

January 14, 2018 AM
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FRIENDSHIP EVANGELISM:
2. “How Jesus Reveals His Glory”
Psalm 67 and II Corinthians 3:7 – 18

Introduction:

As we study the Scriptures together we are in a series of messages on the topic of **Reaching Out** to **People** we **Love** who are presently unchurched, irreligious, and prechristian people in our families, workplaces, neighborhoods, or schools. The topic is “Friendship Evangelism,” which is a fancy title for choosing to be sincere friends who care about the spiritual welfare of people in our spheres of influence.

Bring up the topic of evangelism and witnessing and many Christians have stereotypes flash through our minds. May I ask you to please relax and permit the Holy Spirit to speak in your heart today? There is a huge difference between the gift of evangelism and the role of being Christian witnesses!

The truth is there are some people who are supernaturally gifted with the **Gift** of **Evangelism**. But that is a relatively small part of the Body of Christ worldwide. We are not all called nor are we gifted to be evangelists. But when the Holy Spirit comes to live in our lives and makes our spirit alive with Christ, He does ask us to **Bear Witness** to others about what He is doing in our lives! The Holy Spirit’s powerful transformation of our lives is tied to being witness to others about what Jesus is doing in you and me!

Acts 1:8 *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

One of the most important things we can do as we pray intercessory for others, is to **Tap** into God’s **Heart** of **Love** for the people for whom we are praying! One of the Biblical pictures of intercessory prayer is that we are standing in the gap between the heart of God and the heart of the person we are praying for in love. God loves all people exactly the same. He loves everyone, the Christian, the backslidden person, and the not-yet-Christian, with an everlasting love and draws all of us to His heart with compassion and grace.

John 3:16, 17 *“For **God so loved the world** that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through him.”*

Romans 5:8 *“But **God demonstrates his own love for us** in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

Another really important thing to remember is the Biblical Truth that we were born into a **World** at **War**. God’s tender love for all of us, and His deep longing to know us and dwell with each

one of us, is vehemently opposed by the person the Bible refers to as Satan or the Evil One. The **Spoils** of this **Warfare** – two what or to whom will the **Glory of humankind** be given? People were born into this world with an inner longing to love, to adore, and to worship something or someone. The enemy wants us to worship anything other than God, so that God, whom He hates, is not receiving the glory He deserves!

Remember this vital truth as you think about caring for and praying for others. The Holy Spirit dwells in and takes great pleasure in our **Heart's Desire** to know Him by faith.

Ephesians 3:16 – 21 *“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power together with all the saints to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him is able to do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”*

Paul prays for all of us as the people of God to have ongoing, daily encounters with the Spirit of Jesus, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. Paul prays that these God-touched lives will live in such a way that Jesus will receive glory through His church. That is why the enemy wants to **Take Out** our **Hearts!** Proverbs 4:23 *“Above all else guard your heart for it is the wellspring of life.”*

Let's think about the glory of Jesus Christ that is revealed to humankind as the New Testament opens, in the Gospels. This one should be really familiar to us all since we just spent the last two and one half years studying the Gospel of John:

John 1:14 – 18 *“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John testifies concerning him. He cries out saying, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.”*

John 17:4, 5 *“I have brought you glory on the earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.”*

Now think with me about the glory of Jesus as the New Testament closes, the glory of Jesus at the end of time as we know it, in the book of Revelation. Revelation 5:12, 13 *“In a loud voice they sang: ‘Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise! Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: ‘To him who sits on the throne and unto the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power for ever and ever!’”*

So if the New Testament opens with the glory of Jesus and ends with the glory of Jesus, then the critical question is: **How is Jesus Glorified on Earth** in the days between the gospels and the end of time described in the book of Revelation? How do people in our family, workplace, neighborhood, and city see the glory of Jesus today?

It is the answer to this crucial question that we will focus our attention in the remainder of this message today. The Lord has always chosen to reveal His glory in the midst of and through His people. We talked about the issue of a theology of blessing last week. We made the point that the reason God has always had a people was that through His blessing in their lives people around them would be able to see what God's blessing looks like and would desire it for themselves.

I. The Glory of God's Face Shining On Us:

Psalm 67:1, 2 *"May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us, **that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.**"*

In the Old Covenant, described in our Old Testament, under which this Psalm was written, the glory of God was **Made Manifest** to the gathered **People** of **God** when they worshipped and surrendered their lives to Him. When God was honored and adored in their eyes in corporate gatherings, His glory fell among them, often in the form of fire.

