

WCCC 2025 Brother Dana Congdon We Beheld His Glory (2)

As we were singing that song this morning (Glory, Glory, Hallelujah) I could hear again my old friend Wayne from sixty years ago saying “GLOOORY!”. At this time, he didn’t know that Margaret Barber stole this song and sang about the glory of the Lord. This was actually an American Civil War song, written by song Christians. But she gave these wonderful words.

It is hard to live with people like Margaret Barber because her faith was so strong. It always made us feel weak. Remember that she was the one walking down the street with Watchman Nee on New Year’s Day. She said, “brother, what if we turn the corner and the Lord is there?” She believed the Lord was coming very soon.

I remember one time back in New York I spoke on the coming of the Lord. I said, “isn’t it wonderful that He is coming back very soon?” A sister came to me and said, “I know He’s coming, but not very soon.”

I said, “well, how do you know?”

“Well first the Antichrist has to come. And then we have to have 3 and a half years of tribulation. And then He is coming.”

“So your blessed hope is that you’re waiting for the tribulation?”

Anybody who has figured out the mystery of the coming of the Lord is wrong. Glory is a place in the future. Glory is a time soon. And then you can have your theories about how everything is going to take place. But here is the privilege that we have.

In one sense, we don’t have to wait for the Lord to come. He will reveal His glory to anyone who pursues Him. That is what made Margaret Barber such a wonderful saint.

I am very excited. I, like my brother Sun, am getting pretty old. Whenever I get through the message, I look outside to see if that shuttle bus has Brother Sun, Brother Ted and I on it to take us out. We’re taking the shuttle bus to glory. The rest of you can go down to the cafeteria for lunch.

What I am excited about is that the Lord is raising up a young generation who once again desires the Lord with all their heart. Isn’t that wonderful? Gen-X was such a bust. The Millennials were too self-centered. I don’t know if there’s going

to be another letter of the alphabet after Z. I don't think so, so the Lord must be coming soon!

We do a Bible study back on the East Coast. I just finished going through the gospel of Matthew. So I do a study on Monday nights. And Friday nights on their own free will, Gen-Z gets together to go through verse by verse to find out what mistakes I made. In this pursuit they already accomplished the 3 requirements to see the glory of the Lord.

- To study the Word until it becomes heavy.
- To know the fullness of the Holy Spirit.
- To consecrate your lives for the glory of God.

Now people who stand on the outside may say "well all this is mystical." Yes, indeed it is mystical, but I would challenge you - I know of no faithful servant of the Lord who has not seen the glory. Now it may be just instinctive. The Lord, through the generations of the Church, has given a few brothers and sisters who have seen things clearly in visions. And there are those in the body of Christ who - thank God - are very practical. But the Lord wants even those practical ones to instinctively know that this is God. This is glory.

A funny thing happened to my wife and I when we graduated from college. In college I majored in business and she majored in religion. I became religious and she became a businessperson. Now to add to the irony of this whole college experience, in my university I received the reward for being the number one business student in the university. But you see, I didn't tell anybody that I had an advantage over all the other students. Myself, along with all the other students studying economic theory, marketing, bookkeeping, along with the other 16 hours of college work I was taking, I was working 20 hours a week as a junior executive in my father-in-law's company. So everything I read in those books wasn't a theory. "So that's how it works!" And I put them to work at the company.

My father-in-law's company is what you'd call a mom-and-pop company. They needed somebody who actually understood business. So that was me. I could put into play all these theories we read about. Meanwhile the other students who weren't working were wondering, "what do we need these economic models for? They are ridiculous!". When you are working on the job, these things are important.

There are a number of Christians - I don't think any in this audience - who worship like this, with their hands crossed. No doubt they are very intelligent. No doubt they have heard all the theories. But they are not in the King's business. They are not serving the Lord. They are dragging their feet, holding the Church down. They are the wet blanket on the sister or the brother who believes.

