

Children of a Lesser Glory
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John 12:41-43
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Please turn with me in your Bibles to the 12th chapter of John. We continue in our exposition, this marvelous passage in John's Gospel. We're going to focus on the next three verses in the text, Verses 41-43 of John 12. The title of our message is 'Children of a Lesser Glory'. What we see in the passage is that John is basically presenting them with the incredible irony that the Jews have missed Christ, and the ones he is writing to are missing Him even now, and they have chosen a lesser glory.

Remember that we've said that John's Gospel, that his purpose in writing it is to convince people that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Then he articulates evidence to that point. But one thing we also need to remember is that his primary focus, or his audience, the target audience that he is burdened about, that the Lord puts on His heart that motivates him to write, is primarily a Jewish audience. He writes as a Jew, who believes in Jesus Christ, as an old man now, looking back on decades of Jewish rejection of Christ. So when he writes this Gospel, that's in a sense, one final attempt, one last Gospel. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are already out there. Many of the letters of Paul, all the letters of Paul have been written by this time, and many of them have circulated widely through the Mediterranean world. But John writes this Gospel to Jews and Jewish proselytes, that is Gentiles who've converted to Judaism, and who were meeting at the synagogues. He writes this Gospel to convince them to believe in Jesus.

He understands that one of their primary problems in keeping them in unbelief is it is kind of a snowball effect. Once the Jews initially rejected Christ by and large, the Jewish leaders, most of them rejected Christ. The Jewish people, overwhelmingly rejected Christ, and the apostles go out and they evangelize. What happens is a few Jews get saved, but mostly it is Gentiles, even though the apostles, and the evangelists going out are Jews themselves, and they always start in the Jewish synagogues, taking the Gospel first to the Jews, and then to the Greeks. So this reality, that the Jews have rejected Christ, becomes, in a sense, kind of another brick in their demise because the fact that other Jews have rejected them, then argues for other Jews now. "Well, we ought to keep rejecting Him." The question was like, "How can so many Jews be wrong?" If I'm a Jewish person, and I'm considering the claims of Christ, and I realize, "Wait a minute, 95 percent of the Jewish people have declared, 'He is a fraud.'" How can that many people,

who are in covenant with God, who have the covenants, who have the Scriptures, who have the temple system, the sacrifices, the feasts, the festivals, who are keeping the Sabbath, who are seeking to walk with the God of the Old Testament, the God of the Bible for them, how can that many people be wrong?"

So what John essentially does, as he closes this section of his Gospel, where he really closes the public ministry of Jesus, he basically takes them to Isaiah, and he says, "Listen, don't put too much stock in what the multitude of the Jewish people think. Consider Isaiah." Now Isaiah was one of the most highly regarded of all of the latter, it probably was the most highly regarded of the latter prophets, and one of the most highly regarded prophets in the Old Testament. He had experienced the most remarkable calling to ministry, which we read earlier from Isaiah 6. It put him on a par with Moses. He had, in a sense, seen the Lord. Remember Moses on the mountain, saw the Lord. Remember God put Moses in the cleft of a rock, and then He causes His glory to pass by, and He said, "I don't want you to see My face, but you can see the hind parts of My robes. You can see the back of My robe passing by." So Moses sees the glory of God. Isaiah is the only other person that sees that same vision, something like that, in the temple. At this point in history, Daniel then also comes along, and those three guys see the most clear revelations of God's glory in the Old Testament.

So Isaiah was greatly revered. He had the longest of all the prophets, 66 chapters. His book was treasured by them. If you've been a Christian long, one of the things you keep finding out as you read the Bible is so many of the wonderful verses that you've heard people quote come from Isaiah. It is in a sense the Gospel of the Old Testament. I mean, it is replete with encouraging, precious treasures, and the Jewish people saw it that way too. It was of all the Old Testament books, the one that possessed the greatest richness and beauty in proclaiming the coming Messiah, His glory, and the glory of His coming Kingdom. I mean, Isaiah 52:7 would have been one of the verses that Jews would have memorized. So many passages.

