

Soli Deo Gloria (Psalm 8; Hebrews 2:5-18 & Romans 12:1-21) 29-Oct-2017¹

This is the final part of a 5 part series on the *Protestant Reformation* - as we celebrate and remember the Reformation which began 500 years ago.

There's Bibles in front of you - and you should have a sermon outline - to write notes if you wish...

Before we start - let me pray for God's wisdom, guidance and understanding first

Intro

As we've said in the last few weeks the Protestant Reformation was basically a protest against the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church at the time

The protesters were basically saying that the Church's teaching should be based on:

[Powerpoint 1-5 Solas]

Sola Scriptura - Scripture Alone

Sola Gratia - Grace Alone

Sola Fide - Faith Alone

Solus Christus - Christ Alone

Soli Deo Gloria - Glory to God Alone

(pause)

What is Glory?

So far we've looked at Faith Alone, Scripture Alone, Christ Alone and Grace Alone

This week we're looking at Glory to God Alone

[Powerpoint 2-Sola Gratia]

So what is Glory?

[Powerpoint 3-Defintion]

Dictionary

- *Praise, honor, or distinction extended by common consent*
- *Worshipful praise, honor, and thanksgiving to God*
- *Great beauty and splendor; magnificence*

The Greek Word for glory is **doxa**

Where we get doxology

Doxology = "glory" + "words"

And doxa means

The kingly majesty which belongs to God as the supreme ruler - and it's majesty in the sense of absolute perfection of God

It also means: *magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity and grace*

And it also means: *the most exalted (highest) state*

It's the condition with God the Father in Heaven, which Jesus was raised to after He achieved his work on earth

And it's the glorious condition of blessedness into which is appointed and promised to all people who believe in Jesus

When you were a child you may have learnt the Westminster catechism¹.
The first question in the Catechism is

[Powerpoint 4-WC 1]

Q - What is the chief end (purpose) of man?

A - To glorify God and enjoy Him forever

This question and answer is based on 1 Corinthians 10:31 and Romans 11:36
So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31)

For from him and through him and for him are all things.
To him be the glory forever! Amen (Romans 11:36)

So basically our purpose in life is to bring glory to God - not to ourselves - or to anyone else

Why? Because we only have anything because of God

So we should always be pointing people towards God

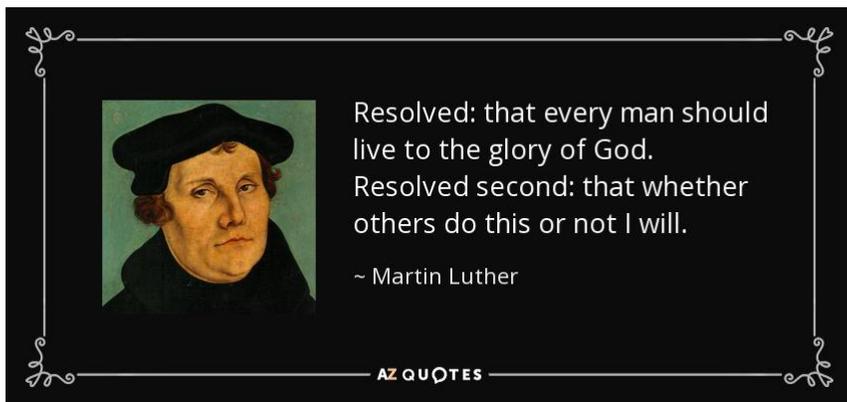
And this was one of the problems, the Reformers protested against.
Because the Roman Catholic Church, at the time, was trying to take some of God's glory for themselves - because the Pope, the Church, Jesus' mother, Mary and Saints - were seen as being equally important as God

Martin Luther's visit to Rome - and seeing the decadence and self-indulgence of the Vatican - had shocked him to the core - How could the Pope, the cardinals and the church have such luxury when there were so many people in the world in poverty and how could they take God's glory like this?

So Martin Luther resolved:

[Powerpoint 5-Luther resolved]

¹ a summary of the principles of Christian religion in the form of questions and answers, used for religious instruction.



What does God's Glory look like?

We've had a definition of God's glory

So what does God's glory look like?