They say, “well I am like the disciple Doubting Thomas.” Except that Thomas gave his life 100% for “my Lord and my God!” So the best thing we can say for everybody: “By faith, untie your boat from the dock and go out into the waters and see if you can walk on the water when Jesus shows up.” You won’t receive answers if you don’t ask, seek or knock.

Can you imagine what would happen if Zippy (Moses’ wife) followed Moses up on the mountain, and she heard Moses say “Oh Lord, show me Thy glory!”? Zippy would have said “shut up! Don’t you know seeing God’s glory can cost you your life?” She would have thought Moses was crazy.

I hope you’re a crazy Christian. I can tell some of you are a little nuts. What I mean is being crazy for Christ, because that is what we want to talk about this morning. Not just Christ the Lord of glory, but Jesus, lover of your soul.

You probably know that one of the major clusters of the word “glory” in the Bible is found in the gospel of John. So if you’d turn to John 1, let us read a few verses together. Our theme verse is John 1:14.

*"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."
John 1:14 NKJV*

Those are the first 2 of 27 times “glory” will be mentioned in the Gospel of John.

*"And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one."
John 17:22 NKJV*

Wouldn’t it be beautiful that brothers and sisters in the same congregation saw the glory of God and were united together?

And then also in the Lord’s prayer,

*"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world."
John 17:24 NKJV*

“O Father, these are my disciples. They see a bit of glory here. A bit of glory there. You bring them here into your Father’s house. Let them see the full expense of the Lord of glory. I know they have to look through my humanity. They saw me when I had a hard time sleeping. They saw me when I was being beaten around by my persecutors, and I know it hurt them. Now I want you to show them the radiance of the Lord of glory. So bring them to the Father’s house.”

What a prayer. God loves us so much He wants to reveal His Son to us. This would be the most pleasurable thing God can do. He has shown us bits of His glory here and there. Somehow we may have seen the brightness, or the heaviness of His presence. Maybe a silent word in our heart, “well done, good and faithful servant.” Or sometimes He displays the power of His cosmos.

I was a young Christian many years ago when I found out about my brother. He was a businessman who loved the Lord and witnessed and brought many people to Jesus. But now he had an operation on his back. They fused some vertebrae and he was in such pain he could only lie on the floor.

My father-in-law asked if we could go visit him down in Florida. Another 12 or so men came to pray that perhaps the Lord in His mercy would heal this man. We got to His house, found the door unlocked because he couldn't get up from the floor to open the door for us. We gathered the brothers from North Carolina, Virginia, other places in Florida and myself from New York. Little did we realize that we were having an encounter with glory.

So we began to pray for our brother's healing. A couple of prayers in, one brother stopped. He said, “I feel before we can pray for him, I need to confess my sin.” He asked the Lord to forgive him for getting mad with his wife that day and leaving the home with the thing unresolved. Then he asked the Lord's forgiveness for not reconciling with a brother in church over some finance matter.

Wouldn't you know that all 12 men in that meeting began to confess their sins. None of them, as I recall, were big sins, but sins in the way of praying with holy hands. And after all the prayers and confessions had been made, I began to sing “Turn your eyes upon Jesus”, and all the men joined in.

How do you explain such moments as this? A heaviness came into that meeting that forced all of us as men to get out of our chairs and lay down with our faces on the ground. A brightness came into that room, though that eyes were closed, it seemed I was staring at the sunlight. Before a soul could pray “Lord Jesus, heal this dear brother by Your mercy!”, our brother cried out and groaned a great groan. He stood up on his feet, a healed man. No one even had a chance to pray for that. We cried for hours.

That is an experience I have never had since. I can recount some other times the glory of the Lord came into the room. Now, brothers and sisters, men cannot orchestrate bringing the glory down. Glory is place-sensitive and time-sensitive all in the sovereign will of God. And glory may manifest itself in many different ways, but it can help affect your life.

