

Three Ways to Glorify God: Live Worthy of Your Calling

Ephesians 4:1-3

August 18, 2024

Rev Joe Sanders

First Baptist Church Coshocton, Ohio

I've told you stories about being so angry I threw a hammer and it stuck in a tree, right? Not glorifying to God. Then there was the time I ran away from a cat and hid behind a little old lady. Not glorifying to God. How about the day I was so upset I kicked the toilet and broke it? Not glorifying to God.

This is our second of three messages on glorifying God. One of the big things we miss in life is our purpose. It's not to be a missionary, a preacher, an electrician, an accountant, or a teacher. It's glorifying God in whatever your vocation, career, or job. If you've been paying attention to Jesus then you're working to bring glory to God. Be a store manager: glorify God. Mix cement: glorify God. Supervisor workers: glorify God. File papers: glorify God. No matter where you live, glorify God. No matter how you make money, glorify God. Regardless of your age, glorify God.

Last week I shared that the easiest way to glorify God is to open your mouth and sing. Some of you may still have some doubts. I don't. This week I want to share with you that to glorify God depends on how you live your life. The day to day stuff can glorify God. It depends upon you and how you live.

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. Ephesians 4:1–3 (NLT)

We no longer live each day for ourselves but to glorify God. What if each day is about more than how work or the weather impacts you? We talk about work and the weather all the time. We spend a lot of time focused on our work. There are the hours at work, the hours preparing for work, and the hours recovering from work. Many of our activities rely on the weather. When it's raining we're stopped in our tracks. The outdoor plans are locked up for another day. Weather impacts our attitude. The weather can take a glad day and make it a bad day. The weather can take a sad day and make it a good day.

When I put it this way we see that our lives are about more than work and the weather. We have lives outside of our jobs. We have ways of overcoming the weather. We have hobbies and activities, and sporting events that give us pleasure. We enjoy being with friends around the campfire. We like to curl up with a book and block out all the distractions. We go to football games, soccer matches, dance recitals, and festivals. We have our pets who snuggle their way into our lives. They can make our day with just one look. They treat us the same no matter what's going. We like our families, for the most part. When they're with us they may annoy us, but when they're gone we miss them.

Our lives are more than work and the weather. We come to church, we read our Bible, we pray for strangers, friends, and family. Your entire existence isn't just to be saved, but to glorify God. When you gave your life to Jesus: confessed your sins, turned away from your sins and turned to Jesus you were saved. You were saved from eternal separation from God. You were saved from eternity in hell. You were saved from eternal suffering. Giving your life to Jesus meant that you became a forgiven person. Your life was empowered to overcome temptations and sins. You were provided with everything you need to bring glory and honor to your Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Glory and honor need to be directed toward Jesus and not directed toward us. Glory isn't about the crowds cheering. Glory is what God receives when we give praise and thanks to Him. It's how we live our lives. Honor has everything to do with our enthusiastic acknowledgement of God's great mercy, grace, and love. It's difficult for us to see our lives from this perspective: giving glory and honor. So much of what happens with our minds and with our bodies is about us. We move from food, clothing, and shelter to comfort, encouragement, and pleasure. Is it any reason we can't see Jesus in His glory? We're so busy taking care of ourselves or someone else. We might even blame God when we don't get what we want.

Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. Ephesians 4:2-3 (NLT)

Our nature isn't humility, gentleness, patience, unity, and peace. Our culture rewards winners not the humble and gentle. As Christians we are counter to our culture. Humility is too quickly defined in our culture by the word doormat. Gentleness isn't recognized. The academy award for gentleness goes to... If an actor received that award it would mean they were acting. We talk about patience, we want others to be patient with us. But we are rewarded and taught to do things now and get them done quickly. We can't even talk about unity in the climate in which we live. We are INDEPENDENT with all capital letters. We encourage conflict. We reward individualism. In team sports we pick out one player and give that player the award for being the best. Peace only exists in our culture when we ask for a piece of pie or cake.

Conflict rules each day. Charles Darwin put this attitude into words when he was promoting the theory of evolution: The survival of the fittest. Only the strongest, biggest, most powerful will survive. Even if we don't know the phrase, it is lived out all day long.

All of this feeds our inner desire to be selfish, to live without God. The unspoken craving within us is make ourselves god. This yearning pushes us to reject God. Therefore, we don't try to be humble. We aren't concerned about being gentle. Patience is something for someone else. Individuality wins out. Peace is a far fetched idea.

It's easier to stir up trouble, cause conflict than it is to be at peace and live in unity. My sarcasm is just another way to stir up trouble. It's my way of saying I'm right and your wrong. How many people like to be told they're wrong? Not too many. How many people think they're always right? Almost all of them. What happens next may not be a war or a fight, but anger, resentment, and an absence of peace results.

The only unity that comes out of conflict, is being united against a common enemy. We may not like each other, feel as though we have too much in common, but we certainly come together against an enemy. This is not what it means to live your life worthy of Jesus. This is not how to glorify God. This not how Jesus lived His life.

