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| Topic | Pursuit of Glory |
| Reference | Exodus 33: |
| Date | 24 July 2016 |
| Speaker | Pastor Massimo Gei |

We will be looking at three things today.

1. Glory pursued
2. Glory petitioned
3. Glory revealed

**1. Glory Pursued**

We all pursue some kind of perceived glory, because we are different kind of people and we perceive glory differently. A good way to talk about glory is to talk about what really matters to us. The word ‘glory’ and the word ‘matter’ have a lot of things in common and we find glory in things that really matter to us or by associating with those things or getting glory through those things or accomplishing those things.

*A lot of us find glory in money, success, fame and glamour.*

This statement was made in the early 90s by Michael Alig. He said,

*We are living in the age where the pursuit of all values other than money, success, fame and glamour, has either been discredited or destroyed.*

Michael Alig was jailed and he was recently released in about 2014. At his height of his living he was pursuing exactly those things; money, success, fame and glamour. He believes the message that he said that nothing else matters as he go to pursue those things. So you find glory for yourself. When he said that statement he looked very different from now. He was king of Club Kids in New York in the early 90s. He had a different statement at that point of time which made him very famous. He says, *“all I want to do is sleep all day and party all night”.*

He was the person who kind of started the big club scene in New York in the 90s about transsexuals going around, doing lots of ecstasies and pretty much the beginning of rave parties. The way the use to dress at the time probably shows that they were the early forefathers of Hipster’s movements. The dress themselves in funky gear and they brought the party everywhere even to McDonalds. Club owners use to pay them just to come and party in their clubs. So wherever they went the crowds followed. Their glory was great, their name was great. At their height when Michael Alig actually first got into this scene he met somebody called Jameson James and Jameson James when he met Michael Alig, Michael Alig told him, “what is that you do?”. James said, “*I don’t do, I just am*”.

When we pursue glory and self-glory and eventually we are successful in it we think we become God and Michael Alig actually referring back to his time back then said, *“I wanted to create my own world, a world full of color for everyone could play. One big party that never ends.”* His party did end but his life of what happened to him kind of reminds me of what is called a downward spiral of morality in Romans 1. From debauchery he went to immoral living, multiple sexual partners, fraught, theft, lies, drugs and eventually murder. Michael Alig killed his drug dealer who he owed money to.

It is interesting when we pursue self-glory what things we will do. I am claiming this that all of us are not so far off from Michael Alig. We all pursue some kind of glory. Like there is some inverse correlation to the size of your muscles and the tightness of shirts. The bigger your muscles get the tighter your shirts get. Somehow people like me are the only ones who don’t wear tight shirts and I try to find the baggiest possible shirt and pants in the gyms, so when I jog or whatever you know it does not jiggle over the place, because there is not much glory here.

We find glory in different places. Some find in beauty in skin and smooth skin, some find it in money and success. We do our business in such a way that we find glory in that in our careers and if our careers are not that well but at least we can buy a nice car and then we find glory in our nice cars. Some of us get it to athletic accomplishments. We go for competition and we win medals or we win the Olympics and we find glory in our athletic achievements.

*Perceive glory wherever you find what matters in your life, whatever matters in your life most that is where you find your glory. That is what you will pursue.*

What pain, what suffering, what strive, what toil, what sweat, what hard work we would go through just to achieve our perceived glory. In some cultures they have tattoos to show their culture, their strength. Some people find their glory in their families, the bigger their family is the higher their glory is, but ultimately it all boils down back to what Michael Alig said, *money, success, fame and glamour*, whatever you perceive is success, glamour or fame and for most of us it is money.

If we think over our last current couple of prayers, what do you pray for? Success, job, promotion, a life partner, a house, money, health or wealth. Imagine whatever you pray for, imagine you do not have to choose, imagine you could have it all. Just imagine God will come and tell you, *“You can Have It All”*, and God will say, *“You don’t even have to deal with me*. *You don’t have to pray to me, you don’t have to live a sacrificial lie, you don’t have to come to church, you don’t have to serve in any ministry, you don’t have to do any of that, I won’t even be there, I just give it to you and I won’t even be”* there that will be amazing. That is what happened to Moses.

The Lord said to Moses,

**1** Depart; go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘To your offspring I will give it.

**2** I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

**3** Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; **but I will not go up among you,** lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people.

