

TRUE GLORY

A SERMON

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By Mister JAMES WELLS

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“He that glories, let him glory in the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 1:31

THE Lord Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” says one scripture. He died for us simply as sinners. And another scripture, descriptive of the direful consequence of that sinner-ship, puts it in this form, that “he came to seek and to save that which was lost.” So that by taking these two scriptures together, you get first the character in which the Savior took us up, namely, sinners; you then get the consequence of that sinner-ship, that we are lost. So, then, “while we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” But natural reason and the wisdom of the world are always assigning some human reason or another why some are saved and some are not. Hence the apostle, knowing the workings of these enemies, reminded the Corinthians of the freeness of the grace of God; that just as Jesus Christ died for sinners, so the gospel comes to us as sinners, recognizes us as nothing but sinners. If there were any human reason why one should be saved more than the other, then we should have seen a larger number of the wise after the flesh, or of the mighty, or of the noble. But, said the apostle, “not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.” And those that are wise after the flesh, and are called, are not called because they are wise, but because God has loved them; and those that are noble by birth and position are not called because they are noble, but because God is rich in mercy, and for the great love wherewith he has loved them; and those that are mighty, magisterially or regally, or in any other shape or form, they are not called because they are mighty, but for the same reason that the thief on the cross was called. And when all such are called, they have to learn just the same lessons that the unwise have to learn, just the same lessons that the ignoble have to learn, just the same lessons that the weak and the obscure have to learn; there is no difference, and they will have to leave all that belongs to them as creatures, and be saved entirely by the grace of God. Hence Moses was a wise man after the flesh; he was taught in all the wisdom of the Egyptians: and God was glorified as much in the salvation of that wise man as he is in the salvation of an ignorant man; he is glorified as much, but not more; for it comes to a complete level in the salvation of the noble as of the ignoble, and of the weak as of the mighty; for the truth is, there is no difference when we come to the great question of sinner-ship. Now it is open to you all that Moses did not work the wonders which he wrought in Egypt, that Moses did not accomplish the salvation of Israel, by the wisdom of human learning, for whatever Egyptian wisdom he had, that did not enter in, but what he did was by the special revelation, power, and presence of the blessed God. I certainly will be

with you.” There Moses derived all the wisdom, and all the discretion, and all the strength that he needed to accomplish his mission. So it is also open to you all that the apostle Paul was in his youth (and so much to his credit, as it is to the credit of every young person to be very diligent, industrious, and persevering, while he has his energies about him), Saul of Tarsus, when a young man, was very diligent. He not only made great strides in learning, but learnt a trade as well, which was a very good custom of that day. Yet you all know that he did not preach the gospel by that wisdom or by that greatness which he acquired after the flesh. All was laid aside; he was met as a sinner, convinced that he was a sinner, God manifested to him his eternal mercy, and away he went with that salvation by which he himself was saved, with the testimony of that exceeding grace by which he himself was plucked as a brand from the burning; and not in the wisdom of words, but in the wisdom of God and in the power of God, he preached east, west, north, and south, to the salvation of vast numbers of precious souls. Thus, then, it is our mercy that the gospel meets all as sinners; and whatever is to be done spiritually, whatever is to be done to the advantage of the soul of any man, must be done by the wisdom, the grace, and the power of the blessed God.

We have three things to attend to this morning. The first is, *how the Lord puts a negative upon all fleshly glory*. Second, *how he enables us to glory in him*. Third, as far as time permits, *some of the reasons and advantages why we should glory in the Lord*.