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord... Ephesians 4:1 (NLT)

Prison, poverty, suffering, and exasperation are worth it when we are living for Jesus. There is no glory in any of these unless it's done for the glory of Jesus. Don't miss understand God loves even prisoners, the poor, those who suffer, and the people who are beat up one side and down the other.

But if you are imprisoned without Jesus, you're just locked up. If you have nothing and you don't have Jesus, you have nothing. If you are attacked, ridiculed, beaten and knocked down without Jesus, then you are suffering.

Paul, the author of these words, was in prison because he was preaching Jesus as Savior and Lord. He was once an important leader, a man that was feared and respected, but counted all that as garbage. He had been beaten and left for dead. He was at times uncertain about his future and even his life. But He had Jesus. He counted Jesus as the only thing of value and importance.

While He waited to be put to death He proclaimed his salvation through Jesus. When they put Paul in a prison cell he sang songs and prayed to Jesus. After they left him for dead he moved on to the next town to talk about Jesus. His life was about bringing glory to Jesus. Through each challenge and every hardship Jesus was on his lips.

There was no greater joy in Paul's life than to glorify Jesus. He is able to say to the early church and to all of us today that we need to glorify Jesus. He was speaking from experience when he challenged us to be humble and gentle. He knew that was God's way. His life demonstrated that unity and peace can only come from the Holy Spirit. He lived his life with the desire, an inner craving to glorify his Savior and Lord Jesus.

The earthly consequences of living for Jesus are nothing compared to the glory of being with Jesus in heaven. That was what Paul knew in his body, mind, and spirit. The hope of being in heaven for eternity with Jesus was his inspiration. Is it yours? The promise of power and authority now and every day on this earth was his motivation. Is it yours? The gentleness and humility to be attacked for his faith in Jesus came from the Holy Spirit. Where does yours come from? The unity he experienced with believers near and far encouraged him. The peace that kept him going couldn't be taken away by any threat spoken against him. There was nothing on this earth that kept Paul motivated other than his willingness to bring glory to Jesus.

When we let Jesus open the prison door we can then bring Him glory. That prison door is the sin that has kept us locked up. That prison door is an opening into a world we have not encountered but needs the gospel. When we let the gentleness of Jesus invade our lives we are bringing glory to Him. His gentleness gets transferred through our thoughts, our words, our actions. When we are willing to give up our comforts, and be ready to face hardship Jesus will get the glory.

There will no longer be self-pity, because our selfishness will be replaced by Jesus. There will be in our hearts, our minds, our souls, and spirits a desire that fuels our bodies.

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Ephesians 4:1–3 (NLT)

With every ounce of energy and every thought pattern live for Jesus. No life is worth living unless Jesus is Savior and Lord. I can't imagine my life without Jesus. I can't imagine not talking to Him throughout my day. I can't imagine existing without His salvation and power. My life would be a wreck. I would be an angry, swearing, selfish, grumpy old man. I know this because I see these things trying to sneak out each day. If not for Jesus I wouldn't be married for 45 years. I wouldn't have the family and friends I have. I wouldn't have this life I'm living to today.

I'm not perfect. My mind wanders to anger and revenge when I've been offended. My energy is often spent getting in and out of the recliner. I spin my wheels doing what I want only to realize it wasn't

what I wanted. So, with every ounce of energy I can muster and every thought I can corral I seek to live for Jesus. I can only be the person Jesus created me to be. I can't be somebody else. I give all of myself to live for Jesus.

That means it doesn't matter what I want, it's what Jesus has planned for me. It doesn't matter how many commercials I watch about living on a tropical island, it's what Jesus has planned for me. No matter what I was in the past, I belong to Jesus. I'm in love with Jesus, so it's what Jesus has planned for me. I have my ideas about what tomorrow should be like, but it's what Jesus has planned for me.

I need to remind myself that my life isn't about me, but my life is about Jesus. Every day I don't think I have the energy, the temperament, the desire, the attitude to live for Jesus. On those days I recommit my life to Jesus. Not that I need to be saved from my sin day after day, but I give myself to Jesus knowing I can't live without Him. Does that resonate with you?

God is calling you. This is not just about me. This is about every individual living their life for Jesus, to give glory to Jesus. It's not easy to be humble, gentle, patient, and at peace with others. This is hard work sometimes. It's difficult to do it day after day.

Jesus is calling you to live for His glory. That might mean prison, poverty, suffering, and exasperation. Jesus has the power and the grace for each moment of each day.

Consider how Jesus lived for the glory of God. He became poor to save us. He suffered humiliation and beatings. He felt alone carrying our sin. He died on the cross. He rose from the dead so we can live to glorify the Father.

Jesus lived for the glory of God through it all by giving Himself to the Father moment by moment. Jesus died as our sin for the glory of God. Jesus rose from the dead for the glory of God.

Jesus is calling you. Jesus wants to empower you. Jesus wants to guide you. Jesus wants to save you.

Give your life to Jesus today, now.