

Our text this morning is Isaiah Ch 43 thru Ch 44, v5

and with dynamics by now familiar to us, there's a mixture of Comfort & Judgment

The Babylonian Exile, and Return from Exile are referenced

there's more of God's dispute w/ the worthless idols of the nations

and it's all couched in Isaiah's ornate, poetic style

in this message we're going to spend very little time in the text as a whole

Rather, we're gonna take one Truth from the text and focus on that

this is something I rarely do as a preacher because

I understand the job description "Preach the Word" 2 Tim 4:2

to mean, go thru the actual text

helping people understand what God is saying and how He's saying it

so we can apply His Word to our lives

in our year-long study thru Isaiah we have, for the most part, done that

but the book's size and style make it a demanding task

you know how he likes to paint pictures and hop time-frames

and since we're taking him in chapter length portions

simply going thru a text & covering its reasoning & imagery can take most or all of a sermon

leaving little time for illustration and application

which are, equally important aspects of 'preaching the word'

When we set out on our year-long journey thru Isaiah

I knew there'd be a few times I'd take this route and this morning is one of those times

because in this text there is a Signature Truth

a clear and vital revelation stated as simply as it could be

and this sermon will be on that Truth

but I want to devote a few words to the text as a whole, before we turn to it

ZZZ

I have come up with an image of Isaiah, that works for me, see what you think of it

Isaiah is like the Mississippi River

enormous and central, yet twisting and turning

The Mississippi drains a vast portion of North America it's called the Father of Waters

Yet for all it's enormity and centrality, the Mississippi does not flow in a straight line

it twists & turns back and forth

in like manner, Isaiah is the Father of Prophets,

it seems all subjects and themes of Scripture flow thru him

Yet in like manner, Isaiah does not flow a straight line,

he twists & turns back and forth
so much so sometimes it's hard to know where one part stops and another starts
I happen to have marked off this sermon as Ch 43 and the first 5 vv of Ch 44
& it's not like I 'made that up', there's reason to see it that way
but many good commentators don't and simply see each chapter as its own complete unit
and sometimes, in light of Isaiah's cyclic repetition it hardly seems to matter

Chapter 43 has reasonably clear paragraph divisions

vv 1 thru 7 form the first conveying the message 'Do not Fear' I am with you
vv8 thru 13 the second, saying Israel is God's witness to the world

the message He's the one true God, & the idols of the Nations are nothing is reprised there
vv14-21 speak of Deliverance from Babylon in a way that parallels it with the Exodus fm Egypt
Then vv 22-28 describe again the people's disobedience

and frankly, that frustrated my expectation
I found myself asking: How does that fit there? Why is that brought back up?
we talk about how he hops time-frames, seems to talk about everything in the present tense
and then I realized, in a way that was helpful to me
I guess that's the way God showed it to him

SHRUG/PAUSE

it's not like he sat down and decided to 'mix and match' on his own
He's faithfully relaying what the Lord showed him so that's what we get
vv 1 thru 5 of Ch 44 are very much like 1 thru 7 of 43
the assurance of salvation, the injunction to 'Fear not'

So, here's my thumbnail sketch of Isa 43-44:5

1-7 Fear not I am with you
8-13 Israel is God's witness to the world
14-21 The return from Exile is like the Exodus from Egypt
22-28 We'll say - It's by Grace, not because they earned it
1-5 Reprise "Fear not, I am with you"

and that's as much as we're doing on the text as a whole

ZZZ

Now we turn to that signature Truth

the clear and vital Revelation stated as simply as it could be
like Genesis 1:1 or John 3:16

It's in a sentence that covers a verse and a half

we pick it up in the middle of v6, the Lord talking about the return from Exile:

7 Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth—
Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory;
I have formed him, yes, I have made him."

and I understand that may not strike you with the clarity of

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth
or God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son . .

but there is a simple, direct statement there

which conveys a truth as big in a way you could say bigger than Genesis 1:1

What could be bigger than that?

