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Beholding the Glory



Cultivating Christian Character - Steve Gregg

In his talk about cultivating Christian character, Steve Gregg emphasizes the need to set our hearts on holiness to behold the glory of God. Gregg explains that the term "glory" refers to radiance, brilliance, and shining, all present in the presence of God. He goes on to state that Jesus Christ is the ultimate manifestation of the glory of God, and urges us to imitate Christ's behavior to become full of the glory of God. Ultimately, Gregg encourages us to eagerly anticipate the second coming of Christ, and the appearance of God's glory.

Transcript

Tonight we are in the seventh of a series of talks and studies on the subject of cultivating Christian character. As you glance down at the notes I gave you, it may make you wonder what it is that this talk, with these points that we're covering, has to do with Christian character. I mean, the subject may look interesting in itself, but whether it really belongs to a series on Christian character or not, might not be clearly evident.

But I would like to say that this is one of the very important, perhaps one of the very most important, topics that we have to discuss about this development of Christ's character, or Christ's life, in us. When the Bible says that we are to be transformed into the image of Christ, it means, of course, that in our character we are to come to be more and more like Him. I believe from our earlier lectures we could conclude that what God is seeking to do is to reproduce the life of Christ in us, by the Holy Spirit, by the grace of God, through the word of God, through these resources that God has left His church and us personally, He intends for us to grow up into Him in all things, who is the head.

This growth is supernatural. It's not simply a matter of imposing rules on our life. It is not accomplished by becoming religious.

It is not accomplished by willpower. I will not deny that we do need to set our will and set our face and purpose in our hearts to be holy, or else we will not be holy. But we may do that all that we want to and still not achieve any degree of holiness except for the supernatural agency of God, operating through His word, through His grace, and through

the Holy Spirit.

Now, there is another factor and a very important one, and this one is, I would have to say, maybe a neglected factor in much teaching, in my observation, and that is the crucial role that beholding the glory of God plays in changing us into that likeness. You may be acquainted with that verse from which this phraseology comes, it's 2 Corinthians 3.18, where Paul says, We all with unveiled faces, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed, are transfigured, transformed into that same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Now, obviously, a verse like that sounds very relevant to the subject of being changed into the image of Christ, having the character of Christ cultivated in us.

As we behold the glory of the Lord, we are changed from glory to glory into that same image. Well, that could hardly find anything more directly relevant to the general topic of these discussions. So I'd like to talk about that, beholding the glory of the Lord.

What is the glory of the Lord anyway? I think that with many Christians, the word glory is a very ambiguous term. I know that sometimes glory is a term that is simply substituted for heaven. He's gone on to glory.

I've got a home in glory land that outshines the sun. And I suppose there's a sense in which it is relevant to that usage. But I think that if you think in terms of glory as the destiny of the Christian and you think only in terms of going to heaven, you are missing much of the meaning of this word as used in scripture and its relevance to the way that you live your life today.

With respect to the glory of God, of course, we know that we're supposed to do all unto the glory of God. Everything that we do is supposed to result in the glory of God, is it not? Paul said in First Corinthians chapter 10, whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do all to the glory of God. Very mundane, everyday things, eating and drinking, tying your shoes, combing your hair, whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.

Quite obviously, the glory of God is the goal. It's not only the goal in a sense that you might think of it in that in that phrase to the glory of God. What does it mean when we say do all to the glory of God? What does the word glory mean in a case like that? Obviously isn't talking about heaven.

It's in that case. We're using it more in the sense of honor. Are we not? The word glory also in scripture and in ordinary language sometimes has a meaning of something like radiance, like shining.

It says of Christ in Hebrews chapter one, verse three, that Jesus is the bright shining of his glory. Paul in First Corinthians 15 talks about there is a glory of the sun and a glory of the moon and a glory of the stars and stars differ one from another in glory. Obviously,

the word glory in that sense means something like radiance, something like brilliance, something like shining.

All of these things are wrapped up in the concept of the glory of God. And we must realize that the glory of God is not a minor theme in scripture. It is the ultimate.

Of God's purpose, both in the cosmic, global, universal sense and also in the individual life of the believer. And I would like to talk about that some tonight, and I hope that I put the thoughts in the scriptures that we are going to be looking at. I hope I put them in an order and in a sequence that will help unfold this neatly and easily to be understood.

I'd like to look with you, first of all, at three Old Testament scriptures. If you have the time to look these up at the rate that we go through them, fine. I always think it's better to do so if you can.

If you cannot, as you can see, we have them written down in the notes and you can look at those later on. In Numbers 14, 21, God said, but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. How sure is this? Well, it's as truly as God lives.

How true is that? Does God live? He certainly lives. And as truly as he lives, so truly he has determined that the earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord. That still doesn't answer all our questions as to what is meant by the glory of the Lord.

But it certainly indicates that the glory of the Lord is going to have a tremendous impact. On the earth, when God's purposes have been fulfilled in it. In Isaiah 11, nine, we have a similar but not exactly the same statement.

Isaiah 11, nine, the prophet says, for the earth shall be full. That's sort of like what numbers 14, 21 said. Numbers said the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.

Isaiah said, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Now, once again, we have a superlative here. How much is the earth going to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord? Well, the same amount as the waters cover the sea.

How much do the waters cover the sea? I've asked that question to some audiences and some say three quarters. Because they're thinking in terms of how much does the ocean cover the earth? No, how much does the water cover the sea? One hundred percent. And as the waters cover the sea, so the earth is going to be full of the knowledge of the Lord.

So in numbers, Moses has said that the earth is going to be filled with the glory of the Lord. And in Isaiah, we are told the earth is going to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. Now, these two words are put together by a later prophet Habakkuk in Habakkuk, chapter two and verse 14.

We see that the prophet deliberately seems to or God, the Holy Spirit deliberately takes up these previous two statements that we've seen. And puts them together into one. In Habakkuk 2, 14, the prophet writes, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

You can see that as the waters cover the sea is a phrase taken from Isaiah 11, verse nine. And you can see that the earth will be filled as those other two verses we looked at say. But what is it going to be filled with? Well, the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.

Numbers said it would be filled with the glory of the Lord. Isaiah said the world would be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. And now we're told it's going to be the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.

Does the earth, is the earth full of the glory of the Lord today? It actually is. When Isaiah saw the seraphim in Isaiah, chapter six, you might remember he saw the Lord high and lift up his train, fill the temple. Remember that passage? It says the seraphim were singing, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.

The whole earth is what is filled with his glory. Now that was 700 and something years before Christ. It was announced even at that time, the whole earth was filled with the glory of God.

And it is. In fact, it says in Psalm 19, the heavens declare the glory of God. And the firmament shows his handiwork.

Day and today, utter speech, night and tonight sheds forth knowledge, knowledge of what? Of the glory of the Lord. The heavens are declaring the glory of the Lord. The earth is full of the glory of the Lord.

If you have the eyes to see it, God is involved. His glory is discernible throughout the world. But you know what? Even though we can say, indeed, that the words of numbers are true, the glory of the earth is filled with the glory of the Lord.

It cannot be said that the earth is filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. That is what remains. The earth is filled with God's glory, but not everyone knows it.