God said I will give you the milk, I will give you the honey, I will take away all your enemies, I will clear your path for you, I will bring you to that place, I promise you can have everything and I will not be there, you don’t have to deal with me. Moses was offered what most of us want is the perfect religion. To get all the gifts and not having to deal with the giver. To get all the blessings and not having to be in communion with God. It is that religion that so many of us actually truly want and it was offered to Moses and to the Israelites.

There are two responses. The first one was the response of the Israelites and they say

**4** When the people heard this disastrous word, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments.

**5** For the Lord had said to Moses, “Say to the people of Israel, ‘You are a stiff-necked people; if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you. So now take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do with you.’”

**6** Therefore the people of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments, from Mount Horeb onward.

In the Old Testament when people rip their clothes or strip themselves off of ornaments or tore their beards out, it kind of means repentance. So they were repenting. They were repenting for what they have done. The previous story is that Moses went up on the mountain and he spoke to God and God says, “*build this tabernacle, build this tent and I will dwell in their in our tabernacle and I will be with you in the tabernacle* and then God also said I will give you these Ten Commandments and he got the Ten Commandments and on the way down Moses realized that the Israelites have been worshiping a golden calf because they could not wait for Moses, Moses have been gone for too long and they were suspicious about him. They told Aaron to build them a God and they made this golden calf and they start to worship it. So when Moses found out he broke the Ten Commandments and then there was a fight about 3000 people died. Then God said I will no longer go with you and I will send an angel before you, but when the Israelites heard they started to repent. They repented of the fact that they started to seek glory elsewhere. They repented of the fact that they made another idol that they were not seeking God first, but glory somewhere else. There are some peculiar correlations between repentance and the pursuit of glory. In Romans 3:23

for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

We have all fallen short of the glory of God. That is kind of like a repentance to recognize that. To recognize the fact that we don’t find glory in ourselves, we don’t find glory making things that we want to do, getting fame, glamour, wealth or money, no we are not made that way, we have to get glory from God. We have to realize that we are broken people and in the beginning of the gospel of Mark before Jesus comes on the scene, John the Baptist says, *repent the kingdom of God is at hand*. Again repentance is linked to glory coming and here in Luke we read,

Luke 15:10

…I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

Again repentance and the things of God being glorified. Glory happening, party going on in heaven and may be this passage shines light, it says

2 Corinthians 4:7

But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us

The Pursuit of glory has nothing to do with us trying to become glorious but us recognizing that we are not, by recognizing that we are broken people. God has created us as vessels, these broken vessels that through our brokenness the glory of God can shine. The pursuit of real glory begins with repentance. When we begin to realize that there is no glory in us and all the glory belongs to God and that we have been pursuing glory at the wrong places.

**2. Glory Petitioned**

**7** Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp.

**8** Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise up, and each would stand at his tent door, and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent.

**9** When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the Lord would speak with Moses.

**10** And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, each at his tent door.

**11** Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.

Imagine there are thousands of us, imagine we are all there and then we see Moses rising up and he is passing by and all eyes are fixed on Moses and he is walking towards the tent and we all stand outside our tent, and we see Moses going to that tent and we see that cloud descending on the tent and we all stand in awe and we all worship. We worship because somebody is meeting with God. There is somebody over there in a tent and he is meeting with God that blows our minds.

Lets take this from the Old Testament to the New Testament. When we gather in a church not watching somebody walk into a tent, we are worshiping not because somebody is going to a tent, now we all the privilege to come into the presence of God. We don’t have to watch somebody; we don’t even have to go into a tent. We are the tent. We are able to go to God directly all the time. I mean there is something which the Old Testament people would long for. They were just worshiping because somebody over there was meeting with God. We are the tent yet we are too busy to pray. The privilege that was given to us to talk to God face to face and we don’t take up that privilege. We think that we have better things to do. We are stiff neck people. We have a privilege in prayer that we cannot neglect.

**12** Moses said to the Lord, “See, you say to me, ‘Bring up this people,’ but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.’

**13** Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people.”

**14** And he said, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

God said to Moses earlier on, you can go forth, you can go to the land of milk and honey, I will put down your enemies, I will make your path straight but I won’t be with you and this is the second response. This is Moses response.

**15** And he said to him, “If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.

**16** For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?”

He realized that the presence of God was more important than anything else. God had given him a task to bring the people forth and he realized that he was not able to do it on his own. He was incapable to do it on his own. God’s tabernacle was among the people then because of the golden calf he stopped being between them, but now he will send forth an angel, so Moses is confused.

