

The Glory of God - Part 2

by Charles Leiter

The glory of God is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ through His miraculous life, death, and resurrection.

Duration: 41:16

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Mark 2:12, John 9:32, John 10:32, Acts 2:22, 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Topics: "Divine Glory", "Jesus Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the difficulty of fully understanding and describing the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. He emphasizes the miraculous works of Jesus as evidence of His divinity, citing Peter's preaching in Acts 2:22. The speaker highlights various types of miracles performed by Jesus, including deliverance, control over the elements, and supernatural protection. He concludes by referencing 2 Corinthians 4:3-6, which speaks of the gospel being veiled to those who are perishing but reveals the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Let's open our Bibles to 2 Corinthians chapter 4, and we'll read verses 3 to 6. Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the God of this world, little g God, has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For God who said, light shall shine out of darkness, is the one who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Let's pray once again before we look at these words. Father, we ask you for your Holy Spirit. We confess that we can't even believe you apart from your help.

We pray for a spirit of faith and power and love and of a sound mind. We ask you for help now, that we might consider the glories of the works of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

We tried in our last message to consider something of the glory of the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. This time, we want to look at something of the glory of the works of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we talked a little bit about how hard it is to analyze these things.

What is it that we've seen when we say that we've seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ? And every attempt to try to split it apart and look at it seems insufficient and is insufficient. And yet, by doing

that, we get a little bit more of an understanding and more of a glimpse of that glory. And so that's what we want to try to do here.

The works of the Lord Jesus Christ were so wonderful that no mortal tongue could ever adequately describe them. And when we think of His works, immediately our minds go to His miracles. So I want to talk first about the miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I want to look at another passage in Acts chapter 2 and verse 22. Peter is preaching here to these unbelieving Jews on the day of Pentecost. And he says, As men of Israel listened to these words, Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know.

This man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put him to death. And God raised him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for him to be held in its power. Peter is preaching here to these unbelieving Jews, and he gives a bold proclamation or reminder concerning these miracles.

He says, These miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through the Lord Jesus Christ. These were the things that had characterized his life. The ministry of Jesus was a ministry of miracles.

Miracles of healing. Let me remind you of some of them. Miracles of deafness, dumbness, blindness, fever, leprosy, issues of blood, lameness, withered hands, and so on.

Miracles of healing. Miracles of feeding 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish, 4,000 people on another occasion. Miracles of deliverance from the power of demons.

Deaf spirits. Dumb spirits. Suicidal spirits.

Throwing people into the fire and into the water. Spirit of sickness. One of those spirits is called, this woman was bent double with a spirit of infirmity or sickness.

Legions of demons. Here's a man running naked in the tombs, cutting himself and crying out amongst the dead. Legion was 6,000.

This demon gave his name as Legion. He was so supernaturally strong that he could break chains that they would try to bind him with. And the Lord Jesus says one word, go.

And they went. Miracles of deliverance. Miracles over the elements.

Here the disciples are in fear of their lives. The storm is raging. The boat's filling up.

The Lord Jesus gets up and says, be still. Miracles over the elements. Walking.

Not only did Jesus walk on water, He walked on the storm. It was more than just some placid lake. He walked on the storm.

So miracles over the elements. He says, be still and the storm becomes perfectly calm. Miracles regarding the animal kingdom.

Cast your net in over on the other side, He says. And all those fish fill the net. Miracles regarding the plant kingdom.

He says to a fig tree, nobody ever eat fruit from you again. Miracles of protection. Supernatural protection from His enemies.

He'd walk through the midst of them. Miracles of triumph. And this is the last, probably the greatest one.

Miracles of triumph over death itself. Here's a widow's son in funeral procession and he stops and raises him. Here's Jairus' daughter, dead.

People weeping and wailing. And he raises her from the dead. Here's Lazarus, dead four days.