Well, let's think about it

and one of the best ways I know is to ask those 6 questions that cover all the bases

Who What When Where How Why

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth

Who? God What? Created When? In the beginning

Where? . . uh . . that one doesn't really fit in this instance so it's off the table

How? ya read on for that answer

2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep.

And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

the rest of chapters 1 and 2 answer the question 'how?' . .

So Who? God What? Created When? In the Beginning Where? Not relevant How? Read on

Why?

Why did God create the heavens and the earth?

The answer to that question is not in Genesis 1:1 but it's in Isa 43:7

Everyone who is called by My name, **Whom I have created for My glory;**

God created the heavens & the earth and Adam & Eve FOR HIS GLORY

that's the Signature Truth, the clear & vital revelation stated as simply as it could be

the purpose of Creation the Purpose of Everything is the Glory of God

& if you're familiar w/ the New Testament, that should 'ring true'

because the 'glory of God' is a central theme

John 11:4 This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God. .

Rom. 3:23 . . all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

1Cor. 10:31 . . whether you eat or drink,
or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

the glory of God is the ultimate goal the reason behind which there is no other reason

in any game, the object is to 'win'

from checkers to chess Tiddly-Winks to Tennis

the reason you do what you do within a game is to win the game

in Football you're trying to gain yards, Why? so you can get a first down

Why? so you can keep moving the ball. why? so you can score Why? so you can win
within a game, the ultimate purpose of every move is to win the game
now, we can ask Why you want to win the game

that question makes sense because such games are subsets of life
and the answer might be so you can feel good or make money or be famous or whatever . .
we can ask that question of any game in life
but if you pull back as far as you can, and see life itself as 'the game'
you can ask, how do you win that game?
What is the ultimate purpose, of every move in your life?

the Biblical answer to that is The glory of God
Why is it the glory of God? Because there's nothing higher, nothing greater
nothing above it nothing beyond it
in the game of chess the ultimate goal is to take the King
in the game of life the ultimate goal is the glory of God
. . whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

ZZZ

Now time for a disclaimer

because we're not only talking about the most important thing God
we're talking about the most important thing about the most important thing The Glory of God
and since I'm bringing it up and I'm talking about it I'm making the disclaimer:
you may recall, when I introduced Isaiah at the start of the year
I mentioned the sophomore error, sophomore being a compound word whose root meaning is 'Wise fool'
a sophomore has learned a little bit, but not enough
so they think they're wiser than they actually are,
and like to impress people with their knowledge
I said I didn't want to strike a sophmoric pose about Isaiah
didn't want to give you the impression that I comprehended it because I don't
tho I could blow enough smoke to make it appear to you as if I did
but that would just be sophmoric posing
I don't want to do that in relation to Isaiah
and I all the more don't want to do it in relation to the Glory of God
the absurdity of trying to impress someone with your 'comprehension' of the Glory of God
is beyond ridiculous

the very idea of 'comprehending' the glory of God is laughable in and of itself
so even tho I'm preaching this sermon on the Glory of God, I assure you I do not 'comprehend' it

I simply understand, it is very important and hope to point out a few helpful truths about it
150614 SERMON 4 ACTS 16:16-40 SHEPHERD'S GATE 1100

Issac Newton said: I do not know what I may appear to the world,
but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore,
and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary,
whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.

thus we all should feel in relation to God in general, and His glory in particular
so that being said let's see if we can find a smooth pebble or a pretty shell

ZZZ

and begin with the basic question What is the glory of God?
you could answer it's the greatest thing or the ultimate thing
and, while accurate, that's a description of its Value, not of 'it'

If we ask what is IT? What IS the glory of God

the Bible presents us with two basic ideas

either or both of which may seem 'strange' at first glance

What IS the glory of God? In one sense, it is Light
and, in another sense Fame

Light Luminosity Glowingness

pretty simple but unfathomly profound

God is light 1 John 1:5 and in Him is no darkness at all.

in the beginning, when He created darkness was on the face of the deep
and He said Let there be light and there was light

in the end when we dwell with Him the heavenly city has

"no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it"

for the glory of God illuminates it and the Lamb is its light Rev 21:23

we're talking about what the Glory of God IS

and I'm telling you one of the two basic answers is LIGHT

the New Jerusalem does not need the sun or the moon "for the glory of God illuminates it"

[there were] shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them,

and the glory of the Lord SHONE around them . . . it's light [Lk 2:8-9]

Ex. 24: Mt Sinai

16 Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days.