So you, even during this weekend, even just hear a whisper from the glory, stop and ask the Lord, “Lord, what is that whisper? I didn't quite understand!” All of

us have the privilege of knowing the great and blessed hope of glory because Christ dwells in us.

Last time, we took a survey of the glory of God in terms of creation. We talked about the progression of glory, and a man's life from created glory to transitional glory to a vessel of glory. We talked about the Father of glory. And Jesus, the Lord of glory. And the Spirit of glory.

Now, is there any glory that I left out? Most of the times in the Bible, glory is talking about the future. Colossians 3:4 is familiar to us.

*"When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."
Colossians 3:4 NKJV*

That is talking about a place. Undefined. Maybe you call it heaven, or heaven came down to earth. I remember when I was first saved, one of my favorite songs was "Heaven came down and glory filled by soul". When I got saved, I felt so forgiven, so joyful.

But every time the Lord gives us a whisper from the glory, it is a foretaste of something from the future. God's eternal purpose is that He is taking everything and drawing it together towards a final purpose. As I tell the young people, "God brings down from heaven in a big crane, a giant electro-magnet. If it comes too near to your head, the magnetism brings you up!" He is summing up all things in Christ. He is heading up all things in Christ. God's great electro-magnet, the Holy Spirit, is sucking all of us up into higher ground.

Glory is the end game of God. He is gathering a church towards this goal. He is gathering the saints towards this goal. He is gathering creation towards this goal. In these last days, God is working together all things for good - this is an explanation about how He is bringing everything into that glory.

In our present dispensation, the Holy Spirit is the Glorifier bringing us into transition from glory to glory.

Now the world simply cannot understand what glory means. They may think that because they know about religious people, glory means something of a shining, a brightness. But once you have been touched by glory, it begins to explain a lot of things in your life.

Paul in Romans 8:18,

*"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
Romans 8:18 NKJV*

If you have seen the glory, when somebody has a vision, for Christians there is only one way through the door. Jesus is the door to glory. Do you want to see the glory of God? You got to go through Jesus. You want to see the glory of heaven? You got to go through Jesus.

It is just like the book of Revelation. I like to say it simply is this: John was on the Isle of Patmos, so discouraged because the seven churches were falling away from glory. And God the Father said, "Jesus, show him what is going on."

Suddenly John looked up and saw the Lord of glory. He saw the Lord of glory in the midst of all the churches, holding the golden lampstand. When he saw that, he saw that everything is going to be ok.

There was an old song the gospel choirs used to sing on television when I was first saved, and it went,

*"We win, hallelujah we win
I read the back of the book and we win!"*

Now I hope you read the whole Bible, but have you read the back of the Book? My wife loves to read novels. Sometimes she sneaks to the end. If you open the book of Revelation, there is the doorway of what is going to happen. The whole destiny of the world is held in the scroll by the Lamb of God, and He is opening the seals one by one, and everything moves towards glory and the heavenly Jerusalem.

This is a big, big thing. Just think about all that stuff in the book of Revelation. The whole book of Revelation is about the victory of the Lamb of God. What a wonderful glory that will be!

So when we see that glory - Peter called it when on the mountain Jesus was transformed - if Peter were in my Baptist church many years ago he would have called it, "Majestic GLOOORRY!". This is what he called it in 2 Peter, the "majestic glory". Paul calls it the "exceeding and eternal weight of glory".

For us to see and understand glory, we have to have - in the last days - the Spirit of prophecy, the testimony of Jesus. For the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy. What does that mean? All the prophecies given in the Old Testament are in some way pointing to the testimony of Jesus.

So we find our theme verse in Isaiah 43:7 right in the middle of a prophecy. This is a prophecy of one who has seen the glory of the Lord. Not just the glory of the Lord, but the glory of the Lord on His throne. I don't know if you have seen how the book of Isaiah works itself out. But after seeing the Lord of glory, Isaiah first finds out that His name is Emmanuel. Then the Lord said, "do you see me? I am

the Lord on the throne.” And in chapters 13-17, “I, Jehovah, the Lord of glory, here is what I say about Egypt. Here is what I say about Tyre, about Philistia, about Assyria, about Babylon.” And Isaiah saw the world under the throne of the majestic glory.

