

"Father, glorify you name!"

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[0 : 00] Did you know that there's a prayer you can pray that will always get a yes from God? Always. Guaranteed. Now we know, of course, that God hears the prayers of His children, and He answers the prayers of His children, but we don't always know what that answer is going to be, do we?

Sometimes He answers no because He knows the bigger picture, as we've been learning in John, and as we see and experience when we pray for rain. That's a great example of a prayer that doesn't always get a yes answer.

But there is an exception. There is one prayer that is always guaranteed to get a yes from God. You want to know what it is? It's the prayer Jesus prayed in the most difficult time of His life, and it is this.

Father, glorify Your name. That is the one prayer that will always get a yes from God, because there is never a time God won't be working to glorify His name.

That is His primary activity in this world. That is the motivation for everything He does, and that's why He answers Jesus here, I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.

[1 : 08] That is what He has been doing so far in this gospel that we've been reading. It's what He's been doing so far in the entire Old Testament, and in the history of our planet. And that is what He will continue to do, because that is what He is always doing.

And it's vital that we get that. It's vital we understand that about God, that His primary goal in everything, His primary goal in your life and mine, His primary goal in everything He does in our world, is for His own glory, just like it was in His Son's life.

Now, immediately that might seem to us to be a bit selfish of God, to seek His own glory above everything else. But that's just because we don't understand what His glory is, that it seems that way to us.

You see, when the Bible speaks of God's glory, it means the display of who God really is to us, His creatures. It means putting His holiness and His excellence and His beauty on display for us all to see and to enjoy.

Which is really the greatest thing that any human can experience. And we already experience some of it in snatches in this life, even though this is a broken creation.

[2 : 24] Psalm 19 says, The creation declares the glory of God. And so God has already, in many ways, put some of Himself on display in our world.

He's showed us some of His glory in what He has made. So think, think of some of the awesome things in creation that you see and you enjoy. Think of this, the sky filled with stars at night. Have you ever been out camping, and you look out, or, you know, away from the city somewhere, and you look out and you just see this amazing universe laid out before you? That is God just showing us a little snatch of His glory.

Takes your breath away, though. Or think of an epic sunset, more beautiful than anything man could make. And God does it every day. Just to give us a little taste of who He is.

Or think of the peace of a forest, or the power of a roaring ocean. Those experiences that we get from creation are epic. But they are just tasters of the glory of God.

[3 : 28] And yet even those tasters delight us, don't they? They captivate us. How much more will we be delighted and captivated by the glory of God when we see that?

Because that is really what you were made for. It's what I was made for. You were made to see God's glory and to delight in it. God has implanted in each of us a desire to see His glory.

We might not know it. We might not know that's what we yearn for. We might not know that's what we're chasing. But it is. It's a desire deep within us that attracts us to creation. And yet it can never

be fully satisfied in creation or anything in the created world.

And yet we remain unsatisfied because we're looking, we're looking, we've got this deep yearning. You know what that yearning is for? It's for the glory of God. And it can only be satisfied in the God to whom all creation points.

And so given that, given that that's what glory, God's glory is, it makes sense now, doesn't it, for God to prioritize His glory over everything else?

[4 : 38] Because His glory is the best thing for us. By Him pursuing His own glory, He is actually pursuing our greatest good. And besides, if, think about this, if God were prioritizing anything else other than His glory, He would be essentially saying that something is better than His glory.

And that would make Him a liar because there is nothing better than His glory. And so if God wasn't prioritizing His own glory, He wouldn't be good. And so He must. And He does.

In everything. And that's why Jesus did everything for the glory of the Father. You see that throughout the Gospels, the accounts of Jesus' life, every decision He made, every path He walked, every word He spoke was for the glory of His Father.

That's what drove Him. That's what energized Him. And that's what we see here in this morning's passage. You see, the passage starts by telling us, verse 27, that Jesus is deeply troubled.

Distressed. It would be a better word. His soul was distressed. Because you see, while we know Jesus is God, the Son, we also know He was a human being.

[5 : 51] He was fully human. And what human wouldn't feel distressed at what's about to happen within a few days? Jesus is going to the cross to endure not only the painful physical torture of that, but the spiritual torture of being punished by His Father for the sins of the world.

