

A Fresh Vision | Dave Stough

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[0 : 00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church. Knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. Sharks come and they would shoot them and stuff.

But when she started to swim, there was this real thick fog. And the place is quite foggy a lot. And the whole time she swam, there was this thick fog.

And after about 15 hours of swimming, she became so weary that she just wanted to give up and get out. And so the people in the boat, especially her mom, encouraged her to keep going.

And so she swam for about another hour. And finally she got out. They just pulled her out. And when she was sitting in the boat, just kind of recuperating, the fog started to lift.

And she could see in front of her that the coastline was less than a mile away. She had swam over 20 miles and was just that close to making it. But she got fogged out. At a news conference the next day, she said, All I could see was the fog.

[1 : 15] I think if I could have seen the shoreline, I would have made it. So I have a question for you. In light of that kind of illustration, does life seem to be getting a little foggy for you here lately in our culture?

I know it is for me. You know, with all the misinformation we have, the chaos, and we even have some government-sanctioned violence going on, a mental fog sets in.

It's kind of like, oh, this is different. I've never experienced this before. And it makes it harder, I think, for everyone to see. You know Satan is very busy when fear and confusion seem to be leading things.

And I think it's in times like these that everybody, no matter who you are, we tend to cling more to the things that we believe in. As was stated by Teddy last week, many people nowadays scoff, actually scoff at the idea of absolute truth.

Even to the point where some people want to say you're guilty of hate speech if you hold to absolute truth. And really what we have going on is what has been wrongly taught in our culture, in our colleges, I should say, especially for the last 40-plus years, is now becoming the politics of the day.

[2 : 55] Rebellion in our country has progressed from the 60s where it used to be drugs and pleasure. Now it's anarchy and violence.

It's just a progression of rebellion. However, as this rebellion runs its course, so does the emptiness inside of people.

Indulgence and self-indulgence and pleasure, they have their fruit, I believe, in the big empty. You know, just a meaningless life.

I heard John MacArthur say in an interview a little while back, a college professor might be able to sell you the idea of no God, no absolutes, but you can't sell that to your own soul.

It just can't happen. So there's going to be people, though, I think, that are going to stay and just keep going that way. But there's going to be some people who want answers.

[4 : 03] They want something else than what they've heard. And where do these people turn to? I think in a time that we live nowadays, what's most needed, what God wants to do through his church, maybe the most, is in his own way, in this age of grace we live, to demonstrate a fresh display of his glory.

I heard Ravi Zacharias say one time, where the glory of God dwells, there the voice of God is heard. Where the glory of God dwells, there the voice of God is heard.

And I'll add, souls also find rest. So we know from Scripture it's in God's presence, in his glory, that all things are made manifest.

Light exposes what's in the dark. In this darkness, you and I constantly battle, not just in the culture around us, but the darkness of our own flesh, right? I have read through several passages of Scripture about the glory of God.

And let's read a few of these together right now. Are you ready? Exodus 33, Moses, okay? Israel's in the desert. Okay, and this is before the tabernacle was built, but it was years after Moses met God at the burning bush the first time.

[5 : 43] Verse 9. As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance while the Lord spoke with Moses. Moses said to the Lord, You have been telling me, lead these people, but you have not let me know whom you will send with me.

You have said, I know you by name, and you have found favor with me. If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways, so I may know you and continue to find favor with you.

Remember that this is your nation, your people. The Lord replied, My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.

Then Moses said to him, If your presence doesn't go with us, don't send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us?

What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?

And the Lord said to Moses, I will do the very thing you have asked because I am pleased with you, and I know you by name.

[6 : 49] Then Moses said, Now show me your glory. And the Lord said, I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence.

I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But he said, You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.

Then the Lord said, There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by.

Then I will remove my hand, and you will see my back, but my face must not be seen. Moses came to understand God's presence is a very special place to be because he's holy.

He's totally separated from things that contaminate us. At the burning bush, he removed his sandals and put his face to the ground when God spoke.

[7 : 57] And he learned there that the power to do God's will didn't come in his ability to speak, but from the one who was going to be with him. Now, by the time we get to this passage here in chapter 33, so much had been done by God through Moses.

By the time we get to this story, he goes from putting his face on the ground to asking God if he could see his glory. He said, Now show me your glory, and if your presence does not go with us, don't even send us up from here.

Lord, we need you. Moses is saying, I don't want to go anywhere unless you go with me. And the Lord said, My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.

He's so seen his need to be in the presence of God that he asked God to show him his glory. Now that's a daring proposition or question or whatever you want to say, request to make of God.

Since God is sinless and his attributes radiate perfection and glory, a sinner that's not fully redeemed in body and everything will actually die in God's presence.

[9 : 19] It says in 1 Timothy chapter 6, in reference to God, it says, Who alone is immortal, who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see?

To him be honor and might forever. Amen. So God says to Moses, or God then says to Moses, All right, I'll show you my glory, but you can't see my face.

You can see the after effects, is really what he's saying there, I think, from, you know, you can see me, the back of me, you can see the after effects of my glory.