First, then, how the Lord puts a negative upon all fleshly glory, “God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.” Now to confound the wise, as here intended, is to overcome the wise, to overcome that wisdom that would delude the soul. Let me speak with you here very familiarly. “God has chosen the foolish things,” When a sinner’s eyes are opened to see what sin is, when he is made to feel what he is as a sinner, and to see in the distance what religion is, he comes to this conclusion, that he knows nothing. He is a fool now in his own eyes for the first time. Saul of Tarsus no doubt thought he knew everything; but when the Lord convinced him of his state, now then, Saul, now that Jesus Christ has met with you, what do you know? He would say, I know only this, that I am a lost, helpless sinner; that I am a fool, that I have been a fool all my days, that I have never known what vital godliness is. I am a total stranger to redeeming blood; I am a total stranger to justification freely, by his grace; I am a total stranger to eternal election, I feel that I am a fool. Thus, the man becomes foolish in his own eyes, though in truth he is just beginning to be a wise man. Now, how does this man overcome the wisdom of the world? I will tell you; not because you do not know, but merely to remind you, to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance of what the Lord has done for you. Not all the contrivances that Satan can muster up, not all the inventions of men, nor all their reasonings, can persuade that man that he is not a fool, can persuade that man that he knows God savingly. You cannot persuade that man out of his ignorance, nor into an assurance that he belongs to God. He says, I know nothing. I have never felt the pardoning mercy of God; I have never experienced the peace of God; God has never spoken peace to my soul. And you cannot persuade the man, do whatever you may, that he is anything but a poor ignorant creature before God. And such an one (and we shall go further presently; this is only the first step), such an one will look up and say, O Lord, I am as a beast before you, so ignorant am I that I have not the knowledge of holiness nor the understanding of a man of God. There he is, and all sorts of motives are attributed to the man, that he is stubborn, that he is obstinate. But what is he to do? He sees his ignorance, and feels that he knows nothing of God. He reads the Bible, and says, Now I have no true knowledge of the mercy of God; and what does the Bible say of those people that know not God? Why, it says, “it is a people of no

understanding” I am that man. “He that formed them will show them no favor”, that is my destiny, said such a one. “And he that made them will not have mercy upon them”, that is just my character. “He shall take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” such an one says, that is just my character. That man for the first time in his life begins to tremble at God’s word, and to feel it may be his unhappy lot to be cast out at last. Then he is brought into the character to which the promise belongs; but for the promise to belong to him, and for him to be enabled to take the promise, are two distinct things. “To this man will I look, that is poor, of a contrite spirit, and that trembles at my word.” Also “the weak things of the world.” That is the next thing he is taught, his weakness; that he is a poor, weak creature. Tell that man to take the promise; tell that man to come to Christ; tell that man to lay hold of Christ; tell that man to cast his sins and cares upon God; you might as well tell him to create a world. There is Saul of Tarsus down under conviction. A thousand men may go to him and tell him he can take the promise if he will, that he can lay hold of Christ if he will; but he could not. But when Ananias is sent, God’s messenger, and God sets in with power, then Saul is enabled to lay hold of eternal life. How the mightiest powers that men bring against that man cannot persuade him out of his helplessness. His helplessness is what he feels; and, however paradoxical it may seem, this very helplessness which he feels enables him to stand fast against all the mighty powers that may be brought against him. He is brought to feel his need of a self-acting gospel; he is brought to feel his need of the sovereignty of God’s grace and mercy; and whatever persecutions that man may be subjected to, you cannot get him to deny his helplessness: he feels it. And so, these helpless things overcome the mighty; they are brought to stand before the Angel of the Covenant; and get them away from that position you cannot.

