

November 11, 2017 Florida Hospital Seventh-day Adventist Church
Romans 16:27 To Glory of God Alone by Andy McDonald

Sometimes there are series of sermons, that when they come to an end I'm sort of glad. Maybe I shouldn't confess that but it is true. The idea looked good on paper but the reality of preaching it wasn't so seamless, it just didn't quite come together as hoped.

At other times there are series of sermons I hate to end. Pillars of the Reformation is one of those I wish could just keep on going, but it comes to an end today.

We've had the privilege of going down and checking the foundations. I hope that together we have seen that our faith is not built on shifting sand but on solid bedrock of truth that we are saved by Christ alone. There is nothing we can add to his saving work. His life, death, and resurrection provide for us a gift that comes to us by grace alone undeserved, unmerited, unearned, and like all other gifts our part is to accept it and say thank you. We accept it by faith alone and even he faith we extend to receive it that very faith is a gift to us as well. All of the backup, all the support for believing this, all the authority to know and share this comes to us through scripture alone.

What amazing, strong, hope filled pillars of the reformation, and today we come to try and grasp than everything Christ, grace, faith, scripture and the impact in our lives is all for the glory of God alone.

Before we dive in to try and grasp some of the understanding and the implications of everything all for the glory of God alone, lets pray.

Father our ever present temptation is to put more on us and less on you. We are like small children wishing to help a parent, a parent who knows that all of our childish help will only complicate and delay reaching the goal. You have humored us. You have patiently let us think we have helped imagining that it is Christ plus our efforts. You have listened while we explain why we deserve grace which you know would no longer make it grace. You have smiled as you hear us talk about our somehow generating sufficient faith as if we could.

When we have used personal opinions and secondary sources you have waited for us to return to scripture alone as our authority. When we have chosen you as a means to glorify ourselves, even then you have been longsuffering. As we open your word now, like Moses we seek, maybe too boldly, "Show us your glory." Teach us now how we might join all your universe in recognition that it, all of everything is for your glory alone. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

"Oh, what a wonderful God we have!

How great are the riches of his wisdom and his knowledge!

How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and methods!

For who can know what the Lord is thinking?

Who knows enough to be his counselor?

Who could ever give God so much that God would have to pay it back?

For everything comes from him;

Everything exists by his power and is intended for his glory!

To him be glory evermore. Amen" Romans 11:33-36 NLT

Why is everything for the glory of God alone? It's a great question.

In fact when we just say that everything is for his glory alone it makes him sound like an egomaniac. But he isn't. "Perfect humility dispenses with modesty." – C.S Lewis "The Weight of Glory" p. 6

We can't flatter God! No superlative, no praise, nothing we can say positive about him would be exaggeration or flattery, but simply truth.

The reality, not an inflated self-aggrandizing prideful selfishness, but the actual reality is what Paul wrote in Romans, “For from him and through him and to him are all things.” More recent translations say it this way. “For everything comes from him; Everything exists by his power and is intended for his glory! To him be glory evermore.

What is glory? It’s not a word we use a bunch in casual conversation. But think about it for a moment. What is glory? Today is Veteran’s day and what is the glory of a soldier but victory in battle. The glory of an athlete is winning the match. The glory of the spelling bee winner is spelling that word no other contestant can spell!

But in a dictionary way there seem to be two concepts of GLORY biblically: First is honor, Praise, Esteem or the distinctive qualities that bring honor and excite admiration. We honor and praise God we give him glory and all of who he is that inspire and excite that admiration are both glory.

Second is brilliance or splendor like the night on the hillside of Bethlehem when the angels show up to the shepherds and the “Glory of the Lord shown round about them>”

Way back in the book of Exodus, the second in our bible, we find the story of Moses and God’s friendship developing to the point where Moses doesn’t think he’s out of line to make a very personal sort of demand of God.

It isn’t like he said would you, or do you think you might, or here’s what I’d like, do you think you might oblige me. It comes across more as a pleasant direct command. “Show me your glory.”

What was it that Moses wanted to see? One commentary makes sense to me when it suggest that what Moses was after was knowing who Yaweh really was and even more what he would be like in reference to the people Moses was leading. This is what Moses craved. Who are you and how will you treat your children.

God’s response to Moses reveals where in lies God’s glory. He tells Moses, “I will cause all my goodness to pass before you.” Then in Exodus 34:5-7 when God grants Moses requests he reveals 5 attributes of his goodness that are his glory.

He declares that he is compassionate meaning he genuinely cares about humans and holds toward them a tender attitude of concern and mercy. He has warm caring feelings towards us.

He is gracious meaning he does things for people that they don’t deserve and goes beyond expectations to grant truly kind favor toward people, favor of which they are not necessarily worthy.

He is patient with people’s less than satisfactory behavior, with their failures in any realm, including moral failure.

He is abounding, great to the point of excess in his love and loyalty.

Like we sing sometimes “ His love never fails it never gives it never runs out on me.” He is completely faithful. He defines himself as love and then defines love as never giving up and lasting through every circumstance.

And He is abounding without limit in truth—whatever he says is correct and reliable and may be trusted even to the extent of life and death. Whatever he says can be trusted even when we don’t understand it.

God’s eternal glory, his glory before creation, his glory source is his goodness, his character.

