

Valley Brook Community Church

Senior Pastor, Dan S. Baty

Adult Sunday School

9:45 AM

Sunday Worship Service

11:00 AM

Bible Study

Thursday 7:00 PM

Worship Center

7065 Deepage Drive

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Adult Sunday School

Unit Four

His Glory In Your Design

Lesson 1 “The Call To Glory”

⁷ 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, ⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? ⁹ If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! ¹⁰ For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. ¹¹ And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts! ¹² Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. ¹³ We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. ¹⁴ But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ 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. 2 Corinthians 3:7-18 (NIV)

Exposition of Scripture Text

When Moses received the Law from God, it was a glorious experience, a face-to-face encounter with the living God who made His will known by etching it into tablets of stone. Moses' face literally glowed with the light of heaven, so bright that the Israelites could not look steadily at Moses' face.

But over time, the glory of that encounter began to fade and Moses veiled his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the diminishing brilliance.

5. What does it mean to “live to serve others but to please God?”
6. How do we hold onto the value of who we are?
7. When it comes to serving others, what is the difference between selfishness and selectiveness?
8. Discuss this phrase: “The greatest love we will be able to give to this world and the greatest contribution we will make to the glory of God will come from courageously and consistently giving from our design.”

Practical Points

- You cannot please everyone.
- Rejection does not mean you are defective.
- Focus means greater love.

Philippians 3:12-16 (NIV) ¹² *Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.* ¹³ *Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,* ¹⁴ *I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.* ¹⁵ *All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.* ¹⁶ *Only let us live up to what we have already attained.*

Discussion

1. Jesus lived a courageous and focused life, what was His secret?
2. How do you deal with demand that surpasses availability?
3. How about the rejection of what you offer?
4. What happens when we allow others to dictate the type and quantity of our service?

The apostle Paul makes the stunning case to the Corinthians that the glory we have received in Christ is much greater than that of Moses' in that it does not fade away, and in fact increases as the days go by.

In Christ, God has made us to be reflections of His glory. By His Spirit who indwells us, He is transforming our words, our actions, our attitudes and our hearts into vessels of increasing splendor so that we display His attributes. It happens when we pray for others, when we serve others with the gifts He has given us, when we encourage others, when we humble ourselves and when we listen compassionately to others, when we are filled with His Spirit and when we make love our aim. Whenever we yield to His purposes, no matter how small it may appear or how imperceptible the result, the effect is always glory.

Through the individual and collective expression of His people God has declared that "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14).

It was never His plan to keep who He is or what He is about a secret. He wants the whole world to be awestruck by His magnificence and He wants to do that through each one of His people.

Supportive Passages

Matthew 5:14 -16 (NIV) ¹⁴ *You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.* ¹⁵ *Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.* ¹⁶ *In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 (NIV) ¹¹ *With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act*

prompted by your faith.¹² We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:20 (NIV) *I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.*

2 Corinthians 2:14 (NIV) *But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him.*

Discussion

1. How would you describe “glory” in your own words?
2. What makes the glory of the gospel of Christ superior to the glory of the Law?
3. How does the idea of God showing up in the world through you personally affect your sense of purpose?
4. Where does the ever-increasing glory come from? How does it reflect in our daily lives?

There will be other times when what we have to give will be in greater demand than we can accommodate. Continuous invitations, phone calls, requests. Demand is not always the determinant of how much we should give. We must not measure the quality of our love by endless appetites. We must learn to recognize that to love well does not mean to meet all the needs of others – even legitimate ones.

At one point in His ministry the people urged Jesus to stay in their city but He declined. Despite their neediness and entreaties, Jesus moved on. We must learn to give at our own pace, lest we become exhausted and ineffective.

There are times when love requires us to move outside of our area of giftedness and our comfort zone, but in general the greatest love we will be able to give to this world and the greatest contribution we will make to the glory of God will come from courageously and consistently giving from our design.

Supportive Passages

1 Samuel 17:38-40 (NIV)³⁸ *Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head.*

³⁹ *David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. "I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." So he took them off.⁴⁰ Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.*

Acts 20:24 (NIV)²⁴ *However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.*

Lesson 4 “The Courage To Be”

(Matt 11:16-19 NIV) To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others: ¹⁷

“We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.”¹⁸ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, “He has a demon.”¹⁹ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, “Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.” But wisdom is proved right by her actions.

Exposition of Scripture

Jesus came to love. He loved perfectly. He understood His mission and completely fulfilled His Father’s will. And still He was rejected by the very people to whom He had poured out perfect love. This underscores an indisputable truth: No matter how we try, we can never keep pace with the expectations of others. People will always want more, less or something different.

Faced with this reality, the apostle Paul said, “Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.” (Galatians 1:10) We must live to serve others but to please God. And God is pleased with what we give in His name – regardless of the outward results.

There will be times when attempts to encourage will be unappreciated or even unwanted. That is not a reflection on the quality of our gift anymore than someone walking past a jewelry store is reflection on the quality of the jewels inside. What God has given us to share with each other and with the world doesn’t fit every situation or every need, nor was it intended to do so.

5. Are there particular moments or occasions when you feel more like a reflection of God’s glory than at other times? What is the difference?

Practical Points

- God’s plan involves showing up in the world in a unique way through you.
- The glory of God in you increases as time goes by.
- The increasing glory is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Lesson 2 “Spiritual Gifts and More Still”

Ephesians 4:11-16 (NIV) ¹¹ It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Exposition of Scripture Text

The church is described as the body of Christ and each Christian is a part of it. As each part does its work the body grows. To stimulate this growth, God has given spiritual gifts to every member of the body of Christ. There is no such thing as an ungifted Christian. In God's Kingdom there is a zero unemployment rate. We all have a job. Therefore, church attendance is not only for being built up in our faith but to also build others up.

