



**ELECT EXILES**  
**God Gave Him the Glory**

**1 Peter 1:20-21**

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Dr. Todd Wilson, *Senior Pastor*

<sup>20</sup>He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you <sup>21</sup> who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

**Introduction – Resurrection as the Giving of Glory**

Today we have gathered to celebrate a most extraordinary fact: the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It is an unprecedented fact. In all of human history there is nothing like it. It is the most profound of facts. We could study and celebrate the mystery of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead all day long and we would never plumb the depths of it—it's the most profound of facts. It is God's victory over death and the grave. It's also God the Father's vindication of his righteousness and his power. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is also God's witness to Jesus Christ that what he said and what he did was true indeed! It is also our guarantee that our sins are forgiven there on the cross at Calvary: God guarantees it by raising his Son from the dead.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is also God's gift; it is God's gift of glory—that's what our passage says. It is God's gift of glory to his Son, "He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory."

What does that mean? We know from the Bible that God is often described as glorious, having glory. Glory is something that God has. Glory is all the perfections of God shining forth like beams of light radiating out from the sun. That is the glory that God the Father has. So too, the bible sometimes talks about God giving glory. What does it mean for God to give glory like he gave his Son? It means God giving perfection and praise.

This is how God gave glory to his Son, not that the Son had any imperfection due to sin but because the Son assumed human flesh—a flesh that could be bruised and cut, a flesh that could ultimately die! So God raised him from the dead, perfecting his body, giving him glory. So too, the giving of glory is not only perfection; it is also praise for this is what the resurrection of Jesus Christ is also about. Death spoke a word of defeat, and yet, God spoke by raising his Son—a word of victory and a word of praise; "This is my Son," as he raises Jesus Christ from the dead—both perfection and praise. This is what it means for God to give glory!

## Our Quest for Glory – What We’ve All Lost Yet Desperately Seek After

Perfection and Praise: this is what it would mean for God to give you and me glory as well. And so, in him raising his Son from the dead, it is the triumph of Easter; and so too, in the prospect of us sharing in that same resurrection, it is the great *hope* of Easter. It’s a hope, Friends, that transforms everything! It is a hope that revolutionizes one’s entire outlook on life. Why? Because what you and I ultimately seek with all of created humanity, if we are honest with ourselves, is this: glory, perfection and praise. We are on a quest for glory; glory is what we all seek.

Perfection and praise is the thing that we all desperately crave. Of course we don’t usually call it glory, do we? We don’t go around saying, “I’m seeking glory this afternoon,” do you? In our culture we use terms like significance, influence, affluence, status, power, or indeed, control. Those are the words we use in our quest for glory. We also don’t usually admit that we are on a quest for glory. Who wants to be known as a glory seeker? And yet, friends, if we peel back the surface layer of your life and my life, if you look at human activity in all of its flurry, fervency and zeal, do you know what you see underneath it all? You see a quest for glory—a quest for perfection and a quest for praise. That’s why we spend so much time at the workout center or the gym. That’s why we spend so much time before the mirror in the morning. That’s why we spend so much time working in our gardens, pulling the weeds and planting the tulips. That’s why we spend so much time with our home, rearranging the furniture, re-painting the walls, hanging a picture or two or three. We’re trying to glorify our environment. This is why we spend so much time at work or perhaps why we put out so much energy on the athletic field, or perhaps why we invest so much time in the books or school—we’re seeking to glorify skills, or perhaps glorify reputation.

So as you look out on the horizon of human activity, as you peel the surface back, you see this quest for perfection and praise driving so much of life. And yet, it’s not a bad thing in itself to seek glory, though it can be because of sin. Our quest for glory is often cluttered with pride and ambition and vanity and competition, but it need not be, and is not in itself, and here is why—because we seek the glory we lost, the glory we were designed to have!

