul about divine power? His power "is made perfect in weakness."

Read Matthew 16:21-26

[21] From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. [22] And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." [23] But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

[24] Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. [25] For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. [26] For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? (ESV)

Hearing the predictions of Jesus' suffering and death, Peter rebukes his Master. **Why was Peter's point of view a "theology of glory"?** He didn't want Jesus to suffer or die.

What does Jesus say about those who follow him? “Let him deny himself and take up his cross,” because “whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

Read John 17:1-5

[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, [2] since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. [3] And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. [4] I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. [5] And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. (ESV)

Jesus’ last hour had come. How was the Father glorified during the Son’s earthly ministry?

The Father was glorified as the Son “accomplished the work” he was given by the Father to do.

On this night of his betrayal, and in the days to come, how would the Son glorify the Father?

By staying true to the Father’s will and “drinking the cup” of suffering that awaited.

Read 2 Corinthians 3:12-18

[12] Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, [13] not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end. [14] But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. [15] Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. [16] But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. [17] Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. [18] And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (ESV)

After Moses spoke with the Lord, he covered his shining face with a veil. What does Paul

mean when he says that we behold the Lord with our faces unveiled? We have seen the truth of God’s glory – given in the image of Christ crucified.

How have we seen the glory of the Lord? Christ has “taken it away.”

Into whose image are we being transformed (see also Romans 8:29)? The image of Christ.

[29] For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. (ESV)

Read Colossians 3:4 and 1 Peter 5:10

[4] When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

[10] And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. (ESV)

Glory awaits us, but it is the glory won for us through the cross of Jesus. When will we share that glory? “When Christ appears” and “after you have suffered a little while.”

Read 1 Peter 4:13

[13] But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. (ESV)

For now, what do we share with our Savior? We share his sufferings.

Summary

“But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (1 Corinthians 2:7-8). The rulers of this age lived by a theology of glory, as do so many people today. They seek the glory of God through their own achievements and, as the apostle Paul once did, in their own righteous obedience. They expect God to act in powerful ways that make sense to human reason. But God does the unexpected. His mighty power to save was hidden in the weakness, suffering and death of the Lord of glory.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, your power to save was revealed in the most unexpected way – through your suffering and death on the cross. By the power of your Spirit, help us to be witnesses to your life, death and resurrection so that others will see the redeeming power that is hidden and revealed at the cross. Amen.