

GLORY

This was originally a note to a dear married couple I know through email:

It is always so encouraging to be around brothers and sisters in the Lord! “How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron’s beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows blessing, even life forevermore.” (Psalm 133)

In Christ we have such a unity in each other, such a bond of friendship. Oil pouring down the beard represents to me the blessing of friendship - of commitments that link brothers and sisters together in bonds that cannot be broken. Let the dew of Hermon fall on all of us, refreshing us with each other’s presence in the Lord.

Jesus prayed on the night he was arrested for us believers that we would be unified, “I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” (John 17:20-23) There is such a beauty and such a glory in true Christian unity! Our flesh can continue to demand its own way, but the Spirit urges us: “put down the sword and be unified with your brothers and sisters!”

I’ve been thinking so much about friendships and how fortunate I am in the Lord. It seems when times get difficult or I just get weary that the Lord puts the right person with the right message in my path to encourage me. You two are an encouragement to me. It is pleasant just thinking about you. I keep trying to imagine what you look like, but then again, that is of little significance. I pray to the Lord and don’t know what he looks like. I strain in my Spirit to get closer and closer to him in worship. I cry out like Moses, “‘now show me your glory.’” And the Lord said, ‘I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence...but...you cannot see me face to face.’” (Exodus 34:18-19)

I just want to see your glory, Lord! How often I get myself stuck on my troubles and the day-to-day life, the life of the flesh! Just show me your glory, Lord! And one day we will see him in all his glory... “Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.” (1 Corinthians 13:12) Too often I cower back, lacking faith and vision, like the Israelites after receiving the Ten Commandments, “When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, ‘Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.’” (Exodus 20:18-19)

How often do I truly yearn to see the glory of the Lord, to put all earthly cares aside and truly get a better vision of him, to hunger and thirst for him, to desire him with all-out passion, with abandon? How easy it is to get caught up in what I see and hear and not step out totally, yearning to know him. My heart aches for the Lord right now. I just want him, him only. I burn to see him face to face. Come soon, Lord Jesus!

“You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.” (Psalm 16:11) There is my joy; there is my treasure. To sit at

Jesus' feet like Mary, Lazarus' sister, "As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!' 'Martha, Martha,' the Lord answered, 'you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.'" (Luke 10:38-41) How come I'm so busy with busy work so often, like Martha was? The work seems so noble, but how hungry am I just to know you, to see your glory, to sit at your feet and ponder you?

"The Lord confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them. My eyes are ever on the Lord, for only he will release my feet from the snare. Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. The troubles of my heart have multiplied; free me from my anguish." (Psalm 25:16-17) I'll take that anguish of the pilgrim way, that only I may know you more, Oh Lord! I long with all my heart that you confide in me more. I do want to seek you with all my heart. Nothing else will do. Human friends can fail me, those close to me can harm me, but you confide in me. You are my portion and my cup. I need you. I thank you for all the brothers and sisters that you have given me. Oh what a joy to see others so passionate about you. It is a great joy to share in fellowship with them. But in fellowship there are times of pain, like when Jesus said, "He who shares my bread has lifted up his heel against me." (John 13:18)

Lord, you alone are my glory. You alone are my strength, my shield and my salvation. In you alone will I trust. Mold me and shape me into your image, reveal your glory to me, and may that glory shine through me to others that they may turn and praise you as well. I am here for the praise of your glory. I long to bring the glory back to you. I am jealous for you, my Lord. It pains me to see people chasing after the idols of this world - money, popularity, pleasure, lust of the flesh, power and prestige. Oh how useless it all is, none of it will save in the day of wrath. Oh what a deceit the world has bought into. May I learn to continually turn my back on those temptations.

I will proclaim you to this lost world. See the glory; fall in love with the glory. Glory, Hallelujah! You are glorious, my Lord! "My heart says of you, 'Seek his face! Your face, Lord, I will seek.'" (Psalm 27:8) Glory, glory, glory!!! I just can't get enough of his glory! "May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who love your salvation always say, 'The Lord be exalted!'" (Psalm 40:16) I want so desperately for God to be exalted in my life. I want people to see Jesus in me. May they turn/return to him. I long to be a brilliant light for him, radiant, shining his glory.

