

Glory and Honor

June 26, 2011

Scripture tells us the whole earth is filled with God's glory (*Isaiah 6:3*) and that God deigned to impart His glory to mankind, whom He crowned with glory and honor (*Psalms 8:4*). Yet, because we fall short of God's divine plan and diminish our inherited glory, God sent us Jesus, in whom we recognize "the glory of the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth" (*John 1:14-15*). Amazingly, we who trust in Christ are being transformed by the Holy Spirit back into the image of God, from "glory to glory" (*2 Cor. 3:17-18*).

The Hebrew word for "glory", *kabad* (alternatively spelled *kavod*), is also translated into English as "honor." *Kabad* means to "be or make heavy", indicating that to experience God's glory is to experience more of the weight of His presence. In this light, to honor someone is to share the weight of our presence with that person. When we honor God, we give Him the weight of our entire presence. Thus Jesus said the most important commandment is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your strength" (*Matt 22:37*, quoting *Deut 6:4-5*) – i.e., with the full weight of who we are. Another meaning of *kabad* is "battle armaments" (which are heavy), which tells us God's glory affords perfect refuge and protection, as in *Psalms 91*. Paul said we are to put on the "whole armor of God" (*Ephesians 6:13-18*).

Jesus said: "I do not receive honor from men" (*John 5:41*). He goes on to say: "If I honor myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say He is your God" (*John 8:54*). *2 Peter 1:17* confirms Jesus' words: "For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'"

Jesus warned against seeking honor for ourselves: "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (*Luke 14:11*). Paul extended this idea repeatedly in his writings, especially in *Romans 12:10*, where we are instructed to give preference to one another, and *Philippians 2:3*, which says to esteem others better than ourselves. Peter wrote: "Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'"

A powerful picture of honor and glory is found in the story of Jonathon and David in *1 Samuel 18:1-4*. There we learn that the two young men made a covenant of friendship with each other, and "Jonathan took off the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even his sword and his bow and his belt." Jonathan, the son of the King, diminished his own royal status by transferring the emblems of his royalty to his covenant friend, David. In like manner, Jesus, though "being in the form of God...made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men" to set us free (*Phil 2:6-7*).

Radically, Jesus transferred His royalty to us by dying for us "while we were yet sinners" (*Romans 5:8*). He did not wait until we performed up to His expectations. Rather, He honored the hope of glory within us (*Col 1:27*) by dying to confer on us a higher status as priests and kings modeled after Himself (*Rev. 5:10*).

Radical honor recognizes the freedom of each person to fail while hoping and praying for their success! When we realize we are free in Jesus, we are obliged not just to preach the Gospel but to actually release others by honoring their freedom to be who they are. This does not mean approving bad behaviors or empowering further cycles of failure, but recognizing the likeness of the Father placed in every created individual! More often we withhold our honor until others meet our expectations, thus denying them the freedom to fail that Christ gave to all of us. That is the result of a religious spirit rather than a covenant relationship with Christ in us, the hope of glory for all people.

While journaling, I wrote: "If you want to see God's glory, you have to honor God with your whole being. If you want to honor God, you have to honor other people because He intends for them to wear the crown of His glory!"

Radical, New Covenant honor is seen to return to God's glory in *Rev 1:5-6*: "To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."