

The Father of glory... the Lord of glory... the Spirit of Glory

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon explores the concept of glory as it relates to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, emphasizing God's satisfaction and the transformative power of grace in suffering.

Scripture: Matthew 3:17, Acts 10:36, Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 12:7, Ephesians 1:15, 1 Timothy 1:11, Hebrews 12:4, James 2:1, 1 Peter 4:12

Topics: "Gods Glory", "Holy Trinity"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks preaches on the pursuit of God's glory as the ultimate purpose of all His works, emphasizing that glory is the expression of God's satisfaction and delight, which believers can partake in. He delves into the roles of the Father of glory, the Lord of glory (Jesus Christ), and the Spirit of glory (Holy Spirit) in manifesting God's glory in the world. Through various biblical examples, he illustrates how God's sovereignty and mastery work towards bringing about glory even in the midst of trials and sufferings, ultimately leading believers to experience God's pleasure and satisfaction.

Transcript

In pursuing the matter which has been before us, I want to call to your remembrance three fragments of the Word:

"For this cause I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you, and which ye shew toward all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him" (Ephesians 1:15).

"My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons" (James 2:1).

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you: but insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice, that at the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy. If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye; because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you" (1 Peter 4:12-14).

May I just remind you that we have been occupied with the truth that the end of all God's works is glory. We have defined glory as being the expression of God's full and final satisfaction, God giving out from Himself His pleasure, His delight, and, like a heavenly contagion, those who come within its range and its reach are very conscious that He is pleased and satisfied. In one place He is called "the blessed God" (1 Timothy 1:11), but the original says 'the happy God'. You know that if you go into the presence of people who are really happy you are affected and infected by their happiness. It is possible to go amongst people who are heartily laughing, and you begin to laugh, not knowing what you are laughing at! The atmosphere influences you. Now, if God is happy, satisfied, well pleased and delighted, and you come within touch of Him, you catch something from Him and feel that happiness. That is exactly the meaning of glory: God being completely contented with a situation, or with a life, or with a person, and if you should happen to be that person you just take from Him something of His contentment and satisfaction. It is a glorious sense of contentedness, of satisfaction, of blessedness.

So the end of everything that is really of God is that wonderful power of His own personal pleasure. I think there is nothing in all the universe so blessed as to have a sense that the Lord is well pleased. It must have been a great day for Abraham, a wonderful, inexpressible day, when God called him His friend, and for Daniel, too, when the messenger of God said: "Oh Daniel, thou man greatly beloved". What do you want more than that from God? That is glory, is it not? Well, God is working toward that in all His works in the universe, in the creation and in the redeemed.

You will have noticed from the three passages that we read that the triune God, the three Persons of the Trinity, are personally related to glory. First, the Father of glory; secondly, the Lord Jesus, the Lord of glory; and thirdly, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of glory. Each member of the Godhead takes character from this word 'glory', and each Person of the Trinity is supremely concerned with glory. That opens up a very large door, but I shall not go very far through that door just now. I will just mention that you can follow through the Bible how God, as Father, the first Person of the Trinity, is always concerned about glory; how the Lord Jesus, the second Person in the Trinity, is always working on the line of glory; and then how the Holy Spirit all the way along is operating toward glory, with glory as the governing concern. I leave that, for it is a long, long line of very blessed revelation. The point for me just now is that the Godhead is united, is one in this thing. The three are united concerning glory, and their interest is one interest. As we have already said, it is their priority. So the priority of the triune God is glory.

All I am going to do now is to say a little word about each of these designations - the Father of glory, the Lord of glory and the Spirit of glory - and may the Lord give us something in our hearts from our brief meditation!

THE FATHER OF GLORY

What does that mean? Well, it means that God is the source of glory, and that glory emanates from Him. The principle of fatherhood is that the father is the source, the beginning and the projector, so all that really emanates from God has, as its very purpose and destiny, glory. We are children of God, and the very object and purpose of our being His children in His mind is that we should come to glory, that is, that we should be brought to that position where at last - oh, wonderful thought! too wonderful to grasp! - God says: 'I am perfectly satisfied and content.' Can you imagine God saying that about you? Can you believe that the all-mighty, eternal, perfect, holy, great God could look down upon us and say: 'I am well pleased. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord, into the very satisfaction of My Father heart.'? It is too much for us to grasp just now, is it not? But that is the meaning of His Fatherhood. He has begotten us, brought us into

being as His children, is responsible for our coming into being as His children, has taken responsibility for us as His children, and all with this one object of bringing us along the line, along the way, to the end, which is an entering into that unspeakable awareness that He has nothing whatever against us, but is satisfied to the last possible degree.