There is a really important distinction made in the first verse here that I want all us to see and wrestle with. Look carefully with me at what the Psalmist says in the two clauses in this verse. "May God be gracious to us," describing God's working in and among us. And then secondly, "May He make His face shine upon us."

The first clause has to do with the wonders of God's works of grace in human hearts. It has to do with the gracious hand of God being at work in and among us. But the second clause describes something more. May God's face shine on us, describes relational intimacy, the wonder of God's desire for face-to-face encounter with His people. This is a picture of what happens when you are alone with God and His Spirit bears witness to your spirit that He is right there with you, pressing His holy, self-emptying, other-oriented love into your heart and mind!

Let me describe the difference this way. When I am playing with one of my grandchildren it gives me great joy when they get right in my face and look into my eyes with laughter and joy on their little faces. It's like their little eyes are saying: "Pappy, I wonder if all children get white haired people who love them like you love me?" Their hand is one thing but the joy of their face is something else. What I am attempting to do is to point out something that I think too many Christians in North America are satisfied to do.

We "settle for" His hand of grace, His work in our hearts to save us, but we do not go on to seek the Lord's face, in desiring to know God in deepening intimacy with Him. God desires for us to deeply desire to walk in the love of God's face shining on us. It is so important to see the Psalmist tells us **the Lord Makes Himself Known** to His people, pours His glory out on the earth for one reason: To make Himself known to "the nations, to the peoples."

Remember there is a crucial truth about walking through life in the “blessing of God.” There is a theology of blessing that is being described here in verses 6, 7: *“Then the land will yield its harvest, and God, our God will bless us. God will bless us and all the ends of the earth will fear him.”* Why does God turn His face toward us, bless us, pour out His grace and favor on us? So the people among whom we live can see Him living in us, blessing us and turn to Him!

II. The New Testament Temples:

I Corinthians 3:16, 17 *“Don’t you know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him; for God’s temple is sacred, and you are that temple.”*

In the Old Covenant community when the Lord revealed His glory on the earth, **God Came Down to a Building**. In the Old Covenant community of God’s people the temple was a central physical place where God gathered them and displayed His glory to them. The principle is that God reveals Himself and displays His glory in and through the temple!

When He encamped with the Israelites He came and revealed Himself to them as a fire above “the tabernacle,” and with Moses and Joshua at the “tent of meeting.” When Solomon constructed the temple and prayed the dedicatory prayer the fire of God fell on the place and the glory of the Lord so filled the temple that the priests couldn’t go in and do their stuff!

In the New Covenant community **We are God’s Building**, your body and my body are the temple He lives in for the display of His glory on the earth. In the passage of Scripture quoted earlier Paul told the Corinthians each of us as individuals, because we have come to know Jesus, the Lord Holy Spirit lives in us. The Spirit of the Lord dwelling in our hearts is what makes our bodies the temple of the Lord.

The Scriptures are clear on this fact: Our individual lives are the building of God, the temple of God, and that when we gather together for worship we are a gathered dwelling place of God:

I Corinthians 6:19, 20 *“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”*

Ephesians 2:20 – 22 *“[you are] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit.”*

So God reveals Himself in and through the living individual temples of His presence, Christian lives today. As the Spirit of Jesus lives in us and we gather together in His presence, to worship Him, He **Draws Near** to us, **Anointing** the atmosphere as He is in the midst of us. His presence is clearly evident in His love and genuine joy revealed in us as we relate to each other. This love and joy as we relate to each other will serve as an attraction point to people who come here wondering is this Christianity stuff is real and is for them too!

III. Written In Love on Tablets of Our Hearts:

II Corinthians 3:3 *“You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.”*

Paul writes to the Corinthian church telling them that God has done a wonderful work in each one of their hearts. What makes this a special word to me is that Paul saw Jesus’ presence by His Holy Spirit, at work in their lives. He could see the footprints of Jesus, the love of God at work in their lives burning in their hearts. That is something that every person who preaches, teaches, and pastors dearly wants to see in the lives of their church family.