Not everyone sees it. The earth is not yet filled with the knowledge of his glory. Now, the apostle Paul, with these scriptures in mind, especially the Habakkuk scripture in mind, apparently made this statement in 2nd Corinthians four.

In verses. Well, this is in verse six, 2nd Corinthians four, six, Paul said, for it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shown in our hearts to give the light. Notice of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Now, in an earlier lecture, we looked at this verse because I mentioned that Paul here is

clearly alluding back to Genesis chapter one, when God who called light to shine out of darkness. And I saw in that, as I pointed out in an earlier lecture in this series, that Paul saw some spiritual meaning in Genesis chapter one. After all, in the same epistle, Paul said, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation.

And we found that there are throughout the creation narrative of Genesis chapter one parallels to God's work in the life of the believer. Now, this same verse comes to our attention again, but to make a different point. The same God who called the light to shine out of darkness back in Genesis chapter one has done something parallel to that in us.

And what he has done is he has given us he's shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Now, we are told in Habakkuk that the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. And now Paul tells us that's already happened to some of us.

All of us who have, as it were, seen Jesus, those of us who are Christians now. I will confess to you that Paul might mean this in a sense that isn't true of us, although I'm not going to say this is so. But Paul had seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus himself radiantly on the road to Damascus.

Peter and James and John had also seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus. Do you remember where that was on the Mount of Transfiguration when Jesus changed his face, radiated as bright as the noonday sun? The scripture says three of the gospels tell of it. And Peter does also in second Peter chapter one.

So there are some apostles who literally saw the glory of God in the face of Jesus. But I'm not sure that that's what Paul is referring to here. I don't when he says we are our hearts.

He's not talking about what he saw with his eyes, although he did happen to get a vision of that with his eyes. He's talking about what happened in our hearts. God is shown in our hearts.

We have obtained the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus. Now, he's talking figuratively there because we have not seen the face of Jesus. Even the Corinthians to whom he had written, none of them had in all likelihood been in Israel in the time that Jesus was there.

And so these people had not seen the literal face of Jesus, but he was speaking figuratively. What had happened to him literally on the road to Damascus had its counterpart spiritually in the hearts of the believers. There's a sense in which in our hearts we see the face of Jesus as and it's his face that we behold.

But we with unveiled faces beholding the glory of the Lord are changed from glory to

glory into that same likeness, even as by the spirit of God. So we can see, then, that this is a vision that God has for us to see Jesus and to know of his glory. But there's more to it than that.

To know of his glory is only the starting point to obtain the glory is what God has in mind. This is what Paul identifies as the call or the goal that God had in mind when he called us. We need to have a hope.

You know, if you're going to be changed through the arduous task of dying to self and walking in the spirit and denying your flesh and so forth, you're going to have to have some strong motivation for that. We have enough motivation to simply live in the flesh. In fact, our flesh gives us strong incentives every day, many times a day to to live according to the flesh.

We need some kind of overwhelming motivation and incentive to not do so. And that incentive is found in understanding the call of God on our lives. And the hope that is associated with that calling.

In First Thessalonians, chapter two and verse 12, Paul states that his desire for his readers is, as he puts it, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. Now, God calls you. To what? To go to heaven? Well, some people identify both kingdom and glory with nothing else but heaven.

However, both of those concepts are used in the scripture as something not well, not restricted to heaven. Let's put it that way. Certainly, heaven would include the kingdom of God and the glory of God.

But that is not, I believe, what Paul has in mind. Paul talks about the kingdom of God and the glory of God in a way elsewhere that leads me to believe he has something else in mind than simply the discussion of going to heaven. We see that we are called to two things, to his kingdom and to his glory.

And in the next epistle to the same people in Second Thessalonians, two fourteen, Paul says the same thing, but a little differently. I think in a way more helpfully. He says this in Second Thessalonians, two fourteen, to which he called you by our gospel for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, notice in First Thessalonians, he says he's called us to his glory. Now he says to the same people in another epistle, he's called us to obtain the glory. What does it mean to obtain the glory? I mean, we're supposed to know about the glory of God.

But what does it mean to obtain the glory of God? We need to understand that this is the hope that the scripture places before us. The hope of the believer to which we've been called, the hope we've been called to obtain is the hope of glory. You know, don't know the scripture in Colossians, one twenty seven, which has the phrase Christ in you, the

hope of glory.

Christ, as Paul put it in Galatians, four nineteen, Christ formed in you Galatians four nineteen. Paul said, my little children with whom I travail again in childbirth until Christ be formed in you. In Colossians, one twenty seven, he says Christ in you is the hope.

Of glory, the hope of the Christian is associated with obtaining the glory in Romans, in Ephesians one eighteen. Paul prays for his readers that the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling. What are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints? Now, interesting that Paul doesn't just explain it.

He prays that they can grasp it. Paul doesn't just sit out and expound on the riches of the glory. He says, I pray that your eyes of your understanding may be open.

He's talking about a supernatural illumination that he hopes God may work upon his readers, because I presume he felt that if God does not do this, it's just not going to happen. This isn't something you can just explain in words and hope that people get it. That's why every time I've ever taught on this subject, I do so with fear and trembling, because I've made it my goal in teaching to make things clear so that when people go out of the room, they understand fully whatever it is I think I understand.

And I'm trying to communicate to them. But whenever I come to something like this subject, I realize that Paul himself did not even trust his own powers of communication to get it across. I have some despair unless God shows up.

I really pray that God will open the eyes of our understanding, because unless he does, I don't think we'll get what he's talking about here. But notice what Paul hopes they will get. When the eyes of your understanding are enlightened, he says that you may know what is the hope of his calling.

Now, we're called to obtain the glory of God. It is a hope of glory, we're told in Scripture. And he identifies it.

The hope of our calling. What is the riches of the glory? Now, he wants us to know what are the riches of the glory, the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. It's not just it's not just that we get a mental description or a mental doctrine of the glory of God.

He wants our understanding to be illuminated by God so that we can grasp what this hope of glory really is. It's a it's a glorious calling. In Romans 5 to Paul said, through Christ, also we have access by faith into this grace in which you stand and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

We Christians rejoice. What do we rejoice in? We rejoice in hope in the hope of what? In the hope of the glory of God. Now, does that mean that we simply hope that God will be

glorified? Well, I mean, it would it would be perfectly meaningful and legitimate if that's all Paul meant by that, that we just hope that God will be glorified.

We hope in the glory of God. But judging from what he has said in some of these other passages, I think he's gotten even more than this in mind, not just that God will be glorified, but our hope is that we will obtain the glory of God in the sense that God desires that we should. Let me show you something that's not in your notes.

Things often come to me that I didn't think of when I was making the notes in Romans chapter two. I think we'll see when you start about verse. Well, it's a long sentence of Paul.

We'll start at verse five. But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart, you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each one according to his deeds, eternal life to those who, by patient continuance in doing good, seek for glory, honor and immortality. Now, God will grant eternal life in the day of judgment to those who, by continuance in doing good, are seeking for glory and honor and immortality.

Now, we don't usually think of seeking for glory to be a good thing. Someone is said to be a glory hog or someone who's just wants, you know, he's in it for the glory. It doesn't sound very humble.

