

The One Whom God Delights to Honour

by H.J. Vine

The sermon emphasizes the significance of the church as the body of Christ, the sufferings and glory that are to come, and the One whom God delights to honour, Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Romans 8:37, 2 Corinthians 4:16, Colossians 1:18, 1 Peter 1:6

Topics: "Church Glory", "Suffering Faith"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches about the supreme glory and blessings that the church, the assembly, is brought into as the body of Christ, called into fellowship with Jesus by God's grace. Despite the sufferings of this present time, believers are encouraged to endure, knowing that their faith being tested through trials will result in praise, honor, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Just as Joseph and Mordecai were exalted after suffering, Christ, the rejected and crucified Messiah, is now crowned with glory and honor, holding the pre-eminence as the Head of His assembly, with believers sharing in His exalted glory.

Transcript

Of all the circles which God has counselled and planned for glory, order and blessing, that into which the church, the assembly, is brought is the chiefest, for the assembly is the body of Christ who is the Head of all things. The members of His body are out-called from the world by God's grace, but they are also called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and it is the mission of the Spirit who indwells them to show to them the glories of Jesus (John 16) and the breadth and length and depth and height of the vast range of blessedness which He will soon manifest in glorious order and joy. They are saved by grace, they are introduced into present favour, and they rejoice in hope of the day of glory (Rom. 5).

But along with all this rich present and eternal blessing, it must be remembered that there are "the sufferings of this present time" also, and these sufferings are very real, for, said the apostle, "Even we who have the first-fruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves" (Rom. 8); and again, "To you it is given on behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Phil. 1). Now suffering of this sort is not without profit to ourselves personally, nor is it without benefit to others, and it results in the furtherance of divine designs as 1 Peter 1:6-8 indicates: "Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory," that is, the glory soon to be displayed with Christ the Centre

of it all! It fills our hearts beforehand while we await His coming!

We remember the story of the two disciples, who on the Resurrection day were going to their home disappointed and sad, and how Jesus found them and talked to them until their hearts burned within them as a holy joy glowed there. He talked to them of the sufferings first and the glory to follow, saying, "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" He endured the atoning sufferings for us alone, but others now share in "the fellowship of His sufferings"--His sufferings from man in the path of devotedness to God on the way to the glory; and they also taste the bitter trials which are common to us all in a world like the present.

But what are these sufferings in the estimation of a man whose heart is set on the glory? Paul could say, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us"; and again in 2 Corinthians 4:16, "Wherefore we faint not, but if indeed our outward man is consumed, yet the inward is renewed day by day. For our momentary and light affliction works for us in surpassing measure an eternal weight of glory" (N.Tr.). In all that he suffered he found consolation and comfort, in all he saw profit resulting in glory, yea, "IN ALL THESE THINGS"--not as being out of them or evading them--"We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. 8:7). Christ was near to him in the trials! The love of Christ filled his heart in his afflictions! He was more than a conqueror through Him! He knew present joy and satisfaction in the love of Christ, who gave Himself for us. It was a love that He knew well and which we may know well, and yet it passeth knowledge, for it made Him ready to suffer for us beyond all others, and what none other could suffer, and so enter into His glory. Now the One who suffered is He whom God delights to honour, He is the One of whom it is decreed that all should "honour the Son even as they honour the Father."

Joseph was honoured after his rejection and affliction. He was exalted and made very high after his humiliation and after the iron had entered into his soul, and this resulted in salvation and blessing for his brethren and the whole earth. Mordecai, the man whom the king delighted to honour (Est. 6:6, 7, 11), was first of all the man for whom a gallows was made of fifty cubits high (5:14). But the Agagite (a type of sin in the flesh) was hanged thereon, and the king's wrath pacified (7:10). Mordecai's exaltation resulted in rest and blessing and gladness to God's people (9:18) as well as eventual peace and prosperity for all. Then what shall be said of the greater than Joseph and of the greater than Mordecai? He passed through the time of His sorrows, He left the prison-tomb of death for ever behind, He rose from among the dead and ascended to God's right hand. There He is crowned with glory and honour upon the throne. To Christ is given the first place in every created position of dignity in the heavens and on the earth, and by Him all shall be reconciled and set in beautiful order for God's own satisfaction. But in that supreme place of honour, He is the Head of His assembly, holding the pre-eminence as such. Therefore we said that the subjects of God's saving grace today are called into the very highest circle of favour. "He is the Head of the body, the assembly, who is the Beginning, Firstborn from among the dead, that He might have the first place in all things" (Col. 1:18, N.Tr.). If Mordecai's people were blessed and honoured in his exaltation, how much more is the body of Christ, the assembly, blessed and honoured in the supreme glory of her exalted Head!

