

## Weekly Newsletter: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024

### Reflection: What Does It Mean To See The Glory Of God?

By Dan Barnard

Last week, I was in Argentina. My dad was teaching some international students there, and I was fortunate enough to be able to accompany him. Throughout the week, dad taught on the 'Glory Of God.' He did a fantastic job - to the extent that even though I was not tasked with writing an essay, I chose to write one anyway. In this essay, I will be answering the question, "What does it mean to see the glory of God?" I hope that this essay is eye opening to those who haven't yet experienced God's glory and encouraging for those who are hungry to see more.

To begin, to see God's glory is to see His visible splendour. Surprisingly to some, humans - left to their own - are unable to see the glory of God. God's glory is invisible, and its raw intensity exceeds the capacity of the naked eye. Yet, God chose to put his glory on display. He created a universe so lavishly beautiful that it cries out the Creator's name. The universe is tangible for the human eye to see. But, God did not stop there. He also created humans so they could reflect God's glory to each other. Gerard Manley Hopkins expresses this in his poem "As Kingfishers Catch Fire." He writes, "For Christ plays in ten thousand places, lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his to the Father through the features of men's faces." Is this not baffling? Christ's glory does not just exude from Christ Himself. It also radiates out of humanity. Thus, the first thing one must know about glory is that God created humanity and all that exists so that humans could visibly see His glory in each other and also in their surrounding environment.

Second, to see God's glory is to see God's character. From Genesis to Revelation, God progressively reveals his character to the world. Here are two examples of this. First, in Exodus, God reveals Himself to Moses on Mount Sinai. This is God's word: "The Lord passed before him [Moses] and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will no means clear the guilty (Exodus 34:6-7).'" Moses asked to see God's glory, and God answered his prayer. But what is surprising is that God did not just reveal His back to Moses. He proclaimed His name. Glory and character are inseparable. The second example is from Isaiah. The author writes, "He [The Lord] will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span...and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance (Isaiah 40:11-12)?" In the first few lines, one sees such a tender revelation of God's character. God is a shepherd; He gathers His people like lambs. Yet again, in reading on, one is swept up into realms of majesty otherwise inaccessible to human experience. No one but God can weigh the mountains. No one but God can measure the oceans. No one but God can calculate

the diameter of the universe. God wants to make His glory known through creation and humanity, but He also desires to be known by His character.

Third, to see God's glory is to see God's localized presence. In the Old Testament, when God shows up, He usually takes the form of a cloud - the glory cloud. For example, when God meets with Moses on Mount Sinai, He comes in the cloud. When God descends to dwell in Solomon's temple, He comes in the form of the cloud. When God leads Israel in the wilderness, He leads them in the form of a cloud. What does this signify? It does not mean that God was contained by the cloud, but it does mean that God desired that His glory be localized among His people. In the New Testament, God does something marvellously unexpected. He takes the form of a man, and localizes Himself on Earth. Inasmuch as the cloud partially represented God's glory, Jesus is the perfect representation. He is God, but man. His glory is equal to that of the Father.

Having just read about God's visible splendour, God's character, and God's localized presence in the Lord Jesus, one must be connecting these dots to the cross. On the cross, God's glory is most magnificently displayed. At first, the cross looks shameful and grotesque. But when one grasps the truth of the last three paragraphs, it all makes sense. Jesus on the cross is visibly displaying God's glory. God's eternal glory is present at that moment for the world to see. Also, on the cross, Jesus displays God's character. Remember the verse in Exodus: "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness (Exodus 34:6)" Jesus on the cross is proving God's unending love for sinners. But again, think about God's localized presence. Jesus (God) could not be more localized than on the cross. He is physically nailed to a tree. The point of all this is that in short, if one had to condense this whole essay into a sentence, to see the glory of God is to see Jesus on the cross. At that moment, God exposed the depths of his glory to the world - not watered down, just His glory as it is. How amazing, that by surveying the wondrous cross one can peer into the ocean depths of God's glory.

## Thanksgiving Service – Mary Philip



We were saddened by the news of Mary Philip's passing but rejoice that she is with her Saviour who she loved and lived for. Please pray for Jen (pictured here with her mum) and William and their families as they grieve her passing.