And because of that, the Lord kept opening up his heart, such that when Isaiah became an old man, he realized by prophetic burden that Judah was about to go into captivity into Babylon. The Lord said, “Isaiah, look up! Even though my people are going into captivity, they are Mine. I have a plan.”

Let us look at a few verses.

*"But now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob,
And He who formed you, O Israel:
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by your name;
You are Mine."
Isaiah 43:1 NKJV*

Here is the context of our conference theme. And then our brother Ted brought our verse 4.

*"Since you were precious in My sight,
You have been honored,
And I have loved you;
Therefore I will give men for you,
And people for your life."
Isaiah 43:4 NKJV*

Wait, wait, wait. The Lord is saying this about His children who are basking in idolatry? He says, “You were precious in My sight.” And in the Hebrew it says, “you have been glorified by Me. And I have loved you.”

*"I will say to the north, 'Give them up!'
And to the south, 'Do not keep them back!'
Bring My sons from afar,
And My daughters from the ends of the earth—"
Isaiah 43:6 NKJV*

Isn't that wonderful? This is a promise that the children of Israel held on to while they were in Babylonian captivity. The Lord says, “I am Jehovah. I know the end from the beginning.”

When you get to the end of the chapter.

*“Do not remember the former things,
Nor consider the things of old.
Behold, I will do a new thing,
Now it shall spring forth;
Shall you not know it?
I will even make a road in the wilderness
And rivers in the desert.”
Isaiah 43:18-19 NKJV*

Jesus said to His disciples, “when you see all this tribulation about, look up! Your redemption draweth nigh.”

When we come to the gospel of John, it was written full of glory. It was written to reveal God’s glory in a special way. Even there in the first century, many, many people got saved. But the Church devolved from a testimony of Jesus into a large house where there were vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor.

When you look at the book of Revelation, the Church had gotten busy, sometimes preaching, sometimes serving, sometimes following doctrines, sometimes falling asleep, sometimes getting rich. The Lord said, “John, time for you to write something. Time for you to write about My glory. The saints have gotten into salvation and missed the Savior. I want you to share about the glory that can be seen in Jesus Christ.”

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,” John said. “And we beheld His glory.” Because of this, some Bible teachers think that this is John talking about when he saw Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. But that is not what John is talking about. He is not talking about when Jesus was changed into glory for a moment. He says, “when Jesus came to earth, we beheld His glory. The glory begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

The glory of God cannot be seen by sinful man or he will die. But God said “I am going to refract My glory in my Son in such a way that sinners can see Him.” So John writes a gospel that includes 2 different strategies for revealing the glory of the Father. As you know, he showed 7 - some say 8 - signs: “I am”.

I am the light of the world
I am the bread of heaven
I am the true door.

And He gave some signs. Some say they were miracles. But John says no, they are signs. They are signs pointing to something. It is not that Jesus is the light of the world, but when He healed the man born blind, that was a sign to show

that Jesus is the light of the world. And so there were all of these miracles: the changing of water into wine. At the end of John 2:11, it says,

*"This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him."
John 2:11 NKJV*

Water into wine. The head of the feast said, "GLLOOOORY!"

But at the end of the gospel, John said in a way of summary, in John 20,

*"And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."
John 20:30-31 NKJV*

So John's collected signs were all pointing to Jesus, the I Am. When people saw those signs they believed. But here is where the gospel is quite unique. Unlike Matthew, Mark and Luke, you'll remember that the gospel of John is actually a list of a number of personal encounters with people. The reason he tells these stories is so that you can see God through the way Jesus talked and treated these various people.

Jesus came to this earth with one great burden: I want people to see the glory of my Father. To the Jews, God was great. So holy we can't even say His name. When you read in the Old Testament and it comes to Jehovah - you can't do that - such that every time they read it they change it to Adonai which means Lord instead of Jehovah. In their prayers, they wouldn't even say "Oh God", but they would say "Oh, the name!"

