



The Theology of the Cross

Lesson 5: The Hidden God in the Christian

Goal

- Recognize yourself as a glorious saint who is yet hidden under the cross
- Understand how both that glory and cross unites us to Christ and others

Opening Prayer

Lord God, just as you mask your glory in the humble and lowly, we, as your children, share in that glory which is hidden under the cross. Give us hearts to recognize and appreciate your grace which glorifies us as saints and your wisdom which gives us crosses to bear. Bless this study of your Word and may it bear fruit in our lives. Amen.

Introduction

In one minute list as many examples as you can of crosses you bear in your life. Then, take another minute to list as many examples as you can of God's glory in your life.

A Glorious, But Hidden Saint

1. What is the Biblical definition of *saint*?
 - a. **Romans 1:7** "To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints..."
 - b. **1 Corinthians 1:2** "To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together in all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours"
 - c. **2 Corinthians 1:1** "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God that is in Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia"
 - d. **Ephesians 1:1** "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus"
 - e. **Philippians 1:1** "Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons"
 - f. **Colossians 1:2** "To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father."

2. What must we do to become saints?
 - a. **Romans 6:1-4** “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”
 - b. **Ephesians 5:25-27** “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.”
 - c. **Romans 8:37-39** “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
 - d. **Ephesians 1**
 - e. **Ephesians 2:6,7** “and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

3. **Agree/Disagree.** A Christian’s glory must remain hidden while here on earth.

4. Paul uses himself as an example of this in his epistles. He was an apostle, chosen by Christ the risen Lord. He was given a gospel message that had worked powerfully in thousands who came to faith through his preaching and teaching. He was, and he knew it, an especially chosen vessel of God’s grace and mercy to a fallen world. He was taught by the risen Christ himself (Galatians 1:12). Even this blessing he had, that he was caught up into heaven while still alive here on earth (2 Corinthians 12:1-4). Could a man have greater honor than the honor Paul had?

5. What purpose did the apostle Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” play in his life?
 - a. **2 Corinthians 12:7-9** “So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

6. **Agree/Disagree.** We should desire ours and the church's glory to remain hidden while here on earth.

7. How can Christians can be both saints and sinners at the same time?

8. Why is the balance between our hidden reality of glory and the obvious cross so important?

United to Christ and Others

9. How does the realization that we are saints change our self-evaluation?
 - a. **Romans 3:27** "Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith."
 - b. **1 Corinthians 1:26-31** "For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.'"
 - c. **1 Peter 4:10, 11** "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies--in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."
 - d. **Romans 8**
 - e. **Matthew 28:18-20** "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"
 - f. **John 14-15**

10. How does our “sainthood” change our attitude toward both believers and unbelievers?
 - a. **Matthew 25:40** “The King will answer them, ‘Amen I tell you: Just as you did it for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me.’”
 - b. **Matthew 5:13-16** “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its flavor, how will it become salty again? Then it is no good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled on by people. You are the light of the world. A city located on a hill cannot be hidden. People do not light a lamp and put it under a basket. No, they put it on a stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. In the same way let your light shine in people’s presence, so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”
 - c. **Galatians 6:1-10**
 - d. **John 1:46** “Nathanael said to him, ‘Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?’ ‘Come and see!’ Philip told him.”
 - e. **Romans 12**
 - f. **1 Corinthians 12-13**
 - g. **Philippians 4:4-7** “Rejoice in the Lord always! I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”
 - h. **James 3:9-12** “With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people, who are made in the likeness of God. Blessing and cursing come out of the same mouth. My brothers, these things should not be this way. A spring does not pour out both fresh and bitter water from the same opening, does it? Can a fig tree bear olives, my brothers, or can a grapevine produce figs? A salt spring cannot produce fresh water either.”

11. Why is it dangerous for us to focus on the failures and shortcomings of other people?
 - a. **1 Corinthians 10:6-13** “Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.’ We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”

12. **Agree/Disagree.** It would be better for the church if we didn't have freedom of religion in America.

13. How can we Christians be confident that pain and suffering are not punishment for our sins?

a. **Romans 6**

14. **Agree/Disagree.** We should pray for suffering because it makes us better evangelists and members of the church.

Closing Prayer (CW 326)

May the grace of Christ our Savior And the Father's boundless love

With the Holy Spirit's favor Rest upon us from above.

So may we abide in union With each other and the Lord,

Gathered here in blessed communion By the power of his Word.

Now with all the saints in heaven Thanks and praise to you we sing,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, THree in One, our triune King.

Going Deeper

St. Paul gives us an excellent example of both the glory and its hidden-ness in the Corinthian epistles. At the same time he shows us the why of that hidden-ness. The Corinthian Christians did not appreciate the hidden-ness of God. the hidden-ness of his glory under the lowly cross. They wanted glory, glory that could be seen and experienced and felt outwardly. Looking for an outwardly glorious gospel, many of them had begun to look down on Paul, such a lowly looking apostle. They wanted a glorious apostle. He seemed too weak, too frail, too limited to be worthy of much attention. They would have preferred someone more impressive in appearance or in his presentation of the gospel. Paul answers them with the message that the glory of God is hidden, hidden not only in Christ on the cross but hidden as well in the lowliness of the church under the cross. It is hidden in the lowliness of its messengers and then in the lowliness of its members. This week, read or re-read the Corinthian epistles and focus on the hidden-ness of God, of Christ on the cross, his church and us. Consider focusing especially on the following sections:

1 Corinthians 1

2 Corinthians 4

1 Corinthians 2