But you see, Paul says that God will reward those who are seeking continuously after glory. But what glory? Well, the glory of which the whole New Testament speaks, but which I'm afraid we don't often enough here expounded. And I'm going to try to help redress that imbalance tonight.

In a well-known verse quoted usually when people are talking about the rapture, Titus 2, 13. Paul says, we are looking for the blessed hope. Remember, hope, what's the hope? The way the King James and the New King James and a few others render it, it says the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

So the blessed hope, according to these translations, is the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. But if you look this up in the in a Greek interlinear, you'll find that it's actually worded a little differently. And this different wording is found, for example, in the New American Standard and other translations that that seek a fairly literal translation.

Literally what this says is the New American Standard and the Greek itself will attest. We are looking for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. That's what it says in the Greek text.

It doesn't say the glorious appearance as the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, the hope of the Christian. According to Paul is the appearing of the glory of our

great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. It is a hope of glory.

We hope in the glory of God. These these expressions of hope and glory repeatedly found together because that is the Christians hope. Now, if glory simply means heaven, then I guess we just say my hope is I'll go to heaven and I do intend to go there and greatly desire to go there.

But there's something else placed before us in Scripture that is our motivation. You know, hope is a great motivator. People who lose hope, what do they do? They lose hope completely.

They often take their own lives or if they are not courageous enough to do that, they just kind of agitate and do nothing. There's nothing to motivate them. There was an experiment done by animal psychologists some decades back.

Now, it's been it's been reported many times where they were trying to discover the effects of hope on behavior. And they took some laboratory rats and they placed them in a tub of water that was so deep and inescapable that they had to swim or die. And so they swam and they swam and they swam and they swam.

And after about 20 minutes, approximately, the rats decided they were going over fast and there was no way out. And they just surrendered to their fate and went down. But they were rescued.

The researchers rescued the rats, took them out, let them dry off, put them back in their cages for a while. And later they took the same experimental rats, put them in the same situation and they swam again. And they swam and they swam 20 minutes, 30 minutes, an hour, two hours.

They they they just kept going. I don't really know whether the researchers reached the right conclusion, but it makes for good preaching. They concluded that in the second experiment, the rats, having been rescued once before, had the concept in their memories that if they don't give up, perhaps they'll be rescued again.

The first time they'd never been rescued before, they had no concept of being rescued. They just kind of gave up hope. But the second time there was that hope that motivated them to keep on and keep on.

Now, whether that whether those conclusions of why the rats did that, I don't know how much memory they have or whatever. But whether those conclusions are correct, it certainly illustrates a biblical truth. Paul said, you know, if it were not for the hope that was in him, he would not endure the many things that he goes through.

And many times hope is associated with endurance in the Christian life. Well, we need to have a vivid hope. And if we have anything less than the vivid hope that Paul and the

scriptures placed before us, it is possible we will have an inadequate hope.

And the scripture says that our hope is the glory of God. Our hope is the obtaining of the glory of God. Our blessed hope is looking for the appearing of the glory of Jesus Christ.

So what's that mean? Well, let's go on to our next point. I would like to suggest to you that the glory of God in the Christian mind is associated with the image of Christ. Remember, Paul said that God who called the light to shine out of darkness is shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in where? In the face of Jesus Christ.

The glory of God is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. The glory of God is often in scripture or even the word glory in scripture often has the meaning of being roughly synonymous with image. Paul says in the first Corinthians chapter 11, he says that the woman that the man is the image and glory of God.

Maybe there's some small difference between image and glory there. But Paul is using them in very close association with each other. Likewise, in Hebrews chapter one in verse three, it says of Christ that he is the bright shining of God's glory and the express image of his person.

There's a close association, if not synonymous. This. Of the glory of God and the image of God in Christ.

Now, John tells us in John chapter one in verse 14. After telling us that the word was God, the word was with God and so forth. He says in verse 14, and the word was made flesh.

And dwelt among us. And what does he say after that? We beheld his glory. Now, what is it that causes us to change from glory to glory, beholding the glory of the God? John says we beheld his glory.

And then he he clarifies what he means by that. He said it was the glory as of the only begotten of the father. Now, that's how it reads in every translation.

But in the Greek, there's no definite article there. And some commentators believe it would be more accurate to say it was the glory as of an only begotten of a father. So that although we know that, you know, Jesus is the only begotten of the father, that's not necessarily what John was trying to get across.

When he said we saw we beheld his glory, it was it was the glory as of an only begotten son of a father. Now, what does glory mean in a case like that? What what is seen in a son of his father? Something of his likeness, something of his image. Most most sons at least bear some likeness of their father.

I don't see it in my own children, but other people do just today. Someone who hadn't

seen Benjamin for several years came across him in a parking lot. And she said, oh, he resembles you.

Well, I don't see it. But and he probably hopes he doesn't either. But the fact is, it's very rare when a son doesn't in any sense resemble his father.

And it seems to me that what John is telling us is that the glory that was seen in Jesus. Was the glory of God, and it was like seeing the glory of a father in his in his only begotten son, the image of a father in a son looking at Jesus was like seeing God's image that was beholding his glory. In John's language.

Now, it's very clear from scripture, from what we've seen already, that glory is also to be found in us. One thing that's interesting is how glory and image are used interchangeably in two passages. One's in Hebrews and one's in Romans.

Now, both may be Pauline. We don't know whether Paul wrote Hebrews or not. Many people doubt it.

And I'm not here to confirm that he did. I don't know whether Paul wrote it or not. But I would say whoever did write Hebrews, if it was not Paul himself, was somebody who is saturated with Paul's thought and who traveled with Paul because he was a co-traveler of Timothy.

Also, whoever it was. And it's very clear that the Pauline thought is there in Hebrews. And there are two passages, one in Hebrews and one in Romans, which place in juxtaposition illustrate what I'm saying about the resemblance or the or the similarity or the or the equality of speaking about glory and speaking about image.

And this is when it's about us, because in Hebrews 2:10, it says, for it was fitting for him for whom are all things and by whom are all things in bringing many sons to glory. To make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. Now, notice what God intended to do to bring many sons where to glory.

Now, in Romans 8:29, Paul wrote, for whom he foreknew. He also predestined to be conformed into the image of his son. So that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

What do these two verses have in common? They both tell us that Jesus was intended to be the first of many sons who were to come into essentially the same thing. Now, in Hebrews, it says that God want to bring many sons to glory in Romans. It says that we are to be conformed in the image of Christ.

So he be the first one of many brethren. The idea is God wants more children. He wants more sons.

He wants a bigger family. Jesus was the first. But the way that it's expressed, what is his goal for these children? That they would be conformed to the image of Christ or that they be brought into glory.

I believe there's many places where we see this likeness or this equation of glory and the image or likeness of Christ. The verse I've quoted several times tonight already does so. But we with unveiled face beholding what? The glory of the Lord are changed from glory to glory into what? Into that same image.

What are we looking at? We're looking at the image of Christ. We're changing that same image from glory to glory. I'm not saying that the words are exact synonyms.