Isaiah 52:7

***How lovely on the mountains
Are the feet of him who brings good news,
Who announces peace
And brings good news of happiness,
Who announces salvation,
And says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"***

Isaiah 11, listen to the beauty of this revelation that Isaiah has. I just passed over Isaiah.

Isaiah 9:2

***The people who walk in darkness
Will see a great light;
Those who live in a dark land,
The light will shine on them.***

Isaiah 9:6-7

- 6** ***For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.***
- 7** ***There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace,...***

Chapter 11.

Isaiah 11:1

***Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse,
And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.***

“There is going to be a descendant of David that is coming,” he’s saying.

Isaiah 11:2-3

- 2** ***The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him,
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,***
- 3** ***And He will delight in the fear of the LORD,***

Look at the Kingdom this Messiah is going to bring. When He comes, he says:

Isaiah 11:6

And the wolf will dwell with the lamb,

Picture this, ...*the wolf will dwell with the lamb,*...

Isaiah 11:6

And the leopard will lie down with the young goat,

We have two dogs, a boxer, and a Golden Doodle. The Golden Doodle, isn't that a crazy name for a dog? It took me a while to get used to saying it. I felt almost embarrassed as a man saying, "We have a Golden Doodle," you know? It is very unmanly, but we have a Golden Doodle. I've gotten comfortable with it, and I'm okay with it now. A Golden Doodle is a half Golden Retriever, half Poodle, a really neat breed. A Golden Doodle, anyway, our Golden Doodle, the hair grows at just an incredible rate. We cut it once a year, and we trim it down, really it is like two different dogs. We take her to have her clipped. I try to do myself and it's impossible. I almost thought when we'd take her home, I'm like, "Is this really Ginger?" You know? But anyway, it grows out during the winter and one of the things that happens is, my boxer is a short-haired dog, and so they are out in the back yard, it is a cold afternoon, my boxer will sit down on top of the Golden Doodle. The Golden Doodle will be lying down, and the boxer will sit on her. It looks like a bean bag chair. Apparently the Golden Doodle is okay with it, she is warm too. They just sit like that. I mean, it happens all the time. He is saying that what is going to happen is a leopard and a young goat are going to lie down like that. When the Messiah comes, He is going to make it so a wolf and a lamb will dwell like that.

Isaiah 11:6-8

- 6** ***And the wolf will dwell with the lamb,
And the leopard will lie down with the young goat,
And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
And a little boy will lead them.***
- 7** ***Also the cow and the bear will graze,
Their young will lie down together,
And the lion will eat straw like the ox.***
- 8** ***The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra,
And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den.***

A little bitty child can be playing in the snake's hole, and the snake is not going to bite him. That is a picture, these glorious pictures of what the Kingdom of Jesus Christ is going to be like when it is fully manifest. Isn't that glorious? This book is filled with those kinds of things. "Where do you want me to read from?" "Read from Isaiah." So such reverence for Isaiah. Now remember John is writing to Jews who are rejecting Christ because all of the Jews already have been rejecting Christ, "We've got to keep on rejecting him. Surely they can't all be wrong." The reason he brings up Isaiah and he quotes him twice, back to John 12, he quotes him twice in the passage, is to say, "Don't forget Isaiah." Let me read the verses. We're going to read Verses 37-43. Speaking of Jesus he says:

John 12:37-43 ~ But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him. 38 This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?" 39 For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, 40 "HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES AND HE HARDENED THEIR HEART, SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT SEE WITH THEIR EYES AND PERCEIVE WITH THEIR HEART, AND BE CONVERTED AND I HEAL THEM." 41 These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him. 42 Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

Let's pray together.

Father, we ask that You might open our eyes, and our hearts to Your word. That You might let us see Jesus' glory, and You might give us faith to surrender completely, which is the only worthy response to such amazing glory. We pray in His name, Amen.

Now, he says, "You're being swayed by the fact that so many Jews have rejected Jesus. You are saying, "Well, then therefore Jesus must be a false Messiah. He cannot be who He claimed to be." He says, "Think back to Isaiah and he brings up these passages from Isaiah, Isaiah 53:1. He quotes in Verse 38:

John 12:38 ~ "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?"

