

SERMON STUDY GUIDE

GLORY

WEEK 3: DEC. 11, 2022

Everloving God,
thank you for your
faithfulness to us, even
in our wilderness
experiences. Help us to
understand what the
weight of glory has to
teach us about your
favor for us. Guide us,
we pray, to show your
glory to others.
Amen

THE WEIGHT OF GLORY

READ Isaiah 40:3-5; Luke 2:8-14

Isaiah 40: 3 A voice is crying out:
"Clear the Lord's way in the desert!
Make a level highway in the wilderness for our God!
4 Every valley will be raised up,
and every mountain and hill will be flattened.
Uneven ground will become level,
and rough terrain a valley plain.
5 The Lord's glory will appear,
and all humanity will see it together;
the Lord's mouth has commanded it."

Luke 2: 8 Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. 9 The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified.
10 The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. 11 Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. 12 This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger." 13 Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, 14 "Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors."

GETTING STARTED

- Welcome each other.
- Inquire as to anyone who is missing. Is follow-up needed?
- What are your reactions to the Scripture verses informing this sermon? Are they new? Or perhaps bring memories to mind?

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SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In the introduction to the sermon, Pastor Rob asserts, "...glory is the secret to our deepest need as human beings." Does this get your attention? If so, how? Why? Aren't we all curious as to what the secret to something is? And what is our deepest need?
- A review of the two Old Testament words for glory--shekinah and khabod--is a useful reminder of the context on which the sermon is built. Compare the meanings of the terms. They are quite different. Yet ultimately they work together. Try to hang on to the distinct meanings as the sermon progresses.
- Pastor Rob moves on to focus on khabod, translated as weight or heaviness. He uses the verses from Isaiah to introduce the idea of khabod as it was experienced by the Israelites as wilderness. If you can, describe a wilderness in your life. Have you ever feared for your survival? Have you ever worried about your recovery from a wilderness experience?
- What happened to the Israelites? How does this inform the comparison between God's glory and human glory? If you've experienced it, what does being favored feel like? Being favored--whether you believe you've experienced it or not--is a thread for the remainder of the sermon. Discuss being favored.
- Pastor Rob emphasizes an essential point about glory: "Glory is something given, not gotten." What does this mean? How do the examples of Rudolf Valentino and the baptism of Pastor Rob's grandson, Geo, inform our understanding of this point.
- Are/were there people in your life who have given YOU glory? Who were they? What did they do? Describe the impact(s) on your life?
- What was/is your reaction to Pastor Tim Keller's admonition that we need to confront the real truth ourselves? That we need "to change our loves"? Did/does this come across as harsh? Necessary? Challenging? Revolutionary? Other?
- We are brought to the point that is given particular emphasis in the Westminster Catechism commonly cited in Presbyterian Churches: our chief purpose in life is to glorify God. What does it mean to glorify God? Is this too lofty? Too ambiguous? Too unrealistic? Other?
- To put this into perspective, Pastor Rob proceeds to bring us full circle: "God's glory is directed toward humanity. God gives glory to people God favors. When we help favor others, it gives glory to God." Do you see the cycle? Does it include both shekinah and khabod types of glory? If so, where?
- If we're paying attention, we'll hear Pastor Rob suggest what the secret to happiness in life is. What is it?
- Pastor Rob challenges, "Do you want to know glory?" How do we do this? Try to be specific. Does the Carver McGriff anecdote give you any ideas? (The original definition of glory we heard from Pastor Jevon on Week 1 may be useful here--Glory is the visible manifestation of the attributes of God.)
- Pause to reflect on the Scripture verses for today. How do they inform the sermon? Alert: this may elicit important new insights for you. If so, what are they?
- As we progress through this sermon series, how have your ideas about glory begun to change? What issues, yet unaddressed, are emerging for you?

PRAYER REQUESTS

