

**WCCC 2018**  
**The Glorious Church (1)**  
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Brothers and sisters, we gathered here to consider a very, very important matter. It is the glory of God. I like to begin by reading some scriptures that we are all familiar with. They all speak of glory.

Exodus 34: 18 *"You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days you are to eat unleavened bread as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in the month of Abib you came out of Egypt."*

Psalms 19: 1 David was sitting under the stars. And he proclaimed *'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork'*.

Isaiah 6: 1 – 3 When Isaiah saw the glory of God, he said *'I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings; with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory"'*.

Ephesians 3: 20 – 21 *Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

My burden is to share on the glory of God in His church.

John 17:1 Jesus is the glory of God. And He said this prayer before He went to Calvary. *'Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You'*.

Brothers and sisters, we all remember that the glory of God came down on His tabernacle. The Levites had to lay many boards in place. They had to set up curtains and then different layers upon the tent. And all the furnishings had to be put in just the right place within the tabernacle. And then the offering had to be lit in the brazen altar. And when everything was ready, and everything was in the proper place, the glory of God came down.

We are gathering here together for these several days. We have many brothers and sisters here who have prepared and laid the groundwork and framework for this conference. There are many

Levites ministering to the children and the teenagers here in our midst for the next several days. And we want to lift Jesus up and place Him in the center of the altar. But the final preparation for the glory of God to come down these days is that your heart has to be ready. Are we as God's people, ready to be consumed by the glory of God? If we have made all the preparations, but our heart is not on the altar, the glory will not come. The whole purpose of this gathering will fall short of the glory of God. Let us have a word of prayer and ask God to prepare our hearts so that we can be a vessel of glory, that we might see His glory and His wonderful ways during these days.

*Prayer:* God of glory, who reveal Your glory through Jesus Christ the Lord. Your glory will be seen on earth as glory in the days of the bible. We pray Thou glorify Thyself in the church. May the fire of Your glory come down upon us. Consume away all our human activities. And bring us again before our glorious Lord as in the book of Revelation. May we see the glory of the Son of Man and fall down before Him. We pray that our times together will bring glory to Your name. We pray in Jesus precious name. Amen.

The burden of the ministry this time that I share is about the glorious church. This topic is so important. Now I will give you one reason. The Lord Jesus is waiting for His glorious church. When the church has come into the order that He desires, and holds the holiness that comes from Him, and has woven her righteous robe, the glory will come.

Do you want to see the glory of God? Maybe we think this world is a glorious place. This is a wonderful building. I think heaven will be better than this. But if we are satisfied with this, then we might not want His glory. The bible makes it clear for us. Our life begins when we see His glory. John said 'the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory. Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth'. Glory is the beginning. Glory is the end. Our Lord said to Moses in Numbers 14:21 *'but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.'* Can you picture that? My wife and I come from New York and when we walked over to the cafeteria, we saw all those olive trees along the way. They are beautiful trees. Can you imagine this whole earth full of the glory of the Lord? That will happen. But meanwhile everything in between is to be done to the glory of God. So Paul said in 1Corinthians 10:31, *'Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.'*

This is also the course for the church. Unto Him be the glory of the church, Paul said. I just want us to think about this tonight. We are just introducing things. The scriptures regarding our theme all come from Ephesians. And I want us to think about this. Paul could see the glory of Christ in the church of Ephesus. And so He mentioned nine times the word glory in that short epistle. The church of Ephesus was born out of great spiritual conflict, but they have seen the glory of God in Jesus Christ. And because they caught a glimpse of glory, Paul could take them as they were into the heavenly place. And there he could share with them God's eternal purpose. They had already seen some glory. They were pursuing the glory of Christ.

