

The Map Maker's Guide

Map 20 - The Life that Glorifies Our Father in Heaven

Spiritual Exercise

*For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts. Isaiah 55:8-9*

*It is the glory of God to conceal a matter,
But the glory of kings is to search out a matter. Proverbs 25:2*

To put this in a perspective we can understand, the heavens are at least 13 billion light years above the Earth - and our God measures this vast expanse we call the Universe in the span of His hand! Our God is a very big god! By comparison, we are so very small. Still, in His awesome sovereignty, God Almighty has condescended to conceal matters of His kingdom for His children to search out (anyone thinking scavenger hunt?). Furthermore, The Excellent Glory has established that searching out these matters is for our glory. How amazing is that!?!

Prayer

Gracious and merciful Father in Heaven, we are awed by your thoughts and ways. They are higher, more beautiful, more powerful and more magnificent than we can think or imagine. We praise You for Your thoughts and ways. We praise You for concealing these matters. We thank You for inviting us, in Christ, to search them out. We submit to our Lord and to our Teacher in the searching. We commit to do what we hear. In Jesus Christ's Name. Amen.

Introduction

As we move into this last leg of our adventure, let us consider once again the grand purposes of God. His story is about Him getting back that which was lost in the Garden: His reign, His habitation and His intimate relationship with His children. He has invited us to join Him in the work. A life of joyful, Spirit-filled ministry awaits those that will surrender to Him and sacrifice for His plan.

We now turn our attention to the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. Let us consider the One Who put all things under His Son's feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Ephesians 1:19-23)

There is a power that has exceeding greatness toward those who believe. It is - simultaneously - power (*dunamis*), energy (*energeia*), delegated authority (*exousia*), strength (*ischus*), and might (*kratos*). Jesus exercised this power and commissioned His followers to do the same (John 14:12; 20:21). As we submit to His power, God, through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, transforms us into instruments and weapons of righteousness for the transformation of others in our spheres of influence. In so doing, He is glorified.

I want you to know right up front that there are verses in this lesson that I believe with all my heart, but cannot explain with my limited vocabulary. This mystery of glory is one that exposes the limitations of

our minds. I encourage you: Do not settle for that which only your mind can comprehend. Trust Him to lead you into all understanding. May we desire to know the Lord fully, so that we may better love Him with our whole heart, mind, soul and strength.

Definition

Glory (*doxa*): Splendor, brightness, magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, grace, majesty; a thing belonging to God; the kingly majesty which belongs to him as supreme ruler, majesty in the sense of the absolute perfection of the deity; a thing belonging to Christ; the kingly majesty of the Messiah; the absolutely perfect inward or personal excellency of Christ; the state of blessedness into which believers are to enter hereafter through being brought into the likeness of Christ.

Outline of Biblical Usage, BlueLetterBible.org

The word glory appears in the NKJV 404 times. Needless to say, it is an important word in Scripture; important enough that we take time to understand its full meaning. For starters, recognize that it belongs to God the Father and Christ His Son, and is a condition “which believers are to enter”. There is a glory that has been reserved for the Father’s many children - those that follow His Son.

Searching Out the Matter

(All Scripture references, but those noted, are NKJV; Thomas Nelson, Inc.; footnotes and headings excluded)

The Mysteries of Glory and Our Work

Let’s start with the foundational verse for this leg of our adventure. It is here that we begin our exploration of the mystery of glory. It is a mystery that will radically change our work, ministry and family life.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16

First, it is important to note that this is a command of our King. Second, His command is not, “Go do good works that will glorify God”. God will glorify Himself. The command for us is to “let your light so shine before men...” This raises a few compelling questions:

1. Would God take credit for work done by His children?
2. If our Father in heaven is to be glorified in the “good work”, who do you think will be doing the work?
3. Why does Jesus call it “your good work”?
4. If it’s God’s work - and somehow our work - what part of the work is His; and what part is ours?
5. Just what is our responsibility in a work that glorifies our Father in Heaven?

The answers to these questions, and the mystery they represent, will be found in searching out the matter of the glory of God, the glory given to Jesus Christ, and the glory subsequently passed on to those that would believe in Him. Yes, that’s right: The Father has not only given glory to His Son, but He has determined to share it with His other children as well. But, I’m getting ahead of myself. Let’s start at the beginning.

A Vision of Glory

*Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.
Genesis 1:26-27*

Being created in His likeness and image is more than we can think or imagine. What was mankind capable of? Apparently, quite a lot! God created and positioned us strategically - to have dominion over all creation. But, then we fell.

So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life. Genesis 3:24

... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God... Romans 3:23

Without His redemption and restoration, we will not see, nor will we partake of, His glory. But there is hope.

The Hope of Our Return

Adam, the one who would be king of the earth, was cast out; to become a common laborer. He gave up his crown for independence. What a foolish exchange! But, as we know, God has a restoration plan. He has not given up on mankind.

*When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,
What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You visit him?
For You have made him a little lower than the angels,
And You have crowned him with glory and honor. Psalm 8:3-5*

Even in their fallen state, God acknowledged the position of those created in His image. When does a king crown someone? When he is crowning his heir - giving him the resources, responsibility and authority to reign. Think about that for a moment. What does it say about your identity in Jesus Christ?

*It is the glory of God to conceal a matter,
But the glory of kings is to search out a matter. Proverbs 25:2*

There is glory reserved for the kings that will search out a matter. God has been encouraging us to find His glory - and ours - since the beginning. He has great plans for His children: Inauguration, dominion, and glory. He has gone to great lengths to make sure His plans are accomplished.