And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

17 The sight of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire

on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. [16+17]

in Ex 34 we learn, when Moses came down from the Mtn, his face glowed v30

So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses,
behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.

that's the traditional wording 'the skin of his face shone'

The NIV and NLT say his face was 'radiant' he was glowing 1400

we talk about a 'glowing complexion' Moses was literally glowing 2 Cor 3:7 -

the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses
because of the glory (the glowingness) of his countenance

in one fundamental sense Glory IS Light

the other fundamental sense I'm calling 'fame' tho we could call it 'credit' or 'honor' or 'renown'
many words touch on the basic idea which is not hard to understand

In the smn on the Mount, Jesus says, Mt 6:2

. . when you do a charitable deed,
do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets,
that they may have glory from men.

they were literally sounding trumpets to call attention to their charitable deeds

Why? so people would notice them & be impressed with them & think highly of them

they were seeking 'glory' from men to be 'noticed', 'thot highly of'

The NAS has 'be honored by men' The ESV translates 'be praised by men'

glory, honor, praise you can see how these terms overlap

you are noticed, valued, credited

In Lk 14 Jesus tells a parable about taking your place at a Wedding Feast

8 "When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place,
lest one more honorable than you be invited by him;

9 and he who invited you and him come and say to you,

"Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place.

10 But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place,

so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, "Friend, go up higher.'

Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you.

most translations go with 'honor' there

but it's the literal word for glory & you get the point

you're being 'honored'/glorified by being 'lifted up' noticed and credited

as opposed to the opposite which is to be 'put down'

Glory is 'honor' it's opposite is 'shame'

in a parallel sense If we think of Glory as Credit the opposite would be 'Blame'

I'm 'reading' more properly listening to Shelby Foote's narrative history of the Civil War

it's a big story, involves a lot of people

and at the time, and down thru history a lot of arguments about Credit and Blame

Ask why a particular battle was won? And the Generals are pointing to themselves

one says "It's because of what I did" another "No, it's because of what I did"

Flip that question around and ask Why a battle was Lost?

Then the Generals are pointing at one another

It's because of what he did. No! It's because of what HE did!

they're after 'glory' which is to Receive Credit

synonyms for Glory are words like Credit, Honor, Renown
splendor is a good one cuz it kind of folds in the light aspect . .
I'm summing it up w/ "Fame"

Antynoms for Glory would be words like Blame, Shame, Disgrace

if you want a key reference for Glory as Light I Jn 1:5 is pretty good
God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

if you want a key reference for Glory as Fame we just passed one in Isa 42 v8
I am the LORD, that is My name;
& My glory I will not give to another. .

His glory He will NOT give to another

He won't permit the Credit, the Honor, the Fame which is properly His to be missplaced

When 'credit' or 'honor' is missplaced on earth it's certainly an injustice,
but it's not a catastrophe, it's not the end of the world

if one General gets the credit another General deserved

of if some co-worker 'stole' the credit you deserved on the job

That's unfair it's not right it's a shame

but in the grand scheme of things it's not that big a deal

But if God is not given the credit He deserves . . it's more like the end of the world

it throws Life and the World out of balance

getting this most fundamental of things wrong Throws everything off

Romans 1 describes it:

21 . . [they] became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.
22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,
23 [changing] the glory of the incorruptible God into an image . .

