

Jesus Christ My Glory

by Chuck Smith

The sermon explores the nature of God and the importance of knowing Him amidst societal decline and impending judgment.

Duration: 37:38

Scripture: Genesis 6:5, Psalm 10:1-4, Psalm 10:11-13, Psalm 103:8-10, Psalm 119:1, Jeremiah 9:23-24, Matthew 7:21

Topics: "Gods Nature", "Moral Strength"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher highlights the corrupt state of the world, drawing parallels between the present day and the biblical times. The preacher emphasizes that God's nature is characterized by love and holiness. The sermon also discusses the importance of moral strength and a right relationship with God, rather than relying on military power or riches. The preacher encourages the audience to seek a deep understanding and knowledge of God, as it is more valuable than worldly possessions or intelligence.

Transcript

Now shall we turn in our Bibles to Psalm 10. I'll read the first, the unnumbered verses. Pastor Brian will lead the congregation in the reading of the even-numbered verses.

Shall we stand as we read Psalm 10. Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble? The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor. Let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.

For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blessed the covetous whom the Lord abhorreth. The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God. God is not in all his thoughts.

His ways are always grievous. Thy judgments are far above, out of his sight. As for all of his enemies, he puffeth at them.

He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved, for I shall never be in adversity. His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud. Under his tongue is mischief and vanity.

He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages, in the secret places that he murder the innocent. His eyes are frivolously set against the poor. He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den.

He lieth in wait to catch the poor. He doth catch the poor, and he draweth him into his net. He croucheth and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.

He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten. He hideth his face. He will never see it.

Arise, O Lord. O God, lift up thy hand. Forget not the humble.

Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? He hath said in his heart, thou wilt not require it. Thou hast seen it, for thou beholdest mischief and spite. To requit it with thy hand, the poor committed himself unto thee.

Thou art the helper of the fatherless. Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man. Seek out his wickedness till thou find none.

The Lord is king forever and ever. The heathen are perished out of his land. Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble.

Thou wilt prepare thy heart. Thou wilt cause thine ear to hear. To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.

Let's pray. Father, as we come before you today, we know, Lord, that you are just, that you are holy, that you are righteous. We know, Lord, that you are a loving God.

And so often because of your love, you are so patient and long-suffering with our weaknesses and our failures. But we realize, Lord, that in righteousness, you must act to save us from the destruction that we would bring upon ourselves as a result of our own folly. So we ask, Lord, that you would speak to us today through your word.

We ask that our hearts might be open to receive. Bless, we pray, the study of your word today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

This morning, we'd like to draw your attention, however, to the ninth chapter of Jeremiah, beginning with verse 23, where the Lord speaks, Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might. Let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord which exercises loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, saith the Lord.

Here in chapter nine, the Lord speaks of the exceeding wickedness of the nation of Judah, and the judgment that was going to come upon Judah because of their exceeding wickedness. We are told in verse 13 that they had forsaken his law. They would not obey his voice or walk in his ways, but they were walking in the imagination of their own hearts and after false gods.

This basically was the condition of the world at the time that God judged the world with the flood in Noah's day. We read of those conditions in Genesis 6, and God saw that the man was great upon the earth, and that every imagination of his thoughts and of his heart was only evil continually. And God looked upon the earth and behold, it was corrupt.

For the earth was filled with violence, and God said, I will destroy them. As you read these conditions, it sounds very much like the world in which we are living today, in which people have forsaken the law of God, are worshiping other gods, and each man is doing that which is right in his own sight, and really

getting ripe for the judgment of God to once again come upon mankind. Now, God tells us a little bit of his nature here, and as we read the Bible, it tells us about God, and probably one of the chief characteristics of God's nature is love.

God is love. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, Jesus said, greater love has no man than this, that a man will lay down his life for his friends. We know that God is holy.

By holy, we mean that God is pure, that God is true, that God is righteous. He is surrounded by angels who cease not saying, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which is, which was, and which is to come. God is in his law defined for us what holiness is in his eyes.

Basically, anything that will ultimately hurt, harm, destroy you, God considers unholy. God calls that sin. Those things, if you engage in, if you practice, are going to bring harm and hurt to you or to others.

God forbids you doing those things in his law. Basically, whatever is good, whatever will build up, whatever will tend toward a loving relationship, a good relationship with others, God looks upon that as righteous, and God exhorts you to do those things that are holy, that are righteous, that are true. Isn't it interesting today how that we are seeking to sort of free ourselves from the law of God, how that the courts have ordered that you cannot have the 10 commandments posted in the public schools.

