

Kingdom Progression – Part 10

We're in the series called Kingdom Progression; we're now in session ten—Part 10, April 23, 2008. After the introduction, we looked at Adam (pre-fall and post-fall). We looked at us as new born babes in Christ. We looked at us in the double minded state of oh wretched man that I am. We then looked at perfection both in the eternal state and in the state of the unattainable perfection for which we aim here on Earth. Then we began to look at the missing link, the critical stage five out of seven in the Christian walk. I broke that down into three components, the first being Kingdom Progression by which we looked at the overview of the entirety of our Kingdom Progression. We then looked at the fundamental functional connections of flesh versus spirit. We learned that if we walk by the flesh, we access a system called law; but if we function in the spirit, we access God's prescribed system of grace. We then went through the entirety of these three components last time that were pulled together in the one poster called Kingdom Life. And today we head into the subject called Glory to God as a result of functioning in Kingdom Life.

The flesh has self on the throne. The fundamental basis of the flesh is self determination, self determination being the root of all that's wrong with the human race. The spirit has Jesus on the throne as its basis. The flesh runs on the power of self. The spirit runs on the power of the Holy Spirit. The flesh functions according to the system of law; the spirit functions according to the system of grace. The flesh functions according to the law of sin and death. The spirit functions according to the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. And we will look at those Kingdom laws the next time that we come together after today. At every step in our Christian walk we get to choose. We get to choose that it may be of love and not mechanical robotic slavery. We get to choose to function in God's prescribed order which is grace, or man's preferred order which is law. Galatians 3:13 – Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law. Romans 6:14 – for you are not under law but under grace. Romans 11:6 – But if it is by grace it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. Galatians 5:4 – You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law, you have fallen from grace. The point that I would make using these Scriptures is that we are not only saved by grace—that is to say justified, declared righteous before a Holy God through the blood of Jesus Christ; we're also progressively sanctified by grace.

I'll use two Scriptures to make that contrast. Ephesians 2:8-9 – for by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not as a result of works that no one should boast. This, of course, refers to salvation in its meaning of justification. The second Scripture is II Corinthians 12:7-10. This is the Scripture that relates to Paul's thorn in the flesh. Paul had been given a messenger of Satan to buffet him to keep him from exalting himself. Paul prayed three times that it be removed from him. Then Jesus answered very simply – My grace is sufficient for you for power is perfected in weakness. The power of God is in full display only when we're functioning in maximal weakness. So long as we think that we're doing a great work for God, God's power is not displayed. So long as we think that through our willpower we will become Christlike, God's power is not displayed. Paul, of course, was saved at the time this conversation was held. When we are functioning in our own power, then we are in the flesh and there are only two choices; because God only gives us two so no one gets confused. He gives us two that it may be of love. He never gives more than two so that we don't get lost in the

complexity. When we choose the spirit rather than the flesh is when we access the sufficient grace of God. This relates to sanctifying grace, not justifying grace. Paul was already justified at the time of his thorn in the flesh. The sufficient grace of God, through Jesus Christ, was to empower Paul to bring glory to Jesus Christ, even as Paul was being buffeted by the messenger of Satan. This is sanctifying grace, not justifying grace; because Paul had to learn the lesson that I have explained before using the utterance of Peter and the utterance of David to make the point. Peter's statement was I will never forsake you; and, of course, he did before the chapter was finished. David said the Lord Who delivered me from the lion and the bear will deliver me from this philistine called Goliath—totally different focus. One focused on the power of self; one focused on the power of God.

Why does God do it this way? Why does God insist that we do it this way? It all relates to this being about God and not about ourselves. It relates to God fulfilling, not only His purposes, but fulfilling His purposes, by His plan, while displaying His character. And that can be summarized by saying it is all to the glory of God. God created in order to display Himself, not us. In Scripture, He uses two words that are hard to define. They're hard to define because they get at the very God-ness of God and anytime you're talking about the very God-ness of God, you cannot fully define it. The first word is holy. That's why we began this whole series with the holiness of God; because without a revelation of the holiness of God, you will go nowhere in your Christian walk. This is God's primary overarching attribute. He is holy. He is other than. There is nothing to which this God, which we worship, can be compared. He told us that in Isaiah 40:18 when God asked a question. Remember any question God asks is always rhetorical. It's not as if He needs someone to tell Him the answer. And He asked the question, to whom would you compare Me? I am in a category by Myself. I am simply other than.