The prophet Isaiah got a glimpse of God's glory in Isaiah chapter 6:

[Powerpoint 6-Isaiah 6]

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another:

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory."

⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

It's difficult for us to imagine just what that looks like - isn't it?

We use the word awesome a lot in our everyday language

But what Isaiah saw was truly awesome!

So perhaps we can get an understanding of God's glory from something we can actually see

That's where Psalm 8 - our OT reading comes in

[Please turn there now]

Psalm 8 describes what God's glory looks like:

From Psalm 8 - God's glory looks like:

[Powerpoint 7-Psalm 8]

- God's glory looks like His majestic name (v1 and v9). By name - it means God's reputation and fame. His reputation and fame are second to none! He is the One true God
- God's glory looks like - going out West to Dubbo - and looking up at the sky at night and seeing God's handiwork - millions of stars and planets (v1 and v3) - and realizing that this is all God's work - He created it and keeps it all in balance. And realizing how insignificant we humans are in comparison to God - and to help us realize who really deserves the glory!
- God's glory looks like - His attention to detail - Even though He created the Heavens and the Earth - He is mindful of the detail of every animal, bird and fish - Look at the complexity and detail of each animal - their colours - how they walk, fly or swim - it's amazing isn't it
- And then there's the highlight for God - of creating human beings - why would He bother when He has the whole universe at His disposal? But He made humans just a little lower than angels (v5). When we think of the miracle that takes place whenever a baby is conceived and develops in the womb - it's mind blowing
- And God wanted a relationship with human beings and gave them a job to do - to take care of His creation and take care of His creatures. Why? To bring glory to Him. To point ourselves and everyone else to Him. The one true God - with the majestic name and reputation

Why Glorify God?

So God's glory is His whole being, His creation and His creatures culminating in humans

If that isn't enough to glorify God then

[Powerpoint 8-Hebrews 2]

Hebrews chapter 2 - our 2nd reading gives us the ultimate reason to glorify God

[Please turn to Hebrews chapter 2 from verse 5]

The writer of Hebrews says in verses 5 to 8

That it wasn't angels God put in charge of everything put human beings

And when human beings couldn't take care of His creation properly - and when sin entered the world - and we all inherited a sinful nature
 God already had a rescue plan
 He gave us Jesus - His Only Son - who was made a little lower than angels for a little while (v9) and God crowned him with glory and honour
 And gave Him the job of saving humankind from their sin and from the punishment for their sin
 This meant Jesus had to suffer death (v9)
 And He tasted death for everyone - taking our punishment for sin and dying our death
 This - the writer of Hebrews says still in v9 is all because of *God's Grace*
Grace Alone - God's undeserved favour - a gift to us
 Sin and death cured by Jesus
 And that means in v10 - sons and daughters - God's children - all believers - can be brought to glory -
 What does it mean for believers to be brought to glory?
 Remember our definition of glory
the glorious condition of blessedness into which is appointed and promised to all people who believe in Jesus
 It's the glory of Heaven - which is promised and guaranteed by Jesus' death and resurrection - and available to all who believe in Him
 Our salvation made perfect through the suffering of Jesus (v10)

And because of Jesus' act of saving us
 He makes us holy (v11) before God
 How does Jesus make us holy?
 Because He replaces our sinful nature with his perfection - so when God looks at us - He see Jesus instead
 Jesus also makes us holy through the work of the Holy Spirit living in us

And so we can be truly part of Jesus' family (v11)

Then - by Jesus giving up His place in Heaven for a while - and sharing in our humanity (v14) - He got rid of the power of death that the Devil holds over people

The Devil is a defeated power!

And Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross - made atonement for our sins (v17)
Putting us - *at-one* with God again

That's why we need to glorify God
Because He sent Jesus as our Saviour and Rescuer!

Response - How to Glorify God

That act of God - sending His Son to save us - requires a response

That's where our NT passage from Romans 12

[Please turn to Romans chapter 12]

This chapter teaches us how to glorify God...