I'm saying the two are so closely associated that they are almost as good as synonyms. There may be shades and nuances of meaning in the two words that are not equal. But certainly when Paul talks about us coming into glory, he's talking about us coming into the image of Christ, into the likeness of Christ.

Being becoming like him. Now, in Romans 8, 18 and 19, Paul wrote these words. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory.

Now, check this phrase, which shall be revealed in us. The glory that shall be revealed in us. Now, that is that's an important thing because Paul is the same man who wrote in Titus 2, 13 that the blessed hope is the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

And now Paul tells us where that glory is going to appear. That glory that shall be revealed in us. Now, I don't think I'm getting away from the doctrine of the second coming of Christ.

I certainly believe in the second coming of Christ. And by the time we're done tonight, you'll know exactly how I understand these things to go together. But Paul's next statement in Romans 8, 19 is for the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

Now, God wants to bring many sons into glory. He wants us to be brought and conformed into the image of Christ. And this, I believe, is the glory that should be revealed in us, the image of Christ in us.

The trend, the total transformation, having gone from glory to glory into that same image, we actually get there. I mean, what's the point of going that direction if you're not going to get there? Now, don't second guess me here. You might think that I'm saying that we will get there before Christ comes back.

I'm not necessarily saying that. But I'm trying to differentiate between two concepts. One

is the second coming of Christ and the other is what is going to happen in us.

These may happen simultaneously. Or they may not happen simultaneously. But I believe that the ultimate total transformation of us into his image will be at his second coming.

In Colossians 3, 4, it says, When Christ, who is our life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. You will appear with him in glory. Now, John said in 1 John 3, verses 2 and 3, he said, Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be.

But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And then he says this, everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. How relevant that is to our whole topic of this series.

Purifying ourselves like he is pure. To be like him. To have our character so transformed that we are as pure as he is.

And that we are involved in purifying ourselves. But why would we do so? Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself. It is having that hope as a compelling vision in your life that will give the incentive and motivation to purify yourself and to become more like Jesus.

Now, it's not just that. Notice he says, everyone has this hope. What? That we will be like him.

When he shall appear, we shall be like him, John said. And whoever has this hope, what hope? The hope of being like Jesus. But Paul said the hope was the hope of glory.

What's the difference? Probably none distinguishable. The hope of glory is the hope that we will indeed be like Jesus. And that hope motivates us to purify ourselves just as he is pure.

Now, this is an important thing, because John said we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is. Now, we don't yet see him as he is. We see him in a sense.

We have a vision of Christ of some sort. When the name Jesus occurs to you, comes into your ears, probably some kind of a conceptual picture comes. I'm not saying that you have some kind of an image of his face or whatever that comes to your mind.

Maybe that is even true if you've seen enough pictures. But whether or not you have a mental picture of the face of Jesus, I dare say that there is content to what that name Jesus signifies. When you hear the name Jesus, something of content comes to mind.

I actually hope it isn't a mental picture of his face. It would be much nicer if it was something about who Jesus is, what he's like, how he would react in this situation. What

he taught, what he modeled.

Now, even though we have some concept of this right now, Paul tells us that we're beholding the glory of the Lord as what? In a mirror. We with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord. Now, the reason he says as in a mirror, he's not talking about the concept of reflecting our own face.

That's what we would think of as a mirror. But see, in those days, they didn't have mirrors like ours. They didn't have glass.

They had instead of mirrors, they had polished bronze plates. The best they could do, unless they were looking at the reflection in a pool of water to get an idea of whether their hair was messy or they had egg on their face or something, was to take a piece of finely polished brass and look at themselves that way because they didn't have glass mirrors. Now, our glass mirrors reflect a perfect image to us.

But those ancient mirrors really reflected sort of a blurred, somewhat hazy image. And Paul twice tells us that we currently see Jesus as it were through a mirror, meaning in a hazy way. Remember the verse in First Corinthians 13.

For now we see through a mirror dimly, but then face to face. And now in Second Corinthians, we with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord. We see him, but we see him as it were vaguely.

We have an idea of what Jesus was like, and it's hopefully a well-informed idea from Scripture. But we really want to be about different ideas. Even Christians who read the same Bible, different ideas of Jesus.

There are people who picture that Jesus would go to war. Other people's picture of Jesus would be the last thing you'd ever expect him to do. There are people who think that Jesus would never spank a child if he were a father.

I've heard people tell me it because and this is their excuse for not spanking their children. They say Jesus would never spank a child. I mean, there's gentle Jesus, meek and mild.

And others, well, Jesus himself in Revelation says whom I love, I'd chase him. You know, I mean, the pictures of Jesus we have in our imagination are somewhat informed by Scripture. But to a certain degree, the Scriptures don't tell us everything.

There still is room for, well, there's a haziness there about it. But the day will come when we will see him as he is. And we will be like him because we will see him as he is, it says.

It doesn't say we will see him as he is and we will be like him as if these are two unrelated things. One is the cause of the other. We shall be like him because we shall

see him as he is.

Now, we don't see him quite as he is now, but we're becoming like him to the degree that we can with this hazy picture. But the time will come where he is clearly seen, then face to face. And at that time, we will be just like him.

What this tells me is that my being like Jesus is directly related to and dependent upon my seeing him correctly. As I see him not entirely correctly, I am really not entirely like him. But when I will see him entirely correctly, then I will be entirely like him.

Seeing Jesus, beholding the glory of the Lord is that which confers to me that same image through the Holy Spirit working in my life. Now, obviously, that should provide strong incentive for us to really get to know Jesus the best we can. I would certainly urge you, if you don't already have that motivation, to saturate your mind with the Gospels.

There's no other portion of Scripture that I love more or have spent more time in than the Gospels. Because, I mean, I love Paul, but I love Jesus more. I love Paul a lot.

If he were here, he'd be my hero. But, and I love to read his, there's really no part of the Scripture I have read, only a little. But the parts I have read most and with the greatest urgency and fascination are the Gospels.

Because there we see Jesus. But even so, I must admit, there are things about Jesus I don't quite, I mean, I could think of certain situations, if Jesus were in them, I'm not quite sure what he'd do in that situation. I don't know him perfectly, but the better I can get to know him and the more accurately I can get to know him, the more will be, I believe, supernaturally conferred to me.

The grace of his likeness in my life. And that is why we need to be beholding the glory of the Lord. Now let me take you back to a story that I'm sure you're familiar with in the Old Testament.

Moses, when he was on Mount Sinai, in Exodus chapter 33, verses 18 through 23, Moses said to God, please show me your glory. Then God said to him, I will make all my goodness pass before you and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

But he said, you cannot see my face for no man shall see me and live. Then the Lord said, here is a place by me and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be while my glory passes by that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and will cover you with my hand until I pass by.

Then I will take away my hand and you shall see my back. But my face, you shall not see my face, shall not be seen. Now, this story has some strangeness about it.

Wouldn't you agree? You can see God's back and you're going to hide in a cave and God's gonna put his hand there and you. With his hand and once he goes by, you look out and there's his back, but not his face. And he says, you know, it's interesting because Moses didn't ever say, let me see your face.

Moses said, let me see your glory. But in God's mind, that was equated with seeing his face. He said, I'm sorry, you can't see that.

