

November 25 – Incomparable Glory

READ

Romans 5:1-8:17

Romans 8:17-18, “*Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*”

THINK

Isn't it funny how the words *obvious* and *oblivious* are so close?

There's a Czech auto company commercial that shows the features of their car while the street scene around it changes completely, barely noticeable, if at all, to the viewer. In the end, the announcer brings all the changes into view that those watching most likely didn't see, and it's mind-blowing just how drastically the background imagery changed! This clever commercial perfectly illustrates just how oblivious we are to what should be so obvious!

The same is true when we come face-to-face with suffering. We can get so hyper-focused on the *now* that we lose sight of the *eternal*. We get so caught up in our present, earthly conditions that we completely forget about who and Whose we are -- children of the Most High God — and the blessing and eternal hope that go hand-in-hand with a personal relationship with Jesus. That's why Romans 8:17-18 reminds us that, as Christ-followers, we've been adopted into God's family, making us His CO-HEIRS. This means we've been granted everything that belongs to Jesus! Unfortunately, that doesn't preclude the suffering He endured during His earthly ministry. It, too, is ours. But no matter how difficult the trials we'll endure here on earth might be, they're "not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."

Let those words sink in — the GLORY of GOD will be revealed in YOU! Every difficulty, every loss, and every betrayal are absolutely incomparable to the unending joy and perfection YOU will experience in eternity. Does this deny or diminish our suffering? By no means! But it does help us not be oblivious to the obvious — that Heaven, with all its hope and glory, is ahead!

PRAY

Heavenly Father, I lift my eyes to You. You are my Rock, my King, my Father, my everything. I love You and choose to praise You even amid seasons of suffering. Be glorified through me today! In Jesus' name, Amen.

November 24 – Well, He Is!

READ

Romans 2:1-4:25

Romans 3:15-18, *“Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways and the way of peace they do not know. There is no fear of God before their eyes.”*

THINK

When you were growing up, you probably heard someone ask, “Would you do that if God was watching?” and the punch line was always, “Well, He is!” Many people believe God exists but forget that there’s nothing He doesn’t see or know, that no behind-closed-doors operations or clandestine meetings are shielded from His view.

In today’s reading, Paul makes the profound claim that ruin and misery mark the way of those who abandon the Lord’s commands and arrogantly ignore His presence. Therefore, as enemies of God, they’ll never find peace. Conversely, those who delight in a healthy and reverent fear of God will receive His peace, protection, and eternal life.

The fear of God isn’t like other fears. It’s the 24/7 awareness that we’re in the presence of a holy and almighty God. It’s knowing that everything we do, say, touch, and feel is subject to His judgment. If we know Jesus personally, we respond to His love by obeying His commands and living under the authority of His Word. We seek to please Him and bring glory to His name. Following Him leads to life, and there’s no alternate route. Bottom line: Life is too short NOT to fear Him! You never know what tomorrow holds, so surrender your life to Christ today!

PRAY

Dear Lord, I seek to please You with everything I do, say, touch and feel. Help me make choices that reflect my reverence for Your authority and power. Guide me along Your righteous path that I may glorify Your holy name! Amen.

November 23 – Just Look Around!

READ

1 Corinthians 16:1-24

Acts 19:21-20:6

Romans 1:1-32

Romans 1:20, *“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities — His eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”*

THINK

Does God exist? This question has been debated for thousands of years. As Christ-followers, our immediate response is, “Yes! Just look around.” From the human brain to birds in flight to a majestic mountain range, God has made His presence known. Yet many people say this answer falls short of logic, a mere blind leap of faith. So, is the belief that the universe is a random occurrence, that everything came from nothing, a superior response? Absolutely not! Why? Because for every effect, there must be a more powerful cause. Something far greater than chance created us. Romans 1:20 says God has given us indisputable evidence of His eternal power and divine nature.

This leads to the next question: Why are we here?

We weren’t created to merely believe God exists. He masterfully made us in His own image and wants to have an intimate relationship with us. We are the object of His love, and we exist – as does all creation – to glorify Him. And, as believers, we have been uniquely tasked to reflect the majesty of our Maker and shine His light before all humankind!

PRAY

Dear Lord, Thank You for revealing Yourself to me through all of creation. Just as the heavens declare Your glory and the skies proclaim Your handiwork, I will shine Your light before others and make Your name known! In Jesus’ name, Amen.

November 22 – Who Are “THEY”?

READ

1 Corinthians 14:1-15:58

1 Corinthians 15:33, *"Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character."*

THINK

Have you ever been guilty by association? Maybe you hung out with people who had a bad rep, and people started assuming that you were just like them? The fact is that no matter how hard you try, spending the majority of your time with the wrong crowd will eventually rub off on you. You'll begin to think and act the way they think and act.

You might be thinking, "Yeah, but they're my friends! What if I can't find other people who accept me for who I am?" The thought of having to find new friends can be daunting. And no one wants to be lonely! Those are legitimate concerns. But when you seek to do life God's way, He will bless you with the right “THEY”! So, make sure your closest friends are:

Tough and Tender – They’re tough enough to tell you what you need to hear but tender enough to support you through difficult times.

