

MESSAGE

You may have noticed earlier in the readings the elders brought us, a recurring word, or theme. Did anyone pick that up? *"Glory" "Gods Glory" Christ's Glory"*.

You'll recall I mentioned two weeks ago that my hope is that every passage of God's word, read, to commence our services, in 2023, will have a focus on that theme, to focus us on doing this very thing. *"Glory"*. Is there anything more important that we can do?? This is where I want our minds, etc, set today...forward...

It is by no accident the shorter Westminster catechism says *"the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever"*

Isn't this something that we as church ought to be about anyway? Yes, it is. However, when this becomes the focus of what we pray, how we pray, of how we worship, of how we conduct ourselves, of how we relate to each other, and others', of how we approach our varying circumstances it means that *glorifying Christ* has the place of prominence it is meant to have.

When *glorifying Christ* is the posture, the intent, the attitude and the objective that we bring to everything we do – not least these gatherings on Sunday – it means that glorifying Christ has the place of prominence it is meant to have. We can only imagine what that, can, what could, this do, for the life and heart of this church if every one of us took this on board...?

It is in keeping with *"fixing our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith"*. It is *"taking every thought captive and holding it obedient to Christ"*. It is *"let all that is within me praise his holy name"* It is knowing, *"that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Christ is Lord"* It is placing the person of Jesus and his glory front and centre. Is there anything more important that we can do??¹

We've already read and heard a number of passages this morning that speak of the glory of God, that are *Christ-Glorifying*, however in these concluding minutes of our service today I have one more passage I want to commend to you and encourage us, from. I want us to see in these verses what they teach us about the posture, the intent, the attitude and the objective of *Christ-glorifying...?*

¹ When did we lose our reverence for the God? When did we begin to rely on the hype and the frenzy to manufacture a sense of the presence of God and not just be caught up with his magnificence because of who he is?

2 Thess. 1:11-12 ***With this in mind, we*** constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul, Silas' and Timothy's (NB: v.1a) praying ("we") encourages us to be praying, constantly, *that we are made worthy of Gods calling, and that by his power he brings to fruition our every desire for goodness and our every deed prompted by faith.* And because Paul is the master at asking and answering the "why" question. It is, *so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him...*

It seems to me, that Glorifying Christ is the main aim of our praying, and is the main aim of our desires, the main aim in all that we do (our deeds), and therefore the main means by which all things church, are measured by... (NB: "every desire, every deed")

Come with me to a few other verses, then I want to cycle back to 1 Thess. 1...

Paul confirms this (focus on Christs-glory) also in Phil. 1:20, 21 *I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to **live is Christ** and to die is gain.*

...and also in 1 Cor. 10:31 *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, **do it all for the glory of God.***

...and also in Rom. 11:33-36 *Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?" For from him and through him and for him **are all things. To him be the **glory forever!**** Amen.*

And the apostle Peter also does in 1 Peter 4:11 *If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in **all things** God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

So there it is clear...

Come back with me to 2 Thess. Very shortly I'll dig into what this text means for us. Firstly, I hope we noticed at the beginning of v.11 Paul said "with this in mind".

To have more of an appreciation for what Vv. 11-12 mean for us, we have to know what Paul meant here. So the question is, *with what in mind?* ...that leads to us Glorifying Christ?

Refer you back to V.2-10, let me summarise (run your eye...)²

(Summary) Your growing faith, your perseverance, your increasing love, your suffering, your trials, the care of God. And three further things noted here that will happen when Jesus comes again: a. (v.8) those who don't obey the gospel will shut out from his glory, b. but, (v.10) ***on the day he comes (he will) be glorified in his holy people*** and c. not only that (v.10b) he ***(will be) be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you!***

That's the goal, the end game, the great prize, the great blessing...for believers!

With that in mind...*Pray that God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith...so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, **and you in him...***

So in having an emphasis on *Glorifying Christ*, we're saying "we hear your prayer Paul, we say Amen Paul, and we'll do it!" These verses mean something special for us as we head into this year and I'm hoping we can 'see' them together and walk in the Spirit of what they intend for us.

