

# How to See the Glory of God

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The glory of God is the expression of His perfect satisfaction, and we can see it in our lives by committing ourselves to His glory.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 3:17, Matthew 12:47, Mark 10:17-20, John 1:14, John 5:19, John 11:4, John 11:40, John 14:24, Acts 16:6-7, Revelation 21:11

**Topics:** "The Glory of God", "Commitment to God's Will"

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## Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes that the ultimate priority of Jesus' life and ministry was the glory of God, as illustrated in John 11. He explains that Jesus' commitment to this glory governed every aspect of His life, from His inner relationship with the Father to His conduct, works, and timing. Sparks encourages believers to reflect on whether their lives truly glorify God, highlighting that true glory comes from aligning with God's will and recognizing the finished work of Christ. The sermon culminates in the assurance that seeing God's glory is not a loss but the ultimate fulfillment in life.

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## Transcript

Reading: John 11.

Out of that chapter we will just pinpoint two verses:

"But when Jesus heard it, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby" (verse 4);

"Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (verse 40).

"For the glory of God... thou shouldest see the glory of God."

You probably know that chapters 11 to 17 of this Gospel are chapters of summation, and consummation, that is, a gathering up of everything into finality, and what comes out with great clarity in this consummate part of the Gospel is the priority which governed the whole life, the teaching and the work of the Lord Jesus. It seems that that is what John had in mind when writing, for he placed this priority right at the beginning of his Gospel, worked steadily along that line, and then brought it all out in this full and conclusive way at the end. Although the Lord Jesus had been governed by this priority for thirty years and more, there came a crisis point in His life at which He made a complete adjustment of everything upon this

one thing that we are calling the priority where He determined that everything should be focused upon it, and that there should be no deviation at any point from it.

And what was His all-inclusive priority? It was the glory of His Father - the glory of God.

As I have said, John struck that keynote right at the beginning when, writing after it was all over and seeing the whole content and significance of that life, work, teaching and conduct, he started off by saying: "We beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father" (1:14). That is bringing the Father right into view in the matter of glory. Then John went on writing the Gospel, like a great harmony or symphony tuned to that keynote, and all the way through he kept true to it - the glory of the Father.

And I believe, dear friends, that that is the keynote that the Lord wants me to strike at this time. It is a very considerable burden with me in these days.

## THE COMMITMENT OF THE LORD JESUS TO HIS FATHER'S GLORY

Let us turn to the Lord Jesus Himself in this matter. There was in His life that hour of His great commitment, which took place at His baptism. He there and then committed Himself UTTERLY to the glory of His Father. He gathered every detail of His life from that moment and centred it in this thing, as though He were saying: 'From this moment there is to be not one deflection from that motive and object. My Father's glory is to govern everything.' And it was so.

### 1. IN HIS INNER LIFE

Firstly, the commitment was in His own personal, inner life, in His secret walk with His Father. This is a most impressive thing as you read through the Gospel. You find all the way along that everything is coming out from His personal, secret life with His Father. "The Son", He said, "can do nothing of himself [or, out from himself], but what he seeth the Father doing" (5:19). Mysterious language, but those who know anything about life in the Spirit know what it means. "For what things soever he doeth, these the Son also doeth", and not in His own way, but "in like manner." How meticulous and how exact! His commitment as to His own relationship with God His Father meant that there was nothing out from Himself, but only that which He knew in His own heart, and from His secret history with God, the Father wanted Him to do and to say. The background, inner sanctuary life with the Father was maintained unbroken.

### 2. IN HIS CONDUCT

As to His conduct, He behaved Himself on this ground: 'How I behave, how I conduct Myself is going to be altogether a matter of how it touches My Father's glory. The impression I make upon others, what they see in Me and about Me, must never for one moment veil the glory of My Father, hide that glory, or detrimentally affect that glory. My behaviour must always be for the glory of My Father.' This was as to His conduct, His walk. You know, John made a special note of His walk, for it was not just an outward progress. John said: 'He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as He walked' (1 John 2:6). There was something about His very movements that was governed, and His walk, His movements, His behaviour were always for the glory of His Father.

### 3. IN HIS WORKS

As to His works, we have already quoted Him: "The Son can do nothing out from himself, but what he seeth the Father doing: for what things soever he doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner." And His

words: "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me" (John 14:24).

#### 4. IN HIS TIME

Then His times for doing things. Ofttimes we read that He put back suggestions from others that He should do things now, at this time. When something seemed to be demanded of Him, and people expected Him to do it at that time, He put it back: "Mine hour is not yet come" (John 2:4), but He did it very quickly afterwards. He was waiting and in His spirit He was saying: 'Father, is this Thy time?' You know, dear friends, you can do a right thing at a wrong time and it just does not work out. We do a lot of things, and they fail because it is not the time for them. You remember the great incident in the Apostle Paul's life: "They assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not" (Acts 16:7). They were "forbidden of the Holy Ghost to speak the word in Asia" (Acts 16:6). Paul was diverted, for it was not the time. They got to Asia and Bithynia subsequently, in God's time, and when God's time is registered things are very much more fruitful, for you do not waste time. When we do things so often in our own time, we really are only putting them off to God's time, for nothing happens until God wants them done. That is by the way, but that is how the Lord Jesus worked: "Mine hour is not yet", and then the hour seemed to come so quickly afterwards.