Being separated from the glory of God that He has known from eternity past. Who wouldn't be distressed? And yet, Jesus didn't run away.

He could have, but He didn't. He could have called an army of angels to rescue Him and defeat His enemies, but He didn't. He could have asked God to take this away, but He didn't, because His desire for God's glory overcame even His desire for self-preservation.

You see, we all, we all have an instinct for self-preservation, an instinct for survival, the human race. But Jesus stands apart in that His instinct for God's glory was even greater than that instinct for survival.

And He knew that by going to the cross, His death would ultimately glorify His Father, and that's why He didn't turn back. Now why? Why would His death glorify God?

[7 : 06] Well, we're going to consider that in a moment, but before we do, think about this. This is what struck me when I was reading this passage. Jesus, we know, is the ultimate human being. He is the model of what a human being should be like.

He came to show us what we're meant to be like. So if you want to know what it means to be truly human, you look at Jesus. But now this perfect human, what did He live for?

What was His motivation in everything He did? The glory of God. That was His purpose, which means if He is the model human, that is what a human's purpose is.

That is what every human's purpose for existing is. We are meant to glorify God. We're not meant to live for ourselves. You know, I came across a quote this week, Mark Twain.

He's just some secular writer, but he said something quite profound, as sometimes secular writers do. He said, the two most important days of your life are the day you were born and the day you find out why.

[8 : 15] Well, maybe today is the day you find out why, because the Bible teaches you were born, you were created for the glory of God. Now, we already know that we live for something bigger than ourselves if we're going to be truly human.

We know that's part of what being human is. So we see it all around. People are living for a cause. Everybody seems to need a cause in this world to live for, otherwise they feel just like an empty shell.

And so whether that cause is our children, or our legacy, or our community, or our nation, or animal rights, or whatever it is, everybody seems to find a cause to fight for, to live for, to put as something bigger and more important than themselves, because that is what it means to be human, to live for something bigger than yourself.

I wonder what that is for you. I wonder what the bigger thing in your life that you're living for is. Well, you see, Jesus came to show us that the cause we were actually made to live for is the glory of

God.

And he was an example of what it looks like to live for that cause. So now back to the question. Why did this require his death?

[9 : 33] Think about it. God's son being crucified in weakness and shame, like a common criminal. How on earth would that glorify God, let alone more than creation, is already displaying his glory?

Surely creation is enough? Why would this death on the cross, this humiliating defeat seemingly, glorify God more than creation? How is the cross more glorious than sunsets and stars?

Well, Jesus tells us here in this passage by explaining what his death would achieve. And I want us to look at that carefully. Verse 31 and 32. Look in your Bibles at these verses while I read them.

Now is the time for judgment on this world. Now he's talking about his impending death, right? Now is the prince of this world driven out, and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.

So let's just consider what he's saying here. God will be glorified in his death because of these reasons, because of three results that his death will have. Firstly, the world will be judged.

[10 : 44] Now, he's not referring to him being judged on behalf of his people here. He's actually saying that his death on the cross will also judge the world.

How? How will his death on the cross judge the world? Well, because it will provide the most convincing proof that humanity is guilty, won't it? It's like a court case.

You may have watched those courtroom dramas, and then, you know, the prosecution team will find the key piece of evidence to put away the criminal for good. Well, you know, the key piece of evidence to put humanity away for good is Jesus dying on the cross.

Is the Son of God, the perfect Son of God coming into this world and then us torturing him and killing him even though he did nothing wrong.

And so we as a species proved our instinctive hostility towards the God who made us. An instinctive hostility that is deep within all of us because of our sin.

[11 : 49] And we proved it there at the crucifixion. The cross actually judges the world. And do you see the irony, the divine irony in that, the irony that God planned to be in that?

It looked like Jesus was the one being judged and sentenced, wasn't it? But instead, we were the ones being judged on the cross in what we did to Jesus. And so the cross glorifies God firstly by showing that when God does one day bring final and terrible judgment like the prophecy in Joel we heard this morning tells us.

When he does that, the cross is the evidence to prove that he is totally right to do that and that we all deserve that because God will be glorified when he judges.

God is not only glorified by us, you know, singing songs to him on a Sunday morning. God is glorified when he judges wrongdoing. You know, we all say we want justice, don't we?