What is this God like? Jesus said, let me show them what my father is really like.

So I want to share with you 5 principles that Jesus used to show the Father's glory. But these are also teachable moments to show us how to reveal the Father's glory.

The first principle is this: He sought the Father's glory, not His glory. In John 5:41,

*"I do not receive honor from men."
John 5:41 NKJV*

*"How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?"
John 5:44 NKJV*

“He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.”
John 7:18 NKJV

Jesus wasn't interested in sharing His own glory. He had a higher, nobler task. “I want to show the glory of My Father.”

The second principle of His revelation of glory: it was very clear that as a servant with this goal of glory, His whole life must be “not my will, but Thine be done.” More than 5 times in the gospel of John, we have this unique expression. I like the particular translation which says, “I do nothing of my own initiative.” In the Greek it actually says, “I do nothing out of myself.”

You may note these verses:

“I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”
John 5:30 NASB1995

You know, every human being, including our Lord Jesus, can judge things. No one in fact can judge more honestly and correctly than Jesus Himself. But when He felt the urge to judge, He stopped Himself. “Father, what do you think about this?”

Or we have

“Then Jesus said to them, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.”
John 8:28 NKJV

What do you think? Jesus as a human being, there were a lot of things He could say. He could look at Peter and say, “Peter! Take off your flip flops, you are on holy ground!” But He didn't. He waited to see. “Father, do you want to say something to Peter?”

Or

“Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.”
John 8:42 NASB1995

Up in heaven before He ever broke through the clouds, Jesus said, “Father, we must do something to save this world from sin. Should I go down?” The Father

said, "It is time, my Son". His coming to earth was perfectly under the timing of His Father.

*"For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak."
John 12:49 NASB1995*

No wonder His parables were so clever! No wonder His simple words caused conviction and salvation!

*"Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works."
John 14:10 NASB1995*

"Thomas, Thomas, do you really think I did those miracles? I did not do those miracles, the Father did His work through me. Thomas, don't you see that yet? Thomas, if you have seen Me, you have seen the Father. Don't you get it?"

So the second principle is "Not my will, but Thine be done."

The third demonstration of the glory of the Father was the third principle. "I offer my burdens and my trials to be used for Your glory."

Times of testing. Times of suffering. Jesus offered them up believing and trusting that the Father would get glory out of the mess. So you remember the mess in John 11 when Lazarus died? And all the trouble with the disciples about going back, and Mary saying "oh, if you only had been here!"

Here is what Jesus said.

*"But when Jesus heard this, He said, "This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it."
John 11:4 NASB1995*

And He said to her dear sister Mary,

*"Jesus *said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"
John 11:40 NASB1995*

"Mary, Martha, this tragedy of your brother - hang on! You are about to see glory! Do you believe it?"

It is one thing to say, "Oh yes, I believe Romans 8:28." But how glorious when you're going through difficulties you say "I believe God is going to get glory out of this."

The fourth principle, which is an extrapolation of the third: "My cross I endure for your glory". When Jesus knew His hour had come to go to the cross, He believed the glory of God would shine out of that terrible death.

*"And Jesus *answered them, saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."
John 12:23-24 NASB1995*

And then in

*"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. Father, glorify Your name."
John 12:27-28 NASB1995*

But the fifth principle He operated on was the most unique of all, because He believed the Father's glory would be His glory as well. So we read those wonderful verses in the whole of John 17 which we don't have time to go all the way through.

*"Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You,"
John 17:1 NASB1995*

"Father, the time of the cross has come. You know my heart's desire. I want you to be glorified. As I lay upon that cross, would You glorify me, so that I can glorify You?"