And she says, Lord, there'll be a stench if they open that tomb up. And I believe that when they opened that tomb up, the stench rolled out of there. It wasn't any sanitary thing.

And he raises his voice, Lazarus, come forth. And then finally, his own resurrection. I say the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus was a life and ministry of miracles.

Miracles of every sort and size. Unbelieving Bible scholars used to try to cut out all those miracles and just get down to the human Jesus. You know, this guy that carried lambs around and said nice things to everybody.

And what they discovered was, is that if you start cutting out the miracles and cutting out the miraculous and the supernatural, you end up with no Jesus at all. Because the only Jesus that we have any record of was supernatural from A to Z. I mean, do you realize all these miracles of healing just under that? Deafness, dumbness, blindness, fever, leprosy, issues of blood, lameness, withered hand. Just in the miracles of healing.

Let alone all these others. There is no non-supernatural Jesus in history. Now, again, what I mentioned earlier, this explains why there's so little about Him in the secular history books.

Because you'd say, I mean, just come up to this situation from the outside. You say, you ask this person, who has affected history more than any other man? And they get around to Jesus of Nazareth. Well, what was He like? Tell me about Him.

Well, you can't go two steps before you run into a miraculous Jesus. And so it's better just to leave Him alone entirely. Just try to put a little bit in there about Him.

You know, all the major world's religions can get by just fine without the miraculous. You think of Confucianism, there's nothing. You don't need anything miraculous in that.

Hinduism, you don't need anything miraculous. Buddhism, you don't need anything. Mohammedanism.

Islam, you don't need anything miraculous. But that's not true of Christianity. Christianity is precisely the story of the great miracle.

That God came down into this world and was born a virgin. And then He lived this supernatural, miraculous life from A to Z. And He died a supernatural, miraculous death on the cross. He wasn't a martyr on the cross.

I mean, Socrates drank the hemlock cup voluntarily, no problem. But here's the Lord Jesus Christ, sweating drops of blood. This was supernatural.

Even His death was supernatural. You see, the sun grows dark when He dies, and the earth trembles when He dies. He lives a supernatural life from A to Z, and then He rises from the dead after having a supernatural death.

Everything about Christianity is supernatural. And if you don't have the supernatural, if you take it away, you've got nothing left at all. I said from the beginning, starting out, one of the great glories about Christianity is it is not a set of philosophical principles or abstract eternal truths or something.

What we have seen and heard, what our hands have handled. They said, God came down here among us, and we saw and we handled and we saw things happen. That never could have happened except God came into our midst.

He said things that no other man has ever said in a way that no other man has ever said them in a setting that no other man has ever spoken. And He did things in the midst of that at the same time. You see, His words and His works are both self-attesting in their divine glory.

There is no Christianity apart from the miraculous. And this message of Peter on the day of Pentecost was exactly this. These disciples had been overwhelmed by this miraculous person of Jesus Christ.

They had been shocked and overwhelmed by His resurrection. And Peter said to those Jews, all of you know about these miracles too. He says in verse 22, he says, A man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs, which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know.

The Jews never denied that Jesus did the miracles. They said it was by the power of Beelzebul, but they never denied that He was doing it. Just the opposite.

They said, what are we going to do if this keeps on? Again, this question comes up, where in the world did these Gospels come from? Do you think the disciples made up the resurrection? They were the last people to believe it. They were shocked and overwhelmed by an event that turned them from a bunch of sniveling cowards into people that went out and stood in front of kings and said, He's risen! They were overwhelmed by the miracle of the resurrection in spite of themselves and in spite of their unbelief. You see, the explanation for these Gospels is just this.

We saw, we heard, our hands have handled. And we're just telling you what we saw. That's the explanation.

You want to know what it's like when people make up miracles? You can read the so-called apocryphal Gospels that were written hundreds of years later. And they have all kinds of man-made miracles. Jesus as a boy, you know, takes balls of clay and throws them up into the air and turns them into birds in the air.

