

December 24, 2019

“The Glory Of The Lord” by Pastor Ed Terry
Luke 2: 1 – 14 (Sermon)

Tonight I want us to focus on the 9th verse of our lesson from Luke where we read, ***“An angel of The Lord appeared to them, and the glory of The Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.”***

First what is the glory of the Lord? Glory is defined as the visible brilliant display of all of The Lord’s divine attributes. There are a number of places in the Old Testament where we can read about the Shekinah Glory of God. The Shekinah Glory of God was the physical manifestation of the presence of God. In the 40th chapter of Exodus we read that the glory of The Lord filled the Tabernacle. ***“So the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the Israelites during all their travels”*** (Exodus 40:38).

The Children of Israel saw the glory of The Lord. Then in Exodus 34 we can read about the glory of The Lord passing before Moses. And in our scripture lesson tonight we read; ***“An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of The Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.”***

So exactly what did the Children of Israel, Moses, and the shepherds see when the glory of The Lord shone around them?

- They saw love because God is love (1st John 4:16).
- They saw peace because Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6)
- They saw joy because the angel announced, ***“I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people”*** (Luke 2:10)
- They saw hope because a ***“Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord.”*** (Luke 2:11)

Also in Romans 5:2 we are told ***“...Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God”*** (Romans 5:2).

- They saw forgiveness ***“because a Savior has been born to you.”*** (Luke 2:11)
- They saw grace because ***“Jesus was full of grace and truth”*** (John 1:14)
- They saw a promise of a personal relationship with God. Jesus’ name is Emmanuel, which means, ***“God with us.”*** (Matthew 1:23)
- They saw light because Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12). ***“The glory of the Lord shone around them.”*** (Luke 2:9) And Isaiah 9:2 tells us, ***“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.”***

Remember glory is defined as the visible brilliant display of all of The Lord’s divine attributes.

So what does the glory of God mean to us today? In 1st Corinthians 11:7 the Apostle Paul reminds us that man was created in ***“the image and the glory of God”*** so that we could enjoy a personal relationship with our Creator God. However, when man sinned by disobeying God we lost our glory. But thanks to God’s great love for us and for Jesus’ voluntarily dying on the cross

to pay the penalty for our sins, God provided a way to restore our relationship with our creator God and Jesus restored the glory of The Lord that was once ours.

In John 17 when Jesus prayed for all of His disciples Jesus stated; ***“I have given them the glory that you gave me.”*** Jesus was referring to the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit. This is clear in verse 23 when Jesus said, ***“I in them”***. Also when Jesus calls us home through physical death or at The Rapture we will receive our glorified bodies. The Bible tells us our glorified bodies will be incorruptible and our glorified bodies will last throughout eternity.

That leads us to why Jesus has given His glory to believers. The 1st question of the Westminster Catechism tells us that ***“the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.”*** So how do we glorify God? We glorify God by proclaiming who God is, by proclaiming God’s mighty deeds, by living a life pleasing to God, and by reflecting God’s holy characteristics.

2nd Corinthians 3:18 also makes our responsibility crystal clear. ***“We are to reflect the Lord’s glory.”*** Then in 2nd Corinthians 3:3 we are told ***“You are a letter from Christ...written with the Spirit of the Living God.”*** And as you know the only purpose of a letter is to convey a message. So as Christians we are to convey the message of Jesus Christ to the people around us. Next in 2nd Corinthians 3:6 we are told, ***“We are competent as ministers of a new covenant.”*** And as you know a minister is a representative or a servant of another person. Therefore, as Christians each one of us is called to represent The New Covenant of Grace, which offers forgiveness, righteousness, and eternal life to all who accept Jesus as their personal Savior. 1st Peter 4:14 tells us, ***“If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of Glory and of God rests on you.”***

As Christians we are to give God glory in everything we say and do and we are to reflect the glory of The Lord in everything we say and do! As believers we are to let the people around us see the wonderful attributes of our Lord in all that we say and do. You see

- We reflect the glory of The Lord when we are loving people.
- We reflect the glory of The Lord when we are forgiving people.
- We reflect the glory of The Lord when we are joyous people.
- We reflect the glory of The Lord when we are peaceful people.
- We reflect the glory of The Lord when we are patient people.
- We reflect the glory of The Lord when we are kind people.
- We reflect the glory of The Lord when we practice goodness.
- We reflect the glory of The Lord when we practice gentleness.
- We reflect the glory of The Lord when we practice self-control.
- We reflect the glory of The Lord when we are humble people.
- We reflect the glory of The Lord when we are faithful to our calling as Christians.

Psalms 115:1 expressed our responsibility this way; ***“Not to us, LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.”*** The primary duty of every Christian is to reveal holy characteristics The Lord by all that we say and all that do. We are also called to share the glory of the new covenant of grace with the people around us.

When we accepted Jesus as our personal savior God shared His glory with us. However, the gift of God's glory is like any other gift we have to accept the gift and then we have to use the gift for it to be of any benefit to us. We already have the gift of God's glory, which is what Christmas is all about. The problem is that we do not believe this truth and / or we do not put this truth into practice in our daily life. The problem is that many times our sin covers up the glory God has given to us.

Our world is filled with hatred, terror, fear, and unrest. So now is the time for all Christians to reflect the glory of God's in all that we say and do. You may not always feel confident in sharing God's glory; you may not even feel equipped to share God's glory. But it is then that we need to remember that the unlimited power of The Holy Spirit is available to every believer. It is then that we need to remember that Jesus is also praying for us to show God's glory to the people around us. In 2nd Corinthians 3:8 we read "***And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect The Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory, which comes from The Lord, who is the Spirit***". Almighty God has given every Christian His indwelling Holy Spirit so that we have the power to reflect the glory of The Lord! We may fall short but The Lord Jesus Christ never does.

Christmas is about God revealing Himself to us, God coming to be with us, and God coming to pay the price of our sins so we could live with Him both now and throughout eternity. Our primary job as believers is to reveal and to reflect the attributes and accomplishments of our Lord Jesus Christ to the people around us. The best Christmas gift you could ever give to someone is to share the love of Jesus with them. As Christians our actions are to be a Christmas present to our family and friends and our attitude is to be a Christmas message to your friends and neighbors.

As you go through the week remember that as a Christian, the glory of the Lord has been revealed to you and The Lord has given His glory to you. God's word to us tonight challenges each one of us to give God glory in everything we say and do and to reflect the glory of The Lord in everything we say and do! Remember "***the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen....***" (Luke 2:20). So the question for each of us this Christmas Eve is: *Will I respond like the shepherds did after they had seen the glory of The Lord and they had a personal encounter with Jesus?* Will you give God glory in everything you say and do and will you reflect the glory of The Lord in everything you say and do! **AMEN**