Joseph was dearly loved of Jacob his father. Jesus is the Son of the Father's love. The many-coloured coat which Joseph wore was his father's gift, but it was dipped in blood when he was rejected by his brethren. The many-coloured glories which encircle our Lord Jesus Christ are the outcome of the Father's counsels, but through the blood of redemption the rejected One shall shine forth amidst them all as supreme for the Father's delight. Asenath, the bride given to Joseph when he was exalted, shared in

Joseph's glory, the bride of the Lamb shall share in His. How wonderful to us are His own words, speaking to His Father, He said, "The glory Thou hast given Me I have given them." If Joseph's administration resulted in all being brought under Pharaoh, the glorious administration of Christ will result in God being "all in all." What an eternal day of rejoicing and love will that be! What deep and eternal delight will it yield to our God and Father!

In the presence of such heights and depths of infinite blessedness and majesty, we do well to turn our thoughts simply to the One who will bring it to pass, to the One whom the prophet calls "WONDERFUL." We sometimes sing to Him,

"Royal robes shall soon invest Thee,

Royal splendours crown Thy brow!"

In public display shall that be seen! but don't let us forget that Pilate, the Representative of Imperial Rome, brought Him out to the people wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, and said, "BEHOLD THE MAN." What a sight! There stood the Man of the eternal purpose and counsels of God, the Man who is to be first in universal majesty and dominion, the Man whom God delights to honour! Derision and contempt were being hurled at Him by men then, though even the judge declared Him to be faultless, yet the glories typified in the blue, the scarlet, the purple and the gold of the tabernacle of testimony shall find their beautiful and displayed fulfilment in Him. The priestly crown and robes of Exodus 28, the royal crown of Judah's King only point on to His excelling distinctions. In the Gospel of the King we are told that Pilate's soldiers mocked Him with a short "scarlet cloak" of royal military design, putting a reed in His right hand and a crown of thorns upon His holy brow (Matt. 27:27-29). They added the "purple" in the Gospel of Jehovah's devoted Servant (Mark 15:17); Herod's troops put a shining or "splendid robe" in mockery upon the Son of Man in the Gospel of the perfect Man (Luke 23:11) and send Him back to Pilate. The "purple robe" (John 19:5), indicating imperial glory, is prominent in the Gospel of the Son--the Word who was GOD become flesh. But God will see to it that the royal, imperial, and universal honours derisively put on the rejected Messiah by His sinful creatures, shall be His in reality; and it shall publicly be seen that

"Heaven's royal diadem adorns

The mighty Victor's brow."

In all that He passed through His divine perfections shone out! The pressure and the suffering but caused the sweet perfume of His holiness, love, meekness, majesty, gentleness, strength, grace and truth to flow forth! He has glorified God here and God has glorified Him in Himself there. On the cross He upheld the throne and upon the throne He upholds the victory of the cross! From heaven He came and suffered vicariously on earth, and from heaven He'll come again and victoriously fill the earth with the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea! All the thrones, authorities, principalities, dominions and powers on earth and in heaven shall find their Centre in Him who is pre-eminent! He is already set over all as Head, and the assembly, His body, is livingly united to Him even now where He is, and she awaits the day of His glorious outshining; then when Christ who is our life shall be manifested, we shall also be manifested with Him in glory. Suffering now, reigning with Him then, our deep joy in Himself and the high favour of faith's present portion will give place to the exceeding joy of being actually with and like the One whom God delights to honour.

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