Just before the trial and crucifixion of Jesus he prays a prayer recorded in John 17. This disciple John, referred to as the one whom Jesus loved, included in the opening chapter of his book vs. 14

The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” Here are two of the traits that God said were part of his goodness which is his glory, grace and truth.

Now near the end of Jesus earthly ministry, John records the words of Jesus prayer.

Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son so he can give glory back to you. For you have given him authority over everyone in all the earth. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him. And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth. I brought glory to you here on earth by doing everything you told me to do. And no, Father, bring me into the glory we shared before the world began.” John 17:1-5

There’s something going on in this glory realm among the trinity. There is a glory, which is founded in goodness and purity, and is shared among them without beginning or end.

We talked about it last week how Christ came to open to restore the option of our sharing in the great dance with the trinity, to be invited in to their circle.

Now that we do all for the glory of God alone recognize the incredible thing Jesus says in his prayer in vs 22 of John 17 “I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one as we are.”

The sense of glory as honor. Jesus gives us the same honor that the Father gave him and brings us into oneness.

C.S> Lewis writes about the reality that it is not honor or fame conferred by our fellow creatures but it is fame with God, approval and honor and appreciation by God. What does it mean in Jesus parable when he predicts humans hearing, “Well done, you good and faithful servant.”

Lewis writes, “I suddenly remembered that no one can enter heaven except as a child; and nothing is so obvious in a child—not a conceited child, but a good child—as its great and undisguised pleasure in being praised. Not only in a child either, but even in a dog or a horse. Apparently what I had mistaken for humility had, all these years prevented me from understanding what is in fact the humblest, the most childlike, the most creaturely of pleasures—nay, the specific pleasure of the inferior: the pleasure a beast before men, a child before its father, a pupil before his teacher, a creature before its creator.”

This can go horribly wrong and can quickly move to the deadly poison of self-admiration. But for a moment, a very short moment—before this happens, there is this pure moment of satisfaction of having pleased those whom we love.

It provides us hope of that day when we learn that beyond all hope and nearly beyond belief, we learn that we have pleased Him whom we were created to please. There will be no room for vanity then. We will be free from the miserable illusion that it is our doing. We will rejoice in the thing that God has made us to be and that moment will heal our old inferiority complex forever and will at the same time drown our pride. Perfect humility will do away with modesty. If God is satisfied with the work the work may be satisfied with itself.

Because Jesus has given us the glory God gave him so that we may be one with them.

The only way for us to glorify God is to obey him.

A child brings honor or glory to the parents when they bring them obedience.

A citizen brings honor or glory to his country when he obeys it.

A scholar brings honor or glory to his teacher when he obeys his master’s teaching.

And here’s the reality of it what you and I could not bring Jesus brings for us—perfect obedience and he reminds the Father in prayer,

I brought glory to you here on earth by doing everything you told me to do.” And he gives that glory to us.

So that because of Jesus God is glorified and we two share in that glory.

There will come a judgement day. There’s this amazing quotation from *The Great Divorce* the story of an imaginary bus ride from hell to heaven. It says

“Never fear. There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God “your will be done,” and those to whom God says in the end, “your will be done.” All that are in heaven choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it. Those who seek find. To those who knock it is opened.” P. 72

You don’t likely tell someone you don’t know your will be done. Jesus said in that same prayer, “And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth.”

Jesus gives us all his obedience, he brings us into the very presence of God set right with God and says we are one. He has revealed his will as the best way.

His glory is his goodness: compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love, and abounding in truth. And he invites us to know him and abide in him to learn his ways and to share his glory.

But here’s the risk—too much attention on our position with God. Too much satisfaction in the reality that Jesus gives us the glory and that we become all about our salvation and our glorification. God shares his glory with us that we might to love the world the people of the world that he loves all for his glory.

How concerned are we this week about the check out person at the store receiving the glory the Father gave to Jesus?

It feels so good to be invited into the party. To be included on the invitation list. We love to be on the inside. To have the behind the scenes tickets, to get to meet the performer we admire, to spend a moment with the famous. We want some of the glory to rub off on us.

I’m afraid some of us have come to believe that we bring God more glory by supposedly cleaning up our act than by obeying his call to help someone else recognize what Jesus has done for them and for them to receive the glory and obedience of Jesus.

The last couple of weeks I’ve been caught by the brightness of the moon. In fact one night after I’d gotten in bed I got back up to see where all this light was coming from, only to discover it was moonlight spilling through my window. Bright as it might seem the glory of the moon is the sun. It doesn’t generate but only reflects. And maybe the t-shirt Greg has that says Be a moon-reflect the SON, summarizes our calling to live for God’s glory.

This week every person you see, is someone God wishes to invite into his glory. And Jesus calls us to be a moon and reflect the son all for the glory of God alone.



What comes to your mind when you hear the word “glory”?

What concerns you about everything being for the glory of God alone?

What do you think about the idea that you can’t flatter God?

How do you think Moses had the nerve to say “Show me your glory”?

God declares himself to be: compassionate, gracious, patient, loving and true. Which is most glorifying of God to you?

How do you feel about Jesus asking God to glorify him?

Jesus says his glory was his obedience to God and he gives it to us. How does it feel to be God’s beloved child perfect in Christ?

How do you feel about only two kinds of people in the end, those who say to God, “your will be done.” And those to whom God says in the end “Your will be done”? Which do you want to be?

How can you be a moon and reflect the Son this week?



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