That's all you can handle, Moses. I'll show you that. So God speaks to Moses in a very special way by showing him some of his glory and reassuring Moses that he's going to be with him.

I think that's, we always need to hear that. So where the glory of God is, there the voice of God is heard and souls find rest.

[10 : 24] Let's look at another time the glory of God is manifested. In Matthew 17, most of you have read this story. Peter, James, and John go up with Jesus onto a mountain and Jesus decides to unveil some of his glory in their presence.

Now after six days, Jesus took Peter, James, and John, his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves and he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun and his

clothes became as white as light.

And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them talking with him and Peter answered and said to Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here.

If you wish, let us make here three tabernacles, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them.

And suddenly a voice came out of the cloud saying, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. Hear him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid.

[11 : 39] But Jesus came and touched them and said, arise, don't be afraid. And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. So Peter, James, and John seen this glory coming from Jesus on that mountain when he decided to unveil a little bit of his glory.

Now, Peter, like Moses, didn't want, he wanted, he got this impression from Peter, like, let's don't let this stop, Lord.

Let's make these tabernacles. Let's celebrate this. This is something very special. And the father comes over in a cloud and speaks to a cloud and it sounds like a very bright appearance, even more so.

And they put their faces on the ground and the message from God the Father is, if you want to see my glory, listen to what Jesus has to say.

And that's the message for us. There's something about the glory and presence of God that can't be fully described by human words.

[12 : 56] Peter acknowledged this when he refers to this experience he had on the mountain in his second letter when he writes, he says, the prophetic word, referring to scripture, we have this prophetic word confirm, which you do well to heed as a light in a dark place.

Where the glory of God is, there the voice of God is heard, and souls find rest. So what exactly is this glory of God?

Okay, so the Hebrew word is kabod, and it was a word they used when they weighed scales. Like, so, things in ancient times, when you weighed them, they figured out how much they were worth. So something, the more something weighed, the more valuable or the more glorious it was. So, pardon me here.

So, if you were gonna give glory or honor to someone, what you're doing is you're estimating their value, and you're saying they're worthy of glory.

[14 : 24] So it's used in scripture in reference to kings and of course, God. Now, there's a glory that is due God that we ascribe to him in various ways.

You see it used in reference as we do in praise and worship. You see that in the book of Revelation. You see it in reference used to deeds done in faith.

There's that verse that says, let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven. and it's used in reference to God's holy standard.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. But make no mistake about it, when the actual presence of God is manifested, where he chooses to manifest himself like in the passages we read, there's an actual physical light, a brightness that surrounds that presence.

Throughout scripture, this physical brightness would radiate from the presence of God. And God would do that in a place of his choosing with the people of his choosing who wanted to acknowledge him for who he is.

[15 : 40] It is in this demonstration of glory that we see how separate from and high above God is from the rest of his creation, right? Can you put that picture up?

this glory shines because it is it's a reflection of his holy character just radiating through his attributes.

So there's this picture I got and you can you raise it up? There we go. Perfect. Now, I understand no picture is going to fully illustrate the person of God, right?

But, I think this does a good job of explaining why his glory shines. So, when I say attribute, I'm talking about characteristic or as I have them listed up there you can see those.

Omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, we'll go through those. Righteous, just, all these things, faithful, gracious.

[16 : 42] These are characteristics that are in the character. They're just part of who God is. Now, the glory that shines is not one of the attributes but it's the power of those attributes being manifested.

Now, notice on that illustration up there that all of these attributes flow from the holy character of God. You remember what Isaiah said in chapter 6 of Isaiah when he seen the Lord?

He said, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. The whole earth is full of his glory. There's this idea that everything that God does and is emanates from holiness.

So, here's another thing. God's glory it's intrinsic. It's not something he had to achieve to be. It's just who he's always been.

When we speak of man's glory like, was that me? How did that happen? I guess I'm bouncing around here, sorry. Well, okay, Serena Williams.

[18 : 02] Now, she was not always the best woman's tennis player. She had to work hard at it, right? And that glory, as we know, man's glory fades as a leaf. But not God.

He has always been and always will be glorious. He is by nature glorious. And I'm trying to describe the person of God here, and I know it's kind of hard to do, but all these attributes are eternal because God is eternal.

Okay, let's look at a few of them. God is omniscient. He's the only one who knows all things. He has always known all things. He's the only one who has known and will always be the only one who knows all things.

God's omnipresent. He's everywhere at the same time. And he's been that way forever. And he will be the only one that is ever omnipresent.

God is omnipotent. That is, God is all-powerful. Now, we know his power is demonstrated in many ways. He spoke everything that is seen and unseen into existence by his power.

[19 : 30] God is the only one that has power to give life, to create life, and he's the only one that has power to raise the dead to life. Everything and everyone has been created by him and for him, and he is unrivaled.

Now, I think in these three attributes, we just see what's at work when we talk about God's sovereignty, sovereignty, which he has over all of his creation.