Now, what God did say he would do twofold. One is he said, you can see my backside. You can see part of me, but you can't have the full vision.

And the law, God did not reveal himself fully. Moses did not get the full vision of God. He saw he saw as much as God wanted to reveal.

And insofar that Moses wrote and conveyed anything to us, it was accurate. It just wasn't it wasn't all there was. Remember what John said in the Gospel of John, and I think it's chapter one, verse 18.

I think it is. No, no, I'm sorry. I think it's earlier, probably 17 or 18.

He said that he said the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Obviously, something more came to us of God in Jesus than was ever given through Moses. And that doesn't mean there was anything inaccurate about what Moses saw.

I accept the total revelation of God given through Moses. I just see in it only a part of God, not not his face was not seen there. And what Paul said, God has given shown our hearts, give the light of the knowledge of glory in the face of Jesus.

It's when Jesus came that the glory was seen. But in Moses day, he only got a little bit of the glory. That is to say, he only got to see God somewhat, certainly through a glass darkly.

But more than us, he was limited in some ways. He had advantages that we don't have. But when it comes to having the full image of God and glory of God revealed to him, he didn't have it all given to him.

And God said, you can't see my whole face. I'll let you see the backside. That's part of me.

Notice also, God said to him this. I will. Cause all my goodness to pass before you.

And, you know, when God actually fulfilled this promise in the next chapter of Exodus, God passed by and he basically proclaimed, it says, the name of the Lord to Moses. This was God showing him his glory insofar as he could see it. And the name of the Lord was it's interesting.

He says, the Lord, merciful and gracious, full of compassion. And so I can't quote it from memory. It's quite long, actually.

But basically, when God declared the name of the Lord to Moses, it was really a self-description of God's character. The disclosure of the glory of God to Moses was in the form of a revelation of God's character, what God is like. Now, even so, that was only a partial picture.

But later in Exodus 34, verses 29 through 33, we read these words, Exodus 34, verse 29 through 33. It says, now it was so when Moses came down from Mount Sinai and the two tablets of the testimony were in Moses hand when he came down from the mountain. That Moses did not know that the skin of his face shown while he talked with him.

So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shown and they were afraid to come near him. Then Moses called to them and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him and Moses talked with them. Afterwards, all the children of Israel came near and he gave them as commandments all that the Lord had spoken with him on Mount Sinai.

And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. Apparently, because they were so unnerved by this eerie glow that was on Moses face. Now, the Apostle Paul takes this story and he applies it.

He sees some symbolic interest in this. Moses saw something of the glory of God, not the complete revelation. And that sight was enough to cause him to be infected with the same glory.

Now, because it was a limited revelation of the glory of God, the glory on his face was indeed limited. Although I don't know that it says so in Exodus, it might. But in Second Corinthians, Paul tells us that this glory on Moses face eventually faded.

It wasn't permanent. And Paul makes a distinction between that. He sees that as symbolic of the glory of God revealed in the old covenant.

It was a temporary fading kind of revelation, just like the glory on Moses face, the great giver of the old covenant. That glory faded. But there's a new covenant in Christ and the glory of Christ is an ever increasing glory, Paul says.

And that is the glory of the new. And he makes several contrasts between the glory of the old and glory of the new. And he's got Moses and the story of his face shining in his mind all this while.

In Second Corinthians three, let me read a few verses to you. And Second Corinthians three, beginning of verse seven and reading through verse 13 says, but if the ministry of death, that's his. He means the law written and engraved on stones was glorious so that

the children of Israel could not look steadfastly at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance.

Which glory was passing away. How will the ministry of the spirit, meaning the new covenant, not be more glorious for if the ministry of condemnation again, meaning the law had glory, the ministry of righteousness, meaning the new covenant exceeds much more in glory for even what was made glorious. Meaning Moses face had no glory in this respect because of the glory that excels that is compared to the glory in Jesus face.

Perhaps that which Paul had seen on the road to Damascus or which the apostles had seen on the Mount of Transfiguration or simply maybe speaking more figuratively, just that revelation of God's character that was seen in Jesus. That was so superior that Moses face shining had no glory at all by comparison, he says. Now, here he says, for what is passing away and he means by that, of course, the law itself, but symbolized by the glow on Moses face.

If that which is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious. Therefore, since we have such hope. Here's that word hope thrown into the mix here again.

When we talk about the glory of God, it's our hope. Since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech, unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadfastly at the end of what was passing away. And that provides the context for the verse we've referred to several times already tonight.

Same chapter, 2 Corinthians 3, 18. But we all with unveiled face see Moses had a veil over his face versus 14 through 16. Paul kind of makes an illusion.

He sees a symbolic reference to the veil on Moses face prevented the children of Israel from looking straight on at the glory of God was on his face. So likewise, the children of Israel who are still stuck with the law, there's still a veil over them. They still don't see the glory of God.

But he says, if their heart turns the Lord, then the veil is taken away. And then he says this verse that's been quoted so many times tonight. But we all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord are changed from glory to glory in that same image.

Notice the contrast. Moses glory was fading. It was going downhill.

Eventually, eventually it was gone. The glory of the new covenant, which is our hope, is an ever increasing glory. It is from glory to glory that we are transformed, it says, into that same image.

Now, this speaks certainly of the transformation of our character day by day into the

likeness of Christ. Now, in what way do we behold the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ? Certainly part of it is maybe the majority of it is that we simply we simply keep our eyes on Jesus. What we know of Jesus, what has been revealed to us in the scriptures of Jesus and by the way, what he has revealed to us personally in our walk with him.

We hold these things ever before us. We don't we don't just keep them in some category in our mind. They're in some drawer somewhere.

So when we feel like having religious or devotional thoughts, we open that drawer and pull out our thoughts about Jesus. But we hold these things steadfastly as the obsession of our minds, as the compelling vision to be like him. It should not be that you would have to wear a bracelet that says, what would Jesus do? You shouldn't have to be reminded to ask that question.

It should be the natural thing that springs to your mind without without even knowing you're asking the question. It should always be the case that when you're a situation, you see Jesus. You see Jesus in that situation, what he would do, and you quite naturally do the same.

Imitation of Jesus, because we're commanded to do it, is possible. There is with every command of God, the supernatural assistance to do it. In an earlier lecture in the series, we talked about Jesus walking on water and Peter saw Jesus walking water.

He wanted to do the same thing. And he said, Lord, if that's you, you command me to walk on water. Jesus said, come on.

And because of the command of Christ, Peter was enabled. Now, Peter couldn't just jump out of the boat and do it. He had to have the command of Christ, the word of God, the command of God, which enables us to do what God has said.

He wanted to he wanted to walk as Jesus walked like we're supposed to do. He wanted to do what Jesus did. He wanted to imitate Christ and he was commanded to do so.

And therefore, he could in a way that would be impossible naturally, because with the command of Christ. We are made able to walk as he wants to do what he does now in John 13, 15, after Jesus washed the disciples feet, he said, I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you. It's quite clear that we are to be imitators of Christ.

I didn't put that in your notes, but in First Peter, chapter first Peter, chapter two. It says I should find the verse for you. He says of Jesus, he's presenting an example for us in Jesus.