The next is, he is a base thing. Ah, he says, I am a poor base thing; my heart is wicked, my nature is vile, and in me is all manner of concupiscence. I may well, therefore, put my mouth in the dust. And persuade him out of this baseness you cannot; he sees it and feels it. Fourth, he is going down and down, you see he will get down to the bottom presently; and when he has got down low enough, then the Lord will come, but not before; The next step is, he becomes despicable; “things which are despised.” Oh, he says, I despise my righteousness; it is filthy rags; I despise my supposed goodness; it is as the morning cloud and as the early dew, that goes away; I despise the whole of it. The consequence is, he despises every false way, every false gospel; but he admires secretly the adaptation of Jesus Christ to the case of such a poor sinner as he is. Then the fifth and last step shall be, God has chosen things which are not to bring to nothing things that are.” So that the man finds out that he positively is nothing. Why, he says, I am nothing. The law reckons me nothing but a sinner; and in the gospel there is no room for any conditionality. Why, I am come to nothing. While I owe an infinite debt, I have not one mite of my own towards that debt. While I owe perfect obedience to the law, I have not one particle of goodness in my nature; I am full of wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores; the whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint. Thus, the man comes to nothing, and that brings to nothing things that are. Why, before he was thus brought to nothing, the things that were put for religion were of great importance to him. If he happened to be a ceremonialist, all the ceremonies that he witnessed were of great importance to him. Even the parson’s gown went for something; even his white handkerchief, that he plays with so handsomely, went for something; and the very band-box way in which he makes his appearance went for something. All the ceremonies and doings of the creature went for something. His gilt prayer-book, with a golden clasp to it, went for something; and his prayer-savings went for a great deal; and a thousand other things. Why, the apostle Paul, as you know, before he was converted,

gloried in circumcision, in being of pure Hebrew descent, of the tribe of Benjamin, in belonging to the straightest sect (every one naturally thinks his own sect the best, of course), and touching the law blameless. I am a very good character, and very zealous. By and by, when God took hold of him, all these things that before went for something now go for nothing; he himself is brought to nothing, and that brings all the rest to nothing; but it beautifully makes way for Jesus Christ to become everything, and Jesus Christ will never become everything to any man until all other things are brought to nothing. Thus, then, the Lord puts a negative upon the flesh.

Now, is this our experience? Has our ignorance been made manifest to us? Have we felt our weakness? Have we learned our baseness? Have we been made to despise everything belonging to self? Are we thus brought to feel that we are nothing? And do we feel now that it is not whether we will be saved, but whether the Lord will save us; not whether we will have mercy, but whether mercy will have us; not whether we will receive God, but whether God will receive us; not whether we will have Christ, but whether Christ will have us; not whether we will have the promise, but whether the promise will have us? This is the way then in which the Lord puts a negative upon the flesh; and this is the experience that, enables his people to overcome everything. Vital experiences are stubborn facts; you cannot get over them. The man feels these things in his soul; he carries these experiences about with him, and consequently they cannot be denied. I have often enjoyed and praised the Lord for that scripture, though I have often groaned under the truth of it, where one said, "My leanness rising up in me bears witness to my face;" so that I cannot deny my utter destitution of anything that is good. Thus, the Lord puts a negative upon the flesh. And I might easily show the absurdity, too, the evil of glorying in the flesh. If we are left to glory in the creature goodness, see what a delusion it is, because it cannot last long. Whatever creature goodness you have, or suppose you have, you cannot glory in it long, it cannot last long.

If we are born of God we shall thus become as little children; if we are born of God, we shall thus know our utter nothingness, and be prepared, yes, the soul is by this downward work made to receive the gospel. Now we are speaking of spiritual things. I am not telling you that man is physically helpless, or rationally or morally helpless, so that he does not know right from wrong; no; I am speaking, in distinction from these, of the fact that man is helpless spiritually. You that feel the guilt of sin try to bring the word home; can you do it? Those of you that are shut up, as it were, in prison spiritually, try to struggle yourselves out; can you do it? You that are far off from God, and feel and mourn the distance, can you come to him when you please? You feel you cannot. Therefore, it is in this spiritual sense the Lord thus brings us down, to make way for the coming in of that which he has provided. I am sure that all such that I am speaking to this morning, that have thus learned their ignorance, weakness, baseness, despicableness, and entire nothingness, which brings to nothing everything, but at the same time wonderfully advances the name of the Savior, making way for him, all such, I am sure, are prepared to receive the testimony we now have to enter upon. "But of him are you in Christ Jesus." "Of him are you." Do not let us lose sight of this encouraging transition. And just look at the characters which the apostle takes up, and what he does with them; and if he take us with him testimonially, if we have not yet reached across this transition, if we are not yet brought over by this transition, if the testimony take us across, and we feel the testimony belongs to us, then we shall as surely realize that to which the transition takes us as that we exist. In the first place, then, do you see that by nature you do not know anything savingly of Christ, and do you feel that you are a poor weak creature, a base creature, and despicable in your own eyes as far as your own righteousness and supposed goodness are

concerned, and despicable in your own eyes because of your sins, and that you are nothing? Now then, "Of him are you." Why, you are of him. You that know your ignorance, it is because you are born of God. God has shown you thus far the light; you are children of light. You that feel your weakness, you are of him; you are born of him. You that know your baseness, you are of him, you are born of him. You who once congratulated yourselves, and thought hardly any of your neighbors were so good as you were, at least you could find some faults in them you did not find in yourselves, or would not, but now you are brought to the apostles' conclusion, that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" "of him are you." You are brought to nothing; you are a poor nothing; "of him are you." Look at that; there he takes us up in our ignorance, our weakness, our baseness, our despicableness, and our nothingness. I do verily believe this is as far as some of you can get at present; and you are not all so far as this, you know, no. Well, you say it is a very painful part of the experience. Well, you will have the other by and by. You wait, the vision is for an appointed time; the commandment will come by and by. "Rise; he calls you" and then you will experience this transition, and come over into the pleasant regions that are here presented; for "of him are you;" or else you would never have been thus convinced, your eyes would never have thus been opened; you would never have been brought to this nothingness; for all through the Bible the spiritually poor and needy are spoken so highly of. "Of him are you in Christ Jesus." Well, how can that be, of him in Christ Jesus, when I have not yet realized mercy? Well, but you believe in Christ Jesus? Yes, say you, with all my heart. And you desire to be saved by Christ Jesus? Yes, with all my heart. And you desire to be found in Christ Jesus? Yes. Well, then, you are a Christian, you are in the faith. You are not assured you are there; but if you have these downward experiences, if you have no other evidence, these experiences prepare you for what the Lord has in store for you.

Secondly, then, I notice *how the Lord enables us to glory in him*. Now Jesus Christ is made unto such wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; and as that is realized it enables us to glory in the Lord. There is a threefold respect in which Jesus Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. First, by imputation. Did Jesus Christ do an unwise thing in his lifetime? Not one. Did he ever speak an unwise word? Never. We cannot say that, can we? Did he ever take an unwise step? Not one. Did he ever commit even the most remote shadow of folly? Oh no, say you; no, no. Very well then; God imputes that wisdom, that wise doing of Christ to you; and God holds you as free from folly as Christ himself is free; and will no more lay your mistakes, your foolish words and foolish works, foolish steps and foolish thoughts, and foolish things, he will never lay them to your account. He laid them to Christ's account; Christ took your foolishness away, and the Lord views you free from folly, just as though there was not a folly in you. He charges fallen angels with folly, but he never charges his people with folly as they stand in Christ.

Then he is also made righteousness unto us; that is, his everlasting righteousness is set down to us. He did not need it for himself, but it is set down to them that believe, that they can be justified in no other way. And, as we have said, if you have not yet realized the peace that flows like a river into the soul by the justifying righteousness of Jesus Christ, yet if you know your need, of him are you and the Lord counts you as righteous as Jesus Christ is righteous. What love, what grace, what mercy is this! Oh, these delightful truths make our souls cleave unto God; and the men, let them be who or what they may, that shall assert that these truths lead to anything but to holiness and to God, I will call them liars, and declare they know not the truths of which they speak; for the man