Whatever comes out from God, whether it is children or His creation, comes out as destined for that glory of His perfect satisfaction. Things are like that at the end of the Bible. There is a state of glory, a glorious condition, which means the outgoing, the emanation of God's own perfect satisfaction. Paul puts it in this way: "Foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Romans 9:29). What is that? His SON! - "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). And we are to be conformed to that! We are to inherit God's own attitude toward His Son, to come into that position and condition that His Son occupies of the perfect satisfaction of the Father.

You see, His Father-dealings with us are along that line. "My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art reprov'd of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth" (Hebrews 12:4). What is the chastening all about? "All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous, but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness" (Hebrews 12:11). What is righteousness? It is that complete peace in the heart that God's sense of rightness is satisfied.

THE LORD OF GLORY

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory" is what James calls Him, and it is a wonderful thing that James, His own brother in the flesh, should say that of Him! There was a time when James did not believe on Him. "For even his brethren did not believe on him" (John 7:5), was what was said about James formerly. Of course, we have a fairly shrewd idea of why that was. In those early days James and the other brothers of Jesus were a bit worldly and they had an eye to business, to success, to popular acceptance, and they wished especially to stand well with the authorities. That is worldliness, is it not? It is the spirit of the world to wish to stand well with the authorities. This older Brother of theirs was taking a course that was getting Him into trouble with the people who had it in their power to take everything away from Him, and they belonged to His family, which meant that they would suffer because He had taken that line. Well, we will leave that, but I think it is a fairly true judgment of that statement: "Even his brethren did not believe on him." They could not accept the way that He was taking, for it was not going to bring popularity.

Now here is this brother of His, these many years afterward, calling Him "the Lord of glory". Something has happened! James is saying that his own Brother is "the Lord of glory"! Once he did not believe in Him, but now he calls Him "the Lord of glory". That is indeed a wonderful thing! But what did he mean, and what does it mean to call Him "the Lord of glory"?

Well, you know, if anyone is a lord, he has everything under his control. If you should be a 'lord', then things are under your control and in your power. You dictate how these things are going to work out. Yes, you are lord in this situation and, indeed, in all situations. Jesus is Lord, and as Lord of glory He is in a position of mastery.

Peter, who at one time denied Him vehemently later said: "He is Lord of all" (Acts 10:36). A big thing has happened in Peter, too, as well as in James. Indeed, it had happened in all of them, for they all called Him "Lord". We know from the very context of Peter's words that he was at that time having to recognize the absolute mastery of the Lord Jesus. Peter was arguing a bit. It was very strange that he should have been

arguing with the Lord Jesus at that time "Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean", but he had to succumb to the mastery of the Lord Jesus, and he did. Then he said: "He is Lord of all", meaning that He was in charge both of Peter and of every situation, and, being in charge, this situation was going to work out to the end that He intended. So, when James says "the Lord of glory", it means that the Lord Jesus is in charge of everything to make it work out for glory.

You have only to read through the book of the Acts of the Apostles, as it is called, and as you go through you see the Lord of glory holding the situations. Yes, in phase after phase, and stage after stage. We need only lift out one or two examples.

Peter is in prison, with his feet in the stocks and four quarternions of soldiers to guard him, and the inner and outer doors of the prison tightly closed. Herod has made very sure that THAT man is not going to escape! This looks a somewhat difficult proposition, does it not? I doubt whether it would have been possible for any man to have liberated Peter that night. At any rate, all the forces of this world are determined that he should not escape. He is the key man, the strategic man in this new movement, so he must be kept safe. All right, do all you can and all you wish. Take every precaution, every measure, to make everything secure. But the Lord of glory has other ways, and so an angel comes and smites Peter, who is asleep.

It is rather wonderful that when the Lord of glory is in charge you can go to sleep, even in situations where you are going to be brought out for execution tomorrow! You are in a condemned cell, and you know that tomorrow you are going the same way as the other James and be executed, but you just go to sleep right through the night. Well, it needs the Lord of glory to make you do that, so that you can say: 'The Lord has this thing in hand, so I am going to sleep.'

I remember a man who was here in the West in the wild days of long ago. He was travelling and came to a shack, which was in a perilous place where bears were roaming about. He was very tired after travelling all day, but he found that he could not get into the shack. He could only rest under the awning outside, so he lay down there. He belonged to the Lord and before he settled down he read a Psalm: "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." He said: 'Well, Lord, it is no use the two of us keeping awake. If You say You are keeping awake all night, I am going to sleep!' And so he went off to sleep and had a good night. That is trusting the Lord!

Peter went to sleep and the angel smote him, struck off his chains and fetters, and said: 'Rise up and follow me.' They left the guards, the cell and the chains, and went out through the first door, then through the next, until they came to the outer gates, which opened of their own accord, and Peter was landed out in the open. This circumstance, so apparently adverse and impossible, was in the hands of the Lord of glory. And what about the glory? We have Peter's Letters, written years afterwards, and they are wonderful Letters, are they not? His was a wonderful life, and so much wealth has come to us through Peter's ministry in these Letters. Yes, there was glory, and Jesus is the Lord of glory.

