

IX. Gospel Worship In Biblical Perspective

Worship God!

“The Lord of Glory in His Glory”

Luke 9:28-36

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April 21, 2013 – Morning Sermon

Luke 9:28-36 says [28] *Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. [29] And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. [30] And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, [31] who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. [32] Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. [33] And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said. [34] As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. [35] And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!” [36] And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may this His Word be preached for you.

We are coming to the Lord’s Supper and combining our study on the worship of God with this text. Jesus had a statement that He kept making and that was “My hour has not come.” What was He referring to? He was referring to that redeeming moment when He would go to the cross, pay for the sins of His people and provide for them a perfect righteousness so that they would be redeemed for His glory – the hour of atonement, the hour of redemption, the hour of our salvation. That is what He is speaking of. That hour is rapidly approaching. The clock is ticking and it’s not many days from the history of the moment I just read at the Mount of Transfiguration. In that moment, that hour, the Lord of glory will shed His glory and take our humiliation and we will be saved to glory. Before that moment comes, Jesus grasps this moment. Here on this mountain the Lord of glory is lifted up in glory. I believe that in this text it fits wonderfully into not only our focus on the Lord’s Supper but in our series *Worship God*.

In our series *Worship God* we have been asking God to take us on a journey. This journey is not to teach you to worship. You will worship for the question is not ‘will you worship’ but the question is who, what and how will you worship. This series is designed to go to God’s Word to attempt to understand when we worship, we’re made to worship, saved to worship and sustained to worship. When we worship, how do we worship the Triune God acceptably? So we went on a journey of a Gospel pursuit of God-glorifying, Christ-centered, Bible-shaped, Holy Spirit-empowered worship of the Triune God of Glory. It has two factors, adoration and action. Worship is a verb. It is something you do in adoration to the Lord. Now what do we do and how do we do it as we worship Him in Spirit and in truth?

There are two features of worship. There is gathered worship and there is life worship. Gathered worship is foundational to life worship and refreshing out of life worship. In other words, this week you and I were to live to the Lord for His glory. [31] *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31 ESV)*. In this week we have faltered, failed, been blessed, grown, succeed, gone three steps forward and two steps backward, for this has been a constant week and gathered worship is designed to gather you back up, recalibrate, refocus, renew, refresh so that we can step back into life next week. That's how He has designed it.

This moment is no different. To go on this journey we went through a series of sermons where I laid out for you six journey markers – why, who, how, what, where and that we worship. Then our last four studies have been first a worship service in heaven in Revelation 4 and 5. The next study was another worship service in heaven found in Isaiah 6. In the last study we saw a worship service in the battle where God brought His people together under King Jehoshaphat, they worshiped, went into the battle and their very singing of praise to God scattered and destroyed the enemy.

In this study I'm cheating. It is worship on earth but heaven's coming down. This is worship on earth on a high mountain, but heaven and its glory comes down. I believe this worship service of gathered worship with Moses, Elijah, Peter, James, and John, fixed on Jesus is preparing them for the dark days ahead in life worship as He goes to Jerusalem. This gathered worship is gathering up all that He is doing with them and in them for three years. I believe in this not only do we have reaffirmed the key to living life, fulfilling gloriously to Christ as a life of worship comes from gathered worship, and gathered worship focuses on the majesty and glory of God. He is majestic and transcendent so that when you see Him magnified then you realize that as I step into life worship it's that God who is going with me. That's the God who is now going with me.

Here is something that is even more helpful. That is life transforming, life fulfilling worship has an essential dynamic that can't be missed that has to be present when we gather and when we live in worship and praise to God. It's right here in this text. I want to unfold this narrative three ways. You will find this account in all of the synoptic Gospels. I won't read from all of them but I will draw from each of them because each one adds a little bit to what happened here. You can find it in Matthew 17, Mark 9 and here in Luke 9. When you get to Luke 9 there are some very basic things that happen.

First of all, what is the glorious vision? They are coming down from Caesarea Philippi and its eight days after that wonderful moment when we heard 'who do you say that I am? You're the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Peter, upon this Rock I'll build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' Then the Bible tells us He goes through Caesarea Philippi healing and teaching. So in Luke 9 it is eight days after His preaching, teaching tour and He has arrived at this mountain. The other texts tell us He arrives at this mountain but never names a specific mountain other than it's a high mountain. It could have been Mount Hermon, Mount Tabor and some think it was the mountain where He gave the Sermon on the Mount but we don't know the name of the mountain. There are multiple choices of what it might have been but it's eight days after. Now Matthew and Mark only count the traveling days and say six days. Luke it referring to both the teaching time and the arrival time so it is eight days.