*"I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was."
John 17:4-5 NASB1995*

Do you understand? If you set as your purpose in life to glorify the Father, He will glorify you. It is perfectly right in the church and in the gospel that you should seek reward - that you should seek the glory of God, to seek His approval. But the way is not by seeking your own glory, it is by seeking His glory, and then, you are glorified.

You remember when Jesus met the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They were trying to figure out what was going on. Jesus said, "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter His glory?"

So as we find the theme again and again, the way of suffering is the way through to glory.

Now we come back to Jesus who revealed the glory of the Father, full of grace and truth. Jesus had a burden to share this glory of the Father and He showed it through these interviews He had with individuals through the gospels. We all know these stories - the woman at the well, and so on. But they are so familiar to us that we may be overlooking that these were ways Jesus was showing us how to deal with sinners so that they may be saved.

Not only sinners, but the Jews had a completely distorted idea of who God really is.

I am going to put John's testimony in my own words. As I watched Jesus dealing with all mankind, but not as all as we expected God to do. We expected Him to deal with anger, with judgement, with criticism. We thought God would come to speak to sinners with condemnation, with separation and with repentance. But we saw God our Father dealing with these sinners with love, respect, care, patience, drawing.

Jesus was the most wonderful, spiritual boxer in the face of the earth. He has a one-two punch that can save the sinner. Grace and Truth. The one-two punch. That's how God deals with sinners.

So John says, "let me give you some examples." In John 1, Philip ran over to the village, crying to Nathaniel, "We have met the Messiah!". What did old Nate say?

"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

You see, that is religion. He is a Jew. People from Nazareth are also Jews, but we are better Jews than they are.

Then suddenly Jesus comes upon them and punches. "Nathaniel - a true Israelite in whom there is no guile." Nathaniel was such a judgmental hypocrite. He caught an uppercut.

He said, "how do you know me?"

Jesus said, "just a while ago, you were sitting under a tree, and I saw you there."

Nathaniel thought, "This guy has got His eye on me? God has His eye on me! Truly you are the Messiah, the Son of God!"

Jesus said, "Nate, let me tell you what is going to happen. You walk with me, and you're going to see that I am the ladder up heaven. And heaven is coming

down, and earth is going up, and the angels are going to be coming up and down on me with glory. Hang out here with me. I invite you to be my disciple.”

Nathaniel was caught. 100%. The old Negro spiritual goes:

*God wants you 100%
99 and a half won't do*

Oh, such truth! Such grace!

You know the story about changing water into wine. It always captures our attention the way Mary says, “Jesus! Jesus! There is an emergency! They have run out of wine! It is so embarrassing! Jesus, you got to do something about it!”

Jesus gives the truth. “I don’t do anything because I have to do something right now. Let me ask the Father if this is time to do something.”

And then instead of Him doing something right there where Mary would go around saying, “That’s my boy Jesus. He just turned the water into wine!”, Jesus said, “Mary, go sit down. Now you servants take that water to the head of the feast.”

And what He did was Poof grace! He did a secret miracle. Nobody knew it happened. Suddenly it was the best wine. Forget California. Straight from France! Where did you get that wine? Everybody went, “I don’t know!”

This is God’s grace. He is not trying to show off. What is He doing? He is saying, “I love weddings. I love feasting. May the Lord bless you in your marriage, and let this be a little something.”

How many times have you been secretly blessed by God? Just between you and Him. Nobody has to know. This is for you.

Thank God, if you’d think you were a Jew. We jump to chapter 3 to Nicodemus. Pharisee. Not only a Pharisee. A teacher of the people. An exceptional Pharisee. The Pharisees unilaterally treated Jesus with disdain. Now one is sneaking in at nighttime to talk to Jesus. What is He going to do?

“Hypocrite! How dare you come to me after all the things you said behind my back! I know everything you said!” But no!

“Hey Nick, what do you want?” Nicodemus was an academic, so he had a lot of questions.

I hope you see that Jesus dealt patiently and with respect to this man. Because to Jesus it made no difference if he was a Pharisee or a Sadducee or whatever. He was a seeker of something.

