



Chestnut Mountain Presbyterian Church  
Mission Conference Devotions







***“See the Glory” Mission Conference  
Speaker: Jeff Thompson  
RUF-International, UGA***

Jeff and Caroline Thompson have worked together with RUF International at The University of Georgia since 2001. Prior to campus ministry at UGA, Jeff served with Mission to the World in Japan. He is a 1991 graduate of RTS-Jackson. Jeff and Caroline have been married for twenty years and they have two children, George and Caroline.

*“For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 4.6)*

Jonah was not a happy preacher, but he was successful because it is God who saves people. God told Jonah (Jonah 2.9), “Salvation is of the Lord.” The pattern was established with creation itself. The Spirit was brooding over the waters when the word of God brought forth light out of the darkness and chaos. In the same way, salvation is the work of the Spirit in our lives as the word of God is heard, understood, and believed. The gospel is God shining His light in our hearts so that we see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Himself. That glory--the Shekinah glory of the Old Testament that was on the mountaintop at Mt. Sinai and between the cherubim over the mercy seat in the tabernacle and temple and which Ezekiel saw depart--reappeared in Christ. Though it is veiled to the world, the operation of the Spirit of God makes the glory visible to us so that we may grasp the glory of God in the face of Christ. As John 1.14 says, “We beheld His glory.” That is what the gospel is all about: beholding the glory of God displayed in Christ. It is not about us or about this lost world; it is about God and His glory that is on display. We are the beneficiaries, to be sure, but it is first of all about God.

That’s why we sing,

To God be the glory great things He has done. So loved He the world that He gave us His Son, who yielded His life an atonement for sin and opened the lifegate that we may go in. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear His voice, praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the people rejoice. O come to the Father through Jesus the Son, and give Him the glory great things He has done.

It is also why we are to go with the gospel; because having seen the glory ourselves, we desire others to see it. And where we are not able to go, we are to send others, both with our giving and with our prayers. Be in prayer about how we as a church and each of us individually will respond to the privilege we have to *See the Glory*, as well as the privilege to help others *See the Glory*.

Pastor John Batusic

## Exodus 14

Nothing beats watching a good movie for the first time. Not knowing how the plot will unfold leaves you captivated by the drama you see unfolding on screen. No matter how much you love the movie, you’ll never be able to watch it again without knowing what’s coming next.

As we read familiar passages in Scripture we often face this same dilemma. We know how Exodus 14 unfolds: Pharaoh chases the Israelites to the shore of the Red Sea, and then God miraculously splits the waters and allows His people to pass through before crushing the Egyptians. We know how the story ends, so we lose the heart pounding anticipation of not knowing how God will provide for His people in the midst of their great need. We should remember, though, that as familiar as we are with the story, the Israelites were equally unfamiliar. They had no idea what was going to happen next! In the midst of their terror, they asked a question that we all ask when times get hard: “Why?”

Repetition in the Bible shows that something is important, so seeing God declare that He will “get glory over Pharaoh and all his host” three times (v. 4, 17, 18) immediately jumps out. To us this story might seem like it pits nation against nation or man against man, but to the Ancient Egyptians, Pharaoh was considered a deity. That means that this battle was perceived as ‘god’ versus the True God. Everything that Pharaoh counted as strength, like his host, his chariots, and his horsemen (vv.17-18), God saw as an opportunity for His glory.

So why did the recently escaped group of slaves consisting of some able-bodied men, but also presumably the weak, frail, young, and old get pushed to the shore of a great sea by one of the mightiest armies the world had known up to that point? The answer: to show that the True God is sovereign over absolutely everything, and in this sovereignty we see His glory.

In the midst of our trials, like the Israelites on the sands of the Red Sea, we often ask the same question: “Why?” 2 Corinthians 4:17 gives us some insight: “For this momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.” Contrary to popular belief, affliction isn’t antithetical to glory, but rather affliction precedes and leads us to glory.

Life is hard. Whether you’re in the midst of a difficult semester, a financial crunch, a trying relationship, or an awful work situation, you might be asking God “Why?” In life, the only spoiler we know for sure is that God wins in the end. We don’t know exactly how our situation will unfold, but we can take comfort in knowing that affliction doesn’t mask God’s glory, it reveals it. Our circumstances don’t sneak up on God. He has sovereignly orchestrated every single act that has led us to the place where we find ourselves. So what should we do in hard times? Keep fighting for joy, keep pursuing peace, keep seeking God’s face, and trust that you will see His glory.

Pastor Travis Brown

*“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28)*

I will never forget the moment I heard the official news that my father was diagnosed with ALS. In that moment I knew that my family’s life would never be the same. My dad had been a PCA pastor until his disease forced him into early retirement, and years after his diagnosis, he had the opportunity to preach a sermon at his church. By this point, he was on life support and paralyzed from the neck down, but he preached of God’s goodness and how He is always worthy of all of our praise, regardless of our circumstances. My father, who is unable to breathe on his own and is fully reliant on others, uses every opportunity imaginable to share God’s goodness with others. He has a talent of always bringing conversations back to Romans 8:28 and stands on the promise that God brings all things together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. We will never know exactly why my father has this fatal illness, but we do know that God will receive glory.