The second word is glory. Glory relates to the manifestation of His holiness. Well if His holiness is just other than and glory is His expression of that other thanness, how are we going to get a definition around that? That's why John Piper (someone who most of us read) simply states that holiness is glory concealed and glory is holiness revealed. Well, of course, that doesn't define either because they are not definable because they relate to an other than God. John Piper says that holiness is glory concealed and glory is holiness revealed. And what he's acknowledging by that is we can't get our arms around this God. Now those understandings and expressions are true, but they're hard for us to get our arms around in a functional sense. But thankfully God relates to us as the mortals that we are; and He's not a God of confusion and He doesn't leave us in confusion. He told us that in I Corinthians 14:33 – God is not a God of confusion. He keeps breaking it down for us in Scripture until we do get it. From the sum of His Word, we arrived at the following working definition. The glory of God is the manifestation of His intrinsic, infinite, eternal perfections. And those are words strung together to amplify slightly the concept of this being the very God-ness of God.

God even uses words to help us understand this. Now I'm going to start with a Scriptural story, but the point I'm making with this Scriptural story is that God doesn't leave us with just His holiness and glory, He gives us a string of words to help us understand what these things include. This is the story of Moses in Exodus, chapters 33 and 34. In the King James Version in Exodus 33:18, Moses makes a simple request. Show me Thy glory. The next verse, God responds but He makes a subtle adjustment. It's not as if God is hard of hearing and misunderstood the

request of Moses. Moses says show me Thy glory and God says I will make My goodness pass before thee. Well why would God make that shift? He explains it so that we don't miss the point. In the next verse, verse 20, there shall no man see Me and live. In other translations it says no man can see My face and live. Then in verses 22 and 23, God continues to speak to Moses. While My glory passes by – in other words, you asked to show you, I'm going to pass by but I'm not going to let you see fully. I will put you in the cleft of a rock and cover thee and I will take away My hand so that you see My back parts, but not my face. And this is the story of the relationship of man to God. Man cannot see God in His fullness and live. The face of God includes a complete, full, intimate look at God Himself and that would be the fullness of God, the fullness of His glory; but it would include God as a consuming fire. Thus God gave Moses a protected glimpse of Himself, not because God is shy, not because God is inhibited, but for the protection of Moses. And this is to be the story of our Christian pursuit. We are to seek His face because we're commanded to do that; but know that apart from Christ no man could see the face of God and live because this holy God, this other than God, is a consuming fire Who judges all unrighteousness. God displayed His goodness for Moses to see, but not the fullness of His glory which would include His wrath, which no man could see and live.

Next poster. Now I come to the point for introducing this passage. God then proceeds to give words to Moses in order to help Moses and then us understand at least part of His glory. In Exodus 34:6-7 (in the KJV) – And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed. So this is God describing God, pretty high authority. The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in truth and goodness, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin and that will by no means clear the guilty. Now in other translations, other words are used. So I pulled together words in our modern day English that would be included under the umbrella of what God says about Himself. He is love, compassion, grace, mercy, forgiveness, goodness, kindness, truth, justice, and long suffering; with long suffering including such words as patience, forbearance, and slowness to anger. For our purposes today, the key connection is to note the word gracious in the description of God by God. In our Christian walk, this is the key attribute that God wishes to display to us and through us. He displays it to us through His Son. We then are to give Him glory. We do that when we respond appropriately to His glory which includes His grace; and particularly so when we respond appropriately to His Son Who is the major vehicle by which He expresses His grace. Simply stated, we do that by walking in faith in His Son.