One more thing from that Book of the Acts. We are in Philippi. Paul and Silas have arrived, because the Lord has sent them there. 'They had assayed to go into Asia, but were forbidden of the Holy Ghost, and they assayed to go into Bithynia but the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not.' Then, wondering what all that meant - 'Why are we not allowed to go this way or that?' - Paul, in a vision, saw a man of Macedonia and heard him say: "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." "And," said Luke, "concluding that God had called us for to preach the gospel unto them" (Acts 16:10), they set sail, arrived in Philippi, quite sure that

the Lord had sent them there - and the next thing they knew was that they were in a dungeon with their feet fast in stocks and their backs bleeding after thorough lashing. Now what do you make of this? What are you going to do about it? It seems an absolute contradiction, and that a big mistake has been made. Are they saying: 'We have got into confusion over our guidance'? No! Not a bit. In that condition they are singing and praising God at midnight. The Lord of glory has the situation in hand, and that is proved before the morning. There is the earthquake, the prisoners are released, the jailer and his house saved and baptized, and the church in Philippi established. The jailor and his family were amongst the first members and I do not believe his family were infants! It says: "They spake the word of the Lord unto them", and you do not put a little innocent baby in a chair and preach the gospel to it, or teach it the things of Christ. They were intelligent and old enough to understand the teaching and preaching of Paul, and to accept it, so they were all baptized as responsible persons. They were amongst the first members of that church; and we have that beautiful Letter from Paul's own prison, written years afterwards, when he was in Rome. We would not sacrifice that Letter to the Philippians for anything, would we? It is very precious. There is the Lord of glory, you see. It is the Book of the Acts of the Holy Spirit, the acts of the Lord of glory, for He is in charge. I wish we could always believe that when we are in prisons, tied up, with things all against us, and we are having a difficult time! If we could always just say: 'The Lord is the Lord of glory. He has charge of this and the end is going to be glory!' Well, it works out that way, even though He has to say to us afterward: "O ye of little faith! Wherefore didst thou doubt?" Although we, under the trial, sometimes feel that there is nothing of glory in the situation, or in our condition, in the end He is faithful, and we find that glory is the end of His strange ways. He is the Lord of glory which means that He controls everything with glory in view.

THE SPIRIT OF GLORY

Peter calls the Holy Spirit "the Spirit of glory". Now the context is necessary as the background of that title of the Holy Spirit. If you read this first Letter of Peter's you will see that it is very largely about the sufferings of the Lord's people to whom he is writing. It says that he is writing "to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father". Then he opens up on this matter of the sufferings of these people: "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you."

There is a lot about the sufferings of the Lord's people in this Letter of Peter's, and when he has mentioned the sufferings there are two things that he links with them: first grace, and then glory, grace issuing in glory. It is very helpful to notice how Peter speaks of grace, but, unfortunately, in our translation there are places where the word is changed, and the word 'acceptable' is used. In chapter 2:19 and 20 we read: "For this is ACCEPTABLE, if for conscience toward God a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted for it, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is ACCEPTABLE with God." But in putting this right we have something very rich: "For this is GRACE, if for conscience toward God a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted for it, he shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is GRACE with God" (R.V. margin). Grace, then glory. In chapter 5:10 Peter says: "And the God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall himself perfect, stablish, strengthen you." 'Through the suffering of this little while there will be grace sufficient to make us triumphant.' Grace triumphant in suffering, and that means glory.

We sometimes sing:

Jesus, Thy life is mine,

Dwell evermore in me;

And let me see

That nothing can untwine

Thy life from mine.

Thy fullest gift, O Lord,

Now at Thy word I claim,

Through Thy dear name,

And touch the rapturous chord

Of praise forth-poured.

That came from the bed of an invalid! It is something, is it not? Well, that is what Peter is talking about - the sufferings, the fiery trial, and then he says: 'Grace in that means glory.' The Spirit of glory.

The Lord help us! We can say these things, and I say them carefully, guardedly, for we can be so put to the test on things that we say. The Spirit of glory can take hold of the things which could destroy us, and could be our undoing if we had the wrong reaction to them, and turn them to glory. This suffering, this reaction, this trial can mean glory. Paul said: "And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelation - wherefore, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch. Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice" (and when Paul sought the Lord you may take it that he did so very thoroughly, and when he did it three times you may be sure that Paul put himself right into it!). "And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

The Spirit of glory can take hold of our trials, and will do so, if we trust Him, and turn the dark things, the hard things, the painful things, into glory. That is, in those things He will lead us to find God's pleasure, God's satisfaction, God's 'Well done!', and what more glorious thing could we desire than that we should hear Him say: 'Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'?

The Father of glory, the Lord of glory and the Spirit of glory. The Lord place this word in our hearts!

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