He's saying, on the lips of Isaiah in a sense, he's saying to the Lord, "You sent me out, but who has believed our report? Nobody has believed it. They've all rejected me." And then he goes on, and he says, he quotes Isaiah 6:10, which we read earlier this morning.

John 12:40 ~ "HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES AND HE HARDENED THEIR HEART, SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT SEE WITH THEIR EYES AND PERCEIVE WITH THEIR HEART, AND BE CONVERTED AND I HEAL THEM."

Remember when we were reading, Isaiah sees the Lord. He says, "Woe is me, I'm undone. I'm a man of unclean lips. I dwell among the people of unclean lips. My eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts" He knows, "I'm done. I've seen God in His holiness, I see my sin. I am so filthy, so disgusting. I've entertained such low thoughts of this great, glorious God. I thought He was altogether like me. We have all around us the people, we treat Him with so little reverence." He wasn't saying he had a profanity problem, he's saying, "The way I talk about God is filthy." This is the guy that we would say is your average, everyday Christian at this point in time. I mean, he's a committed believer. He's going to the temple regularly, but he says, "My thoughts and my words about God are so low when He is so exalted that my tongue is the first thing that I'm offended at, that I would speak in ways that don't reflect His glory. And the people around me are the same way, and we deserve to be destroyed." That is what he sees right now. "I'm undone. I'm coming apart at the seams."

Well the Lord sends a seraphim, and he takes that hot coal, and he touches his lips, and he cleanses them, and now his lips are ready to speak the truth. Then God says, "Who will go for us? We need someone to go, we need a messenger." Isaiah, seeing the glory of God, "Here am I, send me." He says, "Go," and then He says, "When you go they are not going to listen. What you show them, they are not going to see. Their hearts are not going to be receptive. They will be hardened against you, but go anyway." He says, "Well how long am I supposed to go to people who will not listen, and will not see?" And He says, "You keep proclaiming the glory of God until I've basically destroyed the land, because what is going to happen is they are not going to listen, and I'm going to bring judgment. You just keep telling them who I am. Keep showing them My glory." The reality was, Isaiah's ministry was like that. Here he was, he saw the glory of God in such a powerful way it changed everything about him. I mean, Isaiah is the one prophet, the Old Testament prophet, he is the one who continually refers to God, he can't speak of God without saying the word 'holy'. He is the one that says, "The Holy

One of Israel. The Lord whose name is holy,” Isaiah 57:15. He has always talked about the holiness of God. Ninety-three times in his book he refers to God as holy.

So he has seen the glory of God, he is fired up, and he preaches, and he preaches, and there is no response. So John is saying, “Look, you are rejecting Jesus based on the response. Think about Isaiah. Was Isaiah a man of God? Was Isaiah one who saw the glory, and brought the glory forth? Then don’t be so foolish as to reject Jesus, otherwise you’d be rejecting Isaiah.” So that is his basic argument we worked out, and we saw that the sovereignty of God in salvation is there in Verses 38-40 as well. But today we want to look at this idea of the glory of Christ that Isaiah sees, and I want us to consider what we’re talking about today under three points. The first point is this: *‘The Surprising Witness of Jesus’ Glory’*. The second point is: *‘The Stunning Rejection of Jesus’ Glory’*. And the third point is: *‘The Surpassing Greatness of Jesus’ Glory’*.

1) The Surprising Witness of Jesus’ Glory:

So the first point, *‘The Surprising Witness of Jesus’ Glory’*. In Verse 41, we have these words that should really be just breathtaking, ...***These things Isaiah said because he (Isaiah) saw His glory, and he spoke of Him.*** What John is saying, is claiming right here, is that when the two passages he just quoted, when Isaiah writing 700 years before Jesus was born, Isaiah writing that many centuries before Jesus, when he was writing he saw Jesus. Now look with me first, we’re going to go back to the two passages that are quoted, that John is referring to. When he spoke of him, this is what he is talking about. Isaiah here again is prophesying about the Messiah to come, and he is using a keyword that he uses a number of times in the latter part of Isaiah, to prophesy of the Messiah he calls him *‘The Servant of the Lord’*. Verse 13:

Isaiah 52:13

***Behold, My servant will prosper,
He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.***

He is going to be high, and lifted up, and greatly exalted. He is going to be on top of the world it seems. Now look at the next verse.