Grace, remember, in a global sense is unmerited favor. But one aspect of unmerited favor is the unmerited, omnipotent power of God operating on our behalf and to His glory. Access to that omnipotent power of God is never detached from it being used for His glory. That's why Jesus would say in John 15:5 – Apart from Me you can do nothing. That's why Paul (after learning these lessons) would write in Philippians 4:13 – I can do all things through Him Who strengthens me. Jesus gave us the succinct summary statement as a command in John 15:4 when He simply said – Abide in Me. Why? Because, apart from me you can do nothing; but I've left you on Earth after salvation to do something. So if you're left there to do something in your Christian lives, and "apart from Me you can do nothing," then it makes sense that we abide in Jesus. And remember anytime I have phrases like summing up all things in Jesus, capturing every thought to the obedience of Christ, abiding in Jesus; I tend to fall back to this same definition. To abide in Jesus means to constantly dwell, for that's what abide means—to constantly dwell in full faith

mindfulness, not just mindfulness because you can be mindful of a scaled down Jesus Whom you view as being there to fulfill your Christmas list of things that you desire in the flesh. But it's full faith mindfulness as Jesus is revealed in regard to Who He is, God Himself, the Son of God in the Trinity; what He is, the lamb of God; what He has done, He went to that cross that you could be reconciled to God for all eternity; what He is doing, He's mediating for you, He's interceding for you, He's advocating for you, and He's preparing a place for you. And what He will do if we are dead at the time of the rapture, He will bring our spirits to be united to our now resurrected bodies. If we're still alive at the time of the rapture, we'll be caught up in the air with Him. And He will come back to rule this Earth for a thousand years after the tribulation. So to abide in Jesus means to constantly dwell in full faith mindfulness of Who Jesus is, what Jesus is, what Jesus has done, what Jesus is doing, and what Jesus will do as revealed in the Word of God and not expressed out of your fertile imagination of what you would prefer Him to be.

Giving Him glory all comes down to one simple question at each moment of your life. And this is simply the functional playing out of capturing every thought to the obedience of Christ. In what am I placing my faith at this very moment? Here's the sequence in a simple review. God created to display Himself. God desires to display Himself. This means to manifest His attributes to planet Earth. His attributes collectively are His glory. The major aspect of His glory that He is presently manifesting is that of His grace. His grace is manifested through His Son and specifically through the cross of His Son. Grace is unmerited favor. One aspect of unmerited favor is the omnipotent power of God operating on our behalf and to His glory. My justification was by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ and Him crucified. My sanctification is now to walk by faith in Jesus Christ and Him crucified in order to access His empowering sufficient grace. I do that by abiding in Jesus and I abide in Jesus by constantly dwelling in full faith mindfulness of Who Jesus is, what Jesus is, what Jesus has done, what Jesus is doing, and what Jesus will do, all as revealed by the Word of God. When at any moment of my Christian life I walk by faith in anything else, I walk by faith in a scaled down Jesus, then I am in the flesh with self as the basis operating contrary to the prescribed order of God. When I do that I am functioning apart from Christ and I can do nothing because I'm not abiding in Him. When I do that I still have spirit life positionally as a reality for eternity future, but by choice I am functioning in the flesh in spiritual deadness. Now the deadness doesn't mean you lose your salvation, your spirit life. The deadness means that when you function apart from abiding in Jesus, then you are producing death in the form of dead works, dead testimony, dead abundant life, and taken collectively, dead churches. I do that because I have chosen the yoke of law where my faith is in my willpower, my energy, my abilities, my articulation skills and my overall power to perform at a level acceptable to God with which I know He will be pleased. Why? Because I set the standard of His pleasure. When I do that I have attempted to steal, or to share, the glory due God. God told us very simply so we wouldn't miss it in Isaiah 42:8 that He will share His glory with no one, nor should He because He's the only being Who is worthy of any glory.