For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. Hebrews 2:10

It is important to note that glory and heaven are not the same things. This is not about being brought into our "heavenly rest". It is the hope of our return to glory on this side of eternity. That very hope is secured in Jesus Christ's mission and suffering.

Glory Returns to Man

And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. John 17:22-23

Over 2000 years ago, Christ gave us the glory He had received from His Father. So, when did God give glory to the Son?

For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. 2Peter 1:17-18

Glory was given from the Father in a word that identified Christ as His well-pleasing, beloved Son. This happened on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. Matthew 17:1-2

In this incredible moment, the veil of the physical was pulled away for the glory inside to be seen. This was the glory of God - His life lived in His Son. The Greek word translated “transfigured” here is *metamorphoo*. It is used in two other places.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Romans 12:2

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2Corinthians 3:18

Transformed is *metamorphoo*. Once created in the image of God, we are now being transformed into the image His Son’s glory. We should also note here that the Holy Spirit is responsible for our transformation. He is our “Transformer”.

Glory Returned to the Father

And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. John 14:13

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You... I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. John 17:1, 4

Jesus’ ultimate passion is to glorify His Father. The same must be true of those that follow Him. The ones made into the image of the Son’s glory will passionately desire to return that glory to the Father. But, how? Let’s go back to our opening verse.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16

The circle of glory is complete as the Father is glorified, not by us, but by others. Here we find the key to the mystery; in the meaning of “your light”.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. John 1:1-5

The light of men is the life of Christ. As we behold His glory, and receive the life that He has given us, we are transformed into the image of His glory. This is the image Peter, James and John saw on the Mount of Transfiguration. That image was the life in Him, the glory of His Father.

*But You, O LORD, are a shield for me,
My glory and the One who lifts up my head. Psalm 3:3*

The Psalmist’s glory is the LORD!! When we let our light shine before men, they will see the life of the Father... in the life of His Son... in the Body of Christ... and they will proclaim the Father’s glory. This is the abiding life - “I in them, and You in Me” (John 17:23).

Conclusion

The life that glorifies our Father in heaven is the normal Christian life. In the next module, we will adventure deeper still into the life that we have been called to live. For now, it is important that we

recognize that there is a “greater than” life promised to the followers of Jesus Christ. God is in the process of returning many sons and daughters to glory - and we are not talking about sweet by-and-by life in heaven. He has begun this work in us now.

God’s glory came in two ways: In Him identifying Christ as His well-pleasing Son; and in the life that He lived in the Son. We have discovered that we are also, in this way, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. God the Father, and Christ His Son, are glorified in the work that They do in us (being transformed) and through us (the good works we have been created to walk in).

Application

Leaders in the Workplace cannot be disciple makers until they have been made into disciples, themselves. Similarly, you cannot be transformation agents until you are being transformed. It is time to get serious about submitting to the Holy Spirit’s transforming power. In this humble place, you will find the Life that can live out the normal Christian life in you - and empower you to lead others to do the same.

Reckoning

I am a vessel made to carry and express God’s glory.

Assignment

1. Review your notes and the Scripture passages from this week’s module. Share the ones that are most meaningful to someone you are discipling.
2. What might your work look like when others see it and glorify your Father in Heaven?
3. What are one or two things in your life (or missing from your life) that inhibit the manifestation of the Father’s glory in your work (be specific)? Pray this prayer as often as the Spirit leads you:

Dear Father, thank you for the promise of Your glory. Though I do not understand it, I believe that the glory You gave to Your Son has been given to me. Therefore, in faith, I choose to take hold of it. I claim it for my own. Please deal with anything in me that is inhibiting this work. I surrender to Your hand in creating a vessel worthy to hold and display the glory I have been given. My desire is that it be for Your glory. I surrender to You. I choose to put to death the deeds of my flesh, and to put on Christ. I trust You to will and to do to Your good pleasure. Amen.

Devotion

Perseverance for Success

TGIF Today God Is First Volume 2 by Os Hillman

"And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope" (Rom. 5:2-4).

Perseverance is the key to every great accomplishment because nothing of lasting value has ever been achieved without it. Industrialist Henry Ford is one of the great success stories of American history, but he failed in business five times before he succeeded. A Ford Motor Company employee once asked his boss the secret of success, and Henry Ford replied, "When you start a thing, don't quit until you finish it."

Jesus glorified the Father by finishing the work He was given.

The path ahead of you is strewn with obstacles. People will oppose you. There will be financial setbacks, time pressures, illnesses and misfortunes. Some of the biggest obstacles will be inside of you: self-doubt, insecurity, procrastination, and worry. These things are to be overcome through faith, discipline and the Lord's encouragement.

When we persevere through adversity, we win the approval of our Lord Jesus Christ, who told the suffering church at Ephesus, "I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. . . . You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary" (Rev. 2:2-3). That, I'm sure, is the same commendation Joseph received from God when he passed the perseverance test.

Perseverance is a refusal to quit. It's falling down 100 times and getting back up 100 times. We need to remember that perseverance is not a matter of forcing doors to open; it's standing in front of the doors as long as it takes before God chooses to open them.

Life is a marathon, not a sprint. The race doesn't go to the swiftest, but to those who don't give up. We need endurance in order to deal with the stress of adversity. We must maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, and get plenty of rest. People give up or give out when they feel depleted - when they physically, emotionally and spiritually run out of gas.

When going through adversity, watch out for pessimists, blamers and toxic personalities. Beware of people who try to talk you out of your dreams and goals. Spend time with optimists and encouragers. Seek out people of faith.

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