

# Unsearchable Riches of Christ - Part 6

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The sermon explores the concept of glory, its basis, manifestation, and role in the work of God, highlighting the importance of discipline and adversity in reaching glory.*

**Duration:** 45:29

**Scripture:** Acts 7:55, Acts 16:23-24, Acts 20:23, Acts 28:31, Romans 9:23, Ephesians 1:18, Ephesians 3:16

**Topics:** "Riches Of Christ"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Peter's imprisonment and miraculous escape as an example of how God's glory is revealed in times of tribulation and suffering. The preacher emphasizes that when human resources and efforts fail, God's glory shines through. He references the story of the wedding at Cana in Galilee, where Jesus performed his first miracle, as another example of God's glory being revealed in hopeless situations. The preacher encourages the audience to trust in God's grace and reminds them that even in apparent defeat, the end of the story will be glory.

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## Transcript

We are going to spend a little time in these remaining hours with the second of the links of the riches, the unsearchable riches, and that is the riches of glory. There are two passages to begin with in the letter to the Romans, chapter 9, verse 23. That he might make known unto us, that he might make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy, which he aforeprepared unto glory.

The riches of his glory unto vessels of mercy, which he aforeprepared unto glory. The letter to the Ephesians, chapter 3, and verse 16, that he would grant unto you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his spirit in the inward man, according to the riches of his glory. I think it only needs to be mentioned for you to call much to remembrance that grace and glory go together very much in the scriptures.

He will give grace and glory, and we are to be unto the glory of his grace. The glory is the result of the grace. Grace is unto glory.

As to this word, which it is not easy to understand, this word glory, may I first remind you that this word is attached to each person of the Godhead, the triune God. God is spoken of as the God of glory. Stephen said, the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham.

Paul in his prayer said that it was to the father of glory that he bowed his knee. The father of glory, which simply means the source of glory. The very spring and beginning of glory.

The father of glory. The Lord Jesus is more than once referred to as the Lord of glory. Writing to the Corinthians, the apostle speaking about the following of the wisdom of the princes of this world, said that had they really had true wisdom, they would not have killed the Lord of glory.

Lord Jesus is the Lord of glory. If father means source, Lord means government. The government is committed to him and it is upon his shoulders.

He will govern all things with glory in view, which we shall see shortly. Then as to the Holy Spirit, he is distinctly called the Spirit of glory. The Spirit of glory may rest upon you.

So the whole Godhead is composed and characterized by this one thought of glory. It is the triune God of glory. Think again and you will see that the whole Bible is horizoned by glory.

It begins with God as the God of glory moving into a very inglorious situation and turning it into a glorious one. God was able to say it is very good. And whenever it is like that, as again we shall see, that is glory when it is very good.

The end of the Bible is the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, having the glory of God. The Bible is thus bounded by this thought of glory. Christianity is encompassed by this same thing.

Its inception was glorious. It came in with glory. And the last thing about it is glory again.

The Church is horizoned by glory. It was born in glory in the day of Pentecost. Indeed, that was a day of glory.

And again the last thing about the Church is in that great gust from the heart of the Apostle. Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly about all that we ask or think, according to the power that walketh in us, unto him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus unto all ages forever and ever. You cannot get after that.

That is glory in the Church forevermore. Christ is bounded by glory. Although from the earthly standpoint his coming into the world was in humility and humiliation, in poverty, in weakness, in heaven it was glory to God in the highest.

In heaven, from heaven's standpoint, it was a glorious day when God's Son became incarnate. For heaven knew what that meant. He passes by the way of suffering and sorrow, humiliation and the cross.

But it's a circle or a cycle and it's up to the glory. We have a bigger view of him. He had glory before the world was.

Father, he prayed, glorify me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. Equal with God in the glory before this world was founded in its order and bank. God hath highly exalted him and given him the name which is above every name, glorified.

You see how everything has this encompassment, this horizon of glory. That's the end. That is the end.

That is the object. Now we have to stop and break this up. What is glory? What is glory? Perhaps the most difficult word to define.

Not the most difficult thing to understand and to know. There are two aspects of glory. One is its expression, its manifestation, its effect, its power.

For whenever you come into the presence of the glory, you are affected by it and powerfully affected by it. But mainly in the old dispensation when things were more sentient than spiritual and is in the realm of the senses, the human senses, God was dealing with man on that basis of his sentient life. In that dispensation it was something that could be seen.