[Powerpoint 9-How? Response]

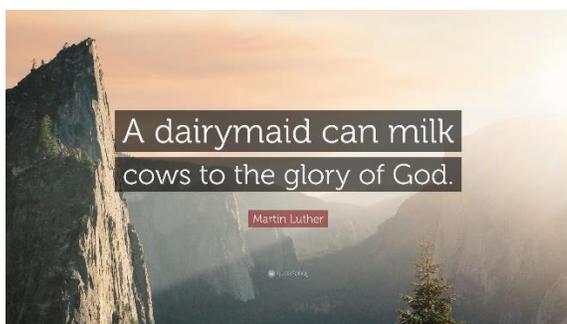
In view of God's mercy (in Jesus)

We need to live sacrificially - this will bring glory to God by doing His will - His good and pleasing and perfect will - and not doing our own will!

So we glorify God by

- V2 - Not being worldly - being worldly means following ways which God does not agree with - people following the world's ways don't consider God's rules from God's word - and results in immorality, cheating, lying and stealing - and leads to an attitude of anything goes - as long as we're happy
- V3 - by not being proud - but humble - *Francis de Sales - Bishop of Geneva - said - some people become proud because they ride a fine horse, or wear a feather in their hat or dress in fine clothes. Don't they see the foolishness in this pride? If there is any glory in such things - it belongs to the horse, the bird and the tailor who made the suit.* So let's not have tickets on ourselves - we only have because God provides it - and the glory belongs to Him alone
- We glorify God by being part of Christ's body, the church, the body of Christian believers - as Paul says in verses 4 to 8. And God has blessed us as different members of that body - with different gifts - these gifts are to be used to serve each other and God

- So are we using the gifts God has blessed us with? If not, we're not glorifying God
- If we are using the gifts God has blessed us with - are we using them to glorify God or are we using them to get human praise and a pat on the back?
- And if we are using the gifts God has blessed us with - are we taking these gifts seriously when we use them - or are we just doing the bare minimum
- *German Composer - Johann Sebastian Bach S. said, "All music should have no other end and aim than the glory of God and the soul's refreshment; where this is not remembered there is no real music but only a devilish hub-bub." He always put the heading "Jesus Juva" on his music - which means "Jesus help me."*
And he always ended music compositions with the initials "S.D.G." "Soli Deo Gratia" which means "To God alone the Glory."
- We need to be like this with every gift and talent we have - asking Jesus to help us be our best - and using the gift to the glory of God alone. Pointing people to God - showing them the gift came from Him - and using it to serve and help others. It's never about us - always about God
- As Martin Luther famously said "A dairymaid can milk cows to the glory of God"



- We also glorify God by showing sincere love in v9 - and being devoted to one another in love and honouring one another in v10. That means being loyal - not two-faced. It means being committed to the person - not gossiping about them behind their back. It means giving the benefit of the doubt - not judging and jumping on every mistake. It means caring about their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. It means being there in times of need. Being available for a prayer, a chat, a coffee, a walk, a visit.
- We also glorify God - when we hate evil - see v9 - the Greek literally means to be horrified by evil. If we're not horrified by the evil we see in this world - the

murders, the abuse, the persecution, the terrorism, the wars, the immorality, the greed, the jealousy - then we're not glorifying God. We glorify God by clinging on to all that is good

- We glorify God - by keeping our zeal and enthusiasm to grow spiritually in v11 - by that Paul means - we should be hungry to learn more about God and about His Son - by meditating on His Word - and learning how to serve and please Him - We should be passionate about doing that - and not drift along in life like we are cruise-control Christians
- Life can be tough - it's been a tough week - lots of people in our church family are sick or struggling - and we've lost dear Mrs T. But Paul says - we can still be joyful in all of these struggles. He says in verse v12 - to be joyful in hope! Why can we be joyful? Because we have the certain hope - because of Jesus' death and resurrection - we have the certain hope that believing in Him - gives us forgiveness and eternal life - living with God forever in Heaven - where there is no more tears, sickness, death, wars, hatred and so. That's worth being joyful for - isn't it? And being joyful in that - brings glory to God - because it's His grace and love that provides that Hope
- And so Paul says - still in v12 - we can be patient in affliction - patient in our struggles - knowing that God teaches us through our struggles - how to be patient and trust Him - and this in turn will encourage other people to be patient - and that will glorify God
- Still in v12 - Paul says - be faithful in our prayer life. If we're not praying - we're not connecting to God - You can't have a relationship with someone if you don't spend time with them and talk to them. Praying shows God - we're committed to the relationship - like He is. So it's worth asking ourselves - how's our prayer life?