In the middle of all things, for those of us who know Christ and seek after Him, when trouble and trials come, He will walk with us through the darkness. If we are in Christ and walking in the light, then we share with others that Christ is the light of the world. He never promises that our circumstances will change, but no matter what situation we’re in, we are promised that the light is greater than the darkness.

Watching my dad suffer physically, but choosing to live in joy daily, has been such a constant reminder that God is always good, always sovereign, righteous, just, and always worthy of all of our praise, regardless of our circumstances.

It has been incredible hearing from so many people how my dad’s joyous attitude amidst his suffering, has been greatly used in their lives and has even strengthened their walk with the Lord. We may not always have the privilege of seeing God’s goodness in all circumstances, but we can stand on His great promise that in His timing, and for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose, He will work all things together for good.

Sarah Tilley, Youth Ministry Assistant

*“In reply, Jesus said, ‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.’” (Luke 10:30)*

As a Christian, have you ever imagined yourself in the place of the wounded man the Good Samaritan helped? Life sometimes strips us, beats up on us, robs us and leaves us for half dead. Imagine yourself unconscious, not able to get up and hoping someone will notice that you are in need of help. In essence, that is who we are in our sins. We have the fatal flaw, that we are sinners in need of God’s help. We need a Good Samaritan. We need Jesus. What does Jesus do? He shows us what God can do. He notices our helplessness, repairs our wounded condition, and provides for all the care we need, then he checks back on us to make sure we find the healing from the spiritual trauma we are in (vss. 34-35).

Jesus then goes on to tell us to be like the Good Samaritan (vs. 37b). Sometimes, though, we cannot. We are still the wounded man in the road. It is not until later, when we are able to walk and get back to normal that we can become the Good Samaritan. In my work with refugees in Germany, it is easy to become overburdened trying to help them solve their language, housing or job needs, but I need to focus more on sharing from eternal resources, from the hope of Christ. That’s my God, the only one who is able to solve our eternal need.

Perhaps from time to time, we need to realize that there will always be the wounded man within us, that we will suffer from the memory of our attacks and the hurt inflicted upon us. In those moments, let us recognize that only God can truly heal and bind up wounds, not us. Our worth does not come from doing the ministry, but our worth comes from knowing the God who saves the world, who knows our needs, our God who can truly bring eternal healing. We can rest in that and go forward in his name, the name above all names.

Kevin Rutledge, MTW-Germany

## LIGHT DAWNS IN THE DARKNESS

*“Light dawns in the darkness for the upright; he is gracious, merciful, and righteous.” (Psalm 112:4)*

The darkness of this world can be little doubted. Darkness is felt even in the kindest of people who do not have the Light of Salvation in them. In darkness people do not see or feel clearly. But God in His mercy created Light: physical light, the first of physical Creation with its lights to govern day and night, and Spiritual Light in the form of Himself, Christ the Firstborn of all Creation (Colossians 1:15).

For anyone to see the light or glory of God, God must first shine His light into the person’s heart. In His mercy, He shines “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” into hearts, providing salvation and comfort. Matthew Henry says of Psalm 112:4, “They shall have comfort in affliction; ‘when they sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light to them’ (Micah 7:8). . . they shall be supported in their troubles.”

In His grace, God has also allowed us to be lights in this dark world and to help others see the Glory, even if it means giving our lives in the battle with the darkness. This may not mean physical death, but the giving up of one’s life on a daily basis is much, much more difficult and in many ways, much more costly. But this is exactly what we are called to do and be: lights that shine in the darkness, lights that reflect the True Light, lights that give up everything (money, time, convenience) to shine. Let us reflect the Light that “spread out and where it touched the Darkness the Darkness disappeared.”\*

Tracy Murchison

*“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellences of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2:9)*

There is no mistaking the good feeling of being picked for a team, a royal team, the best team. If you are a believer you have been chosen to be on *this* unbeatable team.

You have been chosen and called by your King not just to say God is good but to tell *why* and *how* he has been good to you. You have been chosen to proclaim his excellences. You have been chosen to testify to his goodness, sovereignty, holiness, wisdom, justice, love and faithfulness, but also to how *you* were chosen for the team. Out of the darkness of sin he personally called each one of us. “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.” (Ephesians .5:8) Our light doesn’t fade like the glow of Moses’ face after he met with God and we don’t need to hide it as he did. (Exodus 34:34-35)

In the midst of sorrow or joy we need to tell others how God has reached out to us in his lovingkindness, mercy, and faithfulness. “I will also make you a light for the Gentiles that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.” (Isaiah 49:6)

Tell everyone: believer, non-believers, family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, cashiers, waiters, telemarketers, every tribe, tongue and nation!