We all feel satisfaction on those cop shows when the bad guy is caught. We all celebrate when a politician is exposed as a thief. We praise those who expose them.

[12 : 59] Tuli Madancela, Jacques Paul, and others because we love justice. We hold those people up as examples. We love justice except of course when we're on the wrong side of justice.

which, as a world, we actually are. And so on the cross, God is glorified first in his judgment of the human race.

After considering the cross, no one can accuse God of being unfair in judging all of us. But, that's not the end of the story. Just as well for us, that's not the only way God is glorified on the cross.

Otherwise, we'll all be doomed. God is also glorified through the death of Jesus because it results, secondly, in the prince of this world being driven out. Satan.

Jesus here calls the prince of this world. Jesus acknowledges that he exists and that he is real and the Bible teaches that he is the arch enemy of God's people. And his goal in everything he does is to, it's the complete opposite of God's goal.

[14 : 00] Satan's goal is to take away from the glory of God. Satan's goal is to prevent people from enjoying God's glory. And he works hard to keep people from God's glory because he is jealous of that glory.

And so, he works to prevent it in a very simple yet effective way. You know what his tactic is to prevent you from enjoying the glory of God? He tempts you to sin.

And when you sin, it is impossible to enjoy God's glory. Because God's glory does not tolerate sin. And so, the very thing we were made to enjoy actually becomes, when we sin, the thing that

threatens us the most, that we want to get away from instinctively if we are sinners. It's like fire, right? Fire can be really comforting and really nice. It can cook our food. It can be useful. It can warm us when we're cold, when we come out of a cold day in winter and there's a fire at the fireplace and you put your hands over it and you thaw. It's one of the greatest, most satisfying feelings isn't fire can be really comforting and yet, imagine you did that after pouring a can of petrol over yourself. You wouldn't go near the fire, would you? [15:17] You would want to avoid it at all cost if you're dripping with petrol. So suddenly, the same fire that would otherwise comfort you becomes your greatest threat. The thing you want to get away from, well that is what happens to the glory of God for a sinner.

The thing we were made to enjoy becomes our greatest threat and our sin will cause us to run away from God's glory rather than towards it. And that's why Satan didn't have to do much to get Jesus killed, did he?

I mean, yeah, he was in the background, he was kind of a consultant, but he didn't, he didn't have to drive it even. He just had to work to keep people sinning and we did the rest because we couldn't tolerate the Son of God in our world.

So Satan's plan to get rid of Jesus from this world worked like a charm. Except, what he didn't realize was another divine irony taking place.

In that, Satan working to cast Jesus out of this world, actually, God was using to cast Satan out by removing his power over us.

[16:33] Because, you see, the way he used to rule before Jesus was to make us sin and thus to make us run away from God's glory. It would always be a given. If we sinned, we would always run away from God's glory.

We couldn't help it. That's what sinners do. But what Satan didn't realize is that when Jesus died, sinners who trust in him have their guilt for sin removed.

The very thing that causes us to run away from God's glory was removed on the cross. And so, those who trust in Jesus change direction, not running away from God, but running towards him. And that's why, thirdly, Jesus' death results in drawing all people to himself and thus drawing them to God, his Father. Because, you see, if you trust in Jesus, if you trust.

And part of trusting in Jesus, part of believing in Jesus is what the Bible calls repentance, turning, changing, being born again, heading towards God. And when you do that, no longer can Satan keep you away from enjoying God's glory.

[17:40] No longer can Satan accuse you and hold your sins over you. He has no right to if you belong to Christ. Christ. And so, his power to rule you was broken on the cross.

He was cast out. Which was the complete opposite of his plan. And it's beautiful. Satan was played big time. And God was glorified by those who are free from Satan's power.

And so that is why Jesus had to die for God to be glorified. We wouldn't have been able to glorify God, to enjoy his glory, unless Jesus freed us from our sins first.

And that could only happen on the cross when he died. Which means, if you're a Christian this morning, think about this. Jesus didn't save you for your own sake.

He saved you as a means to an end. And that end was the glory of God. He didn't save you for you, he saved you for his Father, so that his Father would be glorified in your life. And that's why in that one song that is often sung at churches, above all powers, you know that song?