Jesus goes up on the mountain and takes Peter, James and John, representing the disciples. I don't know how high of a mountain it was but my guess is that it was a pretty high mountain because when they arrived at the top Peter, James and John fall out. They go to sleep. They are tired and yet people think when they read this "I can't believe they're asleep." Have you ever climbed a mountain? In the midst of all of this Jesus goes to pray and *while* He is praying glory comes down. He is lifted up and a glimpse of the resurrected, glorified Savior is given but He is not by Himself. Here is Moses and Elijah. Men who lived centuries ago, now in this moment become contemporaries with Jesus.

Some really interesting things begin to be answered in my mind here. For instance, why did Elijah get taken up? Elijah doesn't have a grave or bones because he has already been taken up with a resurrected body. The book of Jude tells us that Michael the archangel went to the valley where Moses was buried and retrieved his body even in contention with Satan. Why does God take Elijah up with a glorified body because it says he appeared in glory? Moses appears in glory for they have already received their glorified bodies. Why does God do that? God did that centuries ago for He had an appointment for them for this day for them in their glorified bodies. This was part of His plan. So He wouldn't let Moses rot. He brought Moses up and took Elijah with him. Now they have a job. Moses representing five books, the Pentateuch, the Law, and Elijah representing the 34 books of the Bible, the former and latter prophets – here are the Law and the Prophets right next to Jesus in glory.

Peter, John and James come out of their slumber, their stupor and Peter as the self-appointed spokesman has a response. Peter – "I have a great idea! It's good for us to be here." Then the text says "Not knowing what he is saying" but that never stopped Peter before. Notice he has a default. The default is worship but the default has a fault for we have to be taught to worship. So Peter wants to make a shrine and stay and God will tell him, "No, this isn't to make a shrine and stay, but this is for you to hear and obey."

As they want to make a shrine now comes God's response and God's pronouncement. The Divine pronouncement takes place two ways – Divine action and Divine announcement. The Divine action is a cloud and that is big time important Bible language. What led the children of Israel out of Egypt through the wilderness? It was the cloud of God's presence from which spoke the angel of the Lord. Who is the angel of the Lord? It is called a Christophany and that's Jesus. So it's the cloud from which the Savior, the Redeemer, the second Person of the Trinity, the Shekinah glory indicated by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. So here are all three Persons of the Trinity at this moment. The Father speaks, glory, the Holy Spirit is poured out, Christ exalted, all right here at this one singular moment of Christ-called gathered worship.

As the cloud descends they were afraid. Why would they be afraid? Has God ever put a cloud on a mountain before? Was one of these guys there? There are some amazing connections here in this text. Moses went up on a mountain. It was Mount Sinai and glory came down in a cloud. Moses said "Let me see Your glory." God says "Moses I will put you in the cleft of the rock, put My hand over you, I'll let you see My backside" which utterly changed Moses because he came down reflecting that glory but God continued "but if you look on My glory you will die. You can't handle it. You can't

handle it in your frailty or your sinfulness for My glory will consume you. I will give you the backside look, I'll protect you but you can't look on it for you will die."

Elijah was up on a mountain and the angel of the Lord came to him. He went up on Mount Horeb in I Kings 19. Moses and Elijah had been on mountains. They have glorified bodies because God has brought them to this mountain. It is a nameless, high mountain because all of their life and everything that has gone before that was for this moment. So I understand why James, Peter and John who know their Bible, when the cloud of God's glory descends that they're afraid, but they didn't die. Now they are with the God of glory in His glory.

Now the Father speaks. He not only sends the glory, He then speaks and says "This is My Son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him." We get the word acoustics from that and He put a modifier in front of it. The Greek word for listen is *hupakouo*, a super modifier. When God speaks through His Son, then you with all your might, listen, with unbelievable prioritization and intention, listen to Him. Then they come down off the mountain. Now they are ready for the valley. Jesus tells them about what He, Moses and Elijah had been talking about. Wouldn't you have loved to have heard that conversation? One thing they were talking about was Jesus' departure when He would go to Jerusalem. Notice that He is not a victim in Jerusalem, for He is going there in utter control. That's His departure.

