

Christ Alone (Part III – The Glory Dynamic)

Today's Lesson Goal

Our series premise is that Jesus is our only sufficient source for all things that pertain to life and godliness. Our goal today is to understand that the sufferings of Christ have not yet consummated and that we may opt to share in those sufferings for His glory and our glorification.

Our Session Outline

To understand this suffering: A. We must first discuss glory, B. We must see how important glory is in the whole of God's plan, C. We must know what Jesus taught about His own suffering *and* glory, and D. We must know that we have been given the privilege to share in this suffering/glory dynamic with Christ.

As we ramp up from our previous session:

We are discovering New Covenant dynamics or rivers of grace which are not found in the Old Covenant. We may discover these as we look into the face of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18).

*"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from **glory** to **glory**, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."* (2 Corinthians 3:18, KJV 1900)

"When the child of God looks into the Word of God and sees the Son of God he is changed by the Spirit of God into the image of God for the glory of God."

In our pursuit of Jesus Christ and our New Covenant dynamics, we used Philippians 3:10-14 as our springboard, and we will continue to do so today. We are particularly involved with Philippians 3:10:

"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;" (Philippians 3:10, KJV 1900)

Our first dynamic, entitled, **The Christ Life**, was based on the phrase *"That I may know him..."* We showed you, from the Word of God, the kind of tangible power which flows through the life as the believer abides in Christ. This *abiding* experience gives us new intimacy, new power, and new assurances of answered prayer (John 15:7). The abiding man asks and receives.

Our second dynamic, entitled, **the Resurrection Life**, was based on the next phrase *"... and the power of his resurrection..."*. Again, we dealt with the tangible power which flows out from the resurrection reviewed how we may tap this power in our experience. 2 Corinthians 10 will help

you expand your study here. In each of these two dynamics we explained that there is an authority over personal sin and over principalities and powers which flows from these truths.

We are now approaching the third dynamic as we begin this study.

DYNAMIC # 3 – THE GLORY DYNAMIC

The dynamic is alluded to in the last part of our verse where we notice that it is experienced in a unique way. I'll read the whole verse and stress the third aspect of the verse:

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death:” (Philippians 3:10, KJV 1900)

While this *is* part of Paul's determined purpose, and this *is* Paul's passion, we must admit that, at least upon first blush, it seems very strange. Who would be determined to be a partner in the kind of suffering which conforms us to death, and how is this a dynamic? Christianity is all about life! This seems so antithetic! Why would anyone long to experience suffering and pain and sorrow? This passion to share in Christ's suffering is not the aspiration of an ascetic monk, it is the soul plea for every healthy believer. So, let's answer the question.

Introduction:

It is already obvious that our third dynamic, is unique from the other two dynamics. We are being offered a magnificent investment prospectus. As in the military and athletic worlds the truism, “*No pain, no gain!*” takes on real meaning. Look at it this way:

There are two ways to make money in the world of precious metals such as gold. One is to mine it. I have a metal detector at home, and when time and health allow, I enjoy playing with that detector. It's novel and it is fun, but to be perfectly frank, there's just not a whole lot of money in it, at least for the average person, unless you want to run up to Alaska and invest a million or two in equipment and claims, you're pretty much out of luck. The other way is to invest in gold. Early miners and early investors made the most money, but frankly both prospecting or investing are pretty risky. Gold currently sells around \$1,800 per ounce!

In a more contemporary arena, we have entered the day of virtual metals or crypto currency. As above, there are only two ways to make money in crypto currency. One is through *mining* it and the other is through investing in it. Both are risky. Bitcoins currently sell for \$33,000 each!

