

I. Introduction

- A. John 12:27-33 . . . "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. [28] Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." [29] So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, "An angel has spoken to Him." [30] Jesus answered and said, "This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes. [31] Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. [32] And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." [33] But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die.
- B. There are three truths in this passage that I want to focus on today. Our first focus has to do with God encouraging our faith by reassuring us of His goodness. The second focus deals with God having glorified (*past tense*) and continuing to glorify His name. And our third focus addresses the fact that when the devil, the world, and our flesh thinks it is defeating or has defeated God, God is gaining a victory.
- C. Prayer

II. God encourages our faith by reassuring us of His goodness.

- A. After Jesus said, "Father, glorify Your name," a voice came out of heaven saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." [29] So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, "An angel has spoken to Him." [30] Jesus answered and said, "This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes.
- B. Upon hearing a voice from heaven, the people were trying to figure out what they heard and who or what made the sound. And in the midst of their confusion, Jesus said God's speaking was for their sakes, not His.
- C. In other words, it was the people, not Jesus, who needed to be reassured that God was good. They needed to be reassured that in relation to the cross, God would work all things out for good, that in seeking God's glory Jesus was securing His own well-being, and that in spite of the cost or suffering along the way, a good outcome was not only certain, it would exceed the suffering and cost to such an extent that in looking back Jesus would have no regrets at having paid the price to gain the outcome.

1. The reason Jesus didn't need to be reassured is because His trust in God was unshakeable. He was convinced He was safe in God's hands, and He lived accordingly – as shown by Peter's words that while being reviled, Jesus did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to God who judges righteously (1 Peter 2:23).
 2. However, it seems that few of us are like Jesus. It isn't that we don't trust God, it's that we are not convinced we are safe in His hands – and we show the tentativeness of our faith by how we deal with trials, tribulation, sickness, suffering, loss, and threats to our sense of security and well-being. And so, when our faith is tentative, we need to be reassured that God is good and that we are safe in His hands.
- D. Now I want to be clear that needing to be reassured of God's goodness is not a bad thing, especially when we are new, immature believers.
1. Therefore, as in this story so in our lives, God provides moments and situations that affirm His trustworthiness and assure us of His goodness – in order to build our faith so that we will trust Him and wait patiently for Him to bring about a good that demonstrates His glory and immeasurably exceeds the cost of what is coming our way.
 2. And with this in mind, my encouragement to you is to look for and take note of those God-given, faith-assuring moments and situations and use them to feed and encourage your faith so that it will grow from an uncertain conviction that God is good to an unwavering conviction that you are safe in His hands.
 3. We can also build and strengthen each other's faith by sharing our stories of God's faithfulness with each other – not only during our worship time, but also when we eat together or gather during the week or simply spend time together.
- E. There is one more thing I want to emphasize here. Having an unshakeable faith that you are safe in God's hands does not free you from trials, tribulations, pain, suffering, and loss any more than it freed Jesus from the cross.
1. However, being convinced you are safe in God's hands frees you from such things as anxiety and worry, stress – and the tension that goes with stress, irrational fears, ungodly anger, and an unnecessary concern about the future.
 2. Being convinced you are safe in God's hands enables you to continue thinking clearly, and speaking calmly and respectfully, yet honestly, in the face of difficult, threatening, and even painful situations.

3. And being convinced you are safe in God's hands opens your eyes to see God at work – on your behalf, and on behalf of others who believe in Him, and even on behalf of those who don't believe in Him – which serves to build your faith all the stronger – along with giving you stories to tell believers and unbelievers that bring glory to God.

