

Im going to tread lightly.....When was the first time you learned that certain aspects about Christmas were up for debate? But do you remember how old you were? Do you remember who told you or how you found out?

Maybe it wasn't around Christmas, but maybe it was involving something else. How did you feel when you found out that something that certain things didn't add up. Did it feel like a disappointment or let down? How did it effect you? I mean, let's face it weve all been there?

What's often not talked about is the transformation that happens we learn that something is "real."... We don't talk much about that....The moment you realized that friendship is real! Forgives. Experienced love or peace.

. God is real...We don't talk about the joy and hope and sometimes life altering moment when we thought something was true and it actually was! That's just as powerful! That's just as impactful. I'm fact, this feel gives us an entry point as we talk about our text in John 1:14. It gives us insight into something becoming real.....

This is a turning point between the relationship between God and Humanity. The writer describes the coming of Christ into the world as 'seeing the glory of God. In the form of Jesus Christ, God becomes real in a way humanity has yet to experience. Glory was the evidence. We are going to spend the next few talking about this word and unpacking it. What does it mean to see God's glory and

Let's use this definition. Glory is the visible manifestation of the presence or attributes of God (slide). It is the attributes of God made real. It's not just talking about Godly things, it's see it. It's experiencing what we think is true about God. If we say that God is love, it's seeing it. If we say that God is kind, it's experiencing the visible manifestation of the presence or attributes of God. That's Gods glory.

(This might pose as challenge to some because God shows up differently in different seasons. Some of you experience this reality regularly during the holidays because when you see people or when they show up, they look a little differently than they did before.

In fact, we went home to Detroit and it seems like every year people change just a little bit don't they. Nicole's younger brother grew his hair out and has a goatee and a full time job. Another family member had a new love interest. Another had brand new puppies. My nephew now has two kids of his own. People just show up differently. People are always commenting on how my beard is getting more Grey. Experiencing God's glory requires me to be open to the different ways God might show up in my life and in our world.)..... God shows up differently in different seasons of our lives.

This is not the first time this word glory is used but the way God has revealed himself has evolved. Let me prove it. In Exodus 33....Moses asked if he could see God's glory.

Listen to God's response..... "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you.....But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.....When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. **23** Then I will remove my hand and **you will see my back**; but my face must not be seen." Moses says let me see you, and says, "Sure, now look at my back." **SHOWBACK**

Imagine me preaching with my back facing you the entire time. Imagine coming to the Christmas concerts and the choir sings the whole time like this! Disconnected? Not as personal. Imagine you hearing my voice but not seeing my face.

Isn't that interesting. In one scripture, God is saying you can not see my face? When my glory passes by you will only see my backside **It's almost as though God is saying you can see me, but not all of me.** God makes a conscious decision to remain a mystery. Reveal but only so much....

Then when we get to this time of year, we celebrate the fact that God shows up in the form of Jesus Christ. We see a face. hear a voice. Get a name. We see this God that makes a very different decision to reveal so much more of God's self. What does this say about God? What does this say about a God that decides to reveal more of God's self to humanity in such a vulnerable way. **God is taking off the veil. God is being more transparent. God is showing us God's true nature. This is what God is revealing to us.**

I think Gods glory is not just about God showing these perfect attributes. It's not God saying look at my highlight reel! Glory is God revealing Gods true nature. **Seeing Gods glory is less about witnessing a highlight reel and more about God showing God's compete self._ (Slide)** God goes from showing God backside to showing up in the form of Jesus the Christ. Here we see glory. We see God unveiled. We experience the visible manifestation of God presence in a more intimate way. The character of God does not diminish because we see more of God.

- Here's why this is going to be hard. God the defining the terms of our relationship. Unveiled. Transparent. Real. No false pretenses. No masks. No hiding. No mystery. Show your true self....

This is hard because most of us are used to relationships that look like this....(show backside). We are used to only revealing to people what we want them to know. Job interview. (Backside) First Dates. Social Media. Church Pews. The fear is that the more people know, the less they will embrace us! So we give you this! Backside.

Growing in my faith is not just doing a list of activities but it's courageously showing God more of myself. Seeing God's glory becomes an invitation to experience a relationship where we can experience our true natures.

Can I come before God Unveiled. Transparent. Real. No false pretenses. No masks. No hiding. No mystery. Show your true self....

What areas do you keep veiled from God?

Not only does this challenge the way we experience glory, but it even challenges how we understand it. Normally, when we talk about or assign glory is often used associated with what someone does well. People who are highlighted in our culture it's because they do one thing or a few things well. When you see anybody that's good at something, even though they might be naturally gifted at something they had to work for it!

I've been trying to keep up with the World Cup and it's the first time I've seen some of these famous players actually play a game. I see headlines about them all the time but now we get to see what makes them so good. Cristiano Ronaldo....