Isaiah 52:14

***Just as many were astonished at you, My people,
So His appearance was marred more than any man
And His form more than the sons of men.***

The very thing he comes with right after he says, “How will you know the Messiah? He will be the one that is exalted, that He is high and lifted up, greatly exalted.” Now if they just had that what would they be expecting? When the Messiah comes, He’s going to come as a glorious king. He’s going to come, it’s going to be obvious. The trumpets are going to play from Heaven. He is going to come down. He tells us, “Wait a minute, no, that is not exactly how I mean when I say ‘exalted’. ***Just as many were astonished at you, My people, So his appearance was marred more than any man...*** He’s saying, “You know how people were astonished at you when the Assyrians came in and wiped out the Northern Kingdom so that the nations around looked at you, the people of God, and said, ‘Wow! Look at how God has dealt with His people. Look at the desolation, the supernatural desolation, the supernatural punishment that has come upon Him?’ That is how I’m going to exalt My servant.” That’s what He’s saying, “They will look at Him with the same kind of astonishment they looked at you.” And he says, “So His appearance was marred more than any man.” Here he is talking about Isaiah is seeing the crown of thorns on His head. He is seeing Jesus’ face black and blue from the beating that He took at the hands of the religious leaders of His day. They continually smote Him with their fists, mocked Him, beat Him. His eyes are already swollen shut, blood flowing, and they say, “Tell us who hit you?” These are men of dignity doing this! Supernatural wrath being expressed.

Isaiah 52:14-15

***14 So His appearance was marred more than any man
And His form more than the sons of men.***

***15 Thus He will sprinkle many nations,
Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him;***

When people see His glory, they may see the most glorious king, but when they see His glory revealed, they will shut their mouths. They will stop talking about their glory. They will be silent.

Isaiah 52:15

***For what had not been told them they will see,
And what they had not heard they will understand.***

Then he says:

Isaiah 53:1

Who has believed our message?

“Listen, right now nobody is listening to me,” Isaiah says.

Isaiah 53:1

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

And now he goes back to Jesus.

Isaiah 53:2

***For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot,
And like a root out of parched ground;
He has no stately form or majesty
That we should look upon Him,***

John is saying, “Go back and read Isaiah 52 and 53! You are having trouble recognizing the Messiah, go back there. You are wondering, ‘Why isn’t He the king that is still reigning?’ Have you not read? Have you not heard?”

Isaiah 53:2-3

***2 For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot,
And like a root out of parched ground;
He has no stately form or majesty
That we should look upon Him,
Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.***

***3 He was despised and forsaken of men,
A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;***

*And like one from whom men hide their face
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.*

He said, “In the same way that they rejected Isaiah’s message, don’t you see Isaiah told us they were going to reject the Messiah, and so don’t be foolish.” He is telling him, “I saw, Isaiah saw the glory of Christ.”

Now it seems pretty obvious that he saw it here, but what is even more stunning, look back at John 12 for a moment. Hold your place in Isaiah. He makes the first quote, “**LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?**”, in Isaiah 53:1. Go back and look at Isaiah 52 and 53. Isaiah saw Jesus. Then he says in Verse 40, “**HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES AND HE HARDENED THEIR HEART, SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT SEE WITH THEIR EYES AND PERCEIVE WITH THEIR HEART, AND BE CONVERTED AND I HEAL THEM.**” Now he says, “Go to Isaiah 6,” and this is one of the key passages in the whole book of Isaiah. It is one of those passages that Jewish young people would memorize, one of the high watermarks in all of Scripture. Remember, they didn’t have their Bibles where they could carry them around like we do. Even now, people carry around a phone, or an iPad, and they can pull up Scripture. They don’t even have their Bible with them. How accessible the word of God has become to us. In that day they didn’t have copies of the Bible. They had to go to the synagogue and ask for permission to read a scroll. “And can I copy down, I want to copy down some verses to memorize.” They asked the rabbi to do that. So therefore, memorization was so much more important, and they would memorize passages like this. So when they hear, “Render the hearts of this people insensitive,” their ears, they immediately, when John says that, they know Isaiah 6. So they go back to:

Isaiah 6:10

*“Render the hearts of this people insensitive,
Their ears dull,
And their eyes dim,
Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
Hear with their ears,
Understand with their hearts,
And return and be healed.”*

He said, “When Isaiah said this,” back to John 12, well hold your place right there in Isaiah 6. Look back at John 12, you see how he quotes that in Verse 40? And then Verse 41:

John 12:41 ~ These things Isaiah said...

He says *'These things'* because he made two quotations. He quoted Isaiah 52 and Isaiah 6. He says, "When Isaiah said this, these things, he said them because he saw Jesus. He saw Jesus." When he was prophesying of the servant of the Lord, God opened his eyes to see into the future and to see the coming Messiah, the sufferings of Christ. But in Verse 41, when John says: ***These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory...*** John is saying that when Isaiah saw the Lord in the temple, he saw the pre-incarnate glory of the Son of God. He is saying that Jesus is Yahweh, just as Jesus has been telling us over and over again.

I've shared how in talking with Jehovah's Witnesses, I always try to take them to the Gospel of John. So far I've not had success. I mean, I take them there, but I haven't yet seen somebody come, but I just want to keep throwing this out at them to let them see what it says in the word. Jesus says, "I am the bread of life. I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am. I am. I am that I am." When He says, "I am," in John 18:6 when they come to arrest Him, they said, "We're looking for Jesus of Nazareth." It says in the text in English, "I am He." In the Greek it says, "Ego eimi," which is, "I am." What happened at the moment that He said, "I am," is all those Jewish guards stepped back and fell on their faces. Then astonishingly they get up and arrest him. Wouldn't you think you would say, "Wait a minute. What happened?" They were just thrown on their faces, because when He said, "I am," He was saying, "I am Yahweh," because the Name Yahweh in Exodus 3 comes from the Hebrew word *I am*.

Remember when Moses asked the Lord His Name? He says, "This is My Name. I am that I am. Thus, you shall say, 'Yahweh,'" because *I am* almost sounds exactly like Yahweh. It's a form of that same verb. So it says it all over. Jesus has been saying, "I am." But here John gets even more specific. Listen, when Isaiah said, "He saw the Lord," remember when Isaiah saw the glory of God, it changed everything. He saw the hem of His robe. He saw the seraphim saying, "Holy, holy, holy." Remember they had two wings covering their eyes, two wings they flew with, two wings they covered their feet. Their feet must be covered. Their eyes must be covered. They can't look upon Him in His holiness. When they were looking at the Lord, they were looking at Jesus. That's what he's saying. This is why John said in John 1:14 when he opens up his Gospel, "The Word was with God. The Word was God," and then in Verse 14, "The Word become flesh and tabernacled among us." His temple is no longer the temple that's in Jerusalem. His temple is the temple of His body. The body of Jesus of Nazareth is the temple. He tabernacled for a while among us. He dwelt among us. We beheld His glory.

John 2:11 said, “This is the first sign Jesus did among His disciples and began to show them His glory.” The glory belongs to God. The surprise witness of Jesus’ glory is Isaiah. He’s saying, “Listen. You’re not believing that Jesus has glory. Isaiah did. Isaiah saw Him, and when you reject Jesus, you are also rejecting Isaiah.” The stunning rejection of Jesus’ glory is the second point.

2) The Stunning Rejection of Jesus’ Glory:

It’s there on all the unbelievers, but the part that’s even more heartbreaking is what he says in Verses 42 and 43. In Verse 41 he said:

John 12:41 ~ These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him.