Something that could be seen. It was a radiance. It was a breeze.

It was a terrific power that men were aware of by their senses. It seemed to feel something in their soul. The expression of glory was not nebulous and abstract.

It was something to behold. You will recall how true that was when the glory was manifested, when the glory appeared. It was often a terrible thing.

Always a very powerful thing. But this was only one side. It was the expression or manifestation of glory.

It is thought that we haven't, I think in the world, very much of a definite statement to this effect. It is largely deduction, conclusion. But the conclusion may not be false, altogether wrong, that before Adam sinned and fell, there was something about his body that was like a robe of glory.

Something beautiful. What we say, glorious. And when he fell and sinned, he lost that covering of glory and knew that he was stripped naked.

God had to cover him with the symbols of redemption. That may be an imaginary conclusion. But follow that through and you will find in the case of the Lord Jesus and in the case of glorified saints that there is something about their very person that is glorious.

And I think just the faintest hint of that is found when God is glorified in life. There is something bright about them. Something indescribable even about their appearance.

You have seen the passing of a real saint. So often there is some radiance about the face just afterwards. You have seen someone really born again out of the depths.

There is something about the face that speaks of glory. Or to put it round the other way, when somebody is living out of touch with the Lord, that something about their face has gone. Isn't that true? You say that something got out of their face.

It's not there what was there before. They've lost something. Put it as you may, you mean the glory in expression has departed.

Well this is the manifestation side. But there's something that accounts for that. There is the other side, the deeper aspect and that is the basis of glory.

What is it that makes the glory? What is the basis of the glory? What is the essence of the glory, the reason for the glory, the very nature of glory? What lies behind any manifestation at all, now or forever?

Forever. Glory is the expression of the satisfaction of God's nature. That's a definition that you might well stay with and think about and dwell upon.

And if you do, much will come up out of the world that will show you how true that is. The expression of the satisfaction of the nature of God. God's very nature being what it is, holy and righteous and true and everything that the very nature of God is.

If it is satisfied, if it is satisfied, answer to God finds that which just does correspond to his very being, to his disposition, to his nature, to his way of thinking, his way of acting, and all that which is just God in essence. When God finds that which answers to himself, then there's a state of glory, there's a state of glory. When things are as God wills they should be, then it is glory.

We refer to the creation and God had made all things, was able to say of his work, it is very good. It was a glorious state, really a glorious state. It would really have been good to be there.

And then, dear friends, such an atmosphere of contentment and satisfaction and rest and peace and joy, heart ravishing, nothing present to irritate, to distress. God completely satisfied. A state of glory in the creation.

I'll follow through in other of the many connections, glory. Take the tabernacle. God gave a precise, meticulous, detailed prescription of the tabernacle.

Simple reason that it was not a tabernacle that God had ultimately in mind at all, it was his son. And the command, frowned and repeated was, see thou make all things according to the pattern which was shown thee in the mount. And when it was done, and all things were so made, to a detail, to a thread, to a pin, so done, glory filled the tabernacle.

Glory came down, filled. All things answered to God's mind and there was glory. Every part of it was glorious and the whole was glorious.

Because in every part, it was as God willed it to be. Same, of course, pains in the case of the priests. The high priest and his son, they were clothed, as we are told, with garments of glory.

Prescribed by God himself as to everything about them. The material, colors, the shape, the size, everything was heaven shown. And when the priests were so clothed according to God's mind, they were called garments of glory.

Satisfying God. And what was true of the tabernacle in all its parts and its priesthood, true also of the temple later. When David received the pattern, it is distinctly said that he did.

He said everything I have received from the Lord, I received from the Lord. When it was done, glory so filled the house of the Lord that the priests themselves had to go out. All this leading up to the New Testament.

One who was the fulfillment in person of all this tabernacle, temple, priesthood, and everything else, standing before God, was so approved of God, so fully satisfying to God that he could be transfigured and clothed with glory. His raiment was white and glistened, glorified on the Mount of Transfiguration. Because at that point, he had satisfied the Father God on every detail.

If from that moment he must come down from the Mount, go to the cross and all its agony and humiliation, suffering and sorrow, sorrow, that was not because he had disappointed the Father. That was in order to bring us to glory, to God's satisfaction. This is the basis of glory, God's satisfaction.

And you see from one little thing mentioned that at the point when the glory came in and filled, man had to go out. And that is basic to glory, the absolute exclusion of man by nature. He's the trouble, he's the one that spoils and limits the glory.