There is, however, a *spiritual* currency which is still available. It is still paying rich rewards both in the arena of mining for it and investing in it. The careful listener has probably already predicted the words from the mouth of the Lord Jesus, encouraging us to invest. In His own very

strong words, He instructed a flaccid generation such as our own with an imperative command offered in the form of a rebuke:

*“I counsel thee **to buy of me gold tried in the fire**, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”* (Revelation 3:18–19, KJV 190)

Investors will want to notice that this gold may only be secured from *one* source. It must be *purchased*, it must be purchased *personally*, and it must be purchased *directly* from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Zoom out with me for roughly 90 seconds. We have noticed, from time to time, believers who love nothing more than to work themselves up into a spiritual high. They want their spiritual endorphins and spiritual peptides to flow through their veins. They often respond like Pavlov’s dogs to the kind of spiritual cheerleading which puts them on a perceived higher plane, if only for the moment. While I do not fault some of us who are more emotive than others, I have yet to find *a single shred of evidence in God’s Word that such momentary antics produce anything of enduring spiritual value.*

But I AM here to tell you not to despair. There are some spiritual endorphins which truly are available. There is a source of joy and rejoicing which we may legitimately pursue. In fact, the New Testament speaks a great deal about this kind of joy. Ironically, these spiritual endorphins are available through a New Testament discipline, a discipline, of all things, based upon suffering.

A full treatment of the source of this joy which comes from suffering would engage us in a whole separate study.

- The first thing we would need to do is separate the biblical view of suffering from the Roman view which suggests that punishing our bodies somehow brings us spiritual relief or gain. That is a pagan, Gnostic idea which we’ll simply ignore as showcasing a form of godliness nurtured in bondage.
- We would also want to approach those broad questions regarding why a God of love even allows suffering.

Now zoom back in with me. We are going to bypass those considerations today and move directly to these words about suffering found in our immediate text:

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;” (Philippians 3:10, KJV 1900)

We see here that Paul is not only determined to know Christ intimately; he is not only determined to know the power outflowing from His resurrection; he is determined to know the fellowship of His sufferings. Now, step into the shoes of a Bible teacher and break this out with me in steps:

- This is a *fellowship*. That's one truth we learn from this verse. This means it is a partnership, not just an experience.
- This is a fellowship of *suffering*. That's another truth. I have been a member of a lot of clubs and associations in my time, but I have never been a fraternal member of The Fellowship of Suffering. Or, have I been?
- This fellowship is a fellowship of *His* suffering, not mine. This is not a child asking "Why is God picking on me?" This is a soldier of Christ volunteering, no, begging, for hazardous duty! This is about me, wanting to share in the oxymoronic joy of suffering for Christ!

So, what about this fraternity? What about this unsung and often unnoticed fellowship of those who willingly and passionately desire to suffer along with Christ? Where did this fellowship originate and why does it still exist, and how does this play out in my daily walk? Philippians 1:20-21

A. To understand this suffering: We must first discuss glory. I want to throw these two colors down on our canvas as we brush out a broad landscape. Glory, of course is very bright, and suffering is very dark. Here's a novel fact. **Suffering and glory are commonly paired** in the Bible. In both Testaments, the terms suffering, and glory appear. What many folks do not understand is that they are often discussed in the same context. Wherever we find suffering discussed, for example, glory is not far behind. This is because there is a New Covenant dynamic which will come into play – but we do not want to get ahead of ourselves here.

B. To understand this suffering: We must see how important glory is in the whole of God's plan.

For ponderers who wonder *why* God has paired these themes of suffering and glory I'd suggest you begin with Romans 9:22-23 and the context.

"What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory," (Romans 9:22–23, KJV 1900)

In that passage God walks us back to the time before time as He discusses His intent to manifest His power, *making known* (gnoridzo) or showcasing, both His wrath *and* His *longsuffering* response to vessels of wrath, and the Bible says God did it to make His **glory known** (same Greek word), the riches of His **glory** on His vessels of mercy. This whole discussion falls under the topic of God **manifesting** His pre-creation determinative plan. You may want to chew on that. However, we need to get right down to the more understandable *basics* of God's glory here.

Here are a few simple facts about glory – each of which is deserving of a whole study.