Then in Verses 42 and 43, he says:

John 12:42-43 ~ Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

He’s saying, “Listen, it’s so obvious that even some of the rulers on the sanhedren, the priests and the Pharisees, secretly believed in Him, but the reason they wouldn’t confess it openly was because they loved the approval of men more than the approval of God. What he’s saying is they actually rejected Jesus’ glory because they did not see it completely. They didn’t acknowledge it completely. But you can’t see His glory for who He is and then hide your faith. In fact, there’s a play on words going on in Verse 43:

John 12:43 ~ for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

The NIV and the King James say, “For they loved the praise of men rather than the praise of God.” The word is *approval* in the NASB. The ESV actually translates it more accurately in this point. The word is δόξα (doxa). ...***for they loved the glory of men rather than the glory of God.*** It’s exactly the same word as you have in Verse 41. He saw His glory. ...***for they loved the glory of men rather than the glory of God.***

In the NASB, if you look at your text there if you're using the NASB, there was a little footnote there, number 1 on Verse 43, at *approval*, and when you look over, it says *or glory*. That's one of the things I like about the NASB. It tries to keep you aware of what the words are behind what they translate. The ESV gets it right exactly. ...*for they loved the glory of men rather than the glory of God.*

Now, the glory, the word that *doxa* can mean, it has a wide range of meaning, and it comes from the Greek word *doxa*. We get our word doxology from that, word of glory. It comes from the Greek verb δοκέω (*dokeō*), which means to seem, to think, to value, to estimate. It sort of has the idea of forming an opinion, and glory, the Old Testament word was translated into this New Testament word, because the idea of glory is weightiness and value in the Old Testament, heaviness, and so *doxa* was the closest word they could find to say that. It means that you have a high estimate of God. He's of such value, such weight in your life. But here approval or praise of men is a valid translation.

A word has semantic range of meaning, any word. We use words with all kinds of different meanings. I mean, the word *love*, you can use all different kinds of ways. You can say I love my wife. I love coffee. I love my dog. Those are very different loves, aren't they? Okay, it's the same thing with any word. And so the word *doxa* is the same way. It can mean, over here, approval or estimate, or over here it can mean glory. John could have used different words for the word translated *approval*. He could have used a couple of other different Greek words, but he chose this one, I think, in close proximity to Verse 41, as a play on words.

Yes, the reason they have rejected Christ is they did love the approval of men more than the approval of God. They cared more what other people thought than what Jesus thinks. What a horrible reality. And if that's really a fundamental part of your heart, it keeps you out of the Kingdom. This is why Jesus said things like, "If any man would come to Me (in Luke 14) he must hate his father, his mother, his sister, his children, to be My disciple." That is, you must love God and you must value God so much more than you value people, that you're willing to lose everything else. This is why Christian in *Pilgrim's Progress*, when he begins to hear the call of God to conversion, he leaves the city of Destruction, and remember as he's leaving he's trying to talk his wife into coming? She mocks him. His family mocks him. His friends mock him. He covers his ears and he runs toward the gate, because God is worth that. If I have to lose everything, so be it for the value of God.

These men valued the approval, the friendship, the high opinion of others more than the opinion of God. What a foolish and ridiculous thing. Isn't that amazing? And listen, as Christians, we can struggle with this still. It's part of the sin nature. Why is it sometimes we're silent about Christ when we should take a moment and be bold and say something? Often times it's because we care too much about what other people think. And the reason I think it's a play on meaning is if you think about this, if you care about the opinion of people more than you care about the opinion of God, doesn't it mean that you value people more than you should and really more than you value God? You see, you give people more glory than you give God.

We have to learn that God is first above everything else, that we are to love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, with all of our minds. He is the one who has our supreme allegiance so that it is true that though we love our parents, we love our spouse, we love our children, in the most exemplary way, Christians should love their family members, their wives, their children, more than anybody else in the world. We're the ones that have the capacity to truly love, but when it comes to comparing it, we love Jesus so much more, that in comparison, it makes it look like hate.