Let your light shine, let it shine, let it shine!

Anonymous

\*[A Wrinkle in Time](#), Madeleine L’Engle. Farrar, Straus and Giroux New York

## SEEING GOD'S GLORY AROUND THE WORLD THROUGH MISSIONS AND WORSHIP

I've been on many mission trips over the past years. Through all these have come many different experiences, but one thing remained the same: we worship the same God all around the world and see so many people working to glorify God. How cool is it that all around in so many different cultures, many different types of people worship the same exact God thousands of miles apart.

I first saw this when I was in Bulgaria. We worshiped in a small village named Rakitovo, and we got to worship in a very small church in which our church has invested the past couple summers through short term mission trips. While we started singing, a lot of us thought the same thing, "how cool is it we can worship in two different languages but worship the same God and do it together." We talked a lot about this later that night, and when we got to present to the CMPC about our trip.

Isaiah 6:3: "And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

That is exactly what I got to experience: God's glory across the whole world. I got to see how God was glorified in this small town thousands of miles from where we live, but we got to sing the same worship songs we sing here and, most importantly, worship the same God. You might hear about this a lot, but until you get to experience it, it means so much more to me. I really can't describe the feeling as I was singing in English and they were singing in Bulgarian and how awesome and powerful it was.

So as the time for the mission's conference draws near, isn't it awesome that we get to come together from all around the world and worship as believers in the Lord. We get to see how God is being glorified all across the World, and we get to hear how he is working in all these countries and what he's doing through each and every missionary who is attending. As the verse above (Isaiah 6:3) says "the whole earth is full of his glory". The conference is always one of my favorite times of the year because I get to see how God is being glorified across the world. So join us so you too can see how God is being glorified throughout the world through the missionaries coming to the conference.

Noah Carmosino

## GOD'S GLORY IN THE MUNDANE

*"So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."  
(1 Corinthians 10:31)*

It isn't difficult to see God's glory in big situations. The family member who you have been praying for becomes a Christian, the glorious sunset over the mountains, or when the church gathers together to provide for a family who has lost everything in a fire. God's glory just seems to radiate during those moments. But how do we see God's glory in our daily tasks? How are we to glorify God in the mundane of life?

It is easy to get lost in the flow of our daily routine. I sometimes wake up and wonder why my day just seems to be the same boring steps over and over. But if I take the time to consider, it does not take long for God to show his glory in my morning. I see the excitement my son has when I go into his room in the morning and he shouts, "It's good morning time!" As I eat breakfast with my family, I am reminded how God has blessed me with a partner who pushes me to better myself and to stretch myself in ways I never thought possible. I look around our house and realize it is only through the grace of God that we are blessed to live where we are and have the friends and family we have. So now that I have seen God's glory in these seemingly small moments, how can I follow the teaching of 1 Corinthians 10:31, "So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God?" How can I glorify God while doing dishes or taking out the trash? How is God's glory being shown when I am taking call after call after call at work or I'm stuck in traffic? I admit, that is not the way my mind is inclined to think throughout the day. But seeking to further God's glory in the small, day to day, mundane tasks is where our hearts should be. Everything we do has the potential to be done to God's glory. Don't be afraid to seek out situations where God's glory can be shown. It is in whatever you do. There is no mundane when God is being glorified.

Walker Gossage

## GIVE FOR THE GLORY

*“And not only that, but he has been appointed by the churches to travel with us as we carry out this act of grace that is being ministered by us, for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our good will. We take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord’s sight but also in the sight of man.” (2 Corinthians 8.19-21)*

The churches of Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea) are an incredible example of generous giving. In 2 Corinthians 8, Paul is challenging the church in Corinth to come together and give toward a collection for the suffering believers in Jerusalem. He uses the generosity of the Macedonians as the example, and he calls their giving an “act of grace” (vs. 6, 7, & 19). God provided for the individuals in these churches and he gave them the desire and passion to provide for others who were struggling. This is double grace: God providing *for* people and God providing *through* people.

How has God provided for you? Take a moment and think about this, really think about it. Consider the ways that God has taken care of you. Consider the blessings that you have because of your personal relationship with Christ. Forget none of his benefits!

Often we neglect to consider the many ways that God provides for us. When we come to our senses and realize that “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights. . .” (James 1.17), we often neglect to consider how we can give toward others. God provides, and we forget. God provides so that we can give toward others, and we forget. This is double neglect!

Join me in meditating on this year’s mission conference theme: “See the Glory!” The answer to our neglect of God’s grace is in seeing God’s glory. Our passage for today speaks of Paul and his companions traveling a distance to carry out an act of grace. The completion of this act is ultimately for the glory of the Lord and for seeing the glory of the Lord! When we recognize God’s grace toward us as he provides, and he puts the desire in our hearts to give, the glory of the Lord is made known in a watching world. Bottom line: our faith promise giving in missions is God’s glory flowing through us to a lost world! Please do not miss out on this act of grace and how God wants to use us in the world.