Now this is sometimes a problem for us in the church today. Can we understand the glory in Ephesians if we have not seen the glory of Christ? Every church sings about the glory of God. But have they seen the glory of God? The church without the glory of Christ is a shadow. The book of Ephesians was written to that glorious church. But Revelation 2 is written to that church that had lost its glory. What a tragedy! The bride has lost her glory. No matter what that glory means, the bride no longer has it. She was busy. She left her first love. When the bridegroom comes looking for the glorious bride, He finds her missing in Ephesus. Now if the Ephesians would not hold up the glory of Christ and its lampstand, Jesus said I will just move the lampstand. A church without the light in the lampstand is just a lampstand. There is nothing glorious about a lamp. We have to face this reality. The glory of Christ can be seen in the church or it can be lost by the church. Just as in the Old Testament, there was the glory upon the tabernacle. But when the ark was lost in the battle to the Philistines, the glory departed from the tabernacle. The tabernacle without the ark of testimony was just a tent. We remember when Solomon built the temple and was sacrificing the offering and praying to God, the glory of God came down on the temple. For those saints like Ezekiel who loved and cherished the glory of God, Ezekiel wept when he saw the glory of God left the edge of the temple and out to the Mount of Olives.

When we read these verses in Ephesians, Paul was speaking to a glorious church because she was pursuing glory. She had the hope of glory. He could say 'unto Him be the glory in the church'. And He could speak to the Ephesians words that they could understand. He said, '*Jesus loves you and He is perfecting you as His bride, taking out every spot and wrinkle and making you holy and blameless*'. Can he speak these to the church today? Are we pursuing this glory? So tonight, I want to ask everyone a personal question. Have you seen the glory of God? I am not asking you to define it. I am asking you whether you have seen the glory of God. There is something very

attractive about the glory of God. It was what caused the whole life of Abraham to change when he saw the glory of God. It was what drove Moses up to the mountain to say to God, 'O God, show me Thy glory'. Have we seen His glory? Beyond definitions and beyond doctrines, can you describe the glory? Do you treasure the glory? Do you pray 'Lord show me Thy glory'? I think that is why many of you are here this week. If we truly pray 'Lord show me Thy glory', then we know there are deaths ahead of our old man. We know that when Moses, Isaiah and John saw the glory of God, they fell down as dead men. Seeing the glory of God often involves death in our life and resurrection whence we will always see glory. I know many of you here have been captured by His glory. I remember forty years ago I was a pastor, and I saw the glory of Christ as head of His church. I saw His glory and His perfection and I still see them today. But it meant the end of my ministry. I resigned as a pastor. I saw that I did not understand the church or my ministry at all. But on that same day that my career in ministry ended, there resurrected a pursuit of the glory of Christ in His church. And I can say in my heart though I often fall short of the glory of God, my heart's desire is to see God's glory in His church.

Now I see many young people here. And it is possible that some have heard about the glory of God with their hearing of their ears like Job but have never seen His glory. For those who desire to see the glory of God, there is good news. The burden of the Holy Spirit in this age is to take up the glory of Christ and reveal it to you. And my wish is that in every corner of the church of Jesus Christ represented here tonight, the Lord can recover His glory. In Colossians 1:27 it is not just a verse that we know or memorized. It speaks of the mystery of Christ in you the hope of glory. And my hope is that this verse is not just a verse but a desire and hope of glory that burns in you. As we are introducing things tonight, I just try to define a little bit of this glory. There is a mystery to glory. But we can tell when someone has seen the glory. There is a change in your life when you see the glory.

Now what is glory? Some would think it is a fire or a bright light that shines like the tabernacle. The glory of God is a revealing of God. What is that glory? The Hebrew word actually means heavy. What does 'God's heaviness' mean? Have you ever seen it? When we see the glory of God, there is something of substance that comes into our life. Many Christians are shallow. But glory adds depth to the life. A few weeks ago, I talked to a sister who visited Africa for a few weeks. And when she was there one of the pastors there asked her to teach them about church life. The African pastor said in their country Christianity is very wide but only one inch deep.

Many of them have become saved and now they expect to become rich. But I do not think only the church in Africa has this problem. They need the glory revealed to them.