#### 5. IN HIS FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Here He is, moving, speaking, working, timing, by His fellowship with the Father. He brought everything else on to that ground. He brought His family on to the ground of the glory of His Father. The people came to Him after He had been speaking in a house and said: "Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking to speak to thee" (Matthew 12:47). Now that is a natural appeal. It may be sentimental and quite a right kind of appeal, but wait a minute. He answers: "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? ...Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." He puts it on another ground. 'How far do My family relationships, as far as I am concerned, reflect the glory of God?'

#### 6. IN HIS ATTITUDE TO MEN

He was governed in the same way in His attitude towards men. As to the religious world, He would commend what was sincere and go as far as He could with it in sympathy. A young man came and told Him that he had kept all the commandments from his youth up, and Jesus "looking upon him loved him" (Mark 10:17-20). He did not condemn. He was sympathetic to sincerity, but bring hypocrisy into His presence and His commending changed into condemning! There was nothing that brought out His wrath more than hypocrisy in religion, because it is a thing which robs God of His true glory.

#### 7. IN HIS JUDGMENTS

These are all things that made up the life of the Lord Jesus, and, as you see, His priority governed everything and was over a lot of things. It was over natural judgments - not always sinful or evil judgments, but just natural judgments, when suggestions were made to Him, when persuasion was brought to bear upon Him, and when men projected their minds. But He knew the truth: 'My thoughts are not your thoughts. My ways are not your ways. There are two worlds. I live in one and you live in the other.' And so His concern for the Father's glory often necessitated the setting of natural judgments on one side and seeking His Father's judgment on the matter.

## 8. IN HIS FEELINGS

Natural feelings had often to be set aside. He understood them all right. We shall come to that in this eleventh chapter of John, with Lazarus and his sisters. He was very sympathetic and He understood how they were feeling. He truly entered into their human life, but when they sought to persuade and influence Him to act simply on the basis of natural feelings, He thrust it back. He stayed away two days, and did not move until the fourth day when, humanly speaking, it was all too late. The sorrow had run its course. He was not unsympathetic, as the chapter shows, and yet, because He has some greater thing in view, He could not just surrender to human, natural feelings. He had great principles which were governing Him.

## 9. IN HIS PERSONAL INTERESTS

As for His natural, personal interests, He was all the time thrusting them back. It would have been greatly to His personal interest to accept the devil's offer of the kingdoms of this world and the glories thereof, but He repudiated the whole thing. When speaking of His Cross, it might have been to His natural advantage if He had listened to Peter when he said: "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee" (Matthew 16:22). But He said to Simon Peter: "Get thee behind me, Satan!" You see, personal interests must take a back place: but He was not governed by these things, for His constant motive was His Father's glory.

### WHAT DOES GLORY MEAN?

Now before I can go on any further I must return you to the definition of that word 'glory'. It may be that you have heard me give this definition before, but I do not know of a better. What does glory mean where God is concerned? What is the meaning of that word 'glory' when it relates to God? It just means the rebound of God's complete satisfaction. When things have answered to His nature, His mind, when He is satisfied, He is delighted, He is well-pleased, then there comes back something of His own satisfaction, His pleasure. You can put that to the test in your own lives, in more ways than one.

Take your Bible and begin at the beginning. When God had created all things for His pleasure, for His glory, and all things were as He intended and commanded, and everything was governed by: 'And so it was... and so it was... and so it was as the Lord commanded and said it should be', the end of that was: "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). I would like to have been in the atmosphere of that, in the realm where everything satisfied God, emanated from Him, and there was this sense of His complete satisfaction and pleasure. That is glory!

When we come into the new creation, are born from above, on the ground of our recognition and acceptance of the perfect, finished work of the Lord Jesus for our sin, for our salvation (and very often we are better believers at the beginning than we are later on!), when we come on to that ground of the new creation in Christ where everything answers to God's pleasure, do we not have the sense of the glory? The beginning of the Christian life is so often like that. While we could not explain it theologically or doctrinally, we feel it! 'It is wonderful to be saved! This is glorious!' It is something that just wells up inside of us. And what is it? It is the Holy Spirit bearing witness to God's satisfaction with His Son whom we have embraced with all the knowledge and understanding of Him that we have. We have accepted the perfection of Himself and His work, and there is a reflection, an emanation, of His glory, the satisfaction of God in our hearts. When we get away from that simple trust in the Lord Jesus the glory often fades - but I must not go on to that for the moment.

Move on in the Bible, and you have God's mind completely and perfectly revealed in pattern form in the creation of the tabernacle in the wilderness. It was meticulously prescribed to a detail, to a pin, to a thread, to a colour, to a position, to a measure, and it was all given by God. And the last chapter of that reads: "As the Lord commanded Moses... as the Lord commanded Moses... as the Lord commanded Moses." It becomes almost monotonous! It was done as the Lord commanded Moses, and the glory filled the tabernacle. God was satisfied! And you and I know that that tabernacle was only a foreshadowing in type of the Lord Jesus.

