



First United Methodist Church of Hanford

*Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.*



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### **Courage to see God's glory**

*"And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ." 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 (NIV)*

Hear me; I know it is not easy. I know there are days you want to quit or feel like you just cannot do it anymore. That is when God's glory can come through. It takes courage to face uncertainty - say like while still living through a pandemic. Wondering, questioning, and seeking. It takes courage to live your authentic life in a world that tells you you cannot. It takes courage to endure pain and brokenness; It takes courage to be patient. It takes courage to break down barriers. It takes courage to speak truth in love. It takes courage to follow Jesus and mean it.

Paul's message focuses on the idea that some people do not see the glory of God because they are distracted or looking the other way. There is much in our world today that keeps people from seeing the glory of God: Pride - I do not need God, I am in control of my own destiny. Pain - I do not feel God with me. I cannot see evidence of God in the mess of my life. God must be gone, silent. Anger - Why God?! Why me, why now, why her, why them? Why? Busy-ness - I do not have time, what I do, where I go, who I am with are far more important. Division and isolation - us and them, me against the world. Fear - fear of fully embracing the claims of Jesus and living into his teachings; fear of, failure, ridicule; fear of being wrong, letting go of control.

Commentators agree that Paul was talking about the ways the evil one, the devil, tries to keep us from seeing God in our midst. It is the way evil keeps us veiled from the truth of God's love and grace revealed and given through Jesus - by keeping us focused on other things. I cannot help but wonder if they are also the ways that people use to avoid facing the truth of self or

circumstance as well. What I mean is, could it be that we use distraction, anger, fear, arrogance, success, busyness, etc. To keep ourselves from looking at our own struggles, failures, and disappointments? To keep ourselves from addressing the difficult issues, sensitive topics, or painful truth? Because if we did look, we would have to see our flaws, admit we are not o.k., not as strong as we thought, that we cannot do “it” alone, or that we were wrong? And by doing that we are exposed. In that moment, when we are vulnerable, is the moment God’s glory means the most; can teach us the most, reveal the most, and transform the most.

Could it also be that Paul is not just talking about those outside the church, but perhaps some inside the church as well? Could there be believers who cannot see the glory of God because they are too caught up in being right, staying ahead of the game, planning for the next big thing, or worrying about things they cannot control? Could it be there are those in the church who do not see the glory of God because they become distracted by the very rules, traditions, protocol, and standards, they pledged to believe? I am not saying those things in and of themselves are bad, but can they hide the glory of God when that is all we look at or listen to?

For me, Paul is telling these things to the church too and by that I mean those who follow Jesus, that their lives as a community - a body of believers (not just individuals) is meant to show the glory of God – our purpose is to live life together, in such a way that the glory of God shines through, even when its hard and even when people may not see what we are trying to do. We press on with courage and prayer trusting that God’s glory, not ours, will prevail and that people will come to have eyes to see, including the eyes of some within the church.

The glory of God appears in a variety of ways - in expected and unexpected places. It takes courage to live a life that reveals such glory - it takes courage to see such glory. I pray, we are up for both.

Amen.

“Now I can say I Live a Day” (John Wesley)

Pastor Pablo

April 28<sup>th</sup> , 2021

#### Online Devotionals

To grow in your relationship with God and others, it is important to have some spiritual disciplines in your life. Below are some helpful websites that will lead you to read scripture, pray, and focus on God.

[UPPER ROOM DAILY DEVOTIONAL](https://www.upperroom.org/devotionals) <https://www.upperroom.org/devotionals>

A daily devotional including scripture lesson and story.

[UPPER ROOM DAILY REFLECTIONS](https://upperroombooks.com/neweverymorning/) <https://upperroombooks.com/neweverymorning/>