It's the natural man who keeps back the glory. Whenever he takes a place in divine things, then the glory is either removed or limited. Limited.

Well, that is again a reflection upon the Lord Jesus. There is nothing about him that corresponds to the natural man. In him, that first Adam, his whole race has gone out, been put out of the way.

And he of a new order answers to God's thought about man and can stand in the eternal light unconsumed. Christ in person and Christ in his work. Perfect.

Perfect. And therefore glorified. It is spontaneous, the glory, when God is satisfied.

It just happens. It does not have to be invoked, implored. It just happens when God is satisfied.

If God is satisfied, in part, there is spontaneously by the spirit of glory indwelling the witness to God's satisfaction in the sense of wonderful rest, quietness of heart, sense of joy, quite inexplicable in a way. And yet it is because the Lord is well pleased. The Lord is well pleased.

And this state of satisfaction to God, the full pleasure of God, the answer to the very nature of God is what the spirit of glory is walking toward in the church and its members. This explains all the activities of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in the people of God, collectively. The Lord is working, dear friends, or trying to work, according to how we let him, answer to him, obey the dictates of the spirit of glory.

The Lord is working with us and in us as members of his church, as in the church, that in the end the church may be presented to him a glorious church, not having spots or wrinkles or any such thing. A glorious church. Glory in the church unto all ages forever and ever.

God's object is glory in his dealings with us. We don't always feel like that, do we? It doesn't always seem like that. It seems just the opposite very often.

And yet it is true. But here it is that we, as the Lord's people, have got to have some understanding and recognize and accept something, that God's glory, the reaching of his glory, the manifestation of his glory, now is only along the line where that glory alone can have its opportunity and occasion. Which means, if there is any state, whatever, that needs the glory, spoils the glory, hinders the glory, that has got to be dealt with in discipline.

Got out of the way. That's one thing that we've got to recognize. That discipline is a part of the work of glory.

But another thing that we have got to recognize in that very connection is that God's glory is usually reached along the line of adversity. Now you take up the book of the Acts. The book of the Acts.

What do you call this book? Well, you can call it by different names. The Acts of the Apostles, the Acts of the Holy Spirit, or simply the Acts, or whatever you like. I wonder if you've ever heard it called the book of the glory of God, the glory of Christ.

Doesn't look like that always. But let us look at it again from that very standpoint. We have said that it begins with a church born in glory.

No doubt about it. The day of Pentecost was a day of glory. When heaven came down, the spirit of glory descended.

And it was a state of glory, a state of joy, a state of life, a state of new hope and prospect that Peter could say, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. That was the very atmosphere and nature of the day of Pentecost. Begotten again unto a living hope after a terrible despair a few days before.

It was a day of glory. But now let's pursue the course of the glory through the book of the Acts. Will not be long before we arrive at the terrible story of the martyrdom of Stephen.

The hatred, the malice, the wrath, the wickedness, the evil against Christ, against this way, as they called it. And all of this way venting itself, blazing out against this young man Stephen. Ending in dragging on him outside of the city and stoning him to death.

You say tragedy, defeat, reverse, setback. Ah Stephen, I see the heavens open. Son of man standing at the right hand of God and all beholding him saw his face as it were the face of an angel.

It was glory. And glory so real and so terrible that the chief witness against him and supporter of his death was submitted to the heart. Stirred to the depths of his being and forced to redouble his antagonism to save himself, his own conscience.

However out of Stephen came Paul. Is this defeat? Is this defeat? God is very ingenious. The Lord Jesus, may I use the word of him, is very clever.

Let men and devils, earth and hell combined against the Christ of God. The glorified Christ. How does it work out? Don't be too quick, too soon in drawing your conclusions, passing your verdict.

Look to the end. We are drawing in this letter to the Ephesians, the most wonderful document that has ever been penned by man. It came out of Stephen's death.

Stephen's martyrdom. That's the kind of thing that glory does you see. And if you think that that still needs strengthening, well all right pass on.

Herod seized James and executed him. Terrible setback. Terrible setback.

Why the devil has done something now successful and triumphant, struck at this apostolic company and slain one of its members. But Herod is up against the glory. And before you end the chapter, but Herod is up against the glory.

And before you end the chapter in which his act against the Lord of glory is recorded, Herod himself is smitten and eaten of and the next thing in the next verse is, and the number of the saved was multiplied.