A spiritual gift is in essence the unique way God works through each of us to love others. The Scripture provides several lists of spiritual gifts (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 1 Peter 4:10-11), and in each passage it is clear that God is the One who determines them and distributes them. Therefore, there is no room for boasting about our spirituality or our effect on the lives of others.

We have all been created to make a unique contribution. Understand-

Practical Points

- Give what God has given you to give.
- Determine how you can give what you have been given more abundantly.
- Remember, there is no shortage of need in the world for what you give.

3. What things prevent us from focusing our spiritual effect for maximum impact?

4. What need does the church have that you believe you can help meet?

5. What does 1 Peter 4:11 tell us is the goal of exercising our gifts?

6. How does concentrating on my gift make my love more powerful?

7. Respond to this phrase: “The specific mission we have been given can be determined in large part by studying the way we have been designed...”

8. How does it make the church a more loving place?

9. How can we encourage others in the church to use their gifts?

ing and appreciating our own unique design gives us the capacity to appreciate the design of others and thus love more purely. Ephesians 4:16 indicates that the body builds itself up in love as each part does its work. When we are happy about the way we “work” (our unique design), we become secure enough to be able to genuinely appreciate another person’s uniqueness. If we are not secure in our specialness it becomes much more difficult to allow others their greatness. God’s plan is to create unity through diversity, not competition.

Our spiritual effect includes our spiritual gifts but it is not limited to gifts. It is the combination of our gifts, life experiences, personalities and interests that creates the package of giftedness God has given the world through us. It may be our sense of humor, our smile, our hospitality or other skills. These additional attributes may not be listed in the Scripture but God wants to use them just the same. All of what we are belongs to Him, not just our gifts.

No one sees life through your window of perception; nor can they. No one knows everything you know, nor have they experienced life the way that you have. No one else has your blend of natural abilities, talents and interests. You are a once-in-a-lifetime phenomena, appearing for a limited time only. Make your time on stage count.

Supportive Passages

Romans 12:4-8 (NIV) ⁴Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. ⁷If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁸If it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 (NIV) ⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

1 Corinthians 12:14-20 (NIV) ¹⁴ Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

Discussion

1. What does Ephesians 4:16 tell us about the role of every Christian?
2. Comment on: "There is no such thing as an ungifted Christian."

Luke 4:42-44 (NIV) ⁴² At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. ⁴³ But he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." ⁴⁴ And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

John 21:17-22 (NIV) ¹⁷ The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." ¹⁹ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then He said to him, "Follow me!" ²⁰ Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?") ²¹ When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?" ²² Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me."

Discussion

1. What does 1 Peter 4:10 tell us about the origin of our giftedness?
2. Discuss the phrase: "Each of us is a 'ten' somewhere."

This is a critical lesson. It affects not only our self-esteem and how we feel about ourselves, but the power of our love. The more we focus our God-given effect, the more consistently we give it, the more potent will be the love others experience through us. The more others experience God's love through us the more glory He receives, and we were created to bring Him glory.

We tend to believe that what we have is not enough. That we should have more to give. Or we compare ourselves to others, falsely believing their particular effect is more important and more impactful. But God is the One who determines what effect we should have on the world. It is His show, His plan, and we belong to Him. In His estimation each of us is a "ten" somewhere.

Still, on a practical level, there is no shortage of need in the world for what you give easily and effectively. Whatever it is the world needs more of it. If you have a gift of humor, make more people laugh. If it is writing, busy yourself with more notes and letters. If it is helping others, find more people to help. If you are an artist, produce more art. If a problem-solver, solve more problems. Do it all to bring glory to God.

The task of an apple tree is not to try to become a coconut tree, but to abundantly produce the biggest, reddest, juiciest apples it can. Let each of us determine to produce the best fruit from the tree God has made us to be.

Supportive Passages

Ephesians 2:10 (NIV) ¹⁰ *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

3. Whose job is it to build up the church?
4. What does the passage suggest is the purpose for going to church?
5. Say aloud: "I am a vital component of God's master plan!" Does that ring true for you? Why or why not?
6. What factor or factors determine a person's spiritual impact?
7. Do we have a choice about the type of spiritual effect we will have on the world? Why or why not?
8. Respond to the following statement: "I don't really measure up to these Christians; they all have it together a whole lot more than me."

Practical Points

- Embrace the God-ordained uniqueness of your place in the world.
- You have a job in Christ; determine to do your job well.
- Remember the purpose of attending church is to build as well as to be built up.

Lesson 3 “Focusing Your Love Effect”

1 Peter 4:10 - 11 (NIV) ¹⁰ *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹ 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 forever and ever. Amen.*

Exposition of Scripture Text

Peter's instruction paints a picture of God distributing gifts and effects to His people in such a way as to create a tapestry of His grace to display to the world. Different colors. Different patterns. Different sizes. Each Christian fitting uniquely within the tapestry.

Another way to look at it is God has a strategic plan for dispensing His grace to the world and each Christian has been given a mission. The specific mission we have been given can be determined in large part by studying the way we have been designed, by looking at the gifts, skills and passions we have been given.

Still another way to consider this passage is by using the illustration of the body, as the apostle Paul does “If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. (1 Corinthians 12:17-20)

Whichever example we choose, the overarching point is clear: Be who God created you to be. Give what God has given you to give. Don't try to be something or someone you are not.