There will be a Thanksgiving Service at Holyrood this **Thursday (5th December) at 12 noon** followed by light refreshments in the hall downstairs. Everyone is welcome.

For those not able to attend in person, the service will be

livestreamed here: <https://youtube.com/live/kExmAKcsVf8?feature=share>

## This Wednesday – Prayer Meeting

This week we are meeting at 7pm to pray (with refreshments served from 6.45pm). Please note that there's no meal this month and our first meal of 2025 will be on **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January**.

## Christmas Plans

Here's a note of the plans for over the Christmas season:

- Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December: Carols by Candlelight 6.30-7.15pm (more details below)
- Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December: Last Home Groups for the term. They're back on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025!
- Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December:
  - Morning Service at 10.30am featuring the Sunday Club
  - Christmas Carol Service at 6pm
- Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December: Baby & Toddler Nativity and Christmas Party at 10am
- Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> December:
  - Morning service at 10.30am
  - Evening service at 6pm

There will be no worship service on Christmas Day and no prayer meeting on New Year's Day.

## Carols by Candlelight



On **Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December** we're having Carols by Candlelight with the Salvation Army Band from 6.30 – 7.15pm.

We'll hopefully (weather permitting!) be over in the park for some carol singing and then there will be hot drinks, mince pies and kids activities in the church building.

If you're coming along, please bring a torch with you and flyers are also available at the church information point, please take some!

## Christmas Appeal 2024

After receiving suggestions from the church family, the elders have chosen the following projects for the Christmas Appeal this year.

- Onesimus Fund – Cornhill Scotland. Helping to train useful gospel workers for Scotland and Beyond
- Delhi Bible Institute – supporting DBI's 'Loving The Poorest' appeal
- Merchant City Church Plant – supporting Neil Longwe and David Trimble as they plant a church in the Merchant City in Glasgow
- Bethany Christian Trust – supporting their Buy-a-Bed campaign
- Friends International – to help provide trips for international students in 2025
- Sparkle Sisters – a Christian led charity born out of the desire to share the love of Jesus and enhance the lives of women, of all faiths or none, who have in some way been affected by homelessness and/or abuse.

A graphic for the 'Christmas Appeal 2024' featuring logos and descriptions for several charities: 'Merchant City Church Plant' (Neil Longwe and David Trimble), 'Cornhill SIMUS Fund' (helping to train gospel workers), 'Delhi Bible Institute dbi' ('Loving The Poorest' appeal), 'Bethany Buy-a-bed Campaign' (Edinburgh Welcome Centre emergency accommodation), 'Bethany Christian Trust', 'Friends International' (to help provide trips for international students), and 'Sparkle Sisters' (share the love of Jesus &amp; enhance the lives of traumatised women). A red box in the center says 'Contributions by bank transfer, offering box or cheque - all marked Christmas Appeal'.

Cornhill Scotland and Delhi Bible Institute with each receive 30% of the total raised. The remaining 40% will be split equally between the other projects.

The Christmas Appeal will be open throughout December and as usual people can transfer money directly into the church bank account <https://holyroodevangelical.org/giving/> or place donations into the offering box marked Christmas Appeal. Thank you!

## Advent Devotional Books

A number of Advent Bible reading or devotional books are now available in the church library. Please take a look and feel free to borrow them.

## Hogmanay Ceilidh

This year we're planning to have a Hogmanay Ceilidh as a church family on **31<sup>st</sup> December from 7-10pm**. Serenna and friends will be providing the music and it's a chance to get together at the end of the year and enjoy time together. Keep the date free!

## Church Calendar

For your info and prayers:

- Tuesday: Women's Advent Bible Studies (last one!) 7-8pm on Zoom
- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting at 7pm (refreshments from 6.45pm)
- Thursday: Thanksgiving Service for Mary Philip (and livestreamed) at 12 noon
- Sunday:
  - Worship service at 10.30am – Joe Barnard preaching (live streamed)
  - Christmas Choir practice after the morning service
  - Evening service at 6pm – Jon Gemmell preaching (live streamed)
- Monday:
  - Baby and Toddler Group at 10am
  - Warm Space at 12 noon (last one of the term)



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