

St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Penrith

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ENCOURAGEMENT LETTER 25/9/2024

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Hugh here. How are you today? I'm thankful for the opportunity to share the gospel at a funeral today, and for one of our younger members who came to help me with the sound and computer.

Today's encouragement is from Nicole Mannyx on "God's Glory" after which we move on to church matters.

What do you think of when you hear the word glory? The glory of a beautiful sunset? The glory that comes with victory in battle or on the sporting field? The nostalgia of thinking about our younger 'glory days'? As Christians we often talk about (and sing about) the glory of God. What does the Bible mean when it talks of glory?

There are many passages we could go to think about God's glory -any point in the Bible when God reveals himself to people. Ezekiel seeing God on his throne with amazing shining brilliance. John's vision of the New Jerusalem in Revelation where there's no need for a sun because God himself is their light. Isaiah falling to his knees before the throne of God, surrounded by singing cherubim. All of these tell us something about God's glory. But we're going to focus on one episode in Exodus, on God revealing his glory to Moses.

In Exodus, like in other parts of the Bible, God's glory is often represented as light. We see the pillar of fire, leading them out of Egypt. We see flashes of lightning on Mount Sinai. But in Exodus 33:18-19, Moses asks God to show him his glory and it's a bit different.

Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory".

And the Lord said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my Name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

What is it that God shows to Moses when he shows him his glory?

"I will cause my goodness to pass in front of you".

It's God's goodness that gives him worth. He is glorious because of his goodness, because of his character.

God's glory is tied to his mercy and compassion. God is worthy of glory because he is

good – infinitely good, and so infinitely glorious.

This is what so much of the Bible is about. Yes, we see God's glory in the wonder of creation, as he speaks the world into existence. Yes, we see it in his power, as he sends - or stops – great storms. Yes, we see it in his majesty, as the prophets report those visions of him in his throne room. But what is the bulk of the Bible about? It's about God dealing compassionately and mercifully with his people.

God chooses Israel, not because of any worth in them, but because he chose to show them mercy. And over and over again we see him continually showing them mercy and compassion, despite their endless failings. God keeps his promises to the patriarchs, despite their pretty morally questionable behaviour. God continually provides for his people in the wilderness, despite their constant grumbling and seemingly very short memories. God keeps delivering them from their enemies in the time of the judges, despite their spiral further and further into degeneration. God continues to bless David, despite his moral failures. Even when Israel rebel so far that they end up in exile, God still shows his compassion and mercy by bringing them back to the promised land.

The whole story of the Bible is a story of God showing himself to be compassionate and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in love.

And of course, it culminates in his greatest act of mercy and compassion, on the cross of Christ. In his great mercy, God took the penalty we deserved, the penalty for our rebellion against him, on himself. What seemed like the ultimate failure, what seemed like humiliation and degradation and defeat, was actually the moment when God's glory shined brightest. God's goodness, his mercy and compassion, culminated in the cross. God's ultimate glory, his ultimate worth, is seen in his mercy to us in Jesus. That's why in Revelation 5:9 we hear the heavenly throne room sing
"Worthy are you to take the scroll and open it's seals,

for you were slain and by your blood you ransomed people for God

from every tribe and language and people and nation."

That is God's glory.

FINAL COMMENTS

*Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel,
who alone does marvelous deeds.*

*Praise be to his glorious name forever;
may the whole earth be filled with his glory.*

Amen and Amen. Psalm 72:18-19

Love and prayers, Hugh.