So what is this glory? It is not specifically the nature of God. The bible speaks of the nature of God in four ways – the four corners of God's nature. God is holy. God is righteous. God is love. God is light. This is what God is. He does not have these things but He is these things. But you would not say glory is God because it is not His nature. It is the revelation of His nature. So in Ephesians 1: 6, it says 'to the praise of the glory of His grace'. What does that mean? We have seen the glory of His grace – a particular aspect of God. And when John said he saw the word becomes flesh and the glory of God, he did not speak of the full radiation of His glory, but as grace and truth. So glory is when God reveals something of Himself. Those had to be wonderful days when the glory of God came down on Mount Zion and it came down on the tabernacle. And the glory of God came down on the temple. Do you wish you were there? Problem is you will be the priest that will be stuck in the temple when the glory came down. Glory is a great manifestation. The best explanation of the glory, I believe comes from the end of the bible. We can define glory by looking at Revelation 21 where it talks about the New Jerusalem coming out of heaven full of glory. How would that define glory for us? It would because when we look at this glorious city, we see that even the golden stones are transparent so that the glory of Christ can shine through. And all the precious jewels bring out the glory of God. It speaks of glory because it shines out glory.

So what is God looking for? He is looking for the fullness and the fulfillment of His eternal purpose. There is always a future aspect of glory. One day you will be a stone in that city. You are not just quartz then but you will be transparent with Jesus Christ. And all of us will be glorifying God and Christ. We really learn how to be priest and how to praise Him. You are born and created for the New Jerusalem. It does not matter what your profession is but your destiny is the New Jerusalem. He wants you to be a transparent, glorious vessel. God's glory is perfect. Why does He want to reveal it? He does because of His love. He wants many sons in glory. That includes all of you, sisters too – many male and female brothers in glory. He created the earth. One day it will be full of His glory. That is the reason He created the earth. Not so that it is 100 degree outside. That is part of the fallen world. This world will be a wonderful place. When His purpose is fulfilled in this world, His glory will be shining through.

It is a mystery that God shines through and glorifies Himself in vessels that are not yet perfect. The tabernacle was not really a perfect tent. But each part of the tabernacle so represented His glorious Son Jesus that God said I like that and He shines His glory on it. Now young people, your life may not be perfect. But are you consecrated to Him? Are you a true worshipper of Him? Is your life ordered by the will of God? Are you walking by the Spirit and not by the flesh? Now you are not perfect yet. But are you ordered the way God is ordering you? Then God displays His satisfaction on your life with glory. The church of Ephesus in the days of Paul was not perfect. But it has seen the glory of Christ. It was pursuing the glory. They were operating with faith, hope and love. They were standing in the unity of the spirit. And when people visited the church of Ephesus, they could sense the glory of God. So brothers and sisters we are saved but not yet perfect. Our lives can still bear a testimony to the glory of Christ. You sometimes cannot define what that glory is in the saints. But you can see it in them. There is something transcendent in a Christian when He is walking in a way that glorifies God. His life is being transformed.

And you see in the same way, the church is not perfect. But if we recover the testimony of Jesus sufficiently, the glory of God can be seen in your assembly. In this age we call it the Laodicean church days. What a tragedy – the church with the wrong glory. The church in Laodicea said I am rich, I get my own gold. But Jesus said you are poor, you need my gold. The greatest antidote to the Laodicean church today will be a congregation that pursues the glory of Christ; that its worship glorifies God; that its preaching ministry glorifies God. So the church at Ephesus was moving towards glorifying God and Paul could speak to them of this glory.

Now we have many people here and I am sure almost all of you are believers. Yet as an introduction tonight, let us turn to 2 Corinthians 4. Here Paul clearly told us how he began to see the glory of God. Paul was speaking about the gospel, but the larger context is this: we now live in new covenant ministry. Remember how in chapter 3 Paul said we are now members of a new covenant? And it is a covenant not of the letter but of the spirit. And as we look at the new covenant, we are changed from glory to glory by the Holy Spirit. The more we live in the word of the spirit of this new covenant, the more the Lord transforms us incrementally from glory to glory. But now in 2 Corinthians 4, Paul showed us how we first see the glory of God. 2

*Corinthians 4:3-4 'But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory*

*of Christ, who is the image of God should shine on them.*’ So we see the gospel of Jesus Christ is not just the gospel of the mind, but a gospel that must invade our spirit.