I was reading a number of years ago the biography of Charles Spurgeon. I believe it was in his biography. It may have been in another piece of literature. I can't remember exactly, but I remember reading Spurgeon talk about his mother, and he remembered his dad traveled. It was an itinerate ministry. He was constantly gone taking the Gospel to different places, and his mother was the one who taught them the Scriptures. He said, "I can remember as a little boy my mother having her arms around my neck as she prayed earnestly from her heart with tears running down her face, 'Oh that my son may live before Thee.'" But Spurgeon was 16 before he became a Christian. The Scriptures were sown in his life every day. He had the compelling testimony of his mother, the testimony of his father, and yet he was not converted. And he talked about how there were many times where he was struck by the faith of his mother and her zeal for God, and one of the things that stuck with him more than anything else is he said his mother prayed this on one occasion, and after she had shared the Scriptures with her children and exhorted them to believe on Christ, she prayed for their salvation much like she prayed earlier. "Lord, that they may live before Thee." But this is what she said. "Father, if they reject You, if they fail to believe in You, let me be a swift witness at the judgment day to their condemnation." He said those words haunted him.

In the very best way, he knew his mother loved him with all of her heart, and in reality, she valued God so supremely and she loved his soul so much that she would say that. That's love and that's a person that understands that the glory of Jesus Christ, that the greatest tragedy in your life, son, is that you are not bowing the knee to one so worthy. All of your problems pale in comparison. They are nothing compared to your rejection of Christ. This is what John is saying to the Jews. The stunning rejection of Jesus' glory, even by the rulers, you look at the opinions of people. Many have rejected Him for the unbelievable, ridiculous foolishness of caring about what people think more than God. The third point is:

3) The Surpassing Greatness of Jesus' Glory:

The surprising witness of Jesus' glory is Isaiah. Secondly, we looked at the stunning rejection of Jesus' glory for the approval of men. Thirdly, we'll look at the surpassing greatness of Jesus' glory. The fact John says Isaiah saw Jesus in Isaiah 6, and he saw Jesus in Isaiah 52, I think John as a mature older man, he's walked with God so much, and there are things in his Gospel that are so beautiful. I think one of the things that's going on right here is that John is even calling them to go back to passages that would connect in a way with words that he's just shared with them. As you read my Gospel and you look at this, I told you that Jesus said, remember that Jesus says in Verse 23 of this passage, "Now is the hour for the Son of Man to be glorified, that the Son of Man is going to be glorified, that My glory's going to be made known, that My greatness is going to be exalted, that My true worth and true value are going to be seen this hour. And what's this hour? A grain of wheat must fall to the ground and die. The reason that My glory is going to be made known is I'm going to be lifted up on the cross. And then He says in Verse 32 just a little bit later, Jesus says, "And if I be lifted up, I will draw all men to Me," and John, pleading with these people, "Don't reject Him," says... Go back to Isaiah 52. Turn back over there for a moment with the words ringing in their ears, "And if I be lifted up, I draw all men to Me."

Isaiah 52:13

***Behold, My servant will prosper,
He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.***

When?

Isaiah 52:14

***Just as many were astonished at you, My people,
So His appearance was marred more than any man
And His form more than the sons of men.***

When He is an astonishing, marred form, that's when He's lifted up. That's when you see His glory. And in fact, Turn back to Isaiah 6 for just a moment. When Isaiah saw His glory in Isaiah 6, look what he said about Him:

Isaiah 6:1 ~ In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne,...

Look at the next words:

...lofty and exalted,...