1. Glory is a defining trait that belongs to God and God alone. God may *share* His glory, but it is sourced in God alone. When we speak of this trait, I like the way Laurence Justice defines it:

“God’s glory is the manifestation of his excellencies. God’s glory is his perfections made known. God’s glory is what he is in himself, the sum total of his excellencies made known, revealed, made manifest.”

I chose Justice’s definition because it makes a critical point. God’s glory is always about *manifestation*. It is about *authentication*. It is about the manifestation or *revelation* of Himself. PLEASE HOLD ONTO THIS TRUTH FOR DEAR LIFE: GOD MANIFESTS HIS GLORY TO AUTHENTICATE HIMSELF AND HIS MESSAGE. PERIOD. THAT IS WHY IT IS REVEALED.

2. The glory of God is associated or manifested with His name. A good starting point for that study would begin with Exodus 33:18-23 where Moses himself seeks to peer into God and His glory:

“And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.”
(Exodus 33:18–23, KJV 1900)

Do you suppose we could camp out on that and similar passages for a good long time? Now, you will either have to go home and do a Bible search or just trust me. God’s glory and God’s name are commonly associated or paired. These dual concepts of God’s Glory and God’s name as paired with that glory are so important to me personally as a Bible student, that you will find those very words consistently highlighted in gold throughout my Bibles.

Please keep this up front in your thinking. We’ll need it in a few minutes. This is why you must never, ever, play fast and loose with His name. God hates it.

3. The glory of God is manifest or declared in the creation. The operative word here is *in* the creation. God is not a part of His creation. You have heard this verse from your childhood:

“The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament sheweth his handywork.” (Psalm 19:1, KJV 1900)

Or, possibly, you have read, Psalm 97:6-7, a rebuke to idolaters (and evolutionists) everywhere:

“The heavens declare his righteousness, And all the people see his glory. Confounded be all they that serve graven images, That boast themselves of idols: Worship him, all ye gods.” (Psalm 97:6–7, KJV 1900)

And, by the way, the *goodness of God* and the *power of God* are also associated alongside His glory. The list goes on.

4. God's glory has been further manifested throughout history. It accompanied the giving of the Old Covenant at Mt. Sinai. It was found in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and in the earthly temple and was subsequently taken from that temple and the city in phases in response to Israel's apostasy.

5. Finally, God's glory was manifest in Christ. John said:

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (John 1:14, KJV 1900)

The truth is clear. Every miracle Jesus performed and every sign which He provided was an evidence of His glory. They were provided to authenticate and verify our Lord's person, message, and ministry.

C. To understand this suffering: We must know what Jesus taught about His own suffering and glory. John 17 provides an essay on this for our benefit.

Fact # 1. Jesus claimed unequivocally and unabashedly that He had shared the Father's glory before coming to earth and that the cross itself, represented that grand and glorious hour of His glorification. John 17:5:

"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John 17:5, KJV 1900)

Fact # 2. As our Lord approached His own glorification at the cross, He strangely associated His humiliation and suffering with His glorification. Jesus saw the cross as His hour of glorification. Look back at verse 1 of this chapter where Jesus expands on what He taught in John 12:23-25:

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:" (John 17:1, KJV 1900)

And, by the way, while keeping your place in John 17 don't forget resurrection day. Notice the very first point our Lord sought to get across to his disciples. We find the words recorded in Luke 24:25-27, where he chides those naive disciples on the Emmaus road:

"Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke 24:25-27, KJV 1900)

Understand what our Lord was saying and doing. He was marching these disciples right back through history and arguing the twin dynamics of suffering and glory. This would be

the core of His post resurrection kerygma: Messiah must suffer...and be glorified. Suffering... and glory.

Fact # 3. And, please, please do not miss the third thing our Lord taught. This is where you and I enter the discussion. He says in verse 10:

“And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.” (John 17:10, KJV 1900)

And then we mull over these most beautiful words in John 17:20-23 – and please DO turn to this passage as it is integral to everything else we are about to say:

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” (John 17:20–23, KJV 1900)

Did you pick up on Fact # 3? As Jesus anticipates the finished work of the cross, He speaks of a marvelous *transfer of His glory*. As a result of the cross the Father glorifies the Son, and then, as a result of the Son being glorified, HE GIVES US THE SAME GLORY.