Moses said to the Lord, “See, you say to me, ‘Bring up this people,’ but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Will you go with you because if don’t I am not going to move. He realized that the importance is in God’s presence not the glamour, fame or anything you can get from it. It is God’s presence not the milk or not the honey, not the fact that he will put down all the enemies, it God’s presence that is important and he will not move and secondly he realizes that it is not just the presence for himself which is important, it is the presence for all his people which is important. First God answers him and says, my presence will go with you, which is a singular you, means Moses my presence will go with you and I will give you rest. But Moses switches from the singular into the plural and says,

Is it not in your going with us,….., I and your people.

He recognizes the need for the presence of God for everybody in his faith community. Do we recognize the need for God’s presence in our faith community? We have big churches, we are very organized, many activities, we have got talented people. If the presence of God is not with us we won’t affect change for the city, we won’t affect change for this nation. If God is with us we can effect change. Do we believe that the most important thing for us to go forward is God’s presence and amazing thing is when God offers it to Moses, I will give it to you, he is not just taking, he says, how about my people? When we pray, do we only pray for our own ministries, do we only pray for our own things, for our personal stuff or do we pray for the community. Do we pray for our church, do we pray for our neighbors, do we realize the need of God’s presence in everybody’s life and the life of the church.

**17** And the Lord said to Moses, “This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name.”

Most of us would be like awesome, I am out of here, I have got what I want but Moses goes one step further. He has now dealt with God, he has been in his presence, he has tasted his presence, he wants more, he desires the presence and the full glory of God more than anything else in his life and he says,

**18** Moses said, “Please show me your glory.”

**19** And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ‘The Lord.’ And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

**20** But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.”

**21** And the Lord said, “Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock,

**22** and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by.

**23** Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen.”

God said to Moses, you cannot handle my glory. None of us can handle God’s full glory. Being that we are and being that God is so different they cannot co-exist, at the same time it is kind of like a big fire and small water. If the small water mixes with a big fire it will evaporate. We cannot be and see the full glory of God but we can get a glimpse of it and God is willing to protect us while he reveals himself to us. It is interesting when Moses ask for, show me your glory, God says, okay I will reveal myself to you and in my revelation I will also protect you.

**3. Glory Revealed**

So God is exactly what he said he would do.

Exodus 34:

**5** The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord.

**6** The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,

**7** keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.”

**8** And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped.

Verse 6 and 7 are one of the most important verses in the Old Testament. From here onwards when the Old Testament refers to who God is every verse will refer back to this. It is about 24 times where they have direct references in the Old Testament alone back to this verse. So every time the Old Testament talks about who God is? it refer back to this verse. It is amazing when Moses asked, show me your glory what does God do. He gives Moses his word. He chooses to reveal His glory, His character and His nature through His word and the same is still true for today. When we hunger for God’s presence, when we hunger for God’s glory, when we desire Him we can be assured that we will find His glory in His word. His word reveals His glory and it was satisfied every time and it is interesting what he says about himself. He portrays his full and complete character. He says he is merciful and gracious; slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness and He keeps his steadfast love for thousands and He keeps forgiving iniquity and transgression. His perfect goodness, His perfect love, His perfect forgiveness is met by His perfect justice.

…but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.”

Our God is perfectly just and He is perfectly forgiving. He has perfect love but He also has perfect wrath and if this declaration of God is a glimpse of His glory then Hebrews 1:3 shows us the radiance of his Glory.

The son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being sustaining all things by his powerful word.

He is the exact representation of perfect love and perfect justice. How can it be because it was a word but Jesus is the word who became flesh. In John 1:14 we read

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Jesus came amongst us, he tabernacle amongst us. His presence came among us. God declared his character and that was a glimpse. His radiance is Jesus because Jesus is the exact representation of that because he is the word that became flesh and in Philippians 4:19

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

How did he done that, how did he supply all the needs. He did it on the cross. On the cross it is where perfect love and perfect justice met. Where God poured out his love for us and His justice was poured out on Christ. It is the climax of His character. Jesus broken for us revealing God’s glory. Moses was in the tent and he was mediating on behalf of his people. He was saying, your presence must go before all the people but Jesus is the greatest mediator. On the cross he said, “O God, O God why have you forsaken me”. He removed himself from the presence of God so that we may step into the presence of God.

My question to you today is;

Do you desire His presence?

Do you want God’s presence?

Do you want His glory?