Christian's Ronaldo's training schedule

- 1. Usually starts of his morning at about 6:00. He works out for about 2-3 hours and splits the time doing conditioning and skill moves with the soccer ball.**
- 2. Takes a nap**
- 3. 9:30. Eats a high protein breakfast**
- 4. 10:30. Another 2 hour workout.**
- 5. 12:30. Another nap!**
- 6. Another high protein meal.**
- 7. Another nap.**
- 8. Another meal.**
- 9. Evening obligations**
- 10. Family time**
- 11. Gets in the pool around 10**
- 12. Heads to bed around 11:30**

Here's the catch. Regardless of how hard he trains, sooner or later his athletic skills will diminish. Someone else will take the spotlight. His glory will fade. It erodes. It's not sustainable. Glory is normally this fleeting moment that people chase because we know deep down it doesn't last forever. Glory comes in moments.

And then there's John 1.... It flies in the face of how we normally find and assign glory. We have seen his glory....Does not list an extensive list of accomplishments associated with glory. No highlights. No magical goals.

No training schedule. It's not even associated with a major Jewish holiday. God glory is unique because it's intrinsic. It's an inside job. It's not based on something God learned how to do or be. It wasn't determined on who was there. It wasn't based on their interpretation of events.

Implications.....It's not seasonal. After we put up the Christmas trees, I can experience it. When everyone is done singing carols, I can experience it. Shepherds, people that were considered unclean and marginalized experienced his glory. A caravan of pagans from the East experienced his glory. A young Jewish couple that was contemplating divorce, from a normal family experienced it. A devout elderly couple that thought they were beyond the years of bearing kids. Angles from on high.

When we look at the diversity of people that's experienced the glory of God coming into the world in some ways it doesn't represent different individual experiences but I think it represents the variety of experiences we go through in our own lives. Sometimes we feel angelic. At other times we feel unclean. Sometimes I have a lot of gifts to bring. Other times I only have myself to offer. Sometimes we are devout and other times we might as well be pagans. At any given time our lives can be representative of these. They exist in all of us. You can experience God glory in every season

of your life. There is no one excluded from experiencing Gods glory.

Gods glory is just as real today as it was 2000 years ago.

Is there something hindering me from experiencing Gods presence or attributes being made real?

KEYS.....

Let's be honest. The texts reminds us that most people missed it. They rejected it. Glory was present among them but they didn't get it at that time. And that happens to us. It happens to the best of us. We miss so much of what God is trying to do. But the good news is that experiencing Gods glory is a daily invitation. It doesn't come and go. It's not like we miss a sale today and won't come back until next year.

There is a small word that they used to describe Gods presence in the Old Testament. When the invisible was made visible they would refer to it as Gods Shekhina glory. For instance When they were in the wilderness and God led them with a cloud by

day and fire by night. When God would fill their temples, it would all be described the same way. All of these visible manifestations of God would be described as Gods shakine glory. The word simply meant, “one who dwells.” Some translations suggests one that “ takes up residence.”

Remember hearing that in John chapter 1. Here’s why it matters. Here’s why this brings hope. It suggest that in coming into the world, this is more than a divine visitation. it’s more than just God being present situationally. This is more than just stopping through or passing by... But this is a decision for God to take up residence in our lives. This is not us seeking to dwell with God, this is God seeking to live, dwell, and take up residence with us.

Let me show you the grace that is displayed in Gods decision to dwell and take up residence. How many of you have hosted or was the guest at someone’s house for a holiday? Who has had that experience? There are certain people that you love to visit, but you’d never ask them to dwell and take up residence at your house. Now I’m going be honest. There are certain people I love to visit. I like going over their homes, for a certain amount of

time. I like coming and I like leaving. I don't bring a change of clothes. I make sure I know where they hung up my coat. Some places and people I love to visit, but I would never dwell there. You would never live with everyone that you visit. And you would never allow everyone who visited you to take up residence.

Let me ask you to take out your house keys. Look at it. You don't give that keys to your residence to just any and everybody that visits your home. This is the key to your home. Where you keep your treasures. Where you go for safety. You are very particular about who gets a key. Why because not everyone should be able to dwell or take up residence where you reside.

The same care should be taken spiritually and with regards to our faith. Every situation and circumstance doesn't have to dwell or take up space in your life. We've given out too many keys. We have allowed too many situations and conditions to take up residence when they were just supposed to visitors.

Here's a key. Conflict. Here's a key. Difficult past. Key. Sickness, you get a key. Other peoples opinions, other peoples expectations, etc.....

God is not just coming into the world, God wants to come into our lives and dwell. Gods wants to be visible in our lives.

God wants to take up residence in our lives. God wants to live in our hearts. Live in our thoughts. live in our relationships. The arrival of Gods glory or the arrival of Gods visible presence in our lives is not for just a limited time. It not just something we can have when everything is going well. But it's something we can experience, can see, can feel, can hear for the rest of our lives. It's the glory that was see in that we just see in the distance, but it's what we can experience up close and personal.