Jesus had to give him a little punch or two as He talked to Him about being born from above. “Now you are a teacher of Israel and you do not know these things? I have told you earthly things and you don’t believe them. How would you believe if I told you heavenly things?”

Rather than oppose His opponent, He won him and saved him by making him seek the things that are above.

Then we get to chapter 4. We hardly need to speak of the woman at the well. How does God treat a nasty woman? She’s been divorced a whole bunch of times. She is a smart alec. She is disrespectful. How did Jesus treat her?

“Excuse me, can I have some water from your pitcher?”

She was so surprised. “The Jews don’t even talk with me! Not only that, but you can tell that I am here in the middle of the day, so things aren’t going well with the rest of my friends.”

The next thing you know Jesus tells her, “Hey, would you like some living water? I got some living water for you.”

What’s going on here? This isn’t God? Who is this?

So Jesus invited her for a drink. So she started arguing and reasoning. And He listened, enjoying her cunning arguments. But He had her in a dialogue of truth, you see. Finally He talked her into having a drink of grace.

“Go call your husband.”

“Erm...which one of the 5? Erm.....”

Things took on a different frame, didn’t it? So she starts off her religious argument: you meet on this mountain and we meet on this mountain...

Jesus shushes her. “I can tell you are a seeker after God. Forget the mountains.”

“I tell you what. When Messiah comes, He’s going to tell us....”

“I am He.”

And that woman met God the Father that day, ran into the village and became an evangelist. That's just not the religion you know about. Even among Christians, there is a religion that is so narrow, so nasty, judgmental.

Take John 5. There is the man sitting there for 38 years trying to get into the water to get healed. He is lame. What has this man learned in 38 years about religion? If he is going to get healed, he has to use self-effort and somehow get into the water. Meanwhile God seems kind of unfair. He is arbitrating. God says to the angel, "Hey Charlie is asleep, move the waters so somebody else can get in first. I am not going to answer his prayer, he's gotta try harder. He's gotta hang over the edge of the pool if he wants to get in." Pray harder, do more, that's what you gotta do.

38 years. If you are religious, you have become a victim.

The Lord comes to this man and asks, "Do you want to be well?" He didn't say this to mock the guy. He had been a victim so long he had forgotten what faith was.

Some people are so religious they have forgotten what faith is.

It made the man wonder, "What does He mean by that? Does He not see that I am a victim?"

And Jesus said a gracious word, "Take up your bed and go home."

I don't even know if the man had time to think about what Jesus was saying. He just obeyed Jesus and was completely healed.

Oh, the truth and the grace of Who God is! This was a mystery to all these people until Jesus revealed Him.

Just a few more episodes. In John 7, do you remember how it opens? Here is the wrong kind of God. It says Jesus' brothers didn't really believe He was who He said He was. It was the Feast of Tabernacles.

So they said, "Jesus, we are going to be your agents. If you want to do something to make your name known and to gain glory, it is time to go to the Feast of Tabernacles and show off."

Jesus says, "that's the kind of religion you have. You show off to gain something. Your time is always to show off. My time hasn't come. You guys go. I'll stay here. I am not going to let family influence me."

That is truth. So Jesus went up secretly, because He was waiting for the right time. On the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles, when after pouring out water

for 7 days, they come with empty pots on the 8th and say, “Oh God, send down your Messiah,” the time was right.

Jesus said, “If any man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Those feasts won’t satisfy you. But rivers of living water will come out of your belly if you believe.”

God always does stuff at the right time.

What can we say about the woman caught in adultery in chapter 8? What would religion say? “In Jesus’ name, stone her! She has sinned. Time to stone. We love God. We stone people.”

Jesus said, “who hasn’t sinned here? Go ahead, you chuck the first stone.” And Jesus asked her, “did anybody condemn me? Neither does God, if you repent and sin no more.”

You know that girl’s life changed completely.