We move on to the temple, and, again, the prescription, the pattern, was given to David, and it was all perfected through Solomon. When it was finished according to the heavenly pattern, the glory filled the temple, and even the priests could not abide in it. God filled everything with His satisfaction.

The Lord Jesus came to His baptism and His great committal, and as He came up out of the water the heavens opened and the Father's voice pronounced: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). God was WELL pleased. That was indeed a good foundation for starting His life work! God's satisfaction is the glory, and John says: "We beheld his glory."

Then we come to the perfection of His work on the Cross. There is nothing further to be done after Calvary. It is ALL finished. Oh, believe this, and believe it with all your heart: there is NOTHING remaining to be done for your eternal salvation. If you try to add something you will lose the glory and get out of the place of God's satisfaction. When the work on the Cross was accomplished, the work of redemption was a finished work, and the sacrifice was well pleasing to God. Calvary was finished, that Son was raised from the dead, and it would not be long before the temple received the glory of the Day of Pentecost - and then what glory filled the house of God! Why? Because Jesus was glorified. Until then "the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39). But when He was glorified the Spirit was given.

There you have the Bible background. At the end this glory is seen coming down in the new Jerusalem: "The holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God" (Revelation 21:11). It is the perfected work in the Church, having the glory of God. It is all over, all finished, the battle is won, the course of Christian trial and discipline and suffering is all over, and the glory crowns everything at last because God is satisfied.

Have I, on the side of Scripture at any rate, proved the definition that glory is the expression of God's perfect satisfaction?

#### WHY NO GLORY IN OUR LIVES?

Now I said that you could put this to the test in your own experience. Some of us have had to go through this experience to learn these things, for they are not just theories. What has been the most miserable time in your life? Well, I can tell you what was the most miserable time, lacking in glory and having all that is not glory, in my life. It was when I allowed the devil to succeed in putting me outside the finished work of Christ by accusation. 'The Lord is displeased with you. He has it against you. The Lord is really, because of this affliction, suffering, trial, and sorrow, not well pleased with you.' Go down under that and the glory goes. And while you stay there, there is no glory, simply because God's ground is this ground of the absolute finality of the work of His Son for our redemption. Get off that ground by any accusation or condemnation of the devil, forsake the ground of Christ, and the glory goes and will never come back while you stay there. Make no mistake about that! If you are occupied with yourself how long is it going to take you to learn that that is not the ground of glory? Well, it will take just so long as you stay there on the

ground of this wretched, miserable self that God has finished with in the Cross of His Son. If we move over on to the ground of Christ and His perfection, and by faith put our feet down on that, then the glory will return.

We have only opened the door to this matter, but we really have to apply all this, for I do not want to give you a lot more teaching for you to put into your heads. I have prayed that the Lord will use His word as a shaft to cut in and really do something.

## IS GOD TO BE GLORIFIED IN OUR LIVES?

Dear friends, do we, you and I, really want God to be glorified in our lives? You say: 'Yes!', but there are some who say: 'Well, let us see what it means and then we will say Yes.'

First of all, it means exactly the same for us as it meant with the Lord Jesus, for He was here as our representative Man before God. Therefore it means the great and utter CRISIS: committal. Oh, let that word get hold of us! There are Christians, and there are committed Christians - and I must just leave that with you.

The great crisis experience in the life of the Lord Jesus was when He made the great committal to the glory of His Father and said: 'Everything from this day is going to be judged by the value of how much glory there is in it for My Father.' That was a crisis, and then, as I have said, everything did fall into line with that where He was concerned. He saw to it that His conduct, His own life with His Father, His secret life which no one saw or knew, and His life before the world, before people and before His disciples, were governed by this one thing - His Father getting the glory. His behaviour, the way He spoke and the way He acted were all governed by this one thing. If He had been a business man, it would have governed His business transactions. Were they to the glory of God? If not, He would not have had anything to do with them. His family, His brothers, sisters, mother - 'Is My family to the glory of God?' Is the behaviour in our families, in us, in our children, in our husband and wife relationship, in how we go on as a family, to the glory of God? How do people looking on view it? This is searching!

But if you come to a position like that where you really have a transaction with the Lord, do not think that it is going to mean a life of loss. No, you are going to see the glory of God. That is the upshot of this eleventh chapter of John with Lazarus and his sisters at Bethany. Difficult as the way to it was for them, the last picture is of an emanation of the glory of God. What a delightful scene that is in chapter twelve! Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead, lived, and they made Him a supper. Martha served, in a new spirit of service, and Mary and Lazarus sat with the disciples. It must have been a beautiful time - real glory in resurrection life. But they had been through something to get to that! They had been tried and tested on this question: "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldest SEE the glory of God?" Do you want to see the glory of God in your own life? It is not going to mean a life of loss, for if you have the glory of God you cannot get anything beyond that, or better than that.

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