Now, when the commandments only forbid those things that are wrong or evil and encourage doing those things that are right and good, why do you suppose we would not want them posted so that the children could see what God requires of man? You have to wonder about a nation that forgets God, about a nation that really doesn't want the law of God or their children exposed to the law of God. You wonder about men who would fight to free us from the concepts of God or from worshiping God. God, in his law, told of the problems that would develop when a nation would forsake his law, the evil that would come upon that nation and overtake that nation, the inevitable consequences of doing those things that are wrong.

In the same token, God, in the law, told of the blessings that would come to a person or to a nation that would keep his laws, the blessings that God would bestow upon them, the things that God would do for them who were obedient or the inevitable consequences of living a good life. And thus, in the law, he has shown you, oh man, what is good, the prophet Micah said. And Paul, writing of it, said, for the law is holy and just and good.

But man has rebelled against the law of God. They have said we will not have God's law ruling over us. Interesting that at the same time that our nation has prohibited prayer in school and has now actually restricted the posting of the laws, the problems that have developed in our whole school system, the problems that have developed as far as the moral structure of our nation.

Today, schools have become a war zone in many areas. We have to hire armed guards to patrol the schools. When I was in school, the greatest problem were kids chewing gum in class.

But oh, not today. But we've strayed so far and we're beginning to experience what God told us we would experience if we would cast aside his law. God is love.

God is holy. And God is just. Thus, when the law is broken, there has to be a penalty for breaking the law.

It is not justice if the guilty party is set free without punishment. And here is where God's justice and his love collides. Because God is so long-suffering.

He is slow to judgment, plenteous in mercy. And he will allow people to get by with things seemingly, as he is hoping and waiting for them to turn and to see the folly of the path that they have chosen. God's long-suffering is oftentimes mistaken by man for weakness or for blindness.

God doesn't see, as we read in our psalm this morning. And people think that God, because he hasn't judged me immediately, I've gotten by with it. But here in chapter 9, the time has come where God's mercy and long-suffering has been exhausted.

The people are continuing in the path of unrighteousness. And the time has come when God must become more severe in dealing with their sin. God had sent his prophets who exhorted, begged the people to turn back to the Lord, to turn away from the path of destruction.

God had sent certain limited judgments in order to cause them to turn to the right path. But they have ignored the prophets of God. And when the judgments would come, they would have a surface repentance and God would relent.

But now they've gone too far. God is going to have to become very firm now in his dealing with them. But as he does, he weeps.

God doesn't want to deal in a hard fashion with our weaknesses. He would rather that we just learn and that we would just be open and that we would repent with just a word from him. Years ago, we were celebrating our Thanksgiving dinner with family in Phoenix, Arizona.

Our oldest grandchild was there at the table and we were sitting down to eat and it was a beautifully set table. And he was sort of cutting up and his parents were telling him to behave himself. And he was still cutting up and I said, Bradley, you must stop.

Those were the harshest words I'd ever spoken to him. And he broke down just weeping. Oh, grandpa, you know, I mean, grandpa had never spoken to him in a firm manner before.

He was grandpa's boy, my first grandson. God has difficulty in bringing severe or harsh punishment, which is for our benefit. And yet, well, read it there in the first part.

Beginning with verse one, this is God speaking. It's not the prophet Jeremiah. He was the weeping prophet, but God is speaking.

And God said, oh, that my head were water and my eyes, a fountain of tears that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people. You see, God was going to have to bring Babylon and the armies of Babylon. And the daughters are going to be slain in the streets.

The daughters are going to be raped. And they're going to be taken away to become slaves to the Babylonians. And God's seeing this talks about, oh, that I might just weep night and day for this judgment that is coming.

Oh, that I had in the wilderness a lodging place for wayfaring men, that I might leave my people and go from them, for they are all adulterers. They are the assembly of treacherous men. They bend their tongues like their bow for lies.

They're not valiant for the truth upon the earth, for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the Lord. They're on the path of total extinction, and God is going to have to deal very severely with

them. But God grieves over the severity of the lesson that they must learn to survive.

When I was a child, my father used to often say, son, as he was getting ready to spank me, this hurts me more than it hurts you. I didn't believe him until I became a parent. And then I understand what my dad was saying to me.