Or how about John 9, the man who was born blind? You know the holy men of God - Peter, James, John, Bartholomew, Nathaniel. When they saw the man born blind, they had one question: “Aha! Who sinned, him or his parents, that had made him blind?” These guys were real religious scholars huh. How could he be responsible? How could a child in the mother’s womb do something wrong that would cause him to be born blind?

There are these busybody Christians who go around saying “Aha! I knew it! Because you didn’t raise your children right, look, they have gone off. You’re wrong! You’re bad! It must be the sins of that person or the other person!”

Jesus blew them away. “It wasn’t because of anybody’s sin. This is a moment for the glory of God. For him to be healed to show that I am the light of the world.”

The only time glory is mentioned in that chapter has to do with the Pharisees. They brought this blind man who now sees before the council. This is what they said - their great religious statement: “Give glory to God! That man is a sinner because He healed you on the Sabbath!”

And what did the man do? He sang “Amazing Grace”.

*Was blind
But now I see*

What more needs to be said? Jesus, lover of our souls. Jesus, healer of our diseases. He brought that man right into His fold as the true Shepherd.

The greatest of these interviews of course was all with Martha and Mary over the death of Lazarus.

James came to Jesus one day and said, “Jesus, I just got a telegram from Martha and Mary! Lazarus is very sick. Please get up here to Bethany. Quick!”

Jesus went “Aha! This is for the glory of God. Let’s wait three or four more days.”

Glory comes with God’s timing, you see. As you know, things went from bad to worse and Lazarus died.

When Jesus finally showed up, He showed up four days too late.

Martha said, “Oh I know if you’d only been here, he would have been healed.”

Jesus said, “well if he was healed, he would have died again. How about I raise him from the dead?”

Now when Mary came, she said the same thing. “Oh Lord, if only you would have been here.” Oh, God is always just too late.

Jesus said, “If you only believe you are about to see the glory of God.”

Now all the people were weeping together with Mary. You know what God did? God wept.

Do you have a God that weeps? Just when He sees the tragedy of life, the tragedy of bereavement? Some people have a god who says, “I don’t need to weep. I know what is going to happen. I’m going to raise him from the dead. Why should I weep? Everything is going to be ok!”

Our God. The biggest problem we have with God is that He is hard for us to see because He is more humble than we are. He weeps over broken people more easily than we do. Even though Jesus knew what the outcome would be, He wept.

He said, “Open the grave. Lord, I know what is going to happen. I just want to pray so that all these people hearing me will know what is going to happen. Lazarus, come forth!”

And all of us are going to be resurrected. No matter what our desperate situation.

So it is no wonder that finally in chapter 12, we reach the summation of this glory cluster.

The Greeks came and said, "Wait a minute! We've heard about a God who's very different from the gods we know in the Greek pantheon! We want to see God! We hear He's in Jesus. Please show us Jesus!"

That's when Jesus said, "My hour of glory has come. I want to be accessible to the Jew as well as the Gentile. Now the cross lies before me. Father, glorify Thy name." And all of us Gentiles can enter into glory because Jesus didn't live for Himself. In every way, He showed us what God was really like.

So the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We saw His everyday activities. As we beheld Him we said, "Hey that's God, that's God!" Not the warped god of the Greeks. Not the self-righteous god of the Jews! This is a God who has been revealed to us through Jesus."

Isn't that wonderful that Jesus has revealed to us the glory of the Father? Can there be any mistake about who God is? Do those actions that Jesus took back up when He said?

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever (in those 12 chapters) believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

John 3:16 NASB1995

O Lord, we come to you today. In the humility of God, you came. You came, not only lower than the angels. You came lower than us. You revealed a grace and truth we had never seen before. We worship the God of our salvation. We worship the God of grace and grace. We worship the God who cares for the little ones. We worship a God who didn't judge us, but judged Himself. Oh, great, great God! How big your heart is! We have never seen such a God before. All the gods of this world are just small fries. We are so thankful that we have met the true and living God in Jesus. We pray in His name, Amen