And he says in verse. Twenty one for that to this, you were called. Now, he's just

described servants being gracious in the face of harsh and unjust treatment.

He says, for to this, you've been called, he says, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that you should follow his steps. We're supposed to follow the steps of Jesus. We're supposed to imitate him now in John 5, 19.

Jesus told us how he did what he did in John 5, 19. He said, it says, Jesus answered and said, and most assuredly, I say to you, the son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the father do for whatever he does. The son also does in the same way.

Jesus walked as he walked because he saw the father. He saw how the father was. He he could see the glory of God.

He was full of that glory of God. And he saw what God was like. And he did the same thing.

We see it in Jesus to the extent that we can see it today. And we do the same thing. And in following Jesus, we are nothing else than imitators of God himself.

Ephesians 5, 1, Paul says, be imitators of God. As dear children, we imitate Christ, and by doing so, we imitate God. We can't see God, but in a sense, we can see Jesus.

In another sense, we can't see Jesus, but we can see godly people who are like him. So Paul says, be imitators of me as I am of Christ. Wherever you can get the vision, get it.

You know, I mean, if you could see God directly, nothing could be better. But I don't think you can. You can't see him and live at this point.

You will later. But we can see Jesus somewhat. We can see Paul somewhat, or people who are like Paul.

And we imitate God by imitating Jesus. And we imitate Jesus by imitating people who are imitating Jesus. Be imitators of me as I imitate Christ, Paul says.

So God has given us many resources. We not only have the scriptures describing Jesus, we also have the reproduced life of Jesus in maturing godly examples. You might say, oh yeah, where? That's a good question.

I'm not sure where. But I meet them from time to time. And boy, do they shine when I do.

They stand out like a sore thumb. Unfortunately, they shouldn't. In the church, they should be just about normal.

But I will tell you, I have met people who definitely, when I see them, I get a better idea of what Jesus is like. For sure. And that's what Paul said.

You could look at him and follow his example as he followed Christ's example. In Ephesians 4, 20 and 21, Paul was telling the Christians to avoid certain things that were sinful. Below the dignity and holiness of a Christian.

And he says, as he talks about the prospect of doing those things, he says, but you have not so learned Christ. If indeed you have heard him and have been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus. We are learning.

It's interesting. He didn't say you have not so learned Christianity. He says you have not so learned Christ.

What is Christianity? But simply living the life of Christ. How do you do that? Well, you got to learn it. And you learn it if you are taught by him, if you've heard him and you've been taught by him.

See, it's not only reading the gospels. It's not only seeing godly examples. It's also having a relationship where he teaches you.

You hear him and he teaches you. So Paul said. The imitation of Christ is laid out in graphic detail in Philippians chapter 2, verses 5 through 11.

Where Paul said, let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Who being in the form of God did not consider it robbery to be equal with God. That may not be a very good translation, but we won't bother with it right now.

But made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bond servant and coming in the likeness of men and being found in appearance as a man. He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore, God has also highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow of those in heaven, of those on earth and of those under the earth.

And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. We all know that verse, but that last line is important to the glory of God, the father. Everything is supposed to be to the glory.

The glory is the is the goal. And what Jesus did was he humbled himself and he went through the paces of obedience to his father. And then God glorified him, raised him up, gave him a high name so that the glory of God would be the ultimate result.

But we are told, let this might be in you. That was also in him. That's why there's so much graphic description of what Jesus did so that we can imitate that we're supposed to do that.

In Hebrews 12, one and two says, therefore, we also, since we are surrounded by so

great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us. And let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Keep him in mind, look unto him, run this race and endure it because of this hope that is in you, that you will be like him, too.

Now, in closing, I want to change direction a little bit here, but keeping the concept of God's glory as a focus, I want to talk to you about day and night. Day and night are images that the Bible uses frequently. And I would like to show you that they they speak to us about this subject.

Now, God, remember when he created everything in Genesis chapter one, he made not only days, but he made nights. Now, it was dark before he did anything, but then he said, let there be light. And there was light.

It seems like he could have just kept the lights on for good. But it then says evening came and morning the first day. And then there's another day and evening came and morning, a second day, an evening, a morning, the third day.

These evenings kept coming. In fact, all of human existence, as God has ordained it from creation of day one, has been a cycle of day and night and day and night. Now, that's significant.

It says also in Genesis where it's talking about God creating the sun and the moon, the stars. Actually, the way it reads a little different than that, it says God made two great lights, one light to rule the day and the other light to rule the night. Now, we know he's talking about the sun and the moon, but he says he made one light to rule the day and another light to rule the night.

Now, there's something here. When God made what he made in Genesis chapter one, Paul, remember, saw things there, spiritual things. God, who called the light to the shadow of darkness, has shown in our hearts.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. The old creation provides a type in a shadow for the new. There is a place for day and night.

Now, this is very important. It's not just a little, you know, addendum at the end of what we're talking about here. It's very important.

In Psalm 19, verses four and five, I quoted a few verses from Psalm 19 earlier tonight. That's the one that starts with the heavens declare the glory of God. The firmament shows his handiwork and goes on.

And at a certain point, it says of the stars in verse four, Psalm 19, verse four, their line

has gone out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world. In them, he has set a tabernacle for the sun, meaning the sun in the sky, the orb, which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber and rejoices like a strong man to run its race. David likens the sun in the sky to a bridegroom coming out of his chamber.

He likens the sun in the sky to a strong man preparing to run a race. He says that the stars are there essentially to provide a tabernacle for the sun. Now, I don't know whether I need to convince you or not, but I see the sun is a picture of Christ himself.

He's the bridegroom. He's the strong man. He's the one who's tabernacled among men.

He's the one in whom the glory of God was declared. The heavens declare the glory of God. But over in in in John chapter one, it says no man has seen God at any time, but the only begotten son has declared him.

Now, I see in this psalm a picture of Christ, the son. But if it's not there, it is at least elsewhere in Malachi chapter four and verse two in a reference that no Christian can miss the reference to Jesus Christ. Malachi chapter four, verse two, it says, but to you who fear my name, the son of righteousness, the word son is S.U.N. here.

The son of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings. There's no question, no Christian could doubt that that's a reference to Jesus Christ called the son. OK, well, the sun rules the day, as you recall.

The sun is the ruler of the daytime. And in Isaiah nine to it says, the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. And those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death upon them, a light has shined, a light has dawned.

This is a reference to the teaching of Christ. Actually, Matthew quotes this verse in Matthew chapter four. When Jesus begins his Galilean ministry, Matthew says it fulfilled this scripture.

What a light has shined, a light has dawned on those who are sitting in darkness. If they were it was nighttime, but the day dawned. Sun came up in anticipation of this, Isaiah said in Isaiah 60.

Verses one through five. No doubt speaking to Israel, he said, arise, shine for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth and deep darkness, the people, but the Lord will arise over you and his glory will be seen upon you.

The Gentiles shall come to your life and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes all around and see they all gather together. They come to you.

Your son should come from afar and your daughters shall be nursed at your side. Then

you shall see and become radiant and your heart shall swell with joy because the abundance of the sea representing the Gentiles shall be turned to you. The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.