But you see, there are lessons that as children we need to learn. There are certain things that, if practiced, if continued, can be very destructive and very harmful to us, can bring us great pain, great suffering. And so we need to learn not to do those things.

And if our parents say, now, never play with matches, why would they say that? Because they want to keep us from some exciting toy? No. They can see what I couldn't see as a child. I couldn't see the danger of matches.

I couldn't see how that it could start a fire, could burn down the house, or that I could be severely hurt. I couldn't see that, but they could. And so, if I continued to play with matches, after being told kindly that I shouldn't, then they must inflict a form of discipline, punishment, so to speak, so that they can protect me from the greater danger that would come if I would persist in that dangerous practice of playing with matches.

You teach your child, don't run out into the street, but stop and look both ways before you go out into the street. Why do you teach them that? Because you know that if they just dash out into the street, there's a great danger of them being severely injured or even killed by a car. And so you teach them.

And if they continue and persist to just run out into the street without stopping and looking both ways, then you use more severe measures in teaching them that lesson for their own good. Now, God knows that we are often engaged in practices that can be very harmful and destructive and can bring great pain to us if we persist in them. And Judah as a nation was in that condition.

And so God is going to have to teach them in a more severe manner the importance of following the ways of God and not taking these paths that are going to lead to great pain and harm to them as a people. They won't listen. They haven't listened.

And now God is going to have to become very severe. And the prophet is telling of the judgment of God that is going to come as the Babylonians will come and destroy and take them away as captives, because they have to learn this important lesson. In the New Testament, we see Jesus as He is approaching the city of Jerusalem and as He is weeping over the city, because they have rejected God's provision for their salvation through Jesus Christ.

And Jesus sees what it's going to cost them. He can see the Roman troops that will soon be coming and besieging Jerusalem. He will see the Romans troops as they break the walls and as they enter the city and as they trample the children in the streets.

He sees the some million people that will be killed within Jerusalem as Titus comes in with the Roman army and he weeps because of the judgment that is going to come, because they fail to walk in the ways of the Lord. Jeremiah is called the weeping prophet, but we have a weeping God. A God who weeps over our folly and the things that He has to do to turn us from our folly.

Through Jeremiah, God is talking to the people about the coming judgment. Because of their wickedness, because they did not believe the Word of God, because they were trusting in their own ability to deliver themselves, the Word of the Lord came to them. Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom.

At this time, the wise men of Judah were seeking a strategy to pit the Babylonians against the Egyptians. And they sided with the Egyptians, figuring that the Babylonians could not conquer Egypt. And by siding with Egypt, they felt that they were secure as they turned the conflict away from them toward the Egyptians.

The wise men had developed this brilliant strategy, and they were trusting that the strategy would keep them from being conquered by the Babylonians. But the Babylonians conquered the Egyptians and then turned against Israel, against Judah, and they conquered Jerusalem. Many nations trust in their superior wisdom for their deliverance and for their help.

We feel that we have some of the greatest scientists in the world who can develop super weapons that are far superior to the weapons of our enemies. Our scientists have produced some of the fastest planes, the best tanks, the most sophisticated weapons in the world. We have our think tanks, we have our strategists, we have the Pentagon, we have the CIA, and we glory in superior intelligence.

But superior intelligence will not deliver us from the judgments that will come upon the nation if we continue in the path of unrighteousness. God said, let not the mighty man glory in his might. Another thing that a nation is prone to glory in is their military power.

We've always believed that we had the strongest military might in the world. Vietnam became a very real shock to America because we thought we were invincible till then. One thing it proved, of course, was that politicians don't know how to fight a war.

And the restrictions that they placed upon our military led to our defeat. The true strength of a nation does not lie in the number of well-trained, well-equipped troops that it can place upon the battlefield. But the true strength of a nation is moral strength, moral character.

And that comes from a right relationship with God, keeping the laws of God. Jeremiah said, let not the rich man glory in his riches. We often boast of the fact that we are the richest nation in the world.

Our standard of living exceeds that of other nations. But we've discovered that riches cannot buy peace, they cannot buy happiness, they cannot buy contentment, or they cannot buy true friends. As a nation, we have sought by our riches to buy friends throughout the world.

But we are one of the most hated nations in the world. The world is willing to look to us for a handout. But few are willing to lend a hand, as demonstrated in Iraq.

NATO was quite willing to allow our bombers to come in and to bomb Serbia into submission. But they're unwilling to help us in the fight against terrorism. The true source of national strength, and in what we glory, the Lord said, if you want to glory, glory in this, that you understand and know me.