See the reaction of the glory. This is glory isn't it.

You can see how the glory comes along the line of adversity and it's only along that line that you really do know what the glory is. Well Herod thought that it was a good thing he had done because it pleased the Jews and he seized Peter and put Peter in prison. Now if Peter, if Peter goes, this is going to be something tremendous.

Well he takes every precaution that a man in his position could take to secure Peter. So he throws him, has him thrown into the inner dungeon, his feet made fast with the stocks, four quarternions of soldiers to guard the prison, no hope for Peter so far as hell and men are concerned. But what does the glory say? The Lord of glory is interested in this matter and simply says for the whole thing, oh no, oh no, not a bit of it.

The angel of the Lord as you know visits Peter, his chains fell off, bidden to gird his garment about him, follow. The iron gates opened. What's happened to the four quarternions of God? They are hardly mentioned.

They're as though they didn't exist. And out Peter comes. Now here is something strong, very strong on the part of the evil powers against the Lord of glory and how simply the Lord of glory answers it.

But it's only that way. The church was tremendously stirred and concerned that night, giving itself to prayer. Stretched out it says, the prayer was made earnestly and the word earnestly is stretched outedly by the church.

The taking of this matter so seriously, the Lord of glory moves in and solves the big problem so simply. Infinite power can work in such a simple way. Peter and Nate's sword of Tarsus, in his rage, he calls it rage himself, a cola of anger, wrath, a hatred, like a boiling cauldron overflowing against those of this way.

Goes to the high priests as if you'll give me documents of authority I'll go to the farthest city and I will have arrested all who are of this way, brought to prison, to judgment, needs be to death. Obtains the documents, the parchments of authority, the warrants of arrest, and starts out on his way to the distant city of Damascus where he knows the company of these people of the way. Saw breathing out threatenings and slaughters, went to Damascus and the Lord of glory stepped across his path and the glory smote him to the ground.

Forever afterward this man knew the meaning of the glory. Speak about it so fully. The point is that glory, glory comes along the line of tribulation, suffering, and sometimes apparent defeat, apparent success of the devil himself and his emissaries.

Sometimes it just does look as though now Satan has done it. He has succeeded. That's not the end of the story.

Not the end of the story. So you go with this man from place to place. Go with him to all these cities which he visited.

See what happens. He later said that the Holy Spirit had witnessed to him that in every place bonds and afflictions awaited him. Our true ones, we cannot follow his course.

We call to remind this far and such places. But pick out Philippi. To Philippi he went and the reaction of the evil forces of Satan found Paul silent in the prison.

Again fast in chains, backs bleeding from their thrashing. Surely Satan's won now. Gained the dame now.

Surely this is rebirth and defeat. But we know the story now. The Lord of Glory had an interest in this matter and when it's necessary the Lord of Glory can create an earthquake and shake a prison to its foundations and lose all prisoners and save the and his household and establish the church in Philippi to which the apostle will later write.

My beloved and longed for. My joy and my crown. He would say crown of glory and remember and how it started.

The way along which it came. He referred to it. How shamefully he said it.

How shamefully I was treated in Philippi. Through shame, suffering, adversity, the glory came. I don't know where to end.

The whole of the New Testament has now sprung into life. You see the point. John has a lot to say to us about this thing.

Right at the very beginning marriage of Cana in Galilee and the failure of the wine. An end of all human resources and man can do nothing. Then comes in the Lord of Glory and it says this beginning of signs did Jesus in and show forth his glory.

Glory where man's resources end. Where humanly the situation is quite hopeless. That's the pathway of the glory.

Or Lazarus. Lazarus the sickness is not unto death but for the glory of God. The son of God may be glorified and to the poor baffled sister said I not unto thee that if thou wist to believe thou should see the glory of God.

But the necessity for the manifestation of the glory was the utter end of all human hope. Perfect helplessness on the part of man. Then the glory comes in.

I wish we could believe it and always believe it when things are so hopeless. Utterly hopeless. When it's quite impossible for us to do anything at all.

We have to take our hands off and stand back and say only the Lord God Almighty can handle this situation. May that not be the way of the glory. I wish we could believe it.

Really if only we could always believe that these situations which seem so often to be the work of the devil. His triumph his complete triumph are only the pathway of the glory that in the end when the full story is told it will not be all tragedy. It will not be all defeat.

But the end will be glory through grace. Glory through grace. There we stop for the present.

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