Pastor Dee Hammond

*“And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will pursue them. But I will gain glory for myself through Pharaoh and all his army and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord.” (Exodus 14.4)*

This verse is from the story of the Lord’s freeing the Israelites from Pharaoh. Prior to this, Pharaoh had agreed to let them go, but after they had fled, the Lord hardened his heart to that idea, and the Egyptian army began to pursue them.

When imagining this story and situation, there are numerous directions this story could have gone with the same result: the Israelites being freed from slavery. My mind always wonders as to why God hardened Pharaoh’s heart and seemingly made it more difficult instead of just letting them go. I’m sure the Israelites were overwhelmed with a feeling of abandonment, confusion and doubt when they saw the army coming towards them after thinking they had escaped. In that moment of fear they actually wanted to become enslaved again because their faith was so small. But because our God has infinitely more wisdom, power, understanding and sovereignty than we can ever comprehend, the story played out the way it did. Why? So that ‘[he] will gain glory for [himself] through Pharaoh and all his army and the Egyptians will know that [he] is the Lord.’

More times than not, we are the Israelites in this story. We often look at situations and feel hopeless and question what God is doing. We may feel lost and confused when in reality we are right where the Lord wants us in his plan. In the midst of the chaos he is simultaneously working for our good and bringing himself glory. Isn’t that so reassuring to know? Our sole purpose on this earth as Christians is to glorify the Lord and we know that anything the Lord brings us to and through is for one purpose; to glorify himself. There are times when it’s hard to see his goodness, but that definitely doesn’t mean it isn’t there. Our having miniscule, inferior, incapable minds that cannot fathom what the Lord orchestrates or why he allows certain things to happen doesn’t give us permission to doubt what he is doing. So even though we are guaranteed to face trials and tribulations, we can hold on to the promise that it will bring him glory in the end.

The purpose of this isn’t to invalidate the struggle of things on this side of heaven because they’re definitely real. But I hope this brings light to it being worth it in the end because the glory he receives has value far greater than anything on this earth!

Morgan Wadsworth

*“But for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord God my refuge,  
that I may tell of all your good works.” (Psalm 73:28)*

Psalm 73 is a testimony song. It is not a testimony of salvation or a mission experience, but of repentance: a recounting of how a Christian’s heart is turned from moving away from God to moving toward Him. This should be familiar to us; it is the normal practice of those who are trying to follow Jesus and our daily grind of turning from the darkness within our hearts to the light.

As you read this psalm, it should resonate. The person writing it looks around and sees all those who are outside the faith and is convinced that they are awesome. He even lists the things that cause this envy: wanting Crossfit bodies that look great, the special treatment the affluent enjoy, and the allure of luxury, fun, power, and privilege. He wants all these suburban luxuries that seem to come to the wicked without any cost. And this envy has gripped his soul in a violent way that has led him into the darkness and away from the Lord. It is as Will Storr writes, “the people are suffering and dying under the torture of the fantasy self they’re failing to become.”

But then this fellow comes to his senses in the most peculiar way... by stopping. That’s right. He *stops*. And this stopping happens *in church*. He writes,

“But when I thought how to understand this,  
it seemed to me a wearisome task,  
until I went into the sanctuary of God;  
then I discerned their end.”

You see, sometimes we need a Sabbath to see. We need to stop, to create margin, to be quiet before the Lord so that we can gain perspective. Maybe this is what you need?

The final verse of this psalm is perhaps the most beautiful. He remembers that “it is good to be near God.” In his stopping, he finds that God has not stopped pursuing him, and that true life and joy is found as he abides in the Lord. As you think about missions this week, I hope this psalm reminds you of the soil from which it grows: communion with Jesus.

It is good to be near Him. What are you waiting for?

Pastor Buck Rogers, Christ the King, Braselton

## PRAY FOR THE GLORY

*“Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his  
glory! Amen and Amen!” (Psalm 72:19)*

Psalm 72 is a Royal Psalm and a prayer for the king as he ascends his throne. King David, and each king after him, was ultimately pointing to the Messiah, King Jesus. The only king that could possibly fulfill the realities of Psalm 72 is King Jesus. As we pray Psalm 72, we are asking for the light of the gospel to penetrate all the dark places of the world: righteous and just judgment, the poor and needy to be released from oppression, peace to abound to all nations, and salvation to extend throughout the earth. Psalm 72 is a prayer for the world.

One hymn that we sing at CMPC during the mission conference is “Across the Lands” by Keith & Kristyn Getty. Listen to the heart behind some of the lyrics:

All creation holds together by the power of God’s voice.  
Let the skies declare Your glory; let the land and seas rejoice!  
Now You stand before the Father, interceding for Your own;  
From each tribe and tongue and nation, You are leading sinners  
home!