The one thing I want for every person who attends this church is to watch the Lord live in each person, by His Spirit, writing His love and His desires all over that heart and life! Paul says the work of God isn’t like what happened back in the Old Covenant when God originally gave Moses the Ten Commandments. At that time God wrote with His finger on **Tablets of Stone** but now, today, God communicates in love by His Spirit and it is **Written in our Hearts!**

This is a fulfillment of a prophetic word God gave to Ezekiel some 587 years before Jesus was born. God told His man Ezekiel there would be a New Covenant created and it would be a kingdom of the heart. Ezekiel 36:26, 27 *“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit I you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees.”*

There is an incredible paragraph of Scripture here that describes the truth that the Christian life is about demonstrating the glory of Jesus both then in the wicked city of Corinth and here and now in Mifflintown, PA, or in your home and neighborhood.

II Corinthians 3:7 – 11 *“Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!”*

This Scripture points to the fact that when Moses encountered God in person, His face reflected that encounter. When you and I get alone with the Spirit of Jesus regularly, reading the Word, listening for His whispers, conviction, praying sincerely, **His Presence in our lives will be Reflected in us too!** Paul wrote to believers challenging us to invest time in the presence of Jesus so we may reveal the glory of Jesus to others:

- Romans 15:14 *“Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God.”*
- I Corinthians 10:31 *“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”*

- Jesus prayed for all of His followers, in John 17:10 *“All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them.”*

IV. How New Covenant Temples Respond:

II Corinthians 3:16 – 18 *“But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness, with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”*

The New Covenant temples of the Holy Spirit respond by making the ongoing choice to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. When you and I have the “first love issue” settled, we will engage in time alone with the Spirit of Jesus, with the Scriptures and in prayer. We **Submit to the Holy Spirit’s ongoing inner Transformation!** The goal of that inner transformation by His power is to reveal the life of Jesus in our lives!

Where the Holy Spirit dwells there is freedom to be being utterly changed from the inside out. Where the Spirit of the Lord is working in human lives, those lives will reflect honor and glory to the Lord Jesus. The result of this ongoing transformation is that people we have known and loved, perhaps for our entire life, will be able to see His footprints in our lives

Romans 12:1, 2 The Message: *“So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.”*

The Holy Spirit superintends a process of changing us slowly over time **with Ever-Increasing Glory**, which means incrementally over time, as He does His works in our hearts the glory of Jesus emerges as the desire of our own heart! Paul says here that we “all reflect the Lord’s glory,” “we are being transformed (present indicative active) into His likeness.”

I want to really encourage us all, as the followers of Jesus, that some of the process of transformation, **getting us to the place where our consuming Desire is to Glorify Jesus**, is not **Pleasant**. Let’s read one more Scripture together as we close!

I Peter 4:10 – 14 *“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. **To him be the glory** and the power for ever and ever. Amen. Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so **that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed**. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ you are blessed, for **the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you**.”*

New Covenant temples permit the Holy Spirit to grow us by His grace and to increase our knowledge of Him as Lord and Savior we extend His glory through our lives. Notice Peter says Jesus is to be glorified both now and forever!

New Covenant temples of the Holy Spirit discover and employ the gifts and callings of the Holy Spirit to build up the body of Christ and reach out to people who do not yet know Him.

New Covenant temples of the Holy Spirit submit to what God desires to do in our lives, even when we are called to walk a path of suffering. At times we are all called to walk in hard and difficult things. These are trials that refine us like a refiner's fire purifies metal. Hard experiences can serve as a tremendous motivation to seek the Lord with all our heart. When people see us love Jesus even when we hurt, there is something real about that love that speaks to them!

Conclusion:

FRIENDSHIP EVANGELISM:
2. "How Jesus Reveals His Glory"
Psalm 67 and II Corinthians 3:7 – 18

Introduction:

Our series is about **R**_____ **O**_____ to people we love, who are presently unchurched or pre-Christian. Our topic for the first part of 2018 is "Friendship Evangelism."

A very small percentage of people in the body of Christ worldwide with the **G**_____ of **E**_____ but when the Holy Spirit comes to live in our hearts He asks us all to **B**_____ **W**_____. Acts 1:8

One of the most important things we can do as we pray for others is to **T**_____ into God's **H**_____ of **L**_____ for those for whom we are praying: John 3:16, 17 and Romans 5:8

Another key thing to remember is we were born into a **W**_____ at **W**_____. The deep and reaching love of God for people is opposed by Satan.

The **S**_____ of this warfare? To what or whom will the glory of humankind be given? Satan will do anything to keep people from glorifying Jesus Christ!