Honest — They'll never lie to you, even if it would make you feel better.

Encouraging — They'll cheer you on as you follow Christ.

Yielded to God — They're crazy about Jesus and live under the authority of His Word.

These friends will always *help* and not *hinder* your walk with God! So, how do you find the right THEY? A great place to start is by consistently making church a priority on Sundays, joining a connect group or connection class, and serving in the house. Searching for the right THEY isn't always the easiest journey, but it's definitely the best route to living out who God created you to be!

PRAY

God, Please help me find the right THEY and grant me the courage to distance myself from the wrong crowd. Give me the wisdom to build the right relationships and be a great friend to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

November 21 – A Single Starfish

READ

1 Corinthians 11:2-13:13

1 Corinthians 12:5-6, *"There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work."*

THINK

One morning after a heavy storm, the beach was littered with thousands of starfish as far as the eye could see. A man walking by saw a boy picking up the stranded creatures one by one and tossing them back into the water. Curious, the man asked, *"How can you possibly make a difference? There are miles and miles of shoreline!"* The boy replied, *"It makes a difference for that one!"*

Sometimes we feel insignificant, like nothing we do really matters in the grand scheme of things. We might get discouraged or feel intimidated when we see others do "big" stuff like leading multiple people to Christ in a single day or making a "major impact" in their communities. But as much as they deserve commendation, we shouldn't discount the effects of "smaller" acts of service! As "God's handiwork, created in Christ to do good works," we ALL can make a difference. Smiles break barriers, and everyday acts of kindness soften hearts. An encouraging text or a sincere compliment can change the trajectory of someone's day.

God is about winning souls one life at a time. Jesus spoke of leaving 99 sheep to find the one that was lost. A friendly gesture one day can turn into a conversation the next, and over time develop into a relationship that opens the door to share what Jesus has done in your life.

Remember, even if what you're doing just seems like rescuing a single starfish, you're still making a difference. Believe it, it's true!

PRAY

Heavenly Father, Thank You for creating me to do good works in Christ. Remind me that I'm a difference-maker when I begin to doubt that what I do matters. Give me opportunities today to express Your lovingkindness through my words and actions. In Jesus' name, Amen.

November 20 – Greater Than Gold

READ

1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1

1 Corinthians 10:31, *"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."*

THINK

The story of King Midas is about a man who had it all: a luxurious castle, wealth, power, and an adoring daughter. Dissatisfied and seeking more glory, he made a wish that everything he touched would turn to gold. Unfortunately, as he whirled around, amazed by his new ability, he soon realized the danger and disappointment in such a self-absorbed dream as his food, drink, and most prized possession — his beloved daughter — turned to gold.

Self-absorption and pride always overpromise and under-deliver. Therefore, we're always destined for disappointment when we make everything about our own wants and desires. Why? Because we were meant for something far greater — to reflect God's glory, His greatness in all we do.

God is perfect and holy. We are human and prone to error. So, when we think about reflecting His glory, it isn't about perfection; it's about projection. When we commit to keeping the spotlight on God rather than ourselves, we have the privilege of showing the world who He is and what He's done as we bring Him the glory He deserves. And that's far greater than gold!

PRAY

God, I'm so thankful for the incredible opportunity of reflecting Your glory. Remind me of this when I allow pride to get in the way of bringing You the honor You deserve. Help me to turn from my sins and turn toward the holy life you desire for me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

November 19 – A Healthier You

READ

1 Corinthians 4:1-7:40

1 Corinthians 6:19, *“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.”*

THINK

Imagine that Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon and one of the richest men in the world, wanted to give you 100 million dollars. There's only one condition: you will receive it in 20 years if you follow his daily prescription for a healthier you. Would you accept that offer? Of course! Not only would it make you healthier, stronger, and more vibrant, you'd also be wealthy for doing it! What a sweet deal!

The scenario above may seem a bit far-fetched, but there's another like it that's not. In fact, this scenario is based on a guarantee given to us by God himself. When we live our lives according to the Bible and treat our bodies as God's temple, we'll receive a reward in Heaven far better than anything the world's richest men could ever dream of offering us. Why does God bless us for honoring our bodies? Because Jesus shed His blood to provide us with salvation, we were "bought at a price" — an amount so large that we can't even wrap our heads around the cost. So, the moment we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, He dwells within us. Our heart becomes His home!

Remember, honoring your body through living a healthy lifestyle — physically, emotionally, and relationally — not only gains heavenly reward; it's creating the right environment that's worthy of the ultimate resident — Christ!

PRAY

Dear Heavenly Father, Thank You for the price you paid to make my body Your temple. It is a tremendous gift that I never want to take for granted. Please give me the wisdom and strength to live in a manner that honors You and helps me be all you want me to be. In Jesus' name, Amen.