

Real Christianity: The Sermon on the Mount

#26: Praying & Living for God's Glory

Matthew 6:9-10

The first two chapters of the Book of Job are among the most valuable Scriptures God has ever revealed to humans. Why? Because the hardest thing about living on this Earth is that really hard and bad things happen to us. The first two chapters of Job explain the primary purpose of our relatively short lives on Earth: To be tested. Why? Because God wants to be glorified!

Remarkably, it is this very theme that Jesus says is the first thing we should pray for every day. Glorifying God is the first topic of the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored, may your kingdom come, may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Matt 6:9-10 NET).

The primary purpose for our life is to glorify God by doing His will. Especially when it is hard.

A) What is the primary purpose for your life? *Glorifying God*

When we are praying that God's name be honored, we are praying that God would have a good reputation. In Bible speak, what we are really talking about is glorifying God. God's glory is the first topic of the Lord's Prayer. God's glory is the primary concern and purpose of every Christian. **"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God"** (1 Cor 10:31).

Job's unconditional worship and love for God enhanced God's honor and reputation in the heavenly realm. The Devil knew no one would ever unconditionally love him like that. And that's because the Devil is not as great as God. But what if Job had responded the way the Devil wanted him to? How would that have affected God's glory? It would have diminished it. To curse God in our hardships is to worship, love, and glorify the Devil.

B) Where do we glorify God? *In both Heaven and Earth*

I have taught for many years that there are two ways we glorify God: Publicly and privately. Publicly glorifying God was mentioned by Jesus earlier in the Sermon on the Mount when He said: **"Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven"** (Matt 5:16).

But thankfully, publicly glorifying God by what mere humans see us do is not the primary way we glorify God. We privately glorify God because of what God, Angels, the Devil, and demons see us do. Private glory truly gives us the opportunity to glorify God in everything we do without needing humans to appreciate what we are doing. With private glory, we glorify God by pleasing God, impressing the Angels, and disappointing the Devil and his demons. (cf. 1 Cor 4:9). Of course, a prime example of both publicly and privately glorifying God in Scripture is Job.

C) How do we glorify God? *Doing God's will*

How do we reveal the greatness of God so His reputation is honored? The answer is in the next line of the prayer: **"Your kingdom come, your will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven."** God's greatness is revealed when we do God's will on Earth. Especially when it is hard to do God's will on Earth. (cf. 1 Thess 5:16-18 NLT).

When we look at the requirements for glorifying God, we are tempted to think they are too demanding. How can He expect us to not be angry, anxious, selfish, or depressed in the really painful and hard things that happen to me? Reason # 1 is that God lives in you and when He is living through you, then you will easily have the power to be godly in even the most challenging circumstances.

The second reason God expects you to glorify and obey Him in even the hardest times is because He has promised to never test you beyond what you are able. (cf. 1 Cor 10:13).

D) What are the most important events in your life? *The hardest events in your life*

The most important events of your life will be the hardest and most painful events of your life. Why is that? Because your life's most important purpose is to be tested to see how much you will love God. Our unconditional love for God is only tested in hard times. The conflict between our comfort and God's glory is a Christian's greatest struggle. It was for Jesus in the Garden.

E) What is the worst thing that can happen to a Christian? *Fail their tests*

You fail to obey and glorify God in the most painful tests of your life. As painful and heart-breaking as some things can be, they will never be the worst thing that can happen to you. The worst thing will be if you do not obey and glorify God in those tests and tragedies. The worst thing that can happen to the Christian is that you fail an opportunity to glorify God, and instead, glorify the Devil because you do not do God's will in your test.

If we obey and glorify God in our hardest moments, they will also turn out to be the most valuable parts of our life. For all of eternity, you will be most honored and rewarded for the times you glorified God in the most painful events of your life.

Discussion ?'s

- 1) The most important purpose of your short time on Earth is to glorify God. How does that affect how you view your life? How do you feel about the fact that God's primary purpose for your life is testing you instead of just blessing you?
- 2) What is the difference between publicly and privately glorifying God? Why is the latter more important and valuable than the other?
- 3) Why is it important to notice that the command is to praise God in all circumstances, not for all circumstances (cf. 1 Thess 5:18)?
- 4) How does praising God in our painful circumstance glorify God? Can you give an example of this in your life? Can you give an example of something you are still working toward being able to praise God in?
- 5) What is the area in your life right now that is the hardest to obey God in?

- 6) Why are the hardest and most painful parts of your life, the most important events in your life? How does this help you embrace the hard events coming in your future?
- 7) What is the only way to make the most important parts of your life, also the most eternally valuable parts of your life and not waste them?

Pray together as a Life Group about these things.