it's as if, in the game of chess, you got confused

and thot you won by taking the Bishops rather than the King

if you don't understand the goal of the game, every move you make will be wrong

if you give something other than God the place of primacy and centrality

if you do not glorify God as God

it doesn't matter what the something else is -

your family your country your reputation your pleasure

your thots will become futile and your foolish heart will be darkened

His Glory He will not give to another

2000

Everyone who is called by My name, **Whom I have created for My glory;**

From that statement we've launched into the Purpose of Creation

What's it all about? It's all about the Glory of God

We've tried to put our finger on what that actually is

and found the Bible offers two basic ideas which I have labeled 'Light' and 'Fame'

'Fame' is the more practical for us at this point, because it involves something we do

Worshipping Honoring Praising

We glorify God by reflecting back to Him the Praise/Honor/Credit He deserves

Romans 1 calls it Glorifying God AS God which is vital because

if you don't glorify GOD as God

you'll glorify something else as god - and that's a fatal error

because whatever it is - it's less than God

and glorifying it will throw your life and your world out of balance

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I know this is a risky and demanding sermon

we're talking about as big a truth as there is The Glory of God

and in order to talk about it we've got to be grand and comprehensive

but in order for it to make a difference we've got to be practical and personal

and I'm going to try to conclude Practically and Personally

by returning to our text Isa 43 verse 1, which reads:

But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel:

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by your name; You are Mine.

in that verse the Lord proclaims 3 things He has done:

thus says the LORD, who created you

Fear not, for I have redeemed you

I have called you by your name

The Lord says He Created you He says He Redeemed you & He says He has called you by your name

we'll close by considering the 'glory' He deserves for each of those actions

ZZZ

thus says the LORD, who created you God deserves Glory as Creator

we get a sense of this in a glorious sunset, or a majestic landscape

the Grand Canyon, Niagra Falls . . . The heavens declare the glory of God Psa 19:1

3 weeks ago we were the marvelous 40th chapter of Isaiah, where the Lord Himself asks [v25]

25 "To whom then will you liken Me, Or to whom shall I be equal?" says the Holy One.

26 Lift up your eyes on high, And see who has created these things,

Who brings out their host by number; (He's talking about the stars) He calls them all by name,

By the greatness of His might And the strength of His power; Not one is missing.

By the greatness of His might and the strength of His power

He created the stars and Everything else

He is the Creat-or Everything else is Creat-ion and if you don't glorify the Creator,
you'll be glorifying some part of Creation - cuz that's the only thing there is . .

and however beautiful and marvelous and amazing it might be

Glory does not belong to it its Glory comes from Its Creator

and He will not share His glory with another

God alone deserves Glory as Creator

But His glory in Creation has been obscured Something went wrong

and we're not even privy to the full story

we just know that first thru the Serpent and then thru our parents

sin entered and marred Creation

so that it became a Wonderful / Horrible thing

Life and Death Pleasure and Pain Beauty and Ugliness Wonder and Horror

and all too often the pain and suffering overshadow the glory of Creation

The majesty of the Grand Canyon is of little comfort with your cancer diagnosis . .

The distant splendor of the stars can just add to your feeling of worthlessness . .

Something had to be done and God did it

He Created Sin marred He Redeemed

& For all the Glory He deserves as Creator He deserves even More as Redeemer

the book of Revelation provides a clear instance of the difference

In chapter 4 The apostle John is swept up to the heavenly Throne Room

to see God worshipped as Creator

4 living Creatures surround the Throne 24 Elders encircle it v9

9 Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne,
who lives forever and ever,

10 the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne

and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

11 "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power;

For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."

God is being glorified - credited praised honored - as Creator .

Rev 4:11 You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power;

For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.

Period Full Stop

a couple of times in the book of Revelation John is so overwhelmed

he starts to worship his Angelic Guide

That is why Redemption Manifests More Glory than Creation

Jesus said: Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

[John 15:13]

And that is what He God incarnate did for us

manifested the Greatest Love

which is the deepest, highest, fullest expression of His Glory

which we celebrate Now and Forever

and could find no higher truth to conclude on . . .