III. God has glorified His name and will glorify His name again

- A. In response to Jesus telling God to glorify His name, the first thing God said is, "I have glorified my name"
 1. We know from both the Old and New Testaments that God has already glorified His name a number of times and in a variety of ways.
 2. For example,
 - a. God has shown the world how glorious He is through what He has made. Creation reveals God's unmatched creativity, His zeal for variety and beauty, His generosity in making us in His image, and His forethought by enabling us to do such things as reason and think, learn and remember, conceptualize, ponder, and solve problems. And in creation we see God's wisdom in giving us choices while maintaining His sovereignty.
 - b. In reading the OT, examining world history, and considering our own lives, we can see how knowledgeable, wise, patient, long-suffering, merciful, forgiving, caring, faithful, powerful, just, and righteous God is. And we get a clearer picture of God's side, that is, what He deals with because of us and our behavior.
 - c. And though sinners rarely seem to receive the due consequences of their sin soon after sinning, the Bible, history, and personal experience confirms that sinners ultimately reap what they sow.
 - d. And though a sinner may sin repeatedly and heinously, if he repents, turns from his sinful ways, and proceeds to live with and for God, God forgives and sometimes He even restores what was lost in this life as a result of the sins committed.
 - e. In the life of Christ, God was glorified by His plan to send Jesus to live among us and to die on our behalf. And God was glorified by the way Jesus lived for God and in service to God.
- B. My point is that if we will look, we can see numerous way in which God has glorified His name in creation, through past and even current events, through the truth of the scriptures, through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and through the church – whether it be holy, or in need of reformation, or in the midst of revival. And beyond all that, God has glorified His name through individual Christians who have lived

God-honoring lives – whether they lived in obscurity or were well-known martyrs.

1. In other words, regardless of the times we are living in, God has been glorifying His name in all the earth – and this is to our benefit in building our faith and when speaking with unbelievers, for if an unbeliever will look at the past or listen to our stories about God bringing glory to His name, they can see that God has been at work for the good of all, that He is worthy of trust and allegiance, and therefore their only rational response is to repent, trust in Jesus, submit to God, and live a godly life.
 2. Now admittedly, some don't notice the glory of God that already exists in our world, and some won't listen when we speak of God's glory. And it is true that some only notice the pain and suffering in our world – which they claim shows God to be unjust, unloving, or unable to stop it. There are those who mostly notice the hypocrisy of the church as an institution and the shallowness or even lack of love among believers. And some, though they notice God's glory in the world, they do not want to trust our glorious God and therefore they will not submit to His authority.
- C. However, though we are up against this kind of unbelief and rejection of the truth when talking with unbelievers, God remains undeterred, which is why He went on to say, "I will glorify [My name] again."
1. In saying these words before the cross, we can see that God proceeded to glorify His name in the subsequent death, resurrection, and ascension of his Son, Jesus Christ.
 - a. But God did not stop there. He has continued to glorify His name in the spread of the gospel, and in the growth of the Church – especially in those places where the church has grown under harsh and restrictive conditions – such as in China.
 - b. And though our nation is moving away from God and godliness with increasing speed and determination, we can still see examples of God's goodness, provision, protection, salvation, and sinner transformation in ourselves, our home, our church, our workplace, our community, and our nation.
 2. So what is my point? God has been at work and continues to be at work, bringing honor and glory to His name so that sinners and righteous alike will see that He is completely trustworthy and that His ways are the only rational and reasonable way to an abundant life now, and eternal life hereafter.

- a. We are not in a time where God is absent or silent – though it may seem like that. And the fact that so many unbelievers do not see the glory of God and the worthiness of His ways is not because can't, but because they do not want to see and they do not want to hear.
 - b. And though we cannot force the truth of God and His ways on anyone, Jesus did say that we can let our light shine before men in such a way that will enable them to see our good works, and if they will, glorify our Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:16).
 - c. In other words, beyond words and well-crafted arguments, you can bring attention to God's glory in how you live – in your home, in your neighborhood, with your extended family and friends, at work, at school, when shopping, and when driving.
- D. So resist the temptation to get discouraged in your evangelistic efforts. Remember that God has been at work showing His glory at various times and in numerous situations, and God is continuing to show His glory. Therefore, be God's picture to the world of patient endurance, and God's voice telling those around you what great things God has done – both in the midst of your pain and when God's great good appears following your trials, tribulations, and suffering.

