

Life Driven by Divine Purposes

Read from Elliott Johnson's paper of the Glory of God.

<https://www.deanbible.org/dbmfiles/notes/2014-ChaferConf-004-Johnson-Paper.pdf>

Preview of the lesson: The purpose of history is the demonstration of God's glory. We learn in the Gospel of John from Jesus Himself (John 15:8) that "fruit" produced by the believer glorifies God. We have already learned from Galatians that the Holy Spirit, i.e. the filling of the Holy Spirit produces fruit (Galatians 5:22-23). So a purpose of each and every believer is to walk in faith dependence on the Holy Spirit so that we produce fruit which glorifies God.

Filling of the Holy Spirit → Fruit → Glorification of God

Last week I touched on the purpose clauses in Romans chapter 7. It occurred to me that these are guideposts in our Christian life. They provide us purpose.

Originally I was going to title this lesson "The Purpose Driven Life." But that would only confuse people who are familiar with Rick Warren's book by that title. However, the purpose clauses in Romans struck me as important. Paul gives us purposes in the spiritual life. We haven't even gotten to chapter 8 and he is saying there is purpose in our lives. These purposes don't require us to win a military victory, invent something spectacular or write some beautiful poem. It is just living our daily lives depending upon God the Holy Spirit.

Two verses that were highlighted from this chapter are Romans 7:4 and Roman 7:6.

Romans 7:4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another (union with Jesus Christ), to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

Sounds like phase 1 salvation/justification: union with Jesus Christ is accomplished at the point of faith in Christ by the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. And then phase 2 salvation, bearing fruit by means of God the Holy Spirit.

Romans 7:6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

Let us back up in our thinking to the purpose of history, the purpose of the history in which we live. A broader more all-inclusive purpose. Charles Ryrie who wrote a milestone book on dispensationalism stated that there are three presuppositions necessary as the basis for our interpretation of history¹:

1. Consistent Literal Interpretation of Scripture.

Covenant theology maintains that the Bible should be interpreted literally except when they come to eschatology. Dispensational theology maintains that the Bible should be interpreted literally in all parts except those parts that are obviously illustrations as for instance Nebuchadnezzar's dream which Daniel then interpreted

¹ Charles Caldwell Ryrie (2007). Dispensationalism. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers. 46-48 Ryrie calls these presuppositions the "sine qua non" of dispensationalism. There are two versions of the book. The first published was Dispensationalism Today. Subsequently he revised the book and called it Dispensationalism. He changed the order of the three presuppositions but kept the content.

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from a divine viewpoint. This is not our emphasis today, so I will not go further into the differences.

2. Maintain an understanding of the difference between Israel and the Church.

The Church was not revealed in the Old Testament according to dispensational theology. Covenant theology thinks of the Jews as the Old Testament church. Again, this is not our emphasis today, so I will not go further into this topic.

3. The purpose of history is to glorify God.

Covenant theology considers the glorification of God important. According to Charles Ryrie, for covenant theology, redemption is the purpose of history. According to one Covenant theologian, Wayne Gruden, “When man failed to obtain the blessing offered in the covenant of works, it was necessary for God to establish another means, one by which man could be saved. The rest of Scripture after the story of the fall in Genesis 3 is the story of God working out in history the amazing plan of redemption whereby sinful people could come into fellowship with Him.”²

Ryrie clearly states, “But covenant theology makes the all-encompassing means of manifesting the glory of God the plan of redemption. Thus, for all practical purposes, covenant theology uses redemption as its unifying principle.”³

The purpose here in this lesson is to focus on the dispensational viewpoint that the purpose of history is the glorification of God. As such, believers are involved in that glorification. First, they glorify God through faith in Jesus as savior. The point of our study in Romans

² Grudem, W.A. (2020). *SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY, SECOND EDITION : an introduction to biblical doctrine*. 2nd ed. S.L.: Zondervan.

³ Charles Caldwell Ryrie (2007). Dispensationalism. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers. 108.