[Powerpoint 10-Response]

- We can also glorify God by sharing our stuff in v13 - our home, our food, our clothes, our vehicles, our caravan, our holiday places, our money, our tools, our technology - and so on. Whose stuff is it anyway? How come we have this stuff in the first place? Because God blessed us with it. Sharing our stuff brings glory to God
- Then there's hospitality still in v13 - there's morning tea - there's café church - there's inviting people out for lunch or to your home. There's the homeless and

the needy. Hampers and Samaritan boxes. By practicing hospitality - you're thinking of others - and that brings glory to God!

- Paul says in v14 to bless those who persecute - not curse them. So we could be praying for them - that they turn away from their persecution. That's what happened to the Apostle Paul himself - he met Jesus face to face - and stopped persecuting Christians and became one - and that glorified God
- And we can rejoice when others are rejoicing see v15- share in their joy - be happy for them. Likewise - we can get beside those who are grieving the loss of a loved one - and be alongside them in their grief - praying with them - comforting them - supporting them. God will be pleased with us doing that
- Then in v16 live in harmony with others. We shouldn't be too proud to mix with those less fortunate than us - or people not as educated as us - or people with a mental illness. Paul's basically saying don't be a snob - God loves us all the same - we are all equal in God's eyes
- And what about revenge and pay back - see verses 17 to 19 - Paul says don't retaliate - don't take revenge - don't have a dummy. People are watching our behaviour - especially non-Christians - and if our behaviour is full of hatred and revenge - that's not going to glorify God at all
- Rather Paul says - living in peace with others as far as it is humanly possible - may well win people into a relationship with Jesus - when they see how we don't retaliate and we act peacefully. In fact Paul says revenge is up to God - not us - instead we should be overcoming evil with goodness. Showing kindness to someone who is being horrible to us - Paul says - will convict them of their wrong doing - and they may well come to understand how Christians live - and want to be part of it. That will glorify God

During the Revolutionary War, minister Peter Miller lived near a fellow who hated him intensely and ridiculed his followers. One day the unbeliever was found guilty of treason and sentenced to death. Hearing about this, Peter Miller set out on foot to intercede for the man and plead for his life before George Washington himself. Washington listened to the minister's plea, but told him he didn't feel he should pardon his 'friend'.

"My friend! He's not my friend," answered Miller. "In fact he's my worst enemy!"

"What?" said Washington. "You've walked 60 miles to save the life of your enemy? That, in my judgment, puts the matter in a different light. I'll grant your request."

With the pardon in hand, Peter Miller rushed to where his neighbour was to be executed and arrived just as the prisoner was walking to the scaffold. When the traitor saw Miller, he exclaimed, "Old Peter Miller has come to have his revenge by watching me hang!" But he was astonished as he watched the minister produce the pardon that spared his life.

This is just a shadow of what Christ did; Christ not only obtained His enemies' pardons, but died to accomplish that.

(pause)

Chapter 12 of Romans - gives so many ways that we can bring glory to God

It's a tall order though - isn't it?

It's very difficult for us to achieve the things Paul suggests here

So how is it possible?

Only by what Paul says in v2

[Powerpoint 11-Response possible by]

By being transformed by the renewing of your mind

It's a change in mindset - and that is only possible by claiming the work of the Holy Spirit - living inside us - and asking the Holy Spirit - through our prayers - and through reading God's Word - to transform and renew our minds - to be in step with God's will - and not our will. This will change our motivation in what we think - in what we say - and in what we do - We will then begin to see - that it's glorifying God that matters - not glorifying ourselves

We're basically being rewired by God's Holy Spirit and God's Word applied to our lives

Conclusion/Challenge

So my challenge for us all today - is to claim Romans chapter 12 as our way to bring glory to God - and identify areas of our life - which we can change - with the help of the Holy Spirit - to bring glory to God - and even lead others to God's glory...
Let's pray...