Now, this is sometimes used of the second coming of Christ. Arise, shine, that light has come. But actually, the language of this passage is used in the New Testament of the first coming of Christ.

However, I believe that you've got the light rising, you've got a dawning of a day, the glory of what has risen upon you. But what happens when the glory of the Lord rises upon you? You shall see and become radiant. Moses saw something of the glory of he became radiant.

God's people who received this day that Jesus introduced are themselves become radiant. They become not only enlightened, but they become light themselves. This dawning of the day occurred when Jesus came to the world the first time.

So said Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, at the birth of John the Baptist, even before Jesus was born. This prophecy was made in association with the coming of John. In Luke one, 76 through 79, Zacharias said, a new child will be called the prophet of the highest, for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the remission of their sins through the tender mercy of our God.

With which the day spring, that means the daybreak, the dawning day, with which the day spring from on high has visited us to give light to those who sit in darkness. A clear reference back to Isaiah nine, verses one and two. The day spring from on high has visited us, Zacharias said, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death and to guide our feet into the ways of peace.

Now, you know that Jesus said twice in his mystery, I am the light of the world. The sun is the light of the world, really. I mean, of the natural world, the sun is the light of the world.

Jesus said in John eight, twelve, I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. But he also said this a chapter later, John nine, verses four and five.

Jesus, I must work the works of him who sent me while it is day. The night is coming. When no man can work.

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. Jesus is the light of the world when he's in the world. He was in the world.

He said the night is coming. I need to work while I can, while it's day, because there's a

time coming called night. And after that, I won't be able to do anything else here.

As long as I am here, I am the light of the world. Well, what about after he left? What's the light of the world then? Well, what did he say in the Sermon on the Mount to his disciples? You are the light of the world. Now.

The church, I believe, plays a role in God's great purposes, similar or imaged by that of the moon. Remember in Genesis one, there was a greater light to rule the day and a lesser light to rule the night. Why is it a lesser light? Why is the moon less light than the sun? Well, it's quite simple, really.

The moon doesn't have any light of its own at all. It's just a piece of rock. It doesn't shine.

The only reason it has any kind of visible light is because the sun shines on it. And its light is reflected back to the earth. It's a reflected light.

It's not as bright as the light of the sun himself. But it is a light nonetheless. And it is the light of the sun, simply reflected.

It's not some other light from some other source. The moon is not a source of light. In Song of Solomon, which I will not argue dogmatically for it being a picture of Christ in the church, but many Christians believe it is.

Solomon describes his bride this way in Song of Solomon, chapter six, verse ten. Who is she who looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, awesome as an army with banners? He's talking about his bride. That's a strange way to talk about your wife.

She's clear. She's like the moon. She's like an army with banners.

I believe that the church, the bride of Christ, is like the moon. You see, in the natural day, I mean, in the world, in the solar system and so forth. There comes a morning each day.

It starts with the morning. And the sun comes up and the sun is visible to the world for a while. But eventually the sun goes over the horizon and it is no longer visible to the world.

The world sees it no more. But there is another light. And the reason that that light, the light of the moon, which lights the night, the reason it can is because the moon is not here on the ground with us.

If the moon was right here on ground, he couldn't see the sun any better than we could. But it's seated in heavenly places with the sun. And while the sun is out of view of the earth, it is not out of view of the moon.

And because the moon still sees the sun, it can reflect the light of the sun back to the earth. You know very well where I'm going with this. Paul said in Ephesians chapter two that we are seated with Christ in heavenly places or in Christ in heavenly places, literally.

And Jesus was here. The world saw him, but that sees him no more. The sun went down, as it were, as far as the earth is concerned.

The earth doesn't see him anymore. But we see Jesus. It says in Hebrews chapter two.

And because we see him, we become radiant. And the world is supposed to see him in us. It's so tragic that we so often have to tell people, don't look at Christians.

Look at Jesus. Sometimes that's the best advice we can give. The Christians are not very good looking.

And I don't mean in terms of their attractiveness. I mean, in terms of whether they're a faithful witness to the glory of God or not. Typically not.

But it's not supposed to be. We should not be in the position to say, don't look at Christians, look at Jesus. In the early church, they looked at the Christians and they saw Jesus.

And the time is supposed to come and should always be really that people would see at least something of Jesus when they see the Christians. And the Christians, because of this, we are the light of the world, as Jesus said in Matthew chapter five, you are the light of the world. The city set on a hill.

It cannot be hid while it is night. We're the moon. We're the we're the lesser light.

But we are nonetheless shining in Philippians two fifteen. Paul said that you may become blameless and harmless children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation among whom you shine as lights in the world. Now, Jesus' total statement was this in Matthew five, 14 through 16.

You are the light of the world. The city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand that it gives light to all who are in the house.

Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven, your good works, your behavior. It's supposed to be like Jesus behavior. People glorify the father when they see the behavior of Jesus.

They should glorify the father when they see our behavior. And Peter, taking up those words from the Sermon on the Mount in first Peter to eleven and twelve says, beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lust, which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles that when they speak against you as

evildoers, they may buy your good works, which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation. Jesus said that they may see your good works and glorify your father, which is in heaven.

Paul says they need to see your good works so they can glorify God. They may speak evil of you now, but in the day of visitation, they'll have to admit that they saw enough of God in us to condemn them for not following him. Now, the church age then is somewhat like night.

When Jesus was here the first time, it was like a daytime. But the sun passed from view, the moon came up and has given light to the earth for the past two thousand years. But we all know there's another day going to dawn.

And the sun will appear again. And there's much in the scripture to cause us to anticipate this dawn. It is the dawning of the glory of God in Jesus and in us.

In Isaiah 40, verses three through five, you'll recognize this passage is one that John the Baptist quoted about himself and also some of the gospel writers quoted about him. Says the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley should be exalted.

Every mountain shall and hill should be brought low. The crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth. The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together for the mouth of the Lord is spoken.

What a glorious passage that is now. When John was asked in John chapter one, John the Baptist asked, who are you that if you're not the Messiah, if you're not Elijah, who are you? And he said, well, I'm the voice of one crying in the wilderness, as Isaiah spoke. Well, what's this voice crying out? Make straight the way of the Lord.

Every valley is going to be filled up. Every mountain is going to be leveled low. Every crooked path is going to be made straight.

Now, did John the Baptist go out there into the wilderness with a with a caterpillar tractor and move mountains and straighten roads and stuff? No, he didn't. That's figurative. John the Baptist was preaching this, but he's talking figuratively.

Mountains were obstacles. Those obstacles got to get out of the way. Crooked paths have to be made straight paths.

He's talking figuratively about people's lives. How do I know that? Because what John really actually preached to people was repent. Get right with God.

Turn those crooked lives straight. You see, it's a it's a figure that it's talking about here. But the point is.

Every crooked way has to be made straight. Every rough place has to be made plain. We got a lot of rough places on us.

The Bible says we are like living stones being built up into a spiritual house. To mix metaphors, we are stones who are to be transformed into the image of Christ. How do you transform a stone into the image of Christ? Well.