Things like that. You read the miracles of Islam. Mohammed, you know, he had miraculous powers.

He could make water come out from between his fingers. And he rode his horse Borak to paradise and back. You see, that's the kind of miracles that men make up.

Trees would salute him as he walked by. See the stupidity? In Buddhism, Buddha is born and he claps his hands as soon as he's born and says, I have arrived. That's what it's like when men make up miracles.

You read the miracles of the Gospel. Sublime, majestic, glorious miracles. Totally different.

Not the juggling of a divine magician. Never performed to gain a crowd. In fact, just the opposite.

He said, don't tell anybody about this. Never performed for selfish motives. He's out there in the desert.

Hasn't had anything to eat for 40 days and 40 nights. The devil comes to him and says, you're the Son of God. Turn that stone into bread.

He wouldn't do that. He's on the cross dying. I thirst.

He would not use his powers in any way selfishly. Do you realize the sublimity of these miracles? I'm telling you, try to make up and invent something like in the Gospels, you see. That's what we're talking about when we say, you say, how do you know that this is true? How do you know it's true is because of the divine glory that's right there in the account itself.

That's how you know it's true. Those miracles are full of truth and beauty. They're acted parables.

Jesus says, right before He heals a blind man, I am the light of the world. That's why He healed that blind man. They're not just works of kindness even.

They're signs. That is, things that point to some truth and glory about Christ. He feeds that multitude.

And they take up all those baskets full of leftover. And He says, I'm the bread of life. Now what's He saying? He's saying, I have sustenance for your deepest needs in your existence spiritually and physically and every other way.

I'm the bread of life. And it's not just enough to barely get you by. It's enough to have baskets left over.

Some people try to explain the miracles as psychosomatic cures. There's a famous book on comparative religion. I don't know if it's used anymore or not, but back in my day it was.

A fellow named Noss. This is what he said. He's trying to deal with Christianity.

It gets embarrassing, you know. You're trying to give a nice, tidy book on comparative religion. And you get to Jesus.

What in the world are you going to say? Here's what he says. In a world like that of Jesus' time, where spiritual and nervous tensions were so great, there must have been many instances of functional disorders greatly aggravated by fears and repressions, and exhibiting many of the symptoms of organic disease among all classes of the people. The nobility of Jesus' own faith, mediated through a wholesome, sympathetic, and challenging personality, remade many lost or sick souls, restored their faith, and caused their alarming symptoms to vanish in an instant.

You see, those people just thought they were sick. Here's a guy that thinks that he has leprosy. And he thinks that his body is covered in oozing with sores.

Here's a woman who thinks she's had an issue of blood for twelve years. Her alarming symptoms vanish in a moment. Here's a guy who thinks that he's been born blind.

Better yet, here's Lazarus. He thinks that he's been dead for four days. But his wholesome personality.

I mean, you've got to have a really warm personality to get that corpse to come back to life. You see, he's too hot to handle. You have got to deny and completely try to erase him.

You cannot deal with him. His works, he said, I came and did among them works which no other man ever did. And therefore they have no excuse for their sin.

You look on the pages of the Gospels and you see something that is beyond this world. It's come down from heaven. And it's words that no man could ever have invented.

And it's works that no man could ever have thought of. It's the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. You say, how do you know the Bible's true? How do I know it's true? Because I just read it.

It's like, how do you know the sun's up there? Because my eyes have been opened to see it. Gresham Machen. One of the men who stood for biblical Christianity in a day of acid criticism.

He was over there in Germany. He said he'd go to those classes where those professors scathingly denounced the Bible. And he'd come back and he said, I'd read the Gospel of Mark and I knew it had to be true.

People back then were not that stupid. It wasn't like, you know, the plane flies over and they say, oh, bird God. The things that happened back then were just as inexplicable then as they are now.

And just as inexplicable now as they were then. Listen to some of the things they said. Matthew 9.33. Nothing like this was ever seen in Israel.