Now, do the math here. Our Savior who had shared the Father’s glory is about to be glorified on a shameful and humiliating cross. *As a result*, those who would yet believe on His Word would be made one with Him. Then, *as a result of this oneness*, we would share this same glory.

Folks, this is astonishing. This is awesome. This is incomprehensible. As a result of Messiah’s suffering, you and I share His glory. That is an absolutely undeniable, verifiable theological fact. YOU ALREADY SHARE THIS GLORY. You don’t have to seek it. You don’t have to strive to gain it. You possess it, although you *will* need to learn how to manifest it, as we will see. The personal enduement of this glory to every in Christ believer is another New Covenant dynamic WHICH WAS NOT AVAILABLE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

You have these verses before our very eyes. Examine them, and answer this question directly from these verses in John 17:20-23. In these verses we learn that this glory was GIVEN to Jesus by the Father (as a result of the cross.) Additionally, we have learned that this glory which Jesus had was then GIVEN to us. We HAVE the glory. So, here’s your question: WHY?

According to this passage, and this passage alone, *why did the Father endow the Son with this glory and why did the Son endow you and me with this glory?* What is its purpose? What was God's intent?

This two-part answer which speaks to God's purpose is not incidental. It is integral. This two-part answer is not superficial, it is foundational to the entire New Covenant ministry which you have been given. I'm going to provide it in reverse order:

One part of the answer is in verse 22. Folks, this verse is so over-the-top, that if any human preacher were to announce this we would be tempted to accuse him of blasphemy:

"And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:" (John 17:22, KJV 1900)

Seriously? Were WE made participants IN THE SAME ONENESS which the Father and Son share? We are ONE in the Father and Son, and this is no ordinary oneness. It is fully vested. It is fully implemented. You are sitting here, right now, in front of me, enjoying the same oneness with the Father as He enjoys with His Son. You are enjoying the same oneness with the Son as He enjoys with the Father! So, we may rightfully say that He glorified us for *our benefit*. But don't stop yet.

The other half of this two-part answer about God's purpose is found in verse 21:

"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John 17:21, KJV 1900)

Do you remember what we taught you? Glorification is about authentication. It is the Father's way of authenticating Himself. It is the Father's way of authenticating His Son. And why were YOU glorified? You were not glorified so that you could lie in the sun by the side of the pool with your lemonade. You were glorified, so that the message of Christ would be authenticated in you. You were glorified so that the world, who has ejected Christ would believe that the Father has sent Him. It's that simple.

We don't want to lose track of what we are doing, because *we are stepping you along a path*. We are trying to understand Paul's determination to share in the sufferings of Christ. Since the beginning of this study we have been asking, why do we want to be conformed to His death?

We have said:

To understand this suffering:

A. We must first understand glory.

B. We must see how important glory is in the whole of God's plan.

C. We must know what Jesus taught about His own suffering *and* glory.

Finally,

D. We must know that we have been given the privilege to share in this suffering/glory dynamic with Christ.

Of course, the Bible teaches of a coming day when we will be fully and completely glorified. That is a given, but right now, we are talking about experiencing the suffering and glory dynamic. In the words of Paul as He discusses our partnership in suffering with Christ in Romans 8:17-18:

*“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we **suffer** with him, that we may be also **glorified** together. For I reckon that the **sufferings** of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the **glory** which shall be revealed in us.” (Romans 8:17–18, KJV 1900)*

1. This suffering partnership with Christ is a marvelous New Covenant privilege. Don't be surprised if and when we are called upon to suffer. It could be that more of this is on the horizon. Paul told the Philippians:

*“And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to **suffer** for his sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.” (Philippians 1:28–30, KJV 1900)*

2. This suffering partnership with Christ is an absolute New Covenant necessity. Don't be hesitant to grab hold if and when the Lord lays out a wonderful and immediate opportunity for you to suffer for Him, or better, to reach out and search for it! This is the New Covenant way!