[18:59] That's why here at St. Mark's we don't sing the original line that says, you took the fall and thought of me above all. Because that's wrong. Jesus wasn't thinking about me above all when he died.

He wasn't thinking about you above all when he died. He was thinking about the glory of God. That's why he was doing it. We're just fortunate that us being saved is part of God being glorified, aren't we?

Otherwise, there would be no reason for us to be saved at all if it wasn't for the glory of God. And so, if you're a Christian, you must live for God's glory in all you do.

That's the bottom line because that's the reason you were saved. But it's not even so much that you must live for God's glory now, it's that you can live for God's glory now, which is the greatest pursuit, the greatest cause, the greatest joy in life.

Through the forgiveness of your sins, you're able to draw near to God now and start experiencing His glory in your daily life. You're able to do that. You can seek out God's glory now and you can

start experiencing it as a foretaste of eternity.

[20 : 11] You can seek it out every day, directing your thoughts to God and His excellence and His holiness and knowing God in a personal relationship, knowing His glory personally as you speak to Him and hear from Him and see bigger and bigger visions of who He is in His Word and find your pleasure in that.

You can do that now if you're a Christian. And your Christian disciplines, prayer, reading the Bible, worship, you can do them not because you have to, but you can do them for your own enjoyment. Do you do that? Do you see those Christian disciplines as a duty that you have to get through to tick a box? Or do you see them as a means to find your ultimate satisfaction and peace and enjoyment that nothing on earth can give you?

Because knowing God and His glory is the greatest enjoyment that a human can have. life. And then as you pursue God's glory, learn to live for God's glory in everything that you do, in every decision that you make, where you choose to live, where you choose to go to church, what you do with your money.

As a Christian, all those decisions should be made by asking one question, what will most glorify God here? What will most glorify God in this situation?

[21 : 34] That is the only question that we need to ask. And I must ask you, is your life defined by that question? Is your life lived on the basis of that question?

What will most glorify God today? What will most glorify God here in this decision I'm making? Is your life based on that question? Or is it still defined by the question, what will most benefit me and my family?

No, God's people are called to live like Jesus for God's glory above all other things as our deepest and greatest instinct. And of course, the best way to glorify God, we learn from this passage, is to point people to the cross because that is where God is glorified more than anywhere else.

Jesus knew that going to the cross would glorify God more than anything he could have done. And so, us pointing others to the cross is the best way we can glorify God more than anything we can do.

With our time and with our money. The best way we can use that to fulfill our purpose and glorify God is to investing in pointing people to the cross, investing in the gospel, evangelism, the gospel going out so that people can come to Jesus.

[22 : 53] and people can be enabled to turn back to God and enjoy him and glorify him forever.

That is the greatest cause that you could ever be involved in in this life. That people might come, turn, be saved, and glorify God.

And that's why the angels rejoice at the conversion of a sinner. You know, we hear that. The Bible tells us the angels rejoice when one sinner is converted. You know why they're rejoicing? Because it means more glory for God.

And so we should rejoice and make it our life's task to bring sinners to the cross because that means more glory for God. And if you're not interested in doing that, then are you interested in God's glory at all?

And so whoever you are this morning, ask yourself, what side are you on? Whose glory are you living for? God's or your own? Because there's only those two options.

The thing is, no matter which it is, God is going to be glorified anyway. We've learned. No matter what you do with Jesus, God will still be glorified either in judging you for ignoring his son or saving you for trusting in his son.

[24 : 03] God will achieve his purpose to glorify his name. You've just got to decide in what way God is going to be glorified in your life. Through judgment of a life lived for yourself or salvation into a life lived for the glory of God.

Ask yourself, which one are you? Let's pray. Lord, we do thank you for this example, Lord Jesus, that you gave us of living for the glory of God, of reminding us, of revealing to us that is the purpose that we were born, that is the purpose you came into this world to save us.

Help us to do that, Lord. Help us not just to glorify God in the coming week and month and year out of duty, but out of delight, because that is where our greatest purpose and enjoyment and satisfaction lies.

Help us to believe that. Help us to follow your example of doing everything for the glory of God as we make decisions, as we wake up in the morning. Help us to think first and foremost of pursuing

the glory of God in our lives.

Thank you for taking our sins, that we can do that, not only here, but in eternity. Help us now to do that, in Jesus' name. Amen.