Now the god of this world has blinded the eye of the unbeliever. And what specifically has he blinded them to? Satan has blinded the unbeliever to seeing that the glory of God is in the face of Jesus Christ. I remember when people were witnessing to me when I was a college student, I could understand them talking about sin and hell. But the one thing I could not see was that Jesus was God. I could not see the glory of Christ. He is the image of God. But one day as I was reading the gospel, the Holy Spirit opened my eyes. And I see that Jesus is the son of God. He was not just a man but He is man and God. This is what Satan is hiding. And Paul described it in verse 6 how God opened his eyes. ‘For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.’ Paul was illustrating like as if he was going all the way back to Genesis when God said let there be light and suddenly there was light with the stars at night and the moon shining on earth. And so in the same way, God looks down on me – a blind sinner and said let there be light.

And suddenly on the road to Damascus, Paul saw God, no, it was Jesus, no, it was glory. He was persecuting the man Jesus. But all Paul’s life, He had one desire, and that was ‘show me Thy glory’. And was he not surprised when he said show me Thy glory and Jesus said here I am. It was the beginning of Paul’s resurrected life. We know how Paul from that day on pursued the glory that is in Jesus Christ. And so He said in verse 7 ‘but we have this treasure in this earthen vessel’. Now what is this treasure? It is the glory of God in Christ Jesus.

Dear saints that is our treasure. I understand that if you take all the elements of the body, like carbon and all the other elements and throw them together, it comes to about \$15. That is all the human body worth. But we have a treasure. Do you live your life as a vessel carrying treasure? A lot of times many Christians see the treasure in Christ. But now there is no glory. There may be the knowledge of glory. But there is no glory. The bible is very clear about this. Sin is when you fall short of the glory of Christ. If we have unconfessed sins in our life and as long as that sin is unconfessed, He hides His glory. Many Christians in their early days pursued Christ as their treasure. But now they have golden idols. And there is no glory. I do not need to tell you this tragic story. How many churches do you know that have lost their glory? How many saints do

you know that have lost their glory? How about you? Have you lost the glory? And are you worth only \$15? This is the issue that will be determined when Jesus comes back.

Finally, I would like to look at three passages in Ephesians that deal with the glory of God. I hope these passages are written to us. And not to the churches that were written in the book of Revelations. Listen to Paul's prayer.

Ephesians 3: 14 – 17a is Paul's prayer that has to do with glory. *'For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith;'*

Now it is true that this matter of our strengthening in our life is a personal matter. But Paul was praying this prayer in the context of the corporate life. The church life needs to be strengthened in the inner man. The Holy Spirit is working to strengthen the inner life of the various members of the body of Jesus Christ. We are just sinners saved by grace. What strength do we have to be holy and righteous in the inner man? So Paul prayed to God the Father. 'Father, I pray that the Holy Spirit strengthens the inner man of the brothers when they gather together. And I know you will do this work by the riches of Your glory.' How can we ever be gathered together as a glorious church? It is by the riches of His glory. It has nothing to do with your riches. It is His riches that will strengthen our inner man. After this prayer, Paul continued on to verses 20 and 21 as he praised God for the greatness of His glory. *'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, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.'* What do you think? Had Paul seen the power of the glory of God? It is a transforming power. God, send your transforming power on your people. He said 'God you do far more beyond whatever I could have asked because you have two goals in mind. And these are glory in the church and glory to Christ Jesus'. And on that basis, Paul could pray that prayer.

Let us look at the second passage which is in Ephesians 5 that deals with the glory of God.

