

## For The Honor of His Name

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One of the vital New Testament experiences, in which the first century church was engaged, was witnessing to the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ. As they boldly proclaimed the good news in word and deed,

*“the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:47 NKJV).”*

Witnessing is our privilege and responsibility too. God has “given to us the ministry” and “word of reconciliation.” (2 Corinthians 5:18, 19). Therefore each and every one of us should strive to be the best Ambassador for Christ that we can be.

But the ultimate question is, “Why?” Why do we want to make known the gospel of Jesus Christ? A very good answer is that we love people and want to see them enter the kingdom of God. But a better answer is that we make known the gospel for the honor and glory of God. This is the only answer meaningful enough to keep you passionate about outreach when people let you down, and when times are hard.

When you search deep into the Word of God you find a God whose commitment to reconcile the world to Himself, is rooted not in His people, but in Himself alone. God’s passion to save people and bring them to eternal glory springs not from the shallow soil of our worthiness, but from the infinite depth of His own. Over and over again in the Bible God says that what He does, He does for His own name’s sake. God delights to make His name known, to bring honor and glory to His person. God desires for His glory to be publicly known. When God does something for His name sake, He does it to advance His reputation so that people might see the kind of God He is and trust in Him (Psalm 9:10).

When Jesus Christ taught his disciples to pray, how did he begin? He began by saying, “*Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name (Matthew 6:9, 10).*” In this simple prayer Jesus teaches us that that the goal of all our prayers and all our actions is the glory of God (Matthew 5:13-16).

In 1 Samuel 12 we have story that reveals to us what ultimately motivates God to have mercy on sinners. In the context, the days of the judges are over and everyone is doing what is right in his own eyes. The land is full of chaos and the people call out for the prophet Samuel to give them a king (1 Sam. 8:7). This upsets Samuel so he goes to God and God tells him to do as they ask for they have not rejected Samuel but God. Only the people should know their wickedness in doing this. Samuel does what God says and tells the people of their terrible wickedness (12:17-19). After the people have been brought to fear and repentance, then comes the good news:

*“Do not fear...For the LORD will not forsake His people, for His great name’s sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you His people.” (12:20, 22)*

This is the heart of the gospel! Even though people sin and sin greatly, nevertheless there is hope, because God will not cast away His people. And the ultimate reason why God will not abandon His people is “for His great name’s sake.” The deepest reason that God gives for His commitment to His people is His prior commitment to the honor and glory of His name. God was pleased to make Israel His people in such an intimate manner that His name is at stake in their destiny. Therefore, for the reputation and honor and glory of His name, God will not cast away His people! Yes, love and mercy motivate God, but a deeper motivation is His glory.

God chose Israel so that they would bring glory to His name. In Isaiah 43:21 God says,

*“This people I have formed for Myself; they shall declare My praise.”*

In 2 Samuel, David reveals why God redeemed Israel from Egypt and gave them the Promised Land.

*And who is like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth who God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make for Himself a name... (7:23)<sup>1</sup>*

In other words, God brought Israel out of Egypt by great and mighty works, to make Himself a name, to give Himself a great reputation. In Exodus 9 God reveals why He didn't just cut Pharaoh down in one swift blow for his stubbornness. He says,

*But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth. (vs. 16 – see also Romans 9:17)<sup>2</sup>*

The goal of Israel's deliverance from Egypt (besides their freedom and other spiritual blessings) was to demonstrate to the world the awesome power of God that His name might be glorified and His reputation magnified!

In the New Testament, the church is the continuation of the people of God and so Peter declares,

*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9)<sup>3</sup>*

God's primary motivation in all His works is the honor of His holy name. His love and mercy to people are rooted in the infinite

worth of His reputation. That's why God's people are secure in His love.

It was for God's reputation, His name, that Jesus Christ devotedly and passionately taught, ministered and died. The honor of God burned in Christ's heart! In John 5:43 Jesus said he came to minister in his Father's name. All of his great works were done in his Father's name (John 10:25). In his High Priestly prayer in John 17 Jesus said that he had manifested God's name (vs.6), had declared it, and would continue to declare it (vs. 26). The whole ministry of Jesus Christ was essentially to reveal and honor and bring glory to the name of God, especially in his final sacrifice. Here's what he said in Jon 12:

*“Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name” Then a voice came from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.” (vs. 27, 28)*

Christ's death on the cross vindicated God's name, or cleared His reputation from every accusation of unrighteousness in His forgiveness of sinners.<sup>4</sup>

The glory of God motivated Jesus Christ to serve and it motivated the apostle Paul as well. In Romans 1, Paul says,

*Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name (vs. 6).*

Jesus Christ commissioned Paul as an apostle for the sake of his name.<sup>5</sup> When the good news is made known, when the name of Jesus Christ is honored, when people confess him as Lord, ultimately the name of God is glorified! As Philippians 2:11 declares,

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<sup>1</sup> See also Isaiah 48:9-11; 63:12-14; Psalm 106:7,8; Nehemiah 9:10; Ezekiel 20:9; 36:20-23; 39:25 Daniel 9:15

<sup>2</sup> One of the effects of God's zeal for His name was the salvation of Rahab. Joshua 2:8-14

<sup>3</sup> See also Ephesians 1:5, 6, 12

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<sup>4</sup> Romans 3:25, 26

<sup>5</sup> Acts 9:16

*... that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

The honor of Jesus Christ, which ultimately led to the honor and glory of the name of God, is what burned in the heart of Paul. This is what motivated him to make know the good news, no matter what it took, no matter how much he had to endure.

The only thing that will keep us constantly motivated to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God is the knowledge that every saved individual brings glory to the name of God! Love for people is a great motivation, but it's not great enough. Sooner or later your love will falter and people will frustrate and disappoint you. There is nothing worthy enough in other people to keep your passion for outreach hot. But there is everything worthy in the name of God!

Our God is pursuing with omnipotent delight a worldwide campaign of gathering a people from all nations for the honor and glory of His name. God's omnipotent and faithful commitment to His name, His fame, His reputation, is over us and all that we endeavor to do. Therefore, expect great things from God and attempt great things for God! As we go forth lovingly and boldly proclaiming the good news God will work along with us for His name's sake. His name will not be profaned forever.

*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news ,who proclaims peace, who bring glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!" (Is. 52:7)*

Let us steadfastly commit ourselves to making known the good news for the honor and glory of God.