What do I hope we can 'see', from these verses, for FBC?

That Glorifying Christ on its own, provides any and all motivation we need to come together to *worship*, to come together to pray, to care for one-another (*walk*) and to *witness*. *Glorifying Christ* is what we're consumed by and preoccupied with. It is at the centre of *every desire* and the motivation behind *every deed*. You might say Ross, I want this, for my life, I seem to be 'full' of anything and everything else? You might say, you recognise the things you think (desires), the things you do (deeds) get in the way of being full of Glorifying Jesus, but you can't seem to break free?³

One of my favourite writers A. W. Tozer gives us a helpful illustration. The old fashioned light bulb was made in such a way that at the end was a little projection. When pumped empty it became a vacuum.

² 2 Thess. 1:2-10 We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because *your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing.* ⁴ Therefore, among God's churches we *boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.* ⁵ All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. ⁶ God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you ⁷ and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. ⁸ He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might ¹⁰ ***on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you,*** because you believed our testimony to you.

³ Habitual sin dominates your life, and not Christ

As a kid A. W. Tozer would take a pair of pliers and snap off the little projection, and there would be a popping sound as air would go rushing in to the bulb.

He makes the point you did not have to get inside the bulb and ask the air to come in, all you needed to do is remove the obstruction and the bulb will fill. The air just went in because there was a need for it.⁴

Blessed are those...

What are, if there are any, the obstructions, that need "snapping off" so that when you pray *God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith...so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified...?*

What do I hope we can 'see', from these verses, for FBC?

... that we resolve as a church to make *Glorifying Christ* the main feature of who we are and what we do; in our private lives and public lives. That we resolve to make *Glorifying Christ* the main feature of what we pray, how we pray, of how we worship, of how we serve, of how we conduct ourselves, of how we relate to each other, and others', and how we approach our varying circumstances. That this run in our spiritual veins, be the language of our lips, and the action of our hearts.

There are many ways I could illustrate for you, what the place and the prominence of *Glorifying Christ* can mean for you, let me try and give you just one.

Imagine the scenario where you've chosen to read the word of God for 20 mins a day for all 365 days of the year, because you want to *Glorify Jesus* in your commitment to Gods word. And on Monday you read Psalm 1 *Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers*

Then you get up early on Tuesday, having made your commitment the day before, and about dozen things start to fill your mind for the day ahead. You check emails, the phone rings, someone needs you, it's not super urgent...

⁴ A.W.Tozer, *The Worship Drive Life*, 150

...but the thought enters your mind you've got to make all these things a priority, because you are depended upon, and you become quickly convinced that all of these matters are a greater priority than time with God and his word.... until, you remember what you read the day before:

Blessed is the one...whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers

That's what a *desire for goodness and...every deed prompted by faith*, does. That's what a resolve to make *Glorifying Christ* the main feature of your day, does. *Glorifying Christ* pushes back the gates of hell that prevail. *Glorifying Christ* defeats the temptation to put far-lesser priorities above the greatest priority of Jesus.

I said only one, I know, here's some briefer practical examples:

Lord, let my email today to...Peter...be *Christ-glorifying* so that he might be built up in faith

I've got a tough phone call to make, but help me to *glorify your name* in the way I deal with this matter

I'm devastated by these circumstances, however Lord, may *Christ be glorified*, in me, and in others, through this...

What are we hearing this morning? I'm praying our hearts are awakened, by the Holy Spirit, and we see that Gods word shows our ultimate purpose is to Glorify God. The heavens declare the glory of God (Ps. 19:1). All *this*, will end, with Christ being glorified (2 Thess. 1:10). History and the future exist for the praise of his glory (Eph. 1:3-14).

Can we together make the Glory of God, Glorifying Christ a feature of all we do? I want to invite you to join me in a concluding prayer. Pray this with me if the Glory of God is something you want to be a main feature of your days and of Fairfield Baptist Church.

We pray that God may make us worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition our every desire for goodness and our every deed prompted by faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in us, and us in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