Remember the truth as you love and pray for others. The Spirit of God takes great delight in our **H**_____ **D**_____ to know Him by faith. Ephesians 3:16 – 21

Paul prays for God-touched lives that reflect the glory of Jesus to others. That is why Satan seeks to **T**_____ **O**_____ our hearts! Proverbs 4:23

Let's think about the glory of Jesus Christ on earth at the beginning of His ministry as stated in the Gospels: John 1:14 – 18 and 17:4, 5 and at the end of time: Revelation 5:12, 13!

So between the Gospels and the end of time, **H**_____ is the Lord Jesus **G**_____ on the **E**_____?

I. The Glory of God's Face Shining On Us: Psalm 67:1, 2

In the Old Covenant the glory of God was **M**_____ **M**_____ to the gathered people of God! ... The first clause of Psalm 67:1 has to do with God's **W**_____ of **G**_____, while the second clause God's face shining on us describes **R**_____ **I**_____ with God.

It is so important that we do not "settle for" the hand of God's grace in our lives, but press into His heart of love because the Psalmist says: "The Lord **M**_____ **H**_____ **K**_____ to us!"

Remember the "Theology of Blessing" and look at verse 6, 7 ...

II. The New Covenant Temples: I Corinthians 3:16, 17

In the Old Covenant God came down in glory on a physical place where His people were gathered. In the New Covenant **W**_____ are God's **B**_____!

Our individual lives are His temple. When we gather in His presence we are a gathered **D**_____ **P**_____ of God. I Corinthians 6:19, 20; Ephesians 2:20 – 22.

As the Holy Spirit lives in us and we gather in His Name He **D**_____ **N**_____ to us **A**_____ the atmosphere with evident love and joy!

We become a picture to people who are seeking the truth of Jesus!

III. Written in Love on Tablets of Our Hearts: II Corinthians 3:3

Paul reminds the Corinthians he saw Jesus move in their lives, as His presence did a work of His **L**_____ **B**_____ in their/our hearts. He says it isn't like the finger of God writing on tablets of stone! It was actually holy love **W**_____ in their/our **H**_____

This was promised 587 BC through Ezekiel's words: Ezekiel 36:26, 27. Paul told the Corinthians and you and me, God desires to demonstrate the glory of Jesus on earth in and through us: II Corinthians 3:7 – 11

When Moses encountered God his face reflected that encounter. When you and I get alone with Jesus sincerely seeking His presence, He will be reflected in us too! Romans 15:14; I Corinthians 10:31; John 17:10

IV. How New Covenant Temples Respond: II Corinthians 3:16 – 18

We are called to make the ongoing choice to love Jesus deeply. When the “first love issue” is settled, we get alone with Jesus, and we **S**_____ to the Holy Spirit's ongoing **T**_____! Romans 12:1, 2
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The Holy Spirit superintends a process of changing us from within, to reflect Jesus' presence with **E**_____ - **I**_____ glory.

Some of the work of the Holy Spirit getting us to the place where our consuming **D**_____ is to **G**_____ **J**_____ is not pleasant!

How New Covenant temples respond to His leadership! I Peter 4:10 – 14

Discussion Starter Questions for Home Groups

1. What do think about when you hear the words evangelism and witnessing? Are your mental pictures positive or negative? Why?
2. Can you explain the difference between people who have the “gift of evangelism” and the role all Christians have to bear witness to the work of Jesus in our lives?
3. Have you ever thought about the truth that we are in a world at war and the spoils of the war are “minds?” To what or whom will human beings give glory?
4. As you think about our enemy Satan hating the glory of Jesus on the earth, what are some ways he seeks to “take out” the hearts of Christians?
5. Do you think we Christians truly believe we are the temples of the Holy Spirit? If we truly believe we are God’s temple, how will that truth affect our choices?
6. Paul used Moses reflecting the glory of God on his face as an illustration. So what happens in us as believers when we have been in His presence? What are some ways our family and friends might see the footprints of Jesus in us?
7. How do New Covenant temples respond to the transforming work of the indwelling Holy Spirit? What is the Spirit seeking to produce in us?
8. Read Psalm 67:1 – 7 together aloud. How many references are there to God’s presence in the midst of us touching our hearts to go and touch “the nations” “the peoples?” What should we learn from the repetition?
9. Read together aloud Philip’s story from Acts 8:4 – 13 and 26 – 40 and discuss insights you have regarding how he was used by the Holy Spirit to bear witness.
10. Have you thought about the truth there are people in your sphere of influence and God wants you to care about their eternal soul? Have you prayed earnestly for them? Have you written down what you might want to say if someone asks you to share your story with them?