He's saying, "You don't understand. When Isaiah saw the glory of God, the glory of Yahweh, the Name that you won't even speak as a Jew, when Isaiah saw His unspeakable glory with his eyes, the train of His robe, he felt the earth quake, he saw smoke filling the temple, he saw the Seraphim who ceaselessly, endlessly praised Him by saying, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts,' when Isaiah saw Him high and lifted Him up and his life was changed, he said that marked him." When Isaiah saw Him as he looked ahead into the glorious future and saw Him as the servant who would be lifted up and who would become marred there on the cross, as it goes on through Chapter 53, he says:

Isaiah 53:5

***But He was pierced through for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;***

Do you see he just keeps on explicating and revealing 700 years before the birth of Christ the reality of the cross? When Isaiah saw Him like that, he was anticipating what many in our generation and what you have just heard about, it just happened. The glory of God was made known. It was made known in a way that it has never been made known, and it was made known in the most supreme way ever, beyond any imagination. You can talk about the glory of God in creation, His power in an earthquake, His power in a storm—if you've lived through a tornado like some of these people lived through in the last couple of years, the power of that. You see

how small you are, how frail you are, and that's the glory of God, in one sense. He's in the whirlwind. That's a small thing. If you want to see the glory of God supremely, you look at Calvary. That's the place you see the glory of God, and there you see the glory of a God who is so holy, who is holy, holy, holy, that He cannot dwell with sin, and it's so great His opposition and hatred of sin, that for you and me to come into His presence, He must send His Son from glory to come down to live a perfect life as a Man, a completely human life, and then bear our sins in His body on the cross, and God hurl His wrath upon His Son and punish Him with intense justice. That's the glory of His wrath, the glory of His justice, and at the same time, the glory of His mercy and His compassion.

But the God who reigns over all things is a God who would come all the way down, who would come in humility and weakness, would take upon Himself a body that wasn't that impressive, no stately form, no majesty. He wasn't concerned about His reputation. Everybody that saw Him should have fallen on their faces the moment they saw Him. They should have said, "Woe is me, I'm undone, for I'm a man of unclean lips." Occasionally things like that happen. Remember when Peter meets Him? "Depart from me. I'm a sinful man." But those are just little glimpses. Mostly people didn't respect Him at all. They not only didn't respect Him, but they despised Him. They hated Him. His glory is shining in that kind of humility, in that kind of meekness, in that kind of weakness, because He comes so that He can experience all that you deserve so that you could experience all that He deserves.

When you look at the cross, if you are trusting in Jesus, and it's true for anybody, that's what you deserve. You deserve to be cast aside and despised and hated by everyone and certainly by God, to suffer interminable, unending suffering, and there Jesus is suffering in your place. And as He takes away your suffering, He takes away your sin. He gives you back not just *not guilty*, but He gives you back a righteous verdict. He gives you perfect righteousness so that you who were begotten in sin and conceived in iniquity, if you have repented and if are believing in Jesus Christ, you will stand in the presence of God's glory, His blazing glory, His unapproachable light. You will stand in His presence with your head held high. So great is the Savior that He has sent. So great is His glory, and when we understand the glory of Jesus Christ, when we begin to value Him more, that puts an end to this nonsense of caring about what people think. What does it matter? Let the whole world hate me, but may Jesus love me. Though all men forsake me, He will not cast me out. David says, "My father and my mother, they may forsake me, but the Lord will take me up." That is demonstrated and proven beyond any doubt at Calvary.

Look at glory. Look at the glory of Christ and despise yourself for loving the approval of men, and realize that even that Savior that you're looking at died for that love of the approval of men, so that now you're clean again, and come to Him rejoicing in Him, because He never cared about the approval of men more than the approval of God. He gives a perfect righteousness.

Let's go to Him in prayer...

Our Father, we praise You for such an incredible expression of Your kindness, Your mercy, Your meekness, Your tenderness. We praise You for such a perfect and complete way of dealing with our sin so that You really remain completely just. You punish the sins of everyone who believes fully and righteously, because You do it in the death of Your Son so that You can truly say there no longer remains any wrath for the one whose hope is in Jesus. There remains only love and delight in Your presence. We stand in grace when we stand in Jesus.

Father, grant that men and women in this room, the young people today that are separated from You, might today give You glory by surrendering themselves to so worthy a Savior. Let them turn from living for themselves. Let them turn from esteeming themselves, and let them place all of their hope and all of their trust in the Person and work of Christ. And Father, for those that are Yours already, may we become more and more overwhelmed by the glory of our Savior. May our hearts be captivated and kept for Him and Him alone. We pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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