As we sing “Across the Lands” and other hymns during worship, we are declaring with one voice for the glory of God to extend to the four corners of the earth. Our words rise to the Lord, and we ask for His glory to spread throughout the earth. It is a prayer for the world.

When I was in school I never really enjoyed, or paid much attention to, history or geography. None of those things really mattered to me in my small world. Now I find history and geography really interesting. I have a world map in my office that I am constantly looking at and praying for different countries. It has the flag of every country as a border around the map, and I love to discover new flags and new countries. In the middle of the map it reads: “When we pray, God works!”

Would you join me in praying that we would see the glory of God? How? One way is by praying for His glory to reach the ends of the earth. As we pray, we will see lost sinners from every tribe and tongue and nation coming home to King Jesus. Righteousness will fill our churches, grace will extend throughout our communities, and nations will see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Pastor Dee Hammond

## GO FOR THE GLORY

*“...at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2.10-11)*

At the beginning of Philippians 2, Paul teaches us about the humiliation and exaltation of Jesus. Humiliation helps us understand Jesus' being born in the likeness of men and humbling himself by becoming obedient to the point of death on a cross. He experienced the wrath of God as he took on the sins of the world. Exaltation helps us understand the result of this unique act: God the Father raising his son above all things.

There will be a day when all of humanity will acknowledge the name above every name, Jesus Christ, and when it happens we will see the ultimate glory of God. “At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

According to The Joshua Project\* there are 17,307 people groups in the world, and 7,375 of those groups are considered “unreached”\*\* with the name of Jesus Christ. It is easy to get lost in such large numbers, so please consider one group: the Beja People living in the Horn of Africa. The Beja are an important people group because they represent the largest non-Arabic ethnic group between the Nile River and the Red Sea. Virtually all of the Beja are Muslims and hold a rich variety of traditional beliefs including evil spirits. They are a male-dominated people group believing that men have the power to curse others by giving them the “evil eye.” They also believe in spirits that take on animal forms.

The Beja People need the life-giving gospel of Jesus Christ to free them from their slavery to Satan and his workers. The Joshua Project estimates that there are forty-seven Christian workers needed to reach this unreached people group with the name of Jesus Christ. Are you one of the forty-seven workers that are needed? Will you go to the Beja People? Will you go to see the glory of God the Father when every Beja knee bows and every Beja tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord? If you are not being called to go, will you pray for, and give to, another CMPCer that will go to reach the Beja People?

Pastor Dee Hammond

\*Statistics and definition taken from The Joshua Project. This ministry is devoted to “bringing definition to the unfinished task” of the gospel of Jesus going to the ends of the earth. Learn more at [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net)

\*\*An unreached people is a people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this people group without outside assistance.

## UNBELIEVING, UNTIL JESUS SHOWS UP

*“...he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen.” (Mark 16.14)*

When those who had seen the risen Christ told the original eleven disciples, they doubted and wanted proof (Peter was the only one who had seen him). They were not merely awestruck, or at a loss for words, but Jesus said because they had “unbelief” and a “hardness.”

### How could that be?

This crushing condemnation usually is associated with those alienated from God. Matthew gives further emphasis to this and says that even then (in presence of Jesus), some still doubted.

You can almost emphasize with them. They had some very high “ups” and “downs” over the last three years with Jesus and had seen countless miracles. Now what? They wouldn't believe what we call today “unsubstantiated” witnesses: the women who went to the open tomb and heard the angel and the two disciples on the road who spoke with him.

### With this, is it so surprising that to those that hear the truth of scripture and resurrected Christ cannot believe?

Many are willing to believe Jesus is that “He was a great teacher,” “A philosopher,” “Religious revolutionary,” but not the promised Christ who conquered death and redeemed us from sins. When belief is not received but refused or even ridiculed, it would seem that God's Glory has been extinguished and is impotent. Not so. In this instance Jesus told the disciples when they were “clothed with power on high” (Luke 24:49), they were to “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15).

There is an irony here: The disciples did not believe the witnesses of the resurrected Jesus; they were hardened in heart. Now, THEY were to go out and be witnesses to an unbelieving world! Only the power of the Spirit within allows this to happen: “now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8).

### When Jesus Shows Up

Like those disciples, we are the weak and fallible witnesses carrying the gospel message. As we his witnesses go into the world, there will be unbelief and hardness, but when Jesus shows up, a life in the Spirit is planted.