But we've got one more point to cover

ZZZ

Pertaining to our participation in the glory of God

He created you He redeemed you and He has called you by your name

Jesus describes Himself as the Good Shepherd - who lays down His life for His sheep

there's the Love and Glory of Redemption . . .

but He also says "he calls his own sheep by name" [Jn 10:3]

Redemption is not a mass-produced, faceless process

it's personal He's after you calls you by your name

because there is an aspect of His Glory only you can bring to light

your story your journey your Faithfulness is unique

And it matters it makes a difference

He earnestly desires your participation in His glory

Which is why He has called you by your name

Now in closing

I'm going to try to describe what is to me, a stunning thing about that participation and I'm just going to state this as clearly and simply as I can

& while it's certainly not a perfect statement, it's biblically accurate to the best of my ability

We participate in the Glory of God First by recognizing and reflecting it

simple enough

But there's a Second sense in which it seems . . we somehow . . acquire a share in it

. . a portion of it becomes .. ours

a couple of instances of the first sense, I used the term 'reflecting'

and that's a good illustration think of the way a mirror reflects Light

the mirror has no light in itself it's just a mirror

but it can convey light, it can reflect the light of the Sun!

and that reflection will vary with the quality and condition of the mirror

it can be of higher or lower quality and in better or worse condition

a low quality, dirty mirror reflects light poorly

a high quality clean mirror reflects light well

the process of spiritual growth in this life

is like the process of becoming a higher quality, cleaner mirror
better and better Reflecting the Glory of God

Same point, Different Example think of a Radio

and for this to work you've got to think of an old style, analog radio

where you turned the dial to physically 'tune' the Receiver

The Signal was there it just was what it was

But you could Tune the Radio to receive it

and those of us who are 'of an age' can well remember the WEE-OUUUU noises

static and fuzz, catching the sound a little bit working the dial back and forth
to find the place where the signal came in Loud and Clear

If we think of the Glory of God as a signal We are like Radios

spiritual growth 'tuning' us to get that Signal Loud and Clear

That's the first sense in which we Participate in the Glory of God

and we turn in closing to the other way which is really remarkable

cuz if I'm reading the Scripture right

it seems as if we'll actually acquire 'glory' ourselves

just rattling off a few verses

Rom. 8:18 . . I consider that the sufferings of this present time
are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

the glory which shall be revealed in us

2Cor. 4:17 . . our light affliction, which is but for a moment,
is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory

1Pet. 5:1 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder
and a witness of the sufferings of Christ,
and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:

not just a 'reflector' but a partaker of the glory that will be revealed

As I said up front, I do not understand this completely . .

but it seems to say that we will actually acquire glory

couple of examples from the parables

in the parable of the Talents the master says to the faithful servant: Mt 25:21

Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things,
I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

there's a significant change there

he was 'faithful over' i.e. responsible for 'a few things'

but his reward is not to be made 'responsible over' many things

but to be made RULER over many things

the contrast is not just between 'few' and 'many'

it's also between watching over somebody else's things and ruling over your own

Similar dynamics in the Parable of the Unjust Steward, Lk 16 Jesus says, vv 11 and ff

11 . . if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon,
who will commit to your trust the true riches?

12 And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's,
who will give you what is your own?

and granted, that's stated negatively if you have not been faithful you will not get . .

but the clear implication is that if you have been faithful you WILL get

True Riches in contrast to Unrighteous mammon

and What is your own in contrast to What is another's

I find that really intriguing but don't want to make too big a deal of it

cuz even if you and I actually acquire glory It's for the Glory of God

In taking this opportunity to focus on the Glory of God

my goal has been to encourage and equip you to be tuned just a little bit better

to recognize and reflect The glory of God

Let's close by doing that together in Song

? Lynn start Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord
Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord
Give Him glory evermore
Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord

Worthy

Jesus