I find it both stunning and incredulous that theologians within our own dispensational camps have announced that the New Covenant is not in effect, or that, at best, it has only been ratified. This strange view is predicated in part on the Old Covenant prophecy which announces a future day when Israel would have this covenant placed in her own heart, the day when, in fact, she would be converted in a day!

The logic goes this way, because this Covenant was promised to Israel it cannot possibly be in effect today, or, at best, it must be in effect in some mysterious and unseen way. Well, our participation in this covenant was a mystery kept secret from Jewish believers who did not need to know at that time. But I'm here to tell you that this idea that the New Covenant is for the Jews only is crazy talk for silly rabbits! The lights have been turned on! The mystery has been revealed! It has been manifested! And not only has it been manifested, dear friend, it has been vested – vested in you, a gentile. You have been harvested from among the nations as a direct result of this covenant.

But here is my point. Satan does not want you to know what you have. He wants you to wallow in your weakness. He wants you to moan and groan about the last days - if you will. He doesn't even mind you talking about the dark days which are upon us. And why would that be? Because as long as we are bemoaning, we are neutralized; we are not proclaiming.

For some folks listening to me, our fourth and final message in this series will be a review, a review of things which I have taught and explained over decades, truths to which I have given my whole life in ministry. For others, this material will seem new. For all, however, this New Covenant suffering partnership with Christ is immediate and urgent.

Another way to say it is like this. We have dealt, so far, with three dynamics.

First, we talked about the abiding life dynamic. I think it is fair to say that most seasoned Christians are aware of this wonderful truth of what it means to abide in Christ and the fruit which it bears.

As we advanced to the resurrection dynamic – the power which flows directly out of our resurrection with Christ, there may not be quite as many believers who understand how this resurrection truth works, at least cognitively, from the Bible. There is an immediate and tangible power available to us specifically for ministry and spiritual warfare. It begins with our gifts and extends to our full-on engagement with Satan. *Fewer Christians can say, “Yes, Jim, I have experienced this dynamic in my walk and service for Christ, and I want to know more about this ongoing, outflowing resurrection power.”* This is not charismatic talk, folks. On the contrary, the pseudo spiritual activities often found alongside some charismatic events are evidence of our ignorance of resurrection truth.

But this third dynamic, this suffering and glory dynamic is the one we are most likely to overlook. It is the one we fail the most at appropriating. It is, at once the most fruitful power source available to the believer, and the most terrifying one. This idea of sharing in the sufferings of Christ comes with terrifying overtones, but it comes with glorious (if you will pardon the pun) results.

Conclusion:

The theme of our series has been “Only Jesus,” and the argument is that He is sufficient. He is sufficient for all our needs, be they for salvation, physical or spiritual nourishment and healing, satisfaction, joy, or fulfillment. In the simplest of terms, our New Covenant Lord alone is sufficient because we have been placed in Him. We share His life. We share His intimate and abiding walk. We share in the power which flows out of His resurrection in our struggles and warfare. And today, we learned that we share in the sufferings of Christ as we engage in His grand calling to reach the nations for Christ.

When I was a child, we were commonly subjected to advertisements for a product guaranteed to beef up our iron poor blood. As the years went on, scores of other health products and supplements were added to the long list of things we human beings, especially seniors, are purported to require – supposedly, because of a declining quality in

our food supply. Some of us in this room take a pile of supplements while others of us take few or none. Be assured, we're not about to engage in a supplement war.

But, just in case you feel spiritually lethargic today, I am here to remind you that I have just the supplement you need. Begin by assuming your role as an accepted child of God and nurture the intimacy He wants to enjoy with you. That's abiding. Then, continue by learning how to harness the power which flows out from your resurrection. Finish by adopting a sacrificial path of obedience and service. And, in no time, you'll soon be enjoying the sufficiency of Christ who provides all things pertaining to life and godliness.