Oh how I love your salvation, Oh Lord! You are my Rock and I shall not be moved. My heart fails me, my flesh fails me, but you are my Rock. When I am faithless, you are faithful. You do not let me fall, but oh, how I yearn to be faithful in everything. I don't want to hold any portion of my life back from you, I just want to lay it all down on the line as a living sacrifice. "When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?" (Psalm 56:3-4) What can man do to me? How can anything harm me with God on my side? "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31) "From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I." (Psalm 61:2)

Faintness in our flesh isn't bad when our Spirit is yearning after Jesus! It is a passion that longs to draw closer; it is a realization that I can go infinitely further in God's glory than I am right now. In the midst of my trials, it can be easier to see that glory, with few alternatives but to look up to the Lord and his glory. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God...Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness..." (Matthew 5:8,10) "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever

you face trials of many kinds...” (James 1:2) “O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.” (Psalm 63:1-8)

How I can relate. I am amazed at the words of the psalmist. That is where I want to be all day long, all life long, totally dependent on God. Lord, I seek you with all my heart. Do not let me fall. Open up my eyes to my own sin, that I may repent and see you more clearly. Reveal to me how I can get stuck in faithlessness, doubt, self-pity, pride, vanity and despair. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. Wake me up, Lord, I just want to see you more clearly, Jesus! I just refuse to be satisfied with maintaining the status quo in my walk with you. I just have to know you more.

I know that this is not my home. I am a pilgrim here on earth. This is not my oasis, but I know you have a task for me here, and what a joy, what a privilege to do your will, whether in great matters or small. It was said about Jesus, “Who for the joy set before him endured the cross...” How could he have joy in that? How can I as well have joy in the midst of the crosses God allows into my life? Jesus had joy in the midst of the most sorrowful, painful event in history. How did he do that? He had joy, not for the event, which was pure torture, but joy to do the Father’s will. “Not as I will, but as you will” prayed Jesus to the Father (Matthew 26:38). Is that my heart right now? If I truly want to see God, that has to be my heart, a heart yearning with a passion, “Just your will, Lord! My heart is faint and I pant for you. I pant to do your will with all my being. I put all else aside to do your will. All pain dwindles in comparison. Long-term distractions, detours, interruptions, trials and persecution all don’t matter in comparison to doing your will, oh Lord!

Lord, create in me a pure heart, a heart that seeks out your glory with a passion and won’t let anything else get in the way. Create a heart that sees the pain of trials as yet another opportunity to do your will over my will and another opportunity to learn to die to my flesh and live for Christ. Lord Jesus, do whatever you have to do to break me. I just want to see you more clearly. I thank you for the intense trials you put me through. I want nothing more than to draw close to you with all my heart.

Put me at the end of my rope that I may not see another route out, an escape that the flesh can give me, that I may totally depend and yield to your will in my life. I just want to see your glory. I want to know you more. Can you give me a vision of heaven like you gave to Paul or John? I just want to see you. Lord, nothing on this earth can hold my attention! It is all just a vain striving for that which becomes dust. I just want you. And I thank you for true brothers and sisters in Christ, who are going through the same struggles I am, and who just want to see you more as well. “Our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.” (2 Corinthians 1:7)

May believers realize like David, “Those who look to Him are radiant.” (Psalm 34:5) The glory of God in us just can’t be hidden. “You are the light of the world.” (Matthew 5:14) “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 the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but

not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you." (2 Corinthians 4:6-11)

I feel closer to God as I write these things out. I was feeling weak, faint, but now I feel stronger, closer, more dependent on him, less perplexed at the trials I'm facing. I feel the comfort of God and the comfort of knowing that you care and share the same struggles in life I do. Though they are different in nature, they are in essence the same, the struggle over the flesh. Lord, help us to see the real war and put aside the imaginary war of what we see with our eyes and hear with our ears. Help us to truly see that the war is to die to self and live for you. That is where Satan is truly tempting us - to settle back in despair, to chase after the preoccupations and pleasures of this world, to kick back and take it easy, instead of dying to self and living totally by faith in the midst of the fire.

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