The first pair of human beings, Adam and Eve, had this glory that you and I have been seeking after. They had this glory! They were created with perfection and put in a perfect environment. When God saw what he had created, the first human creatures, he said, “This is very good.” Praise! And yet, it didn’t last very long. As we know, Adam and Eve sinned and took a tumble and indeed, a fall—and what a long fall it was! No more perfection, no more praise but rather sin and condemnation—not perfection and praise but curse and corruption!

And as a result all of us, you and me, as we follow along in the wake of Adam and Eve’s sin are falling short as well. And so the Bible says, “For all have sinned and fall short of”—what?—“the glory of God”—the glory we were designed for, the glory you and I aspire toward in everything that we do. We are constantly falling short of it because of sin, and yet, here’s what makes it such a difficult life to live: we have this impulse for glory because we can hear the echo of our former glory still resonating in our minds and hearts. The memory of the glory that we were intended for still continues to live on in our mind. We ourselves see it *in* ourselves. We see it in the wonderful and disastrous paradox of the human person. Human beings—majestic and yet fallen, marvelous and yet perverse.

So too, we see it in the creation all around us; the creation itself is a constant reminder that we have fallen short of the glory of God. Paul tells us in Romans 8:19-23 the creation itself was subjected to futility but now it groans and it longs for the sons of God to be revealed in glory and for the creation itself to be glorified. And so, every bird, every butterfly, every flower, every fish, every sunset, every snowflake—majestic in one sense and corrupt in another—join us in this universal quest for perfection and praise.

And yet here too, our problem is further complicated because our quest for glory often leaves us in an impossible situation. Despite our best efforts we never seem to attain the glory we so long to attain; we never seem to quite get there. And even if we do think for a season that we've arrived and attained the glory and the status that we long for, we know that death ultimately stands in our way; and death, as we know, is the great stealer of glory. It will rob you of whatever glory you attain in this life. This is our problem.

So let me ask you: How are you doing in your quest for glory? How are you doing in striving after the affluence or influence, status, or reputation, or whatever it is that you are pursuing, in whatever manner it is that you are pursuing? Have you arrived yet? Have you arrived at a place of satisfaction in your quest for glory? Perhaps you've just taken a stumble or a fall from a status you've enjoyed; you're not where you want to be in your pursuit of glory. Perhaps you are at the end of your life and you are looking back at the glory days, pining and nostalgic, yet discontent, unsatisfied, anxious and restless.

### **God's Gift of Glory – What God Gave His Son and Can Give You**

If you find yourself in that situation with status-anxiety about your glory, there is an answer; there is a hope. And this is the hope—not in *our* quest for glory—but in God's Easter *gift* of glory. For what we see in this passage, and what Easter itself helps us appreciate, is that God alone is the one who gives glory. God alone is perfect and so, he is the only one who can restore humanity—and indeed the whole of creation—to its original perfection. And so too, God alone is God, and thus God is the only one whose smile we ultimately crave and long for. If we don't have his smile, any other words of affirmation, any other praise or accolade we may receive, as good as it feels at the time, will be short-lived and insufficient and inadequate. And we will crave for more, longing for the praise and perfection that come from God.

Jesus Christ understood this when he said, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me" (John 8:54). So too, for you and me. If I seek to glorify myself, seek to work hard, strive and strain to become something, attain a status, a position, it's nothing. Even if someone were to give it to me, it's still nothing. The Father alone gives the glory that you and I seek. And yet, here is the good news of Easter. Easter demonstrates the fact that God the Father is both able and willing to give us the glory we all long for. He is both able and willing and he has demonstrated the fact in giving glory to the Son by raising him from the dead!

Of course, the Son *had* glory: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). And the Word indeed, was God; he was glorious from all eternity past. So Jesus in the final prayer of his earthly life said, "Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed" (John 17:5). So you see the Son had glory.

You also see that the Son decided to give up his glory for you and for me. This is what our passage says, "He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in

the last times for the sake of you.” The Son resplendent in glory was made manifest for you and me. But what did he look like when he was made manifest? What did he look like when he showed up on the scene of human history? Glorious? Splendor? Majesty? Pomp and circumstance? Arrive in the big limo like he was coming to the Oscars, stepping out the door with all sorts of regalia?