Mark 2.12. We have never seen anything like this. John 9.32. Since the beginning of time, it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. The mighty miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Raising the dead. Healing the sick. Casting out demons.

Walking on water. Stilling the storm. On and on and on.

The glory of His works, though, goes far beyond the miracles. Now, listen to this. In a way, the miracles are almost a footnote.

They are almost that small in comparison to the glory of His works. Everything about Jesus was glorious. John 10.32. He says, many good works I showed you from the Father.

And the word good there is actually the word beautiful. I've showed you many beautiful works from the Father. Which one of them are you stoning me for? He went about doing beautiful works.

He went about, as Peter says, He went about doing good. Healing those that were oppressed by the devil. Here's a man with leprosy.

Ceremonially unclean. It says, Jesus moved with compassion. Now, you remember, you touch a leper, you become unclean.

Jesus moved with compassion. He reaches out and touches a leper. And instead of him becoming unclean, the leper becomes clean.

Instead of Jesus becoming unclean, the leper becomes clean. Isn't that amazing? Those are beautiful works. Here's a woman beside a well.

And he starts talking to her. He comes up and starts talking to her. First of all, no respectable rabbi would be seen talking to a woman in public.

You don't do that. That's a big strike right there against her. She was a woman.

But worse than that, she's a Samaritan woman. And any self-respecting rabbi would have crossed over and gone up the other side and missed Samaria entirely. He was in Samaria.

And he's talking in public to a Samaritan woman. But worse than that, she is a wicked Samaritan woman. Who's had five husbands and she's living with a guy right now.

And he's out there talking to her. He says, if you knew, if you knew who you're talking to, you would have asked me and I would have given you living water. These are beautiful works.

Here's the disciples in the upper room the night before Jesus is crucified. Right on the very eve of His crucifixion, they're arguing about who's going to be the greatest. And he takes his clothes, takes off his outer garment and girds himself with a towel and gets down and washes the disciples' feet.

I say, when we talk about the works of Jesus, see, it's much, much more. I mean, included in His works, when I say His words and His works display His glory, it's much more than these things like, well, He raised the dead. Beloved, nobody has ever handled a towel the way the Lord Jesus Christ handled a towel.

Nobody has ever smiled the way He smiled. Nobody has ever looked the way He looked. That's why I hate this blasphemy of Hollywood actors trying to be the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no man alive that can look the way a sinless man would have looked. There's no man alive that could give the expression of one who was filled with all the fullness of God. You know, if you want a physical manifestation of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, it's not tones, it's a shining face.

You cannot make your face look the way a man's face looks who has had the Spirit of God poured out upon him. I remember there was a fellow that used to come to our church. He was a young man.

And they left for some time. And he came walking into the room. I had counseled with him as a teenager.

He came walking into the room. Several years after that, I hadn't seen him for a long time. When he walked through the room, I knew immediately he had been transformed by the appearance of his face.

I cannot make my face look right now the way it would look if God had just met with me in some fresh way. Now, you're going to tell me some blaspheming Hollywood star is going to represent my Lord? That's impossible. It's blasphemy.

You see, it's our Lord's whole character and person that shows forth His divine glory. Think just of, first of all, the compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ. There's this leper.

It's this mood with compassion. He reached out and touched him. This rich young ruler.

Jesus loved him. He said, go sell everything that you have. He felt a love for him.

Shortest verse in the Bible. Jesus wept. Why did He weep? He didn't weep because He didn't weep for Himself.

He didn't weep for Lazarus. He was getting ready to raise Lazarus from the dead. Why did He weep? He felt the sadness and the misery of death in this world.

He was able to enter in with compassion towards these miserable, fallen sons of Adam that we are. And He wept. He saw the city of Jerusalem and He wept.