For I am the Lord, which exercises loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. You want to glory in something? Don't trust in the wise men, don't trust in the military powers, don't trust in the riches, but glory in the fact that you understand me, and you know me. The question is, do you really understand and know God? How well do you understand and know God? You may be the poorest man in the world by

the standards of the world, but if you know Jesus Christ, you are rich.

For he will supply all of your needs according to his riches in glory. You may have a very low IQ, but if you know the Lord, you have far greater wisdom than the majority of the college professors in the world today, who often boast of their ignorance in the most important knowledge that anyone could attain, and that is the knowledge of God. For when you come to that area, they'll say, well, I'm an agnostic, which is a confession of ignorance.

You may be weak, but if you know the Lord Jesus Christ, all of the power that brought the universe into existence is at your disposal. Note how God describes himself. I am the Lord which exercises loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.

Is that the God you know? Have you experienced his loving kindness in your life? God declares that he delights in these things. For in these things the Lord said, I delight, saith the Lord. Because he is loving and kind, he delights when you are loving and kind.

Because he is fair, he delights when you are fair. Because he is righteous, he is delighted when you are righteous. In the New Testament, Paul said, God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Jesus Christ.

Paul was a very intelligent man. From his writings, we do realize that he was probably one of the wisest men of his day. And yet, Paul does not glory in his wisdom, in his college degrees.

But he said, I glory in the cross of Jesus Christ. Paul did not glory in all of his accomplishments. He did more to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world than any other man in history.

Yet, he doesn't glory in those accomplishments, but he glories in the cross of Jesus Christ. When you get to heaven, and you have a chance to meet Paul, if you go up and say, Oh, Paul, how I admire you. The way you took the gospel, the things that you endured for the gospel's sake.

And all those wonderful epistles, Paul, I love reading your epistles. They help me. Oh, how I admire you.

Paul, I'm sure would be embarrassed, and he'd sort of blush and say, Hey, hey, hey, knock it off. I'm nothing. If it were not for the cross of Jesus Christ, I wouldn't be here.

You wouldn't be here. Don't glory in me, but glory in the cross of Jesus Christ. Don't let the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the mighty man in his might, nor the rich man in his riches.

But if you want to glory, glory that you know God. You've come to the knowledge of God, and you've come to the cross and received the forgiveness that God has offered to us through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ my God.

All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to his blood. Where the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small, for love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all. Father, we thank you that we can glory today in that we know you.

We've come to know you through Jesus Christ, your Son. And we glory, Lord, in the fact that we can have fellowship with you. Fellowship made possible because of the cross of Jesus Christ, whereby the price was paid for our folly and our disobedience.

Lord, we desire to know you better. We desire, Lord, to serve you. We desire, Lord, that we would live a life that is pleasing to you.

We desire, Lord, to walk a path of righteousness. And so guide us and lead us, Lord, in thy path of righteousness, for thy name's sake. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

The pastors are down here at the front to pray for you. I don't know what you're trusting in. I don't know what you might be glorying in.

But the real issue is, do you really know God? Can you say, yes, I really know God. I know his lovingkindness. I know his judgments.

I know his righteousness. Yes, I know God. If you can't say that, if God is just some far-off something way out there, sort of untouchable, unknowable, well, the thing is, you can know him.

He wants you to know him. He wants you to walk in fellowship with him. And if you are straying, if you are on a path that is destructive, can bring harm or pain to you and others around you, God will help bring his judgments in order to turn you to the right path, in order to bring you to himself.

Maybe you're going through some hard issues right now. How do you know but what? God hasn't allowed that to turn you to him. As long as things are going well and everything is happy, you know, and all is fine, and people sort of just forget God and go their own way.

And so, God brings things into their lives to sort of cause them to look beyond just the temporal things of the world and to look deep inside, to really take a real inventory of your life. Do you really know God? Are you really serving God? Do you really love God? Do you have a personal relationship with him? That's what he wants. The pastors are down here to pray for you.

And if you would like to really know God today, you can. He is knowable. You don't need to be agnostic.

The Bible says to know him aright is to have life eternal. We want you to know him aright. And so, I would encourage you as soon as we're dismissed, come on down to the front and let these men pray for you and help you answer your questions, that you might come into a loving relationship with a God who loves you more than you could ever imagine.

I have loved you, he said, with an everlasting love. Therefore, have I drawn thee, saith the Lord.

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