The Son of God, the glorious Word himself, was made manifest in these last times for you and for me. He showed up on the page of human history with very humble beginnings. He was poor. More than that, he was misunderstood, and by his own family! He was persecuted by his own countrymen, they rejected him. And he was betrayed by one of his closest colleagues who had worked with him for three intensive years, day in and day out, night in and night out. He was abandoned by all his followers. He was disowned by his closest disciples. He was ultimately rejected by all earthly powers; earthly kings and rulers—they put to death the Lord of glory. More than that he was crucified—the Son of God crucified on the executioner’s stake, the Lamb of God, bearing the full weight of divine wrath. Think about it—the blessed King of glory receiving the curse on the tree that you and I deserve for our sins.

How right it is to sing that great Christmas carol even now at Easter time, “Hark the Herald Angels Sing.” Remember that line: “Mild he lays his glory by.” Mild Jesus laid his glory by. Why? “Born that man no more may die / born to raise the sons of earth / born to give them second birth.” That is why the glorious son laid aside his glory—for you and for me at the cross of Calvary.

And yet that is not the whole story! There is the triumph of Easter, the darkness of death giving way to the light of the resurrection, the silence of the grave giving way to the shout of resurrection, the crucified, and indeed mummified Jesus in the tomb with the stone rolled in front of its entrance, gave way and became the glorified and magnified Savior on Easter morning. God gave Jesus glory!

There is Mary Magdalene standing in the entrance of the tomb, as she stood there weeping.

<sup>11</sup>...as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. <sup>12</sup>And she saw two angles in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, <sup>13</sup>“They have taken away my Lord and I do not know where they have laid him.” <sup>14</sup>Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing.

God gave him glory and raised him from the dead and there he is—standing! Mary Magdalene

...did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup>Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you carried him away, tell me where you have laid him and I will take him away.” <sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). <sup>17</sup>Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet

ascended to my Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" <sup>18</sup>Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord."

"I have seen the (risen) Lord." God gave him glory is why she saw the risen Lord. This is the Easter story, the story of the gospel, the story of Jesus Christ having glory, giving it up for you, for me, getting it back from the Father as a reward, as a gift. This is the story of Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped but gave it up, taking on the very likeness of a human being, and being found in the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form, he humbled himself, he became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. And there we are—Good Friday!

The glorious Son of God giving up his glory for your sake and my sake, to the point of death on a cross! What could be more inglorious than that, humanly speaking? And yet as the story goes on, there is a great Easter "Therefore" in this passage from Philippians 2: "9Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name." Perfection and praise! God gave him glory <sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue confess (to praise Jesus) that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

## **The Pathway to Glory**

You see, this is the story of Jesus. This is the path he trod to glory and this is the path that you and I must trod to glory as well. You see, the path of Christ is the path of the Christian! Jesus has modeled the way; he has enabled the way through his death and resurrection, he has modeled the path to glory. You see what the path is? It's the shape of the Christian life you and I are to live in light of the reality of the resurrection of Easter. It is one of faith and hope in God rather than self-reliance. So our text tells us that God raised him from the dead and gave him glory. Why?—"so that your faith and hope are in God," not in self reliance. To walk the way Jesus walked who entrusted himself to God, not to himself and in himself, yielded his life to God in faith and in hope. So too, the path we are to trod is the path of humility and suffering as a follower of Jesus Christ. Humility and suffering rather than self-exaltation; downward mobility rather than upward mobility. Peter writes to believers,

Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time, he may exalt you" (1 Peter 5:5-6).

And indeed he will exalt you and give you glory as you humble yourself in his mighty hand. So too, the shape of the Christian life—the Easter life, the Resurrection life—is one of sacrifice and service rather than self-indulgence.