Jesus taught us the basis of the Holy Spirit functioning within us as Christians. John 15:26, Jesus says – He (the Holy Spirit) will bear witness of Me (Jesus), the Son of God. In John 16:14 Jesus says – He (the Holy Spirit) shall glorify Me (Jesus) the Son of God. But when we choose the flesh, we grieve the Spirit and render Him inoperative. This is because when we do that we're operating by faith in self and not by faith in Jesus Christ and Him crucified. We are bearing

witness of self and not bearing witness of Jesus. We're glorifying ourselves and not glorifying Jesus. But when we walk by the Spirit, we regard Jesus as the source, Jesus as the basis, Jesus as the object of our gaze, and the cross as the means by which everything we have with God is purchased, and the Spirit we regard as the power. So when I walk at any moment by faith in Jesus Christ and Him crucified, then I loose the Holy Spirit to perform in His power. That's because I've now engaged in His mission. He came to bear witness of Jesus, not me. He came to bring glory to Jesus, not me. I was saved by grace, through faith, and that not of myself; it is a gift from God. Now I work out my salvation by using that faith to access the greater grace—namely the omnipotent power of God, operating on my behalf and to His glory. That is the sufficient empowering grace of God. It was willed by the Father, purchased by the Son, and implemented by the Holy Spirit. But it is accessed only by one means. It is accessed when I place my faith totally, completely, absolutely, and without exception in Jesus Christ and Him crucified; because that, and only that, brings God maximal pleasure, brings God maximal glory, and brings God minimal grief. That, and only that, is what accesses the abundant life for me. Our problem tends to be commonly that we want the abundant life without giving the glory to God.

So we can distinguish, but not separate God's maximal glory from my maximal blessing. So we're not in primary pursuit of the blessing. We're in primary pursuit of all glory going to God through His Son, Jesus Christ; and then the blessing flows as a secondary attachment. But it doesn't flow when we seek the blessing primarily; it flows when we seek the glory of God through His Son, Jesus Christ primarily and then the blessing flows to us. That, and only that, brings me maximal eternal rewards. We are told to seek rewards in Heaven. But we're not taught to seek rewards in Heaven to the exclusion of the glory of God while bringing glory to myself. This, and only this, brings maximal accurate testimony of Jesus to others. This is God's prescribed order of Kingdom Life. It must be through His grace, purchased by His Son, empowered by the Spirit, and to His glory. It must be by His grace that it be to His glory. Only that fulfills Ephesians 2:7 where God explains to us (through the apostle, Paul) why He did it His way. We were children of wrath, servants of Satan, hostile to God—but God, because of His mercy flowing out of His love. Why did He say this? Ephesians 2:7 – In order to display His grace for the ages to come. Only when we function in the system of grace do we fulfill Ephesians 1:6 which speaks of to the praise of the glory of His grace. So anytime we're functioning in the flesh with self on the throne judging our performance of works while operating in our power and self determining what level should be acceptable to a Holy God, we are not functioning to the praise of the glory of His grace. But when our eyes are fixed upon Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, when we're beholding Jesus as the source of all things moment-by-moment, and everything that He's the source of was purchased by His cross by the shedding of His blood, relying on the power of the Holy Spirit and not my own power, only then are we operating to the praise of the glory of His grace.

So it is good when we seek His goals. It is fully good when we seek His goals His way; because only that brings the fullness of glory to God. And bringing glory to God is our reason for having been created and being testimony to the greatness of the glory of the grace of God is our reason for remaining on Earth after salvation. So living Kingdom Life His way does the sequence of things that I've articulated several times. They can all be distinguished; but they cannot be separated because they function collectively as a unit. Living Kingdom Life His way, in the

Spirit, moment-by-moment regarding Jesus as the source, the basis, and the object of our gaze with the means by which it is all purchased being the cross of Jesus Christ and the power being the Spirit. Only then do we do the following. Only then do we bring maximal glory to God, maximal pleasure to God, minimal grief to God, maximal accurate testimony to the world, maximal abundant life to us and store up maximal eternal rewards for eternity future for us. All of those things are distinguishable, but not separable because they function as a unit. But they are never accessed when we are functioning in the power of self, judging our own performance to perform works and determining the standard with which God should be satisfied. Those things only are operationally functional when we turn our eyes off of self and on to Jesus Christ, particularly Jesus Christ and Him crucified; then all those things come into a functional reality. And that is the Kingdom Life to which we are called. We are not under law; we are under grace.

But next time we are going to look at Kingdom Laws; because everything that I've stated can be summarized in certain Kingdom Laws that are described in Romans 7 and Romans 8. But that's the subject for next time; because for today my time is up. Thank you for yours.