

## More Glory of Christ

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Last week we observed that the point of spiritual renewal is to behold the glory of Christ. That beholding the worthiness, beauty and mercy of Jesus is the greatest of all privileges. If that is true, we shouldn't rush past it. So we're going to look at the same passage with the same goal in mind: beholding the glory of Christ. Let's take a look at Christ as *more creative, more beautiful, more excellent*.

### More Creative

Jesus is more creative than we comprehend: *in these last days God has spoken to us through his Son...through whom he created the world* (Heb 1:2). God speaks to us in what his Son does for us. What's that? That Jesus created the world. But there's more going on here. The word for world isn't the typical *kosmos* but ages, referring to all of space and time, which means Jesus made the celestial bodies and terrestrial life, red stars and red-speckled bass; the elements of periodic table and the gravity of general relativity. Jesus made everything. But what about that *new* baby, your iPhone? Did Jesus make that? Well he made hydrogen, oxygen, carbon and nitrogen which account for more than 99 percent of humans; aluminum, titanium, iron which constitute an iPhone. Jesus made all the things from which we make all things. He created creative people. So in an original and derivative sense, all things are made in Christ! Now what bearing might this have on our lives? If all things are made in him, all things have value. Real Christianity doesn't value Christ and discard his creation. True faith values the Creator *and* the creation. Which means what we make of the world is a matter of worship. Your **work is a matter of worship**. Beholding Christ isn't sealed off by one day of the week but should bleed into every day of the week. There is not one square inch over all the earth which Christ has not declared, Mine! Yet we often we approach life as an organizing desk tray [pic]: church here, Jesus here, work there, entertainment here, and family over there. We may even applaud ourselves if our Jesus tray is slightly bigger than the rest. But Christ will have none of that. You see, if Jesus creates and sustains all things, then he melts our compartments, rules over *the whole* of our lives. How then should we work? Three ways. First, **excellence**. Work hard and well for the Creator. Produce excellent videos, well-loved and disciplined kids, beautiful art, clear lines

of communication, projects well managed, clients well served. In east Texas I saw a lot of bumpers with a Christian fish on them. But when I get into an Uber my first concern isn't whether they are Christian or not. I want an *excellent* driver. We shouldn't have to choose. Christians should be excellent drivers, artists, scientists, moms and dads. *We create for the Creator. However, we don't serve excellence; we serve Christ.* Which may mean mean not overworking. You might go home before others to serve your family. You might skip a work event to serve your church. Why? Jesus is Lord not work. So work excellently but don't worship excellence. Or take parenting. You want to raise well-rested kids, who get to bed on time to do well at school the next day, but if Jesus is Lord you may keep them up to participate in church life/CG. My teenage son recently wrote a paper on his spiritual formation, and in it he included the names of several men in this church who have encouraged his faith. School shouldn't run our life, work doesn't run our life; Jesus runs our life. *Work is excellent but not ultimate.* A second way Jesus influences our work, **ethically**. We all hit seasons of difficulty at work. Creation, though lovely, is under a curse. People and products can be unwieldy. Say you launch a new product. Everyone celebrates but then bug reports start rolling in. It's not as excellent as you thought. You lose it and yell at team members. People get angry. One quits. What happened? *You* became a curse to your team. Excellence without ethics. Kids misbehave and you snap in anger say things you regret. What happened? An ethical flaw. A balanced view of creation means expecting flaws and disappointments in work. Our work is under a curse. Which brings us to a third way to work, **evangelistically**. But perhaps not like you think. What does a Christian do when they blow it at work? Because Jesus is Lord, we pause and pray in the middle of the day, asking for God his forgiving grace *and extending that grace to others*. Someone snubs you at work. Forgive as we have been forgiven. Someone is put down. We stand up for them, put things right. We evangelize with Christ's grace, Christ's forgiveness; Christ's justice. When we're beholding Christ, we put the gospel on display. We have something greater than our work to give the world: Christ more creative, more gracious than we can ever comprehend.