You may recall that great passage, 1 Corinthians 15:58 where the apostle Paul celebrates the reality of the resurrection. Do you know how that great celebration of the reality of the resurrection ends, what note it concludes on, what note it wants to sound, to resonate in the Christian heart? “Therefore” in light of Easter, in light of the resurrection, in light of the hope of God giving you glory: “Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain” (1 Cor. 15:58).

So you see, the shape of the Christian in light of the resurrection, in light of God giving the Son glory, the shape of our life is to be one of faith and hope in God. Humility and sacrifice, sacrifice and service, this is the path to glory, this is the only path that will lead to glory, this is the only sure and certain way to arrive at what you and I so want and long for: perfection and praise.

So where are you this morning on the path to glory? Are you here and running strong on the path to glory; are you charging ahead? If you are, praise God and continue to fix your gaze on the risen Son, our Savior, and go, go, go! Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. If you are running, continue to run well. Perhaps there have been setbacks in your life. You are here and my prayer is that you would take fresh strength and courage from the fact that Jesus has been raised from the dead, seeking in him the strength you need to run the path. It’s not an easy path but it’s a good path. Perhaps you are loitering on the path to glory. You’ve gotten slightly side-tracked, you are meandering around, you’re at a rest-stop on the path to glory and what you need is a fresh and renewed vision of the goal of glory to prod you along. There it is in the resurrection of Jesus Christ when God gave glory.

Or perhaps, Friend, you are not even on the path to glory. Will you ask yourself that question: Am I even on the path to glory yet? Perhaps you lack the faith and hope in God that is the very start of the pilgrimage on the path to glory. You can have that faith, you can have that hope and you can get your feet firmly planted on the path to glory even now, this very hour and this very day. Let me say to you and plead with you: why would you look for glory in anywhere else than from God? Why would you pursue glory from anyone else rather than God when the glory of this world is so fleeting, fading and tenuous? Why look any where else? If you would give your life to God alone, God will give you glory—the very thing you long for and desire. You turn from sin in repentance and turn to Christ in faith and you will find that God will one day perfect you and praise you, giving you glory.

## **Conclusion – Cannibals and the Example of Christ**

There was a young Scotsman by the name of John Paton, living in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, in Scotland. He was a believer and follower of Jesus Christ, and he felt compelled to take the gospel that he had come to love and treasure, all the way to the New Hebrides islands in the South Pacific. It was pretty far away from Scotland and it was, therefore, a tough sell for his congregation to get behind him and rally in support. There was an older gentleman in his congregation, a man by the name of Mr. Dickson, who was especially vocal in trying to dissuade Paton. He took it as his responsibility to vocalize to Paton in front of the congregation one of the pre-eminent dangers, indeed a scary thing for missionaries at the time going to the New Hebrides. The danger he wanted to set before Paton in trying to dissuade him from going was this: cannibalism. “The cannibals, Mr. Paton; you will be eaten by the cannibals,” Mr. Dickson said to him to dissuade him.

And yet, I want you to hear Paton's response—so beautiful, so characteristic of one who has set his feet firmly on the path to glory, following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, confident of the reality of the resurrection. Here is John Paton's response:

Mr. Dickson, you are advanced in years now, and your own prospect is soon to be laid in the grave, there to be eaten by worms. And I confess to you that if I can but live and die serving and honoring the Lord Jesus Christ, it would make no difference to me whether I am eaten by cannibals or by worms. And Mr. Dickson, in the great day, that great and glorious day, the general resurrection of the body from the dead, in that great day my resurrection body will arise as fair as yours in the likeness of our risen redeemer.

That is the voice of one who has set his feet on the path to glory. That is the faith and the hope of one who will indeed, one day, with all who trusts Christ, be raised to glory, given glory perfection and praise by God the Father. Do you see this? Do you want this in your life and for your life? You can have it today! You will have it one day as you pursue Christ in this path of glory. God gave Jesus Christ glory. This is the triumph of Easter; this is the basis of the Christian life: God gave him glory!

But God will give you glory as well if you, and if I, give God our lives. He will give us glory. This, friends, is the hope of Easter.

Amen.

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