- IV. What appears to the world as God's defeat, God uses to gain great victories.
- A. In John 12:31-32, Jesus said, "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. [32] And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."
 - 1. We know from John 3:17, that God did not send Jesus into the world to judge the world, but rather that the world might be saved through Him. And in Luke 19:10, Jesus said, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."
 - 2. However, though the cross did not bring Christ's judgment, it did bring God's judgment – on the world, on the devil, and on our flesh – or what we also call our old nature or our sin nature.
 - a. And though God's judgment of the world, and the devil, and our flesh was completed at the cross, His sentence of death for each of those has yet to be fully realized.
 - b. Now it is true that His sentence of death has begun, but it will not be fully realized, or completed, until Jesus returns.
 - B. For example, though the world is passing away, along with its evil desires (1 John 2:17), it still exerts its influence all over the globe, and this will continue until it and all its ways are destroyed by fire (2 Peter 3:10).

- C. In the same way, though the devil has been judged and is doomed to eternal destruction, he continues to be spoken of in the scriptures as the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2), and the ruler of this world (John 14:30), and the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4).
1. However, God protects every Christian from being overpowered by the devil – by limiting the devil's temptations (1 Corinthians 10:13) and equipping us with holy armor (Ephesians 6:11-12) – just to name two ways in which his power over us is waning.
 2. And the day is coming when the devil will be cast into the lake of fire for all eternity – thus ending his reign and sealing his doom (Revelation 20:10).
- D. And though our flesh seems to be alive and exerting its influence over us, the scripture says that when we were baptized into Christ Jesus, we were baptized into His death so that sin could no longer rule over us (Romans 6), and so that we could become a new creation in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17) and a partaker of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4) – which together enables us to live a new, transformed life in Christ Jesus.
1. And yet, the war with our flesh continues as if it is anything but dead.
 2. But here again, if we will flee youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart (2 Timothy 2:22), we will progressively become a new creation in Christ Jesus and will continue to do so until we see Jesus face to face – at which time our old nature will be completely done away with and we will be pure and holy, through and through, like Jesus (1 John 3:2-3).
- E. Now you may be wondering what all this has to do with the world thinking it has gained a victory over God while in fact it is God who has gained the victory.
1. But think with me for a moment. To the devil, the religious leaders and the unbelieving world, Jesus capture, trial, beating, and death were seen as a victory for them.
 - a. And yet, the victory went to God, for it was in Christ's death that the devil was defeated, the world and its ways condemned and are coming to an end, and the power of our flesh to rule over us was broken.
 - b. And though it seems to unbelievers that the devil is still on the prowl, the world and its influences still holding sway over most people, and many Christians looking so much like unbelievers that it is hard to tell them apart, God is still gaining the victory in every believer who sincerely and thoughtfully uses God's

empowerment and provisions to persevere in pursuing godliness in all their behavior – in spite of failures along the way.

2. The undeniable truth of what we are talking about here is summed up in these words from Jesus, “ And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.”
 - a. In the eyes of the religious leaders of Jesus’ day, Jesus was put to shame. The truth is, God was glorified.
 - b. In the eyes of the religious leaders, the Jesus movement had been stopped. The truth is, it had just begun, not only in Jerusalem, but around the world and for the rest of time.
 - c. In the eyes of the world, the religious leaders won a battle. The truth is, killing Jesus was their undoing and God’s triumph.
- F. Circumstances may tempt you to think that God has been defeated, or His purposes thwarted, or His power weakened. It may look as if the devil or the world or your flesh has won – and that they will continue to win because there is little or nothing you can do about it.
 1. Don’t believe it. God is using everything the devil, the world, and our flesh does to defeat and destroy us to bring about His glory and our good (Romans 8:28).
 2. In some of these situations the final victory may not occur until we see Jesus face to face. And we may have to endure suffering and pain while we wait for the final victory – just as Jesus did in relation to the cross.
 3. But just as with the cross, so with your life and mine, God is at work, bringing victory out of apparent defeat, good out of evil, freedom out of slavery, and life out of death.
- G. Therefore, as Jesus said to Martha before raising Lazarus from the dead, so I say to us – if we believe we will see the glory of God – as He gains victory after victory over the devil, the world, our flesh, and even over death (John 11:40).

V. Conclusion

- A. Psalm 33:16-20 . . . The king is not saved by a mighty army; A warrior is not delivered by great strength. [17] A horse is a false hope for victory; Nor does it deliver anyone by its great strength. [18] Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, On those who hope for His lovingkindness, [19] To deliver their soul from death And to keep them alive in famine. [20] Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and our shield.