“Gospel of Glory”

SPEAKER	Matt Ryniker
DATE	Sunday, November 17, 2024
PASSAGES	Exodus 19; Exodus 24; John 1; John 12; John 17; 2 Peter 1; Romans 8
MESSAGE	Begins at 1:11:50 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

The glory that filled Sinai in smoke and fire, and later the tabernacle and the temple, came down into a body — one you could see, touch, and put your hand into. And John’s gospel insists that the fullest display of that glory was a tortured, humiliated, dead body. Which is why, when we are invited into his glory, we are invited into his suffering in the same breath.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The election is over, and there is a sphere of influence you have far more control over than the nation: yourself.
- Old Testament glory both conveys God’s presence and conceals it. Israel could stand at the foot of the mountain, but not touch it — and were forbidden idols precisely because they had never seen what God looks like.
- In John, that same glory tabernacles among us in flesh. Jesus can say “whoever has seen me has seen the Father” in a way Moses never could.
- The seven signs in John build toward the crucifixion. The final sign — the one where glory is most on display — is a broken body.
- Jesus confronts people wherever they actually need it: the rich young ruler on his wealth, the disciples on their pride, Zacchaeus on dishonest gain, the woman at the well on her marriages. The question is where he would confront you.

- Glory is not a secret menu item for elite Christians. Scripture says we will be like him, that we are being transformed from one degree of glory to another, that we become partakers of the divine nature.
- Suffering and glory are paired on purpose in Peter, in Paul and in John — which makes suffering as a Christian an honor rather than an accident.
- One practical way a church retrains its sense of glory: honor the people among you who serve Christ sacrificially, because heaven’s scoreboard is not ours.

▶ 1:11:50

The service had already been full — Jolene Michelle installed as women’s ministry director with the board laying hands on her, the launch of the Mentor Project, candles still in the windows from the Kristallnacht anniversary in solidarity with Hope’s Jewish neighbors. Matt had the room stand and pray for those neighbors and for the nation in the week after the election. Then he turned the attention back inward.

Back from the nation to yourself

▶ 1:13:47

There is nothing wrong with Christians involved in local or statewide politics, Matt said — but the election is over, and there remains a sphere of influence you have much more control over than the country: yourself. He picked up the thread from the two previous weeks in John. Nicodemus wrestled with Jesus’ identity, timidly asked his colleagues to at least hear the man out, and finally handled the body of Christ in broad daylight — bravery, from what Matt could tell, and a man who had settled where his loyalties lay. The challenge that came out of it: where can we walk in the light where we have been walking in darkness, even if it puts a target on our back?

▶ 1:16:14

The week before, the Samaritan woman at the well, where Jesus provoked her on a sensitive subject. He does not only confront religious hypocrisy; he confronts people wherever they need it — the rich young ruler on his wealth, the disciples on arguing about who was greatest, Zacchaeus over lunch about dishonest gain, the woman at the well on her many husbands. So: where would Jesus challenge us? A hard question to ask sincerely, but Matt argued it ought to be a joyful one, “because when Jesus pinpoints the sin struggle it is with the purpose, the intention, to set us free.”

A quick tour of glory in the Old Testament

▶ 1:19:00

Glory is a central theme in John — and to hear it properly you have to know what the word carried before John used it. Start at Sinai, with the people consecrating themselves and washing their clothes, because the Lord who holds all creation together is going to come down.

> “There were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled… Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire.”
>
> EXODUS 19:16–18 ↗

They were brought out to meet God and took their stand at the foot of the mountain — so close, and told on pain of death not to touch it.

▶ 1:24:25

> “The glory of the LORD dwelt on Mount Sinai… Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel.”
>
> EXODUS 24:16–17 ↗

Matt kept pressing one word: *sight*. This glory is visible — a lordly, majestic spectacle. And it does two things at once. It conveys God’s presence and it conceals it. That is why the second commandment lands where it does. The ban on idols was not a redundant restatement of the first; it was Moses telling a people who had just met God that they had not actually seen him, so they must not fill in the blank. “Don’t make Yahweh look like a cow because cows are strong,” as Matt put it. Guessing at his appearance would condescend to his majesty.

The same pattern follows the presence around. When Moses finished the tabernacle, the cloud covered the tent of meeting and Moses could not enter. When Solomon finished praying, fire came down, the glory filled the house, the priests could not go in, and the people who saw it fell on the paveme Sacred space, designated for the meeting of God and his people — is God everywhere? Yes. Can you talk to him anywhere? Yes. This was still a particular place.

The word tabernacled among us

▶ 1:25:22

Carry that into John, where glory and glorification are everywhere.
“I glorified you on earth… now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before th
Trinitarian, eternal, hard to comprehend — and yet also something Jesus did on the ground, in a ministry, in a body. A few verses later he asks that those given to him
“may be with me where I am, to see my glory.” Not only reputation and honor. Something with spectacle in it. Something you see.

▶ 1:27:21

> “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”
>
> JOHN 1:14 ↗

“Dwelt” is, in the Greek, *tabernacled*. The meeting place between God and his people is now a person. And what did they see? Water into wine at Cana —
“the first of his signs… manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him.” Matt put the seven signs back on the screen: water to wine, a dying boy healed, a disabled man healed, bread multiplied, another disabled man healed, a dead man raised, and then the crucifixion. They pair off around a center — Jesus the bread of life, his own body given so that mortals live and do not die like the ancestors in the wilderness.