Just to think of all her history, all she was meant to be. And here, Jerusalem doesn't know the time of her visitation. The compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The holiness and unbending righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. He had mercy on that woman taken in adultery, yes. And the law said she ought to be stoned.

But you remember what He said to her? Go and sin less. He didn't say that. Go and sin no more.

He upheld perfect righteousness right while He was showing forth perfect mercy. The majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm trying just to dissect it a little bit.

Something of what we mean when we say, I've seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Haven't you sensed this? He was like a visiting prince from another country. There's a sense of majesty.

As you read about Him, all these things are tied together in our impression of Christ. There's divine dignity about Jesus of Nazareth. They come to Him and they say, Your friend Lazarus is dying.

I better get over there right away. And He says, let's wait a while. Let's wait until He's dead for a while, so I'll go over there then.

You see that? He's standing before Pilate. Pilate was the one that was uneasy and worried and washing his hands. See, it wasn't Christ that was on trial.

You take a bunch of high school kids into the art museum in Florence and show them these world masterpieces. It's not the masterpieces that are on trial. They say, that picture by Leonardo looks dumb.

All they showed was that they don't have the ability to appreciate the Master. You see? It's not the Lord Jesus Christ that's on trial when men decide what they're going to do with Him. All they're doing is sealing their own faith and showing who they are.

They're the ones on trial. The majesty of Christ, the humility of Christ. Oh, it struck me one time there from Philippians 2, though He existed in the form of God, He did not regard equality with God a thing to be held on to, but He emptied Himself.

There's no being who ever was or ever will be that compares in any way to God for His humility. He has to humble Himself to behold the things in the heaven and on the earth. But He humbled Himself to the point of coming down and taking humanity and becoming flesh and dwelling among us.

The second Person of the Trinity, this One who was with God and who was God, He's going to come down. He's not just going to humble Himself to look down there, which is humbling. But He's going to come down and take the form of a man.

Well, where is He going to be born? Not Jerusalem, but Bethlehem. He's going to choose that. What are His parents going to be like? Some, you know, princes? No, He's going to take, I mean, He goes right down there and takes this carpenter and his wife.

And He's going to be born there. And He's going to be born where? In a stable. Under those conditions.

What profession will He grow up with? Well, He'll be a carpenter. Where will He live? Well, He'll live in Nazareth. That's the place that everybody despises.

That's where He'll choose to live. So He says, I'm going to come down and take humanity upon Myself, and I'm going to be born in this little out-of-the-way place in a stable. And I'm going to be a carpenter.

And I'm going to live my life not in the centers of power, but out here in the countryside. Who would He choose to found the church upon? Not scholars, but fishermen. In other words, His whole life was a life of constant humility.

He washed the disciples' feet on the eve of His own crucifixion. He bore with their pride and arguing and trying to figure out who's going to be the greatest. Think of the humility of that.

Even arguing the night before He's going to be killed, they're arguing about who's going to be the greatest. Such humility, such selflessness. Even when He was on the cross, there's a chorus of, Save Thyself, Save Thyself.

You look at the various gospel references, it was like it was coming from all angles. It was demoralizing. Get out from that cross! And if there had been one iota of pride, He would have just been done with it like that.

The humility of Christ, the zeal of the Lord Jesus Christ. Has there ever been anyone who lived so fervently and constantly and completely for God? Has there ever been anyone like Him for sheer zeal? Zeal for the Father's house consumed Him. It ate Him up.

And He goes in there and those money changers are in the temple. It's an amazing thing to me. He made that cord to drive out those sheep and oxen and whatever.

But it says He overturned the tables of the money changers. You've got all this money spread out on there. Overturned their table? I mean, we read these things, we don't think about it.

He lived every moment at full stretch for God. No one has ever been so zealous. And yet, the calmness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What a glory this is. His life was all out for God, yet there was never anything feverish about Him. There was never a hint of fanaticism.

Think of the Lord's Prayer. You know, sane, calm. Calmness.

