



WOW: Word Of the Week

The glory of God made visible in the church

August 19, 2020

The Bible class focused on the last half of Eph 3, concluding with the great doxology of 3:20-21. Takeaway: the church is God's way of declaring his wisdom and his glory – in the church and in Christ Jesus. In the church and in Christ Jesus dwells the glory of God.

Question. How does the church declare God's glory? The church must make visible God's glory, the glory of Jesus. How?

Many churches are off-target -- they believe their task is to make known the love of God.

Many preachers are off-target -- they believe their task is to make known the word of God.

Many Christians are off-target -- they believe their task is to show in their lives the blessings of God.

Many churches have adopted evangelism by presence as their primary tool, virtually eliminating proclamation and persuasion.

THE question of Ephesians 3:20-21: can the community see the glory of God through the local church?

Does the community see God's glory in the church where you attend?

Without diminishing the importance of influence and example, ultimately God's glory is made known when it is declared.

2 Pet 1:16, Peter declares the glory of Christ, writing, reminding. Peter and those with him saw the glory in Christ Jesus and went forth boldly proclaiming that glory.

The angels announced God's glory even as God's glory shone by their presence (Luke 2).

The presence of Jesus in this world allowed people to see his glory (John 1:14ff). Jesus manifested his glory (2:11) and that was the reason his disciples believed. Perhaps the church is ineffective in evangelism because the glory of Jesus is not being manifested, declared, proclaimed!

The Old Testament prophets saw his glory and spoke of him (John 12:41, referring to Isaiah).

We may show his glory by our lives, but if we depend only on our lives, we will fail because all fall short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23). Gospel obedience declares God's glory (6:4). Everything we do should be for God's glory (1 Cor. 10:31) but knowing God's "yes" in Jesus is the ultimate evidence of God's glory (2 Cor. 1:20). The New Covenant is glorious (3:7-11) and our lives are changed only when we see his glory (3:18). The gospel declares the glory of Christ (4:4, 6). God's glory applied in our lives leads to God's glory being visible in the church (Eph. 3). Tongues confessing Jesus as Lord bring glory to God (Phil. 2:11). Paul writes about the gospel of glory again in 1 Tim. 1:11.

We can know the Father only by knowing Jesus. God's glory will not be visible in the church until the church begins again to proclaim Jesus Christ as God's glory. Enough of the self-centeredness that makes the church a mutual self-help society! The church must declare God.

Since Jesus in his physical body made visible God's glory, it is no surprise that the spiritual body of Christ is called to do the same thing. The church must be a place where God's glory dwells, where God's glory is visible. Individually and collectively, Christians in whom God's glory dwells are called to make that glory visible to the world.

May it be! Amen!