### **More Beautiful**

Jesus is also more beautiful than we imagine. He is "[the radiance of the glory of God.](#)" This radiance is vividly described in Revelation 1: "[Son of man, clothed with a long robe and](#)

with a golden sash around his chest. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire...and his face like the sun shining in full strength (13–15). Notice the combination of strength and beauty, eyes of fire and a face like the sun. Jesus is so beautiful you have to shield your eyes, but find yourself longing to take a peek. Like Galadriel in the Lord of the Rings, the Lady of the Woods, whose hair is said to have ensnared the light of the Two Trees of paradisaical Valinor. The vision of Jesus *stops* us in our tracks. *We can't not* look at the beauty of Christ. *That* should be our disposition toward Jesus. Not, I have so much to do today I can't look at Christ in the Scriptures. Not I have so many emails, I can't behold his beauty in prayer. But instead, you're so stunning, *I can't not* look. His voice so sweet, *I can't not* listen. I'm so weak, *I can't not* gaze upon his strength and beauty of Christ. Jesus' beauty is for beholding. But too often we look upon his beauty as a tourist not an enthusiast. Terry Glaspey notes that when a *tourist* visits the Louvre or Musee d'Orsay, they fly through the museum looking for the Mona Lisa, Water Lilies, Starry Night, checking each one off the list until they've "done" them. But an *enthusiast* moves slowly, sitting in front of each painting to appreciate it. Observing how Monet plays with light, Van Gogh uses texture. Consider Monet's *San Giorgio Maggiore at Dusk*. [pic] Monet was so moved by the city that he didn't think he could capture its beauty. But look at how he portrays the sunset, the brushstrokes like little tongues of fire, burning upward and gliding across the water. The tourist is too busy to behold this beauty, but the enthusiast is absorbed by its detail, moved by its glory. So it is with Christ. When we behold him, we are moved by him. In fact, we become like him. When John looked upon this vision of Jesus he fell to his knees as though dead, but then he was lifted by Jesus' hand, filled with *his* life and insight. We become what we behold. Are you beholding accomplishment, busyness, work? Then you are formed negatively, by your brisk approach to life. Will you slow down and gaze at the beauty and strength of Jesus?—eyes of fire, face like the sun. Don't check off his beauty be changed by it. We become what we behold. Behold the creativity & beauty of Christ.

### **More Excellent**

Jesus is more creative, more beautiful, *and* more excellent that we can conceive, *After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having*

become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs (3-4). Jesus inherits a name more excellent than the angels. Why? Because of *what he has accomplished*. These verses depict his accomplishment in the shape of a V. Jesus descends to earth to suffer and die for our sins, but rises to the right hand of the Majesty to secure our standing with him. He was mired in our sin but exalted as our Savior. This V means Jesus is most excellent in his *mercy*: forgiving those who put work before him, have no time for his beauty, who try to compartmentalize the cosmic Christ. Why is he not standing in celebration but seated?—because his work is finished, completed, time to rest. Come to the seated Christ *with your sins* and receive his grace, enjoy his peace. It's time to rest. Behold him, eyes of fire and face like the sun, securing forgiveness for tourist faith but provoking *enthusiast faith*! You say, I don't want to be an enthusiast, to be extreme. Some of you are more enthusiastic about football than Christ, fashion than Jesus, diet than the Son. He is more excellent than even angels. He sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high, a place of power and eternal esteem. Behold the exalted Christ, his V-shaped work catapulting him back to his rightful place as Lord of creation, and Lord of redemption added to his resume! Be still. Behold. Be an enthusiast. 1) Have you found it difficult to behold the glory of Christ? You are not alone. There are a thousand forces pulling us away the world, the flesh, the Devil. Don't let them win. Fight to be an enthusiast of Christ. 2) Do you live too quickly to behold the glory of Christ? Ask Jesus to help you move from tourist faith into enthusiast faith. Begin when you open your eyes each morning with a simple prayer. Lord, draw me to admire and trust Jesus Christ today. 3) How do you do it? Immerse yourself in the life of Christ. Read a bit of the Gospel of Mark each day. Read slowly (PIM). Look for the detail. Observe who Jesus is, what he does, and how he does it. Then carry him to work. Jesus is more creative, more beautiful and more excellent than we have dared imagine. Behold the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ.