

Study # 1

The Glories of the Cross and of Cruciformity

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Cor. 3:18)

It is likely that many readers would picture Jesus as the glorified King on His throne in heaven as they read this scripture. This interpretation is valid; however, the Gospel of John clearly refers to Jesus being glorified on the Cross. Three times, John speaks of His being "lifted up" (John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32) and thus "spiritually exalted before the eyes of the world".¹

When some Greeks came to see Him, Jesus said, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" (John 12:23). Soon after that, Jesus prays, "Father, glorify your name!"; then the Father answers, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again" (John 12:28). Just after Judas left the upper room, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once." (John 13:31). Finally, in John 17, Jesus prays: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you." (John 17:1)

No doubt, all readers would agree that it does seem strange to talk about the glories of the Cross, when crucifixion was the most horrible form of torture and the most degrading and shameful method of execution. However, with the help of the Holy

¹John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1986), 205.

Spirit, we can see past the horror of the Cross and can agree with John Calvin that the greatest manifestations of His glory in Scripture are shown at the Cross:

For in the cross of Christ, as in a splendid theatre, the incomparable goodness of God is set before the whole world. The glory of God shines, indeed, in all creatures on high and below, but never more brightly than in the cross²

If it be objected that nothing could be less glorious than Christ's death . . . I reply that in that death we see a boundless glory which is concealed from the ungodly.³

Further, note these words from Roy Hession regarding the glory of God shown through the Cross and becoming a cruciform paradigm:

. . . In Him [Jesus] we see not only God but His glory displayed. This gives us a new understanding of that which makes God glorious—and it comes as both a surprise and a shock. For the face that reveals the glory of God is a marred face, spat upon and disfigured by the malice of men . . . But you say, that is not the vision of glory, but of shame and disgrace! However, it is glory as God counts glory . . . not so much in His ability to exalt Himself and humble man, but in His willingness to humble Himself for the sake of man⁴

Consider Andrew Murray's declaration that the Cross is the chief glory of Christ and thus cruciformity, the most glorious aspect of our conformity to Christ:

We know that the death of the cross is His chief glory. The one mark by which He is separated here in earth and in heaven, from all other persons, both in the Divine Being and in God's universe, is this one: He is the Crucified Son of God. Of all the articles of conformity, this must necessarily be the chief and most glorious one—conformity to His death.⁵

²Calvin, *St. John*, p. 68, quoted by John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 206.

³Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 205.

⁴Roy and Revel Hession, *We Would See Jesus* (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1958), 20-21.

⁵Andrew Murray, *The Believer's Secret of Living Like Christ* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1985), 124.

Readers are urged to read again through Table I in Part I (pages 7 to 9) slowly and prayerfully and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the glories of Jesus expressed in the scriptures and to commit themselves ever more deeply to being changed into the same glory.

It is vital we realize that we are not focusing on a wooden Cross nor just on the actual physical suffering of Jesus, but **on the qualities present in our resurrected Lord**, Who today communes with us and wants to reveal His nature to us by having us learn to know Him by our focusing on the glories of His nature that were expressed through His suffering and death, i.e., His cruciformity.

Further, it is imperative that we realize that it is impossible for us to reflect the glories of the Cross by our own effort; we need the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to see these glories and to do the work of changing us into the cruciform glories of Jesus Christ. One important part of reflecting the glory of the Cross is to make sure that we spend much time in meditation on the Cross in a worshipful manner as we commune in prayer with our risen Lord Jesus Christ. These familiar choruses take on new meaning as we consider focusing on the glories of His Cross:

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.⁶

Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus;
To reach out and touch Him,
And say that we love Him.⁷

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⁶Helen H. Lemmel, "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus", Copyright Singspiration, 1950.

⁷Bob Call, "Open our Eyes", Marantha! Music, 1976.