### His Glory is Never Dimmed

God's glory emanates from his word (God spoke, the Word made flesh), and his Word will not return empty. And now that word comes by way of his disciples' bringing it. (Isaiah 55.11)

Dennis Swinehart

## John 17

### TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS

Son of God. The Word. Holy. Incarnate. Obedient. Purposeful.  
Born but not begotten. Eternal.  
EMMANUEL.  
Humble. ONE WITH THE FATHER. **Powerful.**

### LOOK FULL IN HIS WONDERFUL FACE

*Compassionate. Patient.* Just. Discerning. GOD INCARNATE.  
Loving. Teaching. ALL KNOWING.  
Strong. FORGIVING. Sacrificing. Kind.  
*Unsurprised by my failures.*

### AND THE THINGS ON EARTH WILL GROW STRANGELY DIM

FEAR. Uncertainty. **Disability.** Marital Conflicts. Debt.  
Job stress/loss. Pain. Aging. Loss. **Family stress.** Politics. Illness.  
**The Unknown.** PRIDE. Hate. Evil. **Death.**

### IN THE LIGHT OF HIS GLORY AND GRACE

Peace. In His Presence. **God's Promise Complete.** His Victory.  
**Forever with Him.** Home at last.

Cindy Burch

As I contemplated the topic of "The Glory of God", I was overwhelmed with the directions in which I could go. However, my mind kept going back to a vision I have seen in my head over and over as I have read a certain passage: John 17. I encourage you to read the whole chapter, as I only have space to highlight a portion.

Few passages have impacted me as much as John 17. Most well known as "The High Priestly Prayer," John 17 is a window like few others into the relationship between the Son and the Father. However, it is more than that. It is a love letter and appeal written all about us by Jesus to his Heavenly Father. We see so clearly the intentions and lavish generosity of Christ with his own. This passage is not just an appeal to save his own from destruction, but so very much more than that.

John 17:21-22 states, "That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they may also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one."

Jesus is very close to dying after submitting this prayer to his Father. Jesus, the Radiance and exact representation of God's glory is not just glorious because He has always been glorious from the foundation of the world, not just glorious because He was the light that shone into the darkness of Creation and into the darkness of our hearts, but in this time of his life He has glorified his Father by fulfilling every mandate, prophecy, and task his Father has called Him to do with perfection - even unto death where he will conquer sin, death and hell on the cross. God's glory once again culminates in his resurrection and ascension and receipt of his glorified body, to demonstrate to us one day how we will also join him in glory with our glorified body. Knowing this is glorious enough! But my heart overflows even more with glory to God as I consider John 17.

The vision I have always had of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is one where I see them joined together in perfect joy, perfect love, perfect light, perfect relationship, perfect communion with one another, almost in a circle of perfect harmony and unity. The most glorious Godhead with three persons that reflect one upon the other glory upon glory unending. John 17 reveals that not only was Jesus' mission to spare humankind from the wrath of God and bring them into his Heavenly Kingdom one day; no, it was much more than that. Jesus implores the Father "that they may also be *in us*" (emphasis mine) and "that they may be one, even as we are one." I am undone at the thought of myself in that circle with the Trinity. The envelopment into that unity and love and pure joy and community and harmony. What a lavish gift. What glory upon glory Jesus seeks to bestow upon us, his own! Glory to God for his glorious grace!

Sarah Lingerfelt

There are 2 men that I have always enjoyed reading about because of their boldness: Jim Elliot and the Apostle Peter.

Jim Elliot was a missionary that went to serve a savage and unreached tribe in Ecuador, the Huaorani. He and four other missionary friends first made plans to show the tribe they were friendly by lowering gifts to them as they circled in an airplane overhead. Eventually the Huaorani started to send up small gifts back to them. This is when the missionaries felt it was safe to go and try to make contact face to face. The first visit seemed to go well as five tribe members came out of the forest smiling and trying to communicate. Despite this seemingly positive first contact, two days later Jim and his friends were speared them to death at the same place the first meeting took place. Even though he was murdered, his wife, 10-month-old daughter, and a fellow martyr's sister went back to the Huaorani tribe and lived among them. They shared the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the entire tribe was saved. The boldness that Jim Elliot had was not in vain, though he did not get to see the results on this side of heaven. Jim Elliot had a missionary mindset and he said that "he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain that which he cannot lose".

The Peter we meet in Luke 22 is very different from the Peter we meet in the book of Acts. In Luke 22, Peter denies Jesus three times. But in Acts 3 Peter is one who heals a blind beggar who had stationed himself his whole life outside of the temple. He and John were brought before the council and were questioned "by what power or by what name did you do this?" (v7). Peter, through the boldness of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him, took this as an opportunity to share the gospel with the council. Verse 13 says the council recognized that Peter and John were uneducated and common men who could not have spoken so well within their own power and thus recognized they had been with Jesus. "Common" actually comes from the Greek word *idiotai* which can either mean idiot or ignoramus. Think of when you leave 6 tees in the table game at Cracker Barrel: "You're an ignoramus!" Peter is a "leave 6 tees" guy! When Peter and John left, they were told to not speak in Jesus name, so they went and prayed with other believers for boldness. After they prayed, the Holy Spirit came upon their meeting place and shook the entire house. Acts 4:31 says they continued to teach in Jesus name everywhere that they went.