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chapters 6-8 is that believers have a means of glorifying God through faith dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Let's look at some of the passages on glory. This is not a detailed exposition of the glory of God⁴. I only want you, the reader and listener to see the importance of the glory of God in our lives.

First, experts in the Law, unbelieving Pharisees understood the importance of giving God the glory. In John chapter 9 Jesus heals a blind man on the Sabbath. The Pharisees want to prove that either Jesus did not heal a blind man or that Jesus is a sinner and not the Messiah. So they insist on investigating all the details. The more they investigate, the more information they obtain proving that they have witnessed a miracle by the Messiah. But because of their hardened unbelief they reject their own Messiah.

John 9:24 So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, “Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner.”

We know. What the Pharisees thought they knew was incorrect. Jesus was sinless. They were the sinners in need of salvation. Here is an illustration of the irony in the Gospel of John. They are the sinners accusing the sinless Messiah of being a sinner. But because of their spiritual blindness, they had proof in front of them that Jesus was the Messiah yet refused to believe. Now we know that some of the religious leaders were believers, but they were afraid to mention it in public because of the hatred of those who were unbelievers.

John 12:42 Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the

⁴ This is the second lesson on the glory of God. It will not be the last.

Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue;

John 12:43 for they loved the approval (literally “glory”) of men rather than the approval (literally “glory”) of God.

Jesus Himself explains the relationship between fruit and glory. This is a key passage. We know how to produce fruit by faith dependence on the Holy Spirit. By connecting fruit and glory Jesus points to the purpose of history that is worked out in our own lives.

John 15:5 I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

John 15:6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.

John 15:7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

John 15:8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

Paul says a purpose of the believer is that we might bear fruit for God. And now we know that producing fruit glorifies God. Why? As Jesus

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said, apart from Him it is not possible to produce fruit. And we know from previous study that we are “in Christ.” We also know that as long as we are in sin we are “operationally dead.” But by the filling of the Holy Spirit we are empowered to produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit. If there are history books in heaven, then each of us may have a paragraph in those history books.

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Galatians 5:23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Back to Romans 7:4 and bearing fruit. Here is Robby Dean’s comment on it: “Bearing fruit to God is a broad concept related to both an internal character fruit of the Spirit, as well as external service. It does not imply what Lordship people say, “See, if you don't bear fruit, you're not saved.” No, this isn't saying that. It's saying that the purpose for your justification was so that you would have the potential to bear fruit. It doesn't say that you will necessarily bear fruit. That's your decision. You've been saved for the purpose of bearing fruit unto God. That's why God made all this incredible transformation in our lives. So are we going to activate that or not? That's our decision.⁵”

Unto God. This is in the dative case. That means it has the same form for the instrumental (by means of) and locative (in the sphere of). I ask a question. Could this also be interpreted to mean that we “might bear fruit by means of God?” The context of Jesus statement in John chapter 15 that apart from Me you can do nothing would indicate that it is God that produces the fruit. The Ephesians passage tells us that the God the Holy

⁵ <https://deanbibleministries.org/new-testament-menuitem/romans-menuitem/message/2010-romans-074b/read>

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Spirit does indeed produce the fruit. I didn't see any commentators that comment on that.

Let us look at glory from the Gospel of John. Jesus performed much of His work on earth in the power of the Holy Spirit. Because of that we can do the works of righteousness like Jesus when filled with the Holy Spirit. Not the miracles but everyday living. How was glory associated with Jesus? Again, this is only from the Gospel of John.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten (or uniquely begotten) from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Glory was from God the Father. John highlights this glory at the beginning of his gospel account.

John 2:11 This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

This is the postscript to Jesus' miracle of changing water into wine.

Jesus manifested the glory of God through his miracles. When the Holy Spirit accomplishes miracles through Jesus, God's glory is manifested which comes from His essence. In John chapter 2 it is omnipotence.

John 5:39 You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;

John 5:40 and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.