that knows these sacred truths knows that they unite him to God, and hereby he loves God. Oh, he says, what an order of things is this, that Christ's wisdom should be imputed to me, Christ's righteousness imputed to me, and I counted righteous as he is righteous. Third, sanctification. Sanctification carries the ideal of devotion to God, consecration to God. Now Christ says, "For their sakes I sanctify myself;" and the apostle said of Christ that he is consecrated for evermore. Do you believe that the Son of God was consecrated to God in perfection? Do you believe his devotion to God was a perfect devotion? Do you believe it was without infirmity, without drawback, and without fault, a perfect consecration to God? Then I will tell you this, that by his being sanctification for us, God views us as being as free from sin, drawback, and infirmity, as Christ himself. Hence that great scripture in the Hebrews, "Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." Now the meaning there appears to be this, that Jesus Christ did by his atonement there and then present before God all for whom he died as free from sin as his blood could make them, as innocent, fragrant, and acceptable to God as his blood could make them. Ah, think! it was the blood of Immanuel, the blood of an incarnate God, the blood that has in it the properties of Eternal Deity. Oh, then, what a scene of delight was that to Christ when he thus saw the travail of his soul, and was satisfied, and God was satisfied! There is your remedy, sanctification and redemption. What is redemption? First, it means the debt paid. Jesus Christ was made under the law and became a debtor to do the whole law, a surety for our debts. He paid the price of redemption; and now, having paid all the debts from first to last, we may put the word "debt" into the place of the word "iniquity" in the fiftieth chapter of Jeremiah, and read it thus: "The debt of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none." Ah, says the devil, I cannot find the books; if I could find the books where their debts are, I would bring them up against them. Ah, he has taken the books away, blotted out the handwriting that was against us, nailing it to his cross; the debt is paid, and we are as free from owing anything to justice, to God's law, as Christ himself is free. You need not be afraid to go to God if you do not owe him anything. People sometimes say, "I would go and see So-and-so; but I owe him so much." But here,

"Paid is the mighty debt they owe,
Salvation is of grace."

Then it signifies personal freedom. Jesus Christ is personally free. "I have a baptism," he said, "to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." But it is accomplished, and he is personally free. He rose from the dead, could not be held by the bands of death; he is personally and eternally free. So shall the people be also; "they shall come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be unto them; sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Third, it means right. Jesus Christ having paid this price, he has a mediatorial right as the Mediator of the covenant to all the advantages of that covenant; and so all the advantages of the covenant are summed up by the apostle in one word, in the word "joy;" "For the joy set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Thus, then, when you were dead in sin, God held you in Christ, unknown to you, free from folly, free from condemnation, from debt, from entanglement. "The Lord has redeemed Jacob;" there is no power can hold him; "the Lord has redeemed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he." Therefore, they shall come and sing in the height of Zion. Second, Jesus Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, not only by imputation but also by manifestation. We are partakers of his wisdom. Wherein lay the essence of Christ's wisdom? Only, in abiding undeviatingly by God's truth. He came to do God's good will, and he would never deviate from the truth; he came

to confirm the truth of the promise made unto the fathers, and the essence of his wisdom lay in that one thing, and we are partakers of that wisdom. God keeping me, I would not give up the yea and amen truth of God, his sworn covenant (for therein the whole of it lies), for ten thousand worlds. The Lord has so taught me the value of that truth as to make me abide by it; and I have done very well with it, bless the Lord, for it has sustained me hitherto, and I shall get to heaven by it at last. Ah, said one, surely you are not going to carry these dreadful doctrines to heaven. But the truth came from heaven, and John said, "The truth shall be with us forever." Those that never knew its value would like to get rid of it, but those that know its value would not part with it for a thousand worlds. Then also Christ is made righteousness to us in the manifestation thereof. We know his righteousness; the consequence is that we place our hope nowhere else. "I will go in the strength of the Lord." Where will you go to David? Why, to heaven. I will go to God in prayer, and thus I will face all my troubles, trusting in him that all will come right at last. But how are you going to have God's strength? "I will make mention of your righteousness, even of yours only." So, then Jesus Christ was made righteousness to him in the manifestation thereof; and the Lord blesses us with wisdom enough to plead, as Dr. Watts says,

"Thy perfect righteousness,
And mention none but yours."