There's a peace, there's a sanity about Christ. No matter how pressed He is by crowds. No matter how pressed He is by persecutors.

There's never the slightest sense that He's in a tizzy. You know, you feel that when you read the Gospels? Don't you feel the absolute zeal of Christ? And don't you at the same time feel His absolute serenity and

sameness? Do you realize how incredible that is? The completeness of the Lord Jesus' character. Other great men have this or that outstanding virtue.

You just look at a lineup from church history of great, so-called great preachers and men who follow the Lord. Totally different. One guy strong in this area, another guy strong in that area.

The Lord Jesus Christ was strong in every area. The completeness of His character. He had every virtue.

There's no characteristic that a man can have that is virtuous that Christ didn't have. In its fullness. Other great men serve as models for particular times and particular places.

But the Lord Jesus Christ serves as a model for every time and every place and every culture that He is. Isn't that amazing? I mean, an African down here, that's a headhunter. Or an intellectual over here in some European university.

Anywhere you go in the whole world, any culture, anywhere. Men are able to totally identify with Him and worship Him. And accept Him as their God.

Worshiped by men from every tribe and tongue and kindred nation. You see, He had every virtue. He was complete.

He did all things well. The harmony. This is number eight.

I should have been numbering these. The harmony of our Lord's character. Have you ever noticed this? These virtues that we talk about in Christ are actually opposites in many cases.

And yet in the Lord Jesus Christ they exist in perfect proportion and harmony. He was free from all one-sidedness. You know, some guys are always harping on something.

Some guys you say, well yeah, that guy has a special ministry in this area. He didn't have any. He was totally free from all one-sidedness.

Everything in Christ's character existed in perfect proportion and harmony. Everything about Him was in perfect balance. He was majestic.

Yet as majestic as He was, He was just that approachable. He was profound, yet He was so simple. He was consumed with zeal, yet He was calm and sane.

He was the meekest man that ever lived. And He was the most fearless man that ever lived. Perfect balance.

He was merciful, yet He was absolutely uncompromising. The harmony of His character. Last one, the consistency of His character.

In every situation with all types of people, He's always the same Jesus. You see Him with sinners, bad sinners. You see Him with saints.

He's the same Jesus. You see Him with little children. And you see Him with aged leaders.

You see Him with the poor. And you see Him with the rich. You see Him with simple fishermen.

You see Him with learned scribes. You see Him with despised publicans and honored members of the Sanhedrin. You see Him with one individual out there alone.

You see Him with a vast crowd. You see Him in the temple. And you see Him by the seaside.

You see Him at a wedding. And you see Him in a cemetery. You see Him standing before a Samaritan woman.

And you see Him standing before a king. And everywhere that you see Him, He's just Jesus. You cannot say anything more than that.

He's Jesus. You can't say anything higher than that. He's Jesus.

Let me read a little bit from Philip Schaff. He says, His zeal never degenerated into passion, nor His constancy into obstinacy, nor His benevolence into weakness, nor His tenderness into sentimentality. He is justly compared with the lion in strength and with the lamb in meekness.

Have you ever seen it? Can you imagine? You couldn't imagine. It's like trying to invent a new primary color in your mind. You can't imagine anybody that's more like a lion and more like a lamb at the same time.

Listen to this. He was the most effective and yet the least noisy. He was the most radical and yet the most conservative, calm, and patient of all Reformers.

He's the most radical of any Reformer. He's also the most conservative, calm, and patient of any Reformer. He came to fulfill every letter of the law, and yet He made all things new.

This Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon. Without science and learning, He shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined. Without the eloquence of schools, He spoke such words of life as were never spoken before or since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet.

Without writing a single line, He set more pens in motion and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, and songs of praise than the whole army of great men of ancient or modern times. How could we ever describe Him? Or show forth His glory? He's unlike any man who ever lived. He's Jesus.

He's God with us. And we see the glory of God in His face.

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