Later in Acts 5, Peter and the apostles were captured and brought before the council again and the same type of thing went down. The Holy Spirit continued to give the apostles boldness to speak in Jesus name even when they were threatened and beaten.

Our response: We should feel so empowered because the same Holy Spirit that was working in Peter, and that was working in Jim Elliot, is the same Holy Spirit that is working in us today. We need to pray for boldness from the Holy Spirit and follow where he leads.

Brady McVey

## THE MESSIAH'S LIGHT AND GLORY

(Isaiah 62)

Friends, we were in sin and without hope before knowing Christ. Wonderfully, God transformed us as He shone the light of Jesus the Messiah into our hearts and brought us into His Kingdom. This Kingdom and the Messiah are described in an inspirational prophesy found in Isaiah 62:

For the sake of Zion I will not keep silent, and for the sake of Jerusalem I will not rest until her righteousness goes forth as brightness and her salvation as a lamp that burns. (MEV). I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem, who shall never hold their peace day nor night. You who remind the LORD, do not keep silent; (MEV) give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a glory in the earth.

Our Messiah will not keep silent nor rest until the light of salvation burns brightly in a worldwide Kingdom of God. To illustrate, think of a woman who has just become engaged and she can't hold back announcing to everyone her joyful news. In the passage prior to this chapter we see Christ bursting with good news "... the Lord [Jehovah] has anointed me [Messiah/Christ] to bring the good news to the poor ...". Isaiah 61:1. Shouldn't we also be bursting with good news? What a joy to see a person moved from darkness to a life in light (v.1.b).

Intriguingly, we are to pray asking our God **to do what He has promised to do** as He actively brings forth the kingdom of righteousness and light in all its worldwide glory (v.7). The implication of N.T. Scripture is that we should copy Him therefore speaking and actively spreading the gospel.

Thus, we have found that God has called us to pray that He will be active and that He will speak out concerning the gospel of Christ and His kingdom of light. And again, we find ourselves challenged to copy Him to do likewise. As a child I grew up on a farm caring for livestock after dark. In my early years while doing chores in the dark I had moments of fear as I couldn't see the sources of noises. However, on those nights that I had a flashlight I could shine a light towards any startling noise, relieving my fear. All lost persons, converted by salvation, have an experience like my childhood when they come to Christ, with His light relieving their spiritual fear. Therefore, let us not be silent, and let us not rest until His light brings all His children to salvation and fills the earth with His glory.

Terry Ensley

It's 103 degrees in the shade. Primarily a medical team, we have come to minister in Honduras in the aftermath of devastating floods brought about by Hurricane Mitch's drenching rains. Now some six months after those floods that washed away the farmers' topsoil, the land is parched and brown. As we arrive in yet another village, the people are already lining up for an opportunity to receive medical care.

Then you see her. She is one of those unforgettable characters that God gives you the opportunity to meet in your life that you never forget. Her name is Concepción. A sturdy built woman around the age of 50, in a country where so many have been so gentle and kind and patient, she is loud, demanding, aggressive, bombastic... you get the idea. In a village where most everybody is dressed in tattered clothes while as a mission team we all are wearing hospital scrubs, Concepción is wearing what is obviously her Sunday dress: a stunningly white dress that stands out against the brown that seems to cover everything.

Even as Jesus came from heaven to earth so we could *See the Glory*, we've come from far away to help people see God's glory. But Concepción has been busy where she lives. In this village it is not the pastor who has been recruiting patients, it is Concepción. She gives orders in Spanish that I cannot understand, and people move. While we spend this hundred-degree day ministering to people, she spends it seeking out people, bringing them in, lining them up, demanding that they be seen. To us she is gruff and grouchy, rearranging the line that's been patiently waiting to make sure the patients she believes **MUST** be seen really are seen by the doctors who have come. If there is a village queen, then it is she, but like the parable that Jesus told, she is bringing the people in who are in great physical, and great spiritual, need.

Her brash, almost offensive style is not particularly endearing to us, but her heart for her people in her village shines as brightly as her white dress. Her shrill voice that is still shouting instructions to us as we load up the van, close the door, and head out of town rings in my ears to this day, 20 plus years later, a voice that allowed us to *See the Glory* of Jesus in this most unusual woman who loved Jesus and her village.

What I suspect is that to our Father in heaven, her final words to us sounded a lot like love under the hot Honduran sun. Concepción's words and actions came from a heart that wanted people to *See the Glory* of Christ, a glory not seen in some dramatic way, but only in the love of people coming from far away to show Christ's love even as Christ came from far away to show us his glory in the way he loved people... all the way to the cross. May we be fervent in our passion for people to *See the Glory* of God. May this year's conference find us asking ourselves-How can I pray more? How can I give more? How can I go more? So that people *See the Glory*.

Pastor John Batusic

## DO IT ALL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

Author, pastor, theologian and marriage counselor, Dr. Paul Tripp, reminds us that one of the natural tendencies of most if not all Christians is to compartmentalize our lives into two drawers: real life and spiritual life. He then proceeds to show us what each drawer is likely to contain.

