

## What Can You Expect? Part VIII—God Glorified In Us

*“To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus forever and ever [unto all the generations of the ages of the ages], Amen”* (Ephesians 3:21).

God’s is the strength—*“My strength is made perfect in weakness;”* God’s is the faith—*“I live by the faith of the Son of God;”* God’s is the righteousness—*“Not having mine own righteousness which is of the law. . .but the righteousness of God;”* God’s is the grace—*“My grace is sufficient for thee.”* And therefore it must follow that—God’s is the glory. We minimize the glory of God as we maximize the human effort to attain Christian perfection. The greater the religious achievement in the flesh, the greater the boast in the flesh. Paul was very conscious of this when he declared to the Ephesians—*“By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves—it is the gift of God; not of works, lest anyone should boast”* (Ephesians 2:8,9). And to the Corinthians, he said—*“And ye are of Him in Christ Jesus, who has become wisdom to us from God, both righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, in order that even as it is written, “He who boasts let him boast in the Lord””* (I Corinthians 1:30,31).

But, of course, it is very hard for us to let go of our own righteousness, as paltry and inadequate as it may be. We feel more comfortable with ourselves when we can have a handle on our religious development. We feel good about ourselves when we have been especially persevering in our prayers or piety, or when we have accomplished some special task for the Lord. And we feel especially good when we have been able to conjure up feelings of confidence about what we “just know the Lord is going to do.” But let me remind you that feelings come from the mind. They are emotions that have come as a result of brain functions and not necessarily “spirit function.” One of the most interesting phenomena of the Christian experience is when the Lord has done something very special for us at times when we have felt very “unspecial.” He has often delivered us when we did not even know that we needed to be delivered. He has put things together in our lives in a most remarkable way when we were not even seeking it. In my own experience, when the Lord has wanted to accomplish some special things in His work—things I was not even aware of His wanting—He did so in such a split-second timing that I could not have manipulated the circumstances in any way.

The truth of the matter is that the Spirit functions at a level quite independently of the mind and often does not even involve human reason or emotions. In fact, when our own emotions and reason are involved, we often confuse the issue. The reason for this is very plain—the Lord does not want to give us an opportunity for the flesh to “boast.” There are some who will very likely stand before the Lord and say, “Well, Lord, at least you’ll have to give me credit for my perseverance or my faith or my service or my prayer life.” And the Lord’s response is most likely to be—“Without me, you can do nothing.” Or He may remind one of the prophets—“All our righteousness is but filthy rags.”

All the things on earth that tend to bring us down—frustrations, mistakes, weaknesses, inadequacies, and the never-ending struggle with the flesh in our physical beings—all have their purpose in keeping us from putting our weight on our own fleshly capacities. As Paul declared to the Ephesians, God has blessed us with spiritual blessings, chosen us out, forgiven us, redeemed us, adopted,

purified us, and surrounded us with His love and grace, all to the end that we may be “unto the praise of His glory,”

We are identified as “vessels of clay,” but clay though we be, we are filled with the majesty of the Creator of the universe. Paul makes this point to the Corinthians in unmistakable terms. *“But God, who caused the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of the [presence of] Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels [vessels of clay], in order that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us”* (II Corinthians 4:6-7). The vessels must be clay, in order that the glory may be God’s. The contents are glorious irrespective of the commonness of the vessel.

But what do we mean by the word “glory.” In English it is but five letters which are used in countless common situations—the slangy exclamation, “glory be!” to war heroes, sports champions, and even a lowly flower which is an aggravating pest in the garden.

So what does it really mean? In the first place, it is a word that should really be left for the Deity, but, of course, has long since lost that distinction. In French, there is a word, *Magnifique*, which is sometimes used to apply to things of earthly excellence, but the “purist” prefers to reserve it for the Deity and to use instead of the word *fantastique*. (So the next time you dine in a French restaurant, remember that distinction in your compliments to the chef.)

But how then do we apply the word to God? What does it mean as far as He is concerned? For this, we must go back to the original usage of the word in the Old Testament. The Hebrew word is *kabod*, which originally meant “weight.” It was used of the gold of the temple, which of course, symbolized the Deity. Gold is a precious metal that has weight or substance. It is easy to determine the difference between artificial and real gold in the relative weight. So it may be said that the glory of God involves His substance while the universe itself consists of mass that is made up of tiny atomic particles (as well as sub-atomic particles). God represents the solid essence of all that is—the foundation and substance of all the creation. In this respect, God is the bedrock of our existence—*“The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms”* (Deuteronomy 33:27). And, *“He is the Rock; His work is perfect.”* (Deuteronomy 32:4). David says, *“He only is my rock and my salvation”* (Psalm 62:2). The glory of God involves His eternal substance and His eternal substance becomes the Rock upon which we stand and “shall not be moved.”

But in the New Testament, the Greek word is *doxa*—and refers to that which is manifested—the substance of God manifested to earth. *“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory.”* So *doxa* is the substance of God manifested to mankind. The verb form has the flavor of “presuming” or “appearing to be.” And thus, the substance of God manifested to mankind is all that He appears to be.

**What can you expect?** You can expect to be weak and inadequate and helpless to fulfill all that God intends you to be. But you can also expect that your clay vessel will be glorified by the presence of Christ within and *“transformed into His image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord”* (II Corinthians 3:18). You cannot hope to achieve by human effort all that God wants for you, but it is

accomplished by the presence of His Holy Spirit within. And no matter what we may appear to be in our fleshly and earthly vessel, we know that we are being transformed into the image of God by the presence of His Spirit within us. Remember that the fact that you want to be like Him is the evidence that His Spirit is working within you.

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