

Easter Explanations: Heaven's Above

Hillsboro Presbyterian Church

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Colossians 1:27 (The Apostle Paul wrote) ***“To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”***

The Mystery of God's Glory...and how God's glory shines through Christians. Hebrews 2:10 says *“God is the one who made all things, and all things are for his glory. He wanted to have many children who would share his glory...”* We have talked about “the mysteries of the faith”...that God has a plan behind human history and that God has purpose for his people...that God created every thing because God wanted a forever family and that God's children live today in preparation for then. Today is the mystery of God's Glory – and next week the mystery of God's grace.

What is the glory of God? We use this all the time. In the Lord's Prayer we say the final phrase is *“For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.”* What does that mean? Listen up: **THE GLORY OF GOD IS WHO GOD IS.** It is God's perfection. God's personality. God's presence. God's character. The glory of God is what God does and who God is.

How has God revealed his glory? Throughout history – or His-story - God has revealed Himself in a variety of ways to show His people what God is really like. **In creation**...just look at nature and we see that God is creative and organized and powerful and likes variety. Psalm 19:1 *“The heavens declare the glory of God.”* **In the Exodus**...God's provided manna for His people in the wilderness. Exodus 16:7 *“In the morning you will see the glory of the Lord.”* When Moses met Yahweh on Mount Sinai, he asked “show me your glory” (Exodus 33:18)...and God did...and God's glory lit up Moses like a Day-Glo stick...Moses had to wear a veil to hide the brightness of God's glory on him. **In the tabernacle and in the temple.** First, the portable tent of worship for God's people that Moses set up. Exodus 40:34 *“...and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.”* Then in the Jerusalem temple that King David and Solomon built...1 Kings 8:11 *“...the priests could not perform their service because the glory of the LORD filled His temple.”* Even today, only a section of wall remains from that Temple – yet it remains the holiest place for a practicing Jew. But God never wanted to be confined to a place, so when the time was right, God puts His glory **in Jesus Christ.** At Jesus' birth, angels sang *“Glory to God in the highest!”* John 1:14 *“We have seen God's glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”* If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus. Now reigning on high, Jesus infuses God's glory **in the Church.** Ephesians 3:21 *“To God be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever. Amen.”* To glorify God and to show this world God's glory is a big part of what God's forever family is all about. **In heaven,** the glory of God saturates every cubic inch of heaven. God's glory is the atmosphere of heaven. In fact, did you know that in heaven you're not going to need light bulbs? Revelation 21:23 *“The city does not need the sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb (Jesus) is its lamp.”* Isn't that amazing? And you are bound for glory. When you get there you're actually going to share God's glory. **In Christians...in our hearts.** 2 Corinthians 4:6 *“God made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”* Every child of God shows what their Father God is like. The Shorter Catechism (1640) teaches: “Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy God forever.” God is glory in and of Himself, but it is significant that we can bring God glory. How?

G – Give yourself to God completely. 1 Chronicles 16:29 *“Give the Lord the glory He deserves! Bring your offering and come to worship him. Worship the Lord in all His holy splendor.”*

Worship is singing, praying, giving, thinking, being quiet, serving...it is expressing your love to God and letting God love you to your core. You are as close to God as you choose to be. And true worship magnifies who God is and what God has done.

L – Love and serve others compassionately. 1 Peter 4:11 *“Are you called to help others? Do it with all the strength and the energy that God supplies. Then God will be given glory in everything through Jesus Christ.”*

Your greatest ministry in life, the way you make the biggest contribution with your life, your biggest help to other people will come out of your greatest pain. The very things you're most ashamed of, you wish had never happened, that you wish you could forget, God says, “Yep! Even that I can turn it around and use it for good to help other people.” So don't waste your pain. Don't waste your hurt. Don't even waste your sins. God says I'll use that to help other people. God did not plan the pain in your heart, but God says I can use that for good and you can use it to serve others. God can turn crucifixions into resurrections...for His glory.

O – Obey God's word continually. John 17:4 *“I (Jesus) brought glory to you (Father in Heaven) here on earth by doing everything you told me to do.”*

When a child does what a parent asks them to do, it brings glory to the parent. And obeying God's word continually brings glory to God. Sometimes that's not easy or convenient, or popular or inexpensive or even natural. Like forgiveness...hurt me and I want to hurt you back...but if God tells you to forgive and you forgive, then God is glorified in that. Others see and experience Christ in you.

R – Reach out to unbelievers courteously. 2 Corinthians 4:15 *“As God's grace brings more and more people to Christ, there will be great thanksgiving, and God will receive more and more glory.”*

God says I want you to tell everybody the good news – your past can be forgiven, they can have a purpose for living, they can have a home in heaven. He says everybody's lost. We all need help. But God says when you deal with people who aren't believers yet you don't judge them...don't be critical...don't berate them...don't attack them. Just tell them the good news. What you believe and why you believe it. Why? Because God has never made a person he doesn't love. Because God has never made a person that Jesus didn't die for. As long as there are people who don't know the good news, we need to keep sharing it.

Y – Yoke with believers closely. 2 Corinthians 9:13 *“They will give glory to God for your obedience to the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your fellowship towards them and towards all.”*

I know I'm stretching to come up with a “y”, but it does fit here. Paul called other believers “yoke-fellows.” It means “to team up” like a pair of oxen. When we work together, when we encourage each other, when we pray for one another, when we help each other, when we meet together, when we love one another...God is glorified. Certainly there are other ways, but these 5 are a start for you to let the light and life of Christ shine in you and through you. To God be the glory. Amen.