John 5:41 I do not receive glory from men;
John 5:42 but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves.
John 5:43 I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.
John 5:44 How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?

Glory comes from God. It may also be associated with God's love, another character. Also life.

John 7:18 He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

Seeking the glory of God involves no unrighteousness. Righteousness is part of God's essence. So far we have omnipotence, love, life and righteousness associated with God's glory.

John 8:54 Jesus answered, “If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God’;

Believers, like Jesus, cannot glorify themselves with glory from God. Only God can glorify something or someone in the spiritual realm.

John 9:24 So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, “Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner.”

Even religious unbelievers understand that glory belongs to God. Have you ever said something stupid and only realized how stupid some time later. Here the Pharisees are saying that the Messiah is a sinner. Give glory to God. Those that said that, assuming they never believed in Jesus, are currently in Torments awaiting judgment and transport to the Lake of Fire. That is not just stupid. That is sad.

John 11:1 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

John 11:2 It was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

John 11:3 So the sisters sent word to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.”

John 11:4 But when Jesus heard this, He said, “This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it.”

Jesus' miracles were credentials identifying Him as the Messiah. They also were an opportunity for Jesus to partake of the purpose of history, the glorification of God. We know that bad things happen to good

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people. But God uses those bad things to work things together for good and glorify Himself. In spite of the fact that we live in a fallen world ruled over by the Devil, God can cause good to happen.

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Looks like we will be revisiting God's glory in Romans chapter 8 (8:18-21).

The raising of Lazarus from the dead is another powerful manifestation of God's glory through His omnipotence.

John 11:38 So Jesus, again being deeply moved within, *came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it.

John 11:39 Jesus *said, “Remove the stone.” Martha, the sister of the deceased, *said to Him, “Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days.”

John 11:40 Jesus *said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

Miracles which manifested the glory of God have a lasting impact on those who witness them. Faith is associated with God's glory. We know from other passages that the Holy Spirit empowers us to produce fruit which manifests the glory of God. It gets peoples' attention which causes them to listen to the gospel. Unfortunately, today people do things that

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are non-Biblical claiming miracles from God and people take notice. We know from Scripture that there are false teachers and false prophets, even today.

John 11:41 So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.

John 11:42 I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me.”

There was a purpose in manifesting God's glory through the resuscitation of Lazarus. It was a credential of the Messiah. That God had sent Jesus Christ (translation: Messiah). And this miracle manifested the glory of God, “so that they may believe that You sent Me.” Faith is associated with glory.

John 11:43 When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth.”

John 11:44 The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus *said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

John 12:14 Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written,

John 12:15 “Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt.”

John 12:16 These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him.

Interesting that the significance of Jesus’ glorification was not immediately recognized by the disciples. It took the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish this starting with the day of Pentecost.

John 12:42 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;

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

Approval. The Greek is “glory.” I can understand that “approval” is included in this context. The Greek word can mean many things like approval or honor. However, it obscures the fact that it is the glory of God that is important. All the translations I looked at had something other than “glory.”

In the priestly prayer, Jesus talks of God’s glory.

John 17:4 I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.

It was not just the miracles that manifested God's glory in Jesus' life. It is so with believers today. We glorify God simply by walking by faith dependence on God the Holy Spirit. Our work is accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit. That is how we produce fruit which glorifies God. We know about producing fruit because of Bible doctrine. It contains information that guides us in our lives. Hebrews 4:1-2 promises (doctrine) plus faith.

John 17:5 Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

John 17:22 The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;

Jesus gave the apostles glory that Jesus had from the Father. So we too will receive glory by walking by faith. Take note that this glory has the effect of unifying believers.

John 17:23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.

John 17:24 Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You

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have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

Again, God's glory is associated with God's love. His character.

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The point of looking at Jesus and His glory is that fruit produced by the filling of the Holy Spirit manifests the glory of God.

That glory is the purpose of history.

So, by fulfilling the command to be filled by the Holy Spirit we are fulfilling God's plan of history.

Hallelujah!