In Isaiah, it says the nations are like a drop in the bucket to him. They're like nothing. He will even choose in his sovereignty who's the next president of the United States for his eternal purposes. choices. Now, I think these, and at the same time, when he does that, will not negate man's ability to choose.

So, just, we're not going to understand that because we're more, I'm sorry, this is more than any mortal man can actually understand.

[20 : 43] Let's talk about some other attributes that I think we like to talk about even more, at least I do. God is merciful and he's gracious. He chooses to hold back his righteous judgment and shower his favor upon those who believe the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This is God's desire to show mercy and grace. James says mercy triumphs over judgment. And in Ezekiel 18, God asks the question, do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked one?

No. Notice that even in God's mercy and grace, his holiness is on display. A sacrifice had to be given so his righteous wrath was satisfied.

So what does that do? That makes God free to pour out mercy and grace in abundance in his wisdom.

I could talk about faithfulness, I could go on, but I don't think time permits. I do want to talk about one more attribute though, and I believe that this attribute speaks the loudest to anyone, and that's God's love.

[22 : 02] Scripture says God is love, not just that he shows love, but that he himself is love, agape love, unconditional love. love flows from his very being.

When two people, when they're dating one another, they're excited, right? And they're looking at getting married. Why are they like that?

Because they are looking at all the good things about the person that they are in love with. Not so with God. God, when our Lord Jesus started to court us, so to speak, he looked down the corridors of time, and he seen the very worst in each one of us.

And he told the Father, I love them. I will go to a cross and die for them. And he did that out of love for the Father and for you and me.

Right? God is love. So, God is excited about you, not because you're doing something.

[23 : 25] You know, if God's, if God's love depended on something we did, do this. Let me say it this way.

There was an old catechism that was wrote and asked the question, what is the chief end of man, or in today's lingo, what are we here for? And the answer is, to glorify God and enjoy him forever. The first time I ever heard that, the phrase, the enjoy him part, was like, just sounded kind of different to me, you know. how do you enjoy God? And, um, so, I think that if you have a mindset, like we probably all do, we have to learn to not have, God loves me because, fill in the blank, whatever it is you think it is that you do to make God love you, or do you think that you should do to make God love you?

I don't think that you're going to be able to enjoy God. Okay, his love doesn't work that way. It works the way that we just talked about.

It is part of his character. God's passion for you and me comes from within himself. You know, 1 Corinthians 13 shows us, you've read that, you know, God, love is kind, and all those things about love.

[25 : 00] That tells us what love looks like. But love comes from the character of God. He has passion for you and me.

So God's love for you and me, it's a done deal. Have you ever found yourself showing pictures of your kids or grandkids to someone who didn't even ask to see them because you're dotting over them?

That's what God does with us. Hey, look at my kids. they're mine. I love them. So, if you're born again, think back, what was it that attracted you to God?

What was it? love? I believe it was that love. I heard someone say, God is the only one that knows how to humble you without humiliating you and knows how to exalt you without flattering you.

love. You know why? Because I think God's love deals with sin his way. And it's in that essence that we find you see God for who he is.

[26 : 31] So, how about you today? Do you need a fresh taste of the glory of God to lift the fog out of your mind, whatever it may be?

Maybe it's the culture, maybe it's just your own personal life, but do you need a fresh vision of the glory of God for your soul? Our swimmer lady, Florence, she tried a second time again to swim to the coastline from Catalina.

She went back, it was the same 21 miles, and there was that same thick fog. Second time she swam, she did it in world record time, she did it in 13 hours, 47 minutes, and 55 seconds the record says, and she broke a 27 year old record, and she was the first woman to ever do it.

She said the difference for her the second time is that she kept a mental image of the shoreline in her mind while she swam. So we like her, we get fogged out at times, and don't you just want to, ugh, some days you're like, ugh, I just want to go cover my head up under the covers.

But like Florence, we can learn to put the image of God's glory in our mind, these attributes that he has on display, that he lives in us, he wants to demonstrate, and they're, because we are his, and he is ours, those attributes are ours.

[28 : 08] It's the character of God that lights our way, the God who's everywhere at the same time, the God who knows everything, who has all power that even gives life to the dead, the God who is always faithful, who delights in showing mercy and grace, the God who is love, and so much more shines today and calls us to see him through his word, by faith.

When the word of God is pondered in a man's soul, there the glory of God is going to be seen.

Hebrews 1 3 says that Jesus is the radiance of God's glory, and it's this same Lord Jesus who desires to have fellowship with us.

Can I have the musicians come back up? It is our Lord who wants moment by moment to have that fellowship with us.

Do you see a need to spend more time with them? I know I do. May the Lord give us the grace to have the mental image of his glory as we live the rest of our days here in this world.

Father, thank you today so much for who you are. Lord, I know I stumble and bumble through life, but I know Lord that you're always with me.

[29 : 46] Thank you so much for the power that you give us to live for you, to change everything we see to be new in Christ. Lord, if there's somebody here today that doesn't know you, speak to them and pray.

Lord, encourage each of us to have a fresh vision of your power and your glory. domoda landscape and jesus. Nope, he's definitely unable to not to show you as r without having me