I can almost hear that conversation. Jesus is saying "Moses you think that Exodus was something? Wait until you see what I do with My departure, exodus – look at those who I will bring with Me in that moment." This is the Savior, your Redeemer. I can hear Jesus saying to Elijah, "Elijah, do you think all the prophets had that much to say? John the Baptist has fulfilled your ministry and it's all pointing to Me." So now the focus is upon Christ. Now they're ready to leave gathered worship into life worship, in the darkest week that becomes the greatest week in all of history. The Lord has prepared them. He took them up on a mountain.

Here is the takeaway. I have great news for you. I don't have seven takeaways, I just have one but it's a long one. Here it is. God's Word proclaimed faithfully and Holy Spirit embraced humbly will lead to Christ-exalting worship which brings pleasure to the Father and life to the believer. It brings delight to the Father and prepares us for the battle in life worship. It is transforming in the life of the believer. We just proclaimed God's Word when we sang God's Word. We read Old Testament Word. We confessed God's Word. We read the New Testament Word. We have prayed God's Word. When this is done faithfully it exalts Christ. The Holy Spirit of God has come to bear witness of Christ so they will bear witness of Christ. So when we gathered for worship and the Word has been proclaimed, sung, read, preached, prayed faithfully and the Holy Spirit is doing His work, then Christ is exalted and the Father is delighted as His Son is lifted up.

Has this happened one other time? It happened at Jesus' baptism three years earlier as He began His ministry. What happened there? Jesus is baptized, ordained, installed as Prophet, Priest and King according to God's Word to fulfill righteousness and the Father says "This is My Son in whom I am well pleased." The Holy Spirit comes upon Him. It is all repeated but this time it's not with a dove but a cloud. The Holy Spirit has come upon Him. When the Father says that it's not "I choose Jesus to be My Son" but it's "I sent My Son and I chose Him to save you. He is My choice, My sent Son to save you. I delight in Him." When His Word, by His Spirit lifts up His Son, the

Father is delighted with that worship when we gather and He is preparing us for life worship as it transforms us when we leave the mountain of praise into the valley of praise in Christ and for Christ.

Dear friends, you can't miss this. Of all of these threads coming together – this Jesus, Mount Sinai and Moses, Mount Horeb and Elijah – now to this high mountain will come down from this mountain. He will ascend the heights of Jerusalem and He will go to Mount Zion. From Mount Zion Jesus will go up to a cross and when He ascends that mountain of redemption He doesn't take anyone with Him. He takes our sins with Him. No longer does the Father say "I delight in Him" but it is the wrath and judgment of the Father that should have fallen on us that fell on Him. Now all of the displeasure, judgment, and wrath of God will fall upon Him at that mountain. As it falls on Him, He saves us and declares "It is finished!" As He is risen from Mount Olive, He will ascend back into heaven.

If you are in Christ then the pleasure of God delights in you. God ought not to delight in you and me. We're sinners. We have fallen short of His glory. We have rejected Him. We have assassinated His glory. God sent His Son who left this mountain and was lifted up in glory. He went to Mount Calvary and there shed His glory. He humbled Himself unto obedience and death on a cross that His glory might be given to you. God's displeasure, His righteous judgment upon us, fell upon Him who set aside His glory to take our sins and now the pleasure of God falls upon you who are in His Son, who has saved you. It is that Gospel-centered, Bible-shaped, Christ-exalting, Spirit-filled, humbly receiving the presence and power of the Holy Spirit that gives the Father delight and it gives you compassion in life because you have been saved by grace and it gives you steel in your heart. God, my family, my marriage, my children, my life, my work, now it's for You. Christ is all and in all. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for these moments we could be together in Your Word. Would You minister to Your people? We like Peter, James and John are frail, we get tired and sleepy. We get distracted so would You by Your Word with Your Holy Spirit, fix our eyes on the magnificence of Jesus? When we come to this Table, the body and blood of Christ, remembering He laid aside His glory, He humbled Himself in full humiliation to take our sins to bring us to His glory. O Lord, be magnified, in Jesus' Name, Amen.