Again, he is made to us also sanctification in the manifestation thereof. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord, and Christ became that holiness. What is it that subdues our sins, drives our evil thoughts down into their dens and caverns, brings the purest thoughts, sympathies, and affections into exercise, and makes us feel a love sometimes to God that we cannot describe? What is this but an experience of the purifying, consecrating, sanctifying power of a Savior's name? Then redemption, we are made partakers of that. I could not have come here this morning but for redemption. Ah, I should well know if there were a debt left unpaid to justice God would not be with me; if there were one jot or one tittle of the law left un-honored, if there were one demand of justice that had not been met, God would not be with us. But all is settled; all is paid; but he has provided a ransom which has paid the whole; and this enables us to cry, "Abba, Father" this sets us free; it gives us boldness before God. "We have boldness to enter into the holy of holies by the blood of Jesus," because that blood has obtained for us eternal redemption. The third respect in which he is made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption unto us is the prospective. A little longer, and we shall be with those of our friends that have been taken from us lately. We shall be perfect in wisdom; we shall possess that wisdom in the perfection of it. We possess it now only in part; we see now through a glass darkly; but when that which is in part is done away that which is perfect shall come. We now have his righteousness by faith, but then by sight, then in personal perfection, full possession, a multitude that no man can number, clothed in white robes, with palms in their hands. I do not wonder at their bearing the palm of victory in that personal and perfect possession of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Sanctification, then we shall have that sanctification in perfect possession. It is true we shall not have it, in the fullest sense of the word, in perfect possession, until the resurrection day.

That sanctification will make us internally, externally, eternally holy, as he is holy. That sanctification makes the people so much like Christ that, as you see, John fell down twice to worship his fellow-servant. John might have made a mistake once: but when he came to make the mistake a second time, the likeness must have been very strong and very great. He fell down, not

only once, but when he saw the prophet again, That's the Master, surely, and he made the mistake again. And I daresay he would have made the mistake a thousand times if the angel, or rather the prophet, had not informed him, "I am your fellow-servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." What, you a servant! why, how is all this? Why, Jesus Christ is my wisdom, and I am perfect in his wisdom; he is my righteousness, and I am perfect in his righteousness; he is my sanctification, and I am perfect in his sanctification. Why, I see no difference. Well, there is not to be any difference, for we are to be like him when we see him as he is. And redemption; when the body rises from the grave, then shall this redemption be possessed in its perfection. There stands the testimony, "O death, I will be your plague; O grave, I will be your destruction: repentance shall be hidden from mine eyes."

Lastly, some of *the reasons and advantages why we should glory in the Lord*. "*He that glories, let him glory in the Lord.*" Whatever holds you back from glorying in the Lord, if you be led in that order of things have described this morning, the Lord will say to that hindrance by and by, "Let him glory in the Lord." If it is Satan that will not let Joshua glory in the Lord, "The Lord rebuke you, O Satan, even the Lord that has chosen Jerusalem." "Let him glory in the Lord." That is what his desire is, and he shall have his desire. Sin, let that man glory in the Lord; sin is put away: law, let that man glory in the Lord; death, let that man glory in the Lord; destruction, let that man glory in the Lord. Whatever hindrances stand in the way, they shall all be swept out of the way, and you shall delight yourself in the Lord; he shall give you the desires of yours heart. In the 41st of Isaiah there is a beautiful reason assigned for glorying in the Lord; there is a promise, too, to the same effect. "Behold, I will make you a new sharp threshing instrument," which, of course, means the new covenant, the gospel, "having teeth," and so on. It will bite, you see; it will lay hold of the sinner and tear him terribly when it first takes hold of him; for the Lord wounds, and in his own time he will heal. But if there are mountainous impediments, with it "you shall thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shall make the hills as chaff;" and the wind will turn round in your favor by and by, and the whirlwind will scatter them, and you will have nothing to do but rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the Holy One of Israel. "Let him that glories, glory in the Lord." Then I meant to have gone to the 45th of Isaiah, then to the 4th of Jeremiah, then to the last chapter of Galatians.