The **real life** drawer is the one they dig into frequently and are most comfortable with. It contains all the stuff of everyday life, like their job, physical health, friends and family, leisure, money, possessions, and daily routine. This drawer dominates their thinking and their doing. It's where they expend most of their emotional and physical energy, and where most dreams will be realized or dashed. The contents of this drawer are the location of their highs and lows, their joys and sorrows. Then they have a second drawer—the **spiritual life** drawer. All the "God" stuff goes here. It's the drawer for Sunday worship, small group, tithes and offerings, short-term mission trips, and the evangelistic conversations with neighbors or extended family members.

Another author, also named Paul, the one who wrote 13 of the letters in our New Testament, reminds us that for the believer, life is not to be divided into a dichotomy of the real and spiritual. Rather, everything we do 24/7 is to be done in such a way that our Sovereign God is glorified. But hear for yourself the way he puts it in 1 Corinthians 10:31: "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

That thought is further augmented by the answer to the first question of the shorter catechism: Q. *What is the chief end of man?* A. *The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.* That is the primary reason why we are here on earth, to bring glory to Him who draws us to Himself through His marvelous grace.

Of course, no person accomplishes this completely this side of eternity. We all mess up every day. But that is to be our goal, to live each day, every hour and every minute in such a way that our gracious God might be glorified.

Thankfully, when we do miss the mark, if we acknowledge the same and ask for forgiveness, He graciously removes our transgressions from us as far as the east is from the west, never to bring them up again. So, if there is unconfessed sin that you are aware of, ask the greatest garbage collector the world has ever known to cleanse your life fully and completely and purpose to live for His Glory TODAY. AMEN.

Bob Bradbury

## SEE THE GLORY

*“To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.”*  
(Colossians 1:27-29)

It amazes me that in God’s plan for His glory, he chose to include us. The hope of glory, the mystery of the gospel is literally Christ in us. If you are a believer and have Christ living in you, you have the hope of glory. And you get to share that glory with others just by living your life for Christ and proclaiming him in all you do. That is easier said than done, but it does have a simplicity to it. You don’t have to have a degree in evangelism or have a special skill set. The hope of glory is in you, and all you have to do is live it out.

It is clear from his letter to the church in Colossae that Paul is bursting at the seams to tell people about the glory he has seen, which is Christ. I love that he is so excited about the gospel. He says he labors with **all of his energy** so that others may see the same glory he did. And from what we know of Paul’s life after his conversion, it was clear that he was a Christ follower. It is clear from his lifestyle that he loved the Lord and wanted others to share in that love and hope of glory. He was passionate about other people seeing God’s glory.

You and I are part of God’s plan for the spread of gospel too, not just Paul. This should cause us to take a look at our lives and ask, “Is it clear to others that I have the hope of glory in me?” Think about the the decisions you make, the things you do, how you spend your time, the things you talk about. Do all of those things point people toward Christ? There are days when I can say yes, and unfortunately days when I cannot. We can become so distracted by the things of the world that our decisions, conversation, and how we spend our time looks no different from the world. Let’s seek to change this so that we live everyday with Christ - the hope of glory - on full display in every aspect of our lives.

Jess Roth, Atlanta Dream Center-Out of Darkness Ministries

*“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.”* (Romans 1:20)

Despite what many want to believe, what society says, and what others may try to convince you to believe about God’s existence, believe it or not, there is a God in Heaven. Even though we can’t see God we can see his glory all around us. Creation is a way that God shows all of us his glory. Paul says in Romans 1:20 that God’s creation can be clearly seen and understood so that people are left with no excuses. God’s glory is evident all around us; all we have to do is go out and look at it.

Here are just a few nature-related facts that show God’s incredible glory in creation:

- Mount Everest is the highest point on earth standing at 29,029 feet above sea level. The Mariana Trench is the deepest known point in Earth’s oceans and is 36,070 feet below sea level.
- Scientists have estimated that there are 8.7 million different types of animals and around 400,000 species of plants.
- There is enough DNA in the average person’s body to stretch from the sun to Pluto and back — 17 times.
- The Great Barrier Reef is the largest living thing taking up 3.75338 trillion square feet of the ocean.
- God has enabled tiny ants to communicate in intricate ways through pheromones in their bodies. Whole colonies can grasp the message to follow a trail.
- The Blue whale can be 70 feet in length and weigh up to 200,000 pounds. They communicate with other whales at sounds too low for humans to hear, yet the sound is one of the loudest of any in the animal kingdom.

Take the time to look at God’s creation today, marvel at His work and praise Him for the glory shown in the world around you. Read and meditate on Psalm 104, which shows more details of God’s creative hand at work. Take time to thank God. Psalm 92:4 says, “For you make me glad by your deeds, O LORD; I sing for joy at the works of your hands.”

Caleb Burkhart