The seventh sign is a body

▶ 1:29:59

John roots this glorious spectacle in a real human body, and he will not let the reader look away from it. Mary anoints his feet and wipes them with her hair. His side is pierced and water and blood come out. Joseph of Arimathea takes the body; they wrap it in linen. And after the resurrection it is still that body:

> “He showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord… Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.’”
>
> JOHN 20:20–27 ↗

Thomas answers, “My Lord and my God.” That is where the signs have been driving the whole time — glory displayed, belief given.

▶ 1:32:40

And here is the reversal of Sinai. There, power on display and person concealed, and do not touch the mountain. Here, the glory is on full display and you may draw near, look at it, put your hand in it.
Moses said do not make an image of Yahweh because you have never seen him. Jesus says
"whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may r
Light is a metaphor, but light also does a plain thing: it makes what is in front of you visible. So when
Philip asks to be shown the Father, the answer is not a lecture.
"Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."

> *"He is God from God, light from light, true God from true God."*

Retraining what glory looks like

▶ 1:33:56

How did Jesus shine that glory? Matt suspected our senses need retraining. In the mind of a man, glory on full display would be conquering Rome — victorious, dominating, on a war horse in shining armor. What Jesus actually said was "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" — meaning his torture and death, in a humiliating fashion, on purpose. A gospel that uses the word *glory* constantly makes its final sign a broken and dead body. From heaven's perspective, Matt said, that body is the perfect template for glory, majesty and honor: "his humiliation is exaltation."

And we are invited into it

▶ 1:35:45

Then a run of passages, each one raising the stakes.
"We are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall
Matt asked whether the room was actually prepared to accept that sentence.
Christ in you, the hope of glory — and no vain hope, since we will see him.

▶ 1:37:40

> "And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you."
>
> 1 PETER 5:8–10 ↗

“Glory is not a secret menu item where only the elite Christians attain to any aspect of it,” Matt said. “You in Christ are called to glory.”
“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from c
That is not his idea, he pointed out — it is the Lord’s, and the Lord is the one doing the transforming.

▶ 1:39:49

> “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence… so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature.”
>
> 2 PETER 1:3–4 ↗

Matt read that one twice, because he doubted we would believe it if it were not in the Bible. We who are broken and sick and weak and at times quite twisted are called to his own glory and excellence.
The only one who is immortal gives mortals eternal life; the righteous one gives wretches his own righteousness.

▶ 1:41:21

> “The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.”
>
> ROMANS 8:16–17 ↗

Twice Matt said it was no accident that suffering and glory keep arriving together. In our union with Christ we partake of his nature, and the invitation runs to both. Which makes suffering as a Christian a source of joy and esteem — with one caveat he was quick to add: “I don’t mean when you play stupid games you get stupid prizes. You robbed a convenience store and then you’re saying, oh, I’m suffering with Christ.”

So where would he challenge you?

▶ 1:44:15

Back to the challenge, now with the stakes visible. If Jesus sat down with you at a well, where would he poke? He surely made small talk about the weather from time to time, but he also had a way of getting under people’s skin — and he is the only person trustworthy with those places of bondage and

confusion and pain. If he pokes at one, let him in. And expect that following through will involve some measure of suffering, which is the point: that is an invitation to glory, not a detour around it.

▶ 1:46:05

Matt offered one guess at what Hope Chapel might wrestle with together — offered as a guess, with a request that people ask the Lord for discernment themselves. Reject the fear of man as disgusting and vile, and obey Jesus in practical ways instead, particularly where we could witness. There are plenty of other candidates the saints have been challenged by: do not forget the poor, flee the love of money as idolatrous, walk in sexual purity. But the fear of man is bondage, and feeding it never makes anyone freer.

▶ 1:47:12

The second was a corporate habit: recalibrate how we see glory by showing honor and respect to those among us who serve Christ sacrificially. Practice heaven’s scoreboard until it feels like our own. Because we have not been left outside the mountain — we have been invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb, where his opinion on everything will be obviously the one that mattered. As with the woman at the well, the confrontation was never finger-wagging. It was an invitation to that feast, and to him.

> *“We have the honor and dignity of being a part of his broken body. What an honor indeed.”*

FOR FURTHER STUDY

SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE

- Mark 10:17–22
- Mark 9:33–35
- Luke 19:1–10
- John 4:16–18
- Exodus 19:16–18
- Exodus 24:16–17
- Exodus 40:34–35
- 2 Chronicles 7:1–3
- John 17:4–5
- John 17:24
- John 1:14
- John 2:11
- John 20:20–27
- John 12:45–46
- John 14:9
- John 12:23
- 1 John 3:2–3
- Colossians 1:26–27
- 1 Peter 5:8–10
- 2 Corinthians 3:18
- 2 Peter 1:3–4
- 1 Timothy 6:16
- Romans 8:16–17
- Revelation 19:9

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. Matt turned the attention from the nation back to the one sphere you actually govern — yourself. What have you been giving attention to that belongs somewhere closer to home?
2. At Sinai the glory both revealed and concealed. What changes for you when the same glory is in a body you could touch and question?
3. If Jesus sat down with you at a well, where do you think he would poke — and what makes that place hard to hand over?
4. Matt suggested Hope Chapel wrestle together with the fear of man. Where does that fear show up in you, and what would obeying instead cost?
5. Who among us serves Christ sacrificially without much notice, and how will you honor them this week?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Matt Ryniker is Hope Chapel’s senior pastor — his own description of the job — and reports to the church’s governing board, who he cheerfully calls his boss. He and his wife Mandy have been held up from Hope’s own pulpit as an example to the congregation. He spent a stretch of his working life as a public school teacher, and he still teaches the parent dedication classes where families commit to raising their children to follow Jesus — a theme that runs straight into this message.

Watch the full message:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFBZ9gH7kz8&t=4310s

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.