Brother Sparks and Brother Nee were talking one day. And I guessed it was Brother Nee who asked the question 'which passage in the bible do you think is the hardest to fulfill'. And I think it was Brother Sparks who answered 'it is the passage *'that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless'*'. That is the toughest verse to be fulfilled. So now let us look at Ephesians 5: 25



– 27 *‘Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless’*. It is an interesting passage for two reasons. First, the church in Ephesus understood what Paul was saying because they experienced this transforming work of the Holy Spirit in their corporate life. You see as Paul was speaking these words, the Ephesians said, yes, yes, we felt Him sanctifying us by the word of God. In our church life together, we sensed the work of the cross and discipline of the Holy Spirit removing spots and wrinkles. We could sense this Holy Spirit’s work making us holy and blameless by His great sanctifying work. They understood this work. Now that was interesting for up to this time they did not understand this is how the husband should love and perfect their wives. So Paul took the experiences that they had of Jesus sanctifying them, and told them to love their wife the same way. They then realized that they did not know this fact. Now today we have the reverse. Every husband thinks they know how to treat their wife. But they have no experience in the sanctifying work that is going on in the church. You see the tragedy of the church without the glory? Is there discipline in our church? I will be honest with you. If the church is not pursuing the glory of Christ over their own lives, discipline will split them. The church will not want to hear the discipline in their lives if they do not see the glory. That is why we are talking about this matter this way.

The last passage is also in Ephesians and it speaks about the corporate glory. Let me ask you. Do you see the corporate glory? Do you see the glory in the church? Paul needs to pray for us and he does that in Ephesians 1:17. Now these Ephesians were living and practicing faith, hope and love. But now Paul was saying, Father of transforming glory, I wanted these saints to be able to see the glory that transcends in their lives together. Father, give them a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. For the Christians to ever see glory, it will be seeing it in Him through Christ. Now in verse 18 *‘I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints’*. There are three things that Paul requested. But we will look at the central one – ‘what are the riches of the glory of inheritance in the saints.’ He said, Father I do not want them just to live together without seeing anything but that they see the glory in the

middle of the saints. Sometimes we think the only time we see glory in the saints is when they die. So we see no glory, just an ordinary brother and sister. Paul said, Father open their eyes. There is a treasure sitting next to you. There is treasure in that sister who joins you working in the Sunday school. Look at the riches. Look at the glory of Christ. You said O Lord, show me Your glory. And the Lord said look at your sister. And you said, no, not that glory, Your glory Lord. But for a church pursuing glory, it needs to see the glory among the saints. Is not the fellowship among the glorious saints wonderful? Much of the time we have to fellowship with the glorious saints by faith. They do not look too glorious. But keep watching. Let the Holy Spirit open your eyes. For forty years, I went to a men's retreat in the spring time. And over these forty years, during the ministry time on the weekend from Thursday to Sunday, we listened to the testimony of one of the brothers each day. And over the forty years we knew every brother is a treasure. Every brother had a story that we did not know. Every brother testified Jesus and His love. And so every time we came together, it was glory. We actually had one brother who always shouted, glory, glory. And they loved to get together. Because every time we gathered, we could see the riches of the glory in the brothers. How rich is the glory! Now you see the saints that are sitting next to you tonight. One day when the New Jerusalem comes, they will be precious stones. Maybe some sharp edges need to be chopped off. But today, when you see that brick, think of it as a precious stone. Do you look at the saints gathered here tonight and see the riches of the glory of Christ? You have seen the glory in Christ Jesus. And whenever you see the glory in Christ Jesus, you see the glory of the coming of the Lord. Every time you say Jesus is Lord, you glorify God the father. And the Lord is closer to coming. In America we used to always sing the song, 'mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord'. Sister Margaret Barber of course changed the words of the song to 'there is a whisper of the coming of the Lord'. But we all know the chorus. 'Glory, glory, hallelujah (3X), the king is coming soon'. And if you look up to see the glory of Christ, you know how close He is to coming. Glory is always related to the end.

Lord, we pray that Your glory will be seen in the church and in Christ Jesus now and forever more. Lord, recover Your glory to the church. And so fill our heart with the power of Your glory that we find ourselves pressing on into glory. The king is coming soon. In Christ's name. Amen.