Is it hard to sculpt? Anyone ever done that? Someone I heard of asked us a famous sculptor once. Is it hard to sculpt? Is it hard to sculpt an elephant? The sculptor says, no, it's quite simple. You just take a block of marble, chip away everything.

It doesn't look like an elephant. Well. We're going to be sculpted, too.

Into the image of Christ. But that's going to require that all the rough places are made smooth. That everything that doesn't look like Jesus is going to have to be chipped away.

We'll have more to say about that next week. In fact, I wish I'd save that for next week because it's more relevant to what I'm going to say then. But the point is this.

That the glory of the Lord, when when every rough place had been made plain. When every crooked place has been made straight. Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed in all flesh.

We'll see it together, said the prophecy. Now in Psalm 110. Now I'm going to skip a couple of these.

Some of these Old Testament verses I have in your notes. Basically I gave them because they do speak of the coming of Christ as a dawning. I don't need to load up scripture after scripture to make that point.

But let me let me turn your attention to this rather strange statement. Matthew 24, 27. Jesus said, for as the lightning comes from the east.

And flashes to the west. So also will the coming of the Son of Man be. You say, what's so strange about that? I've known that verse since I became a Christian.

Yes. But has it never crossed your mind to ask? Why does Jesus say that lightning flashes from the east to the west? Anyone ever seen lightning? Is it your impression that lightning typically flashes from the east to the west? It certainly is not axiomatic that lightning flashes from the east to the west. And yet Jesus speaks of it as if, you know, that's a given.

Just like the lightning flash from east to west. So also. I mean, when you make a statement like that, you're the first part is axiomatic.

It's something everyone agrees with. Sure. The lightning flashes from east to west.

Right. That always seems strange to me. I've known that verse since I was a child.

And I thought, why does he say the lightning flashes from the east to the west? And one time, many, many years ago, I was driving down one of the freeways in Los Angeles, meditating on scripture. And this scripture came to mind. And I thought, I had the question I'd asked myself many times come again.

Why does he say the lightning flashes from the east to the west? And I thought, well, maybe lightning doesn't just mean what I think of as a bolt of lightning. I mean, I could say that these bulbs are lightning the room. I wonder if I wasn't sure.

I wonder if the Greek word has any such possible meaning. And so when I got home, I pulled out a concordance in the books I needed. I looked up this word, the word that's translated lightning here in Matthew 24, 27 is the word astrape.

And it's used only a few times in the New Testament. But I'll show you another place where the same word astrape is used. It's in Luke 11, 36, Luke 11, 36.

Jesus said, if then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light. Can you guess where the word astrape is in that sense? Bright, shining. In every lexicon, every concordance I looked up, there are two meanings of astrape, lightning and bright, shining.

Now, we know, I mean, in Luke 11, 36, we know that the meaning is bright, shining. It's the only meaning that fits that particular sentence. How would the same translation fit Matthew 24, 27? For as the bright shining flashes from the east.

And shines even to the west. So shall the coming of the Son of Man be. What bright shining would flash from the east to the west? The sunrise.

Now, I don't have I've never found any translation of the Bible that translates in any other way than as lightning. And so we get the idea of a lightning bolt. But I must say, if you do your own research on that Greek word and you can even compare it with the use of the same word in Luke 11, it certainly is clear that bright, shining is an alternate translation that could be considered.

And once it's considered, it makes more sense than the word lightning. Because lightning does not travel from east to west typically, but there is a bright shining that does. And that is a bright shining of the sunrise.

Now, when Jesus comes back. It will be the dawning of another day. The sun will be seen again.

The world will not depend on the faint and so often failing light of the moon. You know,

the moon waxes and wanes and cycles. I wonder if that's any kind of prophecy about the history of the church.

I don't know. But I'll tell you, the church sometimes more than others has reflected the world, the glory of God. But the time will come when the fluctuations of the moon, the waxing and waning of the light will no longer be the limits of the knowledge of the glory of God in the earth.

The time is coming when the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. And it says in Matthew 13, as Jesus is explaining the parable of the wheat and the tares in verses 40 through 43, says, Therefore, as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels.

They will gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and those who practice lawlessness and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father.

He who has ears to hear, let him hear when when Jesus returns. The sun will be seen again, but it won't only be seen in the man, Jesus. But the righteous at that time will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the father.

Remember, Paul said in Romans 8:18, our light affliction is not worthy to be compared with the glory that should be revealed in us. The blessed hope is the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ in Christ and in us who will be like him, for we shall see him as he is. In Second Peter, chapter one, verses 16 through 19, Peter said, For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But we were eyewitnesses of his majesty, for he received. He's talking about the Mount of Transfiguration here, for he received from God the father honor and glory when such a voice came to him from the excellent glory. This is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased.

And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with him on the Holy Mountain. Peter, James and John were all there. Now notice this next verse 19.

And we have the prophetic word confirmed. Which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place until the day dawns. And the morning star, Jesus, arises in your hearts.

Now, notice this. He says we saw his glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. Man, that was a glorious thing.

And he says that has for us confirmed the prophetic word. What prophetic word? Well, how about this one? Arise, shine for the light is coming. The glory of the Lord is risen upon you.

What is it that confirms to us that we will be resurrected in the last day? The resurrection of Jesus. He's the first fruits of them that slept. He's the first fruits we follow.

The fact that he rose from the dead is this assurance that we know for a fact we will rise from the dead too. How do we know that we will be glorified? How do we know that we will shine forth like the sun? Because he did. Peter says we saw him and this confirms the prophetic word.

And we need to hang on to that prophetic word until the day dawns, he says. And the day star rises in our hearts. Isn't that a strange expression? And the day star rises in our hearts.

And it's funny how many phrases are in the Bible that never you never noticed before until you actually read them and think about it. There's one other verse I want to leave you with tonight. It's from Proverbs 418.

It says, I think I have, of course, the new King James here in front of me, but I'll quote it from the new American standard because I think it makes it more clear. The King James, I memorized it first, the King James years ago in the King James, it says the path of the just is like the shining light that shines more and more until the full, until the perfect day. But that that never really made it quite clear till I read the new American standard.

And it puts it this way. The path of the righteous is as the light of dawn that grows brighter and brighter until full day. The path of the righteous is like an ever increasing dawning of the day.

Now, I this is from glory to glory into that same image as we are being transformed into the image of Christ. There is to be a clearer revelation of the glory of God to the world through us. What is the full day when Jesus appears himself, when the sun actually appears? But, you know, I'm sure all of you have watched the sunrise at one time or another.

And you know that, you know, if you stayed up all night or you've gotten up way before dawn and you've watched the sun come up, you know that it's dark for a very long time. And then over on the eastern horizon, kind of the sky gets a little turns into dark blue instead of black and then turns into a kind of a light blue. Eventually, it's not very blue at all.

It's more like orange and red and stuff like that, a little bit of yellow. And you can tell that something's coming up over there. And you know what it is.

As you watch it, you know, I've been amazed sometimes how suddenly once once the sky is somewhat illuminated, but the sun is still not visible behind the mountains on the horizon. How suddenly is the sun seems to just pop up? Has it ever? Have you ever been startled by that? I mean, you're watching this. The dawn seems so gradual and so slow.

And then you begin to see the top edge of the sun and seems like.