

The Glory of Christ

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Today we're considering the point of spiritual renewal. It is a point of no return, a place from which we should never want to retreat. What is it? *The point of spiritual renewal is to behold the glory of Christ.* In the past God spoke through the prophets, the shadows of OT people and institutions, **but now, in these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son.** How then has God spoken by (or in) his Son? The author doesn't cite Jesus' teachings, but launches into thick description of his nature, his person and work, his glory. The word glory means weight. If we meet a person of significance, we might describe them as having weight, presence, *gravitas*. I invite you this afternoon to encounter the gravitas of Christ with three words: worthy, beauty, mercy.

Worthy

First, we learn that **God has appointed him the heir of all things.** That's quite a claim. What does it mean? An *heir* receives an inheritance when their parents die. But Jesus receives his inheritance, not when his Father dies, but when the inheritance is ready. When is that? When the last days have come to an end—the consummation of all things. What does he receive on that day? He doesn't get a pension, a house, a boat, a car. He gets all the pensions, houses, boats, cars, cultures, continents, galaxies, dimensions, the cosmos. *All things.* Now who could handle such an inheritance? If we received *all things*, would we no doubt be ruined by it? Unlike some bratty trust fund kid, Jesus can handle his inheritance. For him, it is a fitting gift. Why? Second phrase. Because **through him God created the world.** All the things that have been or ever will be are because they were made through Jesus Christ. **He upholds all things by the Word of his power.** God the Father did not create independently of the Son but dependently on the Son. St. Basil writes, “**of the original cause of all things that are made, the Father; the creative cause, the Son; of the perfecting cause, the Spirit.**” Together with the Spirit they created everything. What's the point? Jesus deserves to inherit all things because he made all things. He will receive in the end what he made in the beginning. He inherits what he already owns. They why tell us? Because it opens up a vista on Christ, a scenic overlook showing us he **is worthy to inherit all things.** He is worthy to receive everything not only because he made all things but also because he

is *over* everything. He is creator and heir, owner and guider, presider over everything, from creation to consummation, beginning to end, from let there be light to there will be no need for a light for its lamp is the Lamb (Rev 21:22). Jesus is the **sovereign** Son of God. All things fit into the palm of his hand. Now how might we apply this? Well, if he is this powerful, this in control, this *worthy*, then he has everything to do with your life. All things—your health, your kids, your relationships, your successes and failures, your past, present, and future—are in his hands, so *relax*. All things are upheld by the word of his power, so give up striving and *rest*. He is guiding all things so we need not lay in our beds worry about tomorrow. We can *trust*. When my kids go to bed at night, they don't lay there fretting about whether or not I will feed or clothe them tomorrow, take care of the taxes. They just trust. How much more should our head hit the pillow trusting the creator and heir of all things? Behold the glory of Christ: worthy heir and sovereign Lord over everything.

Beauty

The next thing we see in the glory of Christ is: He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature (3). What is radiance? It occurs only here in the Bible. It's not the worth of a thing but its aesthetic. Not the elemental composition of the sun, but its effulgent pink, orange, and red hues that crawl across the evening sky. Radiance. When we say of a bride on her wedding day, You look radiant. What are we saying? You clean up nice? No, that she is *beautiful*. ***The radiance of the glory of God is the beauty of Christ.*** How do you respond to beautiful things? Fiery sunset, snowcapped peaks, a stunning painting or person? Do you agree or disagree with them? No. Ignore or brush them off? No, we gaze at them. Gawk. Admire. *Beauty is for beholding*. We're made to behold the beauty of Christ, to gawk at his glory. John Owen says, Beholding the glory of Christ is one of the greatest privileges a believer is capable of, both in this life and the next. Why? He is the exact imprint of God's nature. The word imprint is character and from nature we get substance. Jesus Christ is the character and substance of God. When we get our eyes checked, we sit down and look through that machine that alternates lenses until the perfect lens is found, making the letters on the eye chart crystal clear. Jesus Christ is the perfect lens, bringing the God into focus. Want to see God, look at Jesus: *very God of very God* as the Nicene Creed says. He is not a forgery, a copy, or a knock-off. He is *divine* beauty. Therefore,

to behold his glory is privilege of all privileges. But how can we behold someone I can't see? I can see the beauty of mountains and the sun. Fair, but why do you think the mountains and the sun are there? ***Creation is not only meant to be seen but also to be seen through.*** We used to live in a mansion on the North Shore of Boston (in the garage apartment). When the owners were gone, I would sneak into their living room and stand in front of two, huge gorgeous windows. I didn't stare at their frames or size, I looked *through* them to soak in the sprawling Atlantic Ocean, the curling tail of Cape Cod, and the Boston skyline shooting up in the distance. I did *not* look at the window; I looked *through* the window. Similarly, we're meant to look not just at creation but through creation, to apprehend the beauty of Christ. Trace the sunbeams back up to *the radiance* of the Son, our eyes climb up the mountains and off the peaks into *the grandeur* of Christ, *through whom the world was made*. Jesus is *the* beauty worth beholding, glory worth gawking at. So how do I behold the beauty of *Christ*? By **faith**. A spiritual faculty is required to apprehend a spiritual reality. Hebrews 11:1, **Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.** Faith is the *conviction* of things not seen. It's the inner persuasion that something glorious is out there. We all exercise faith in beauty...every time you click on a new song hoping the band delivers a pleasing tune, every time you plan a destination vacation eager for the views, every time we plant a flower. Everyone believes in beauty. *The question is will you look at the flower or beyond it, stare at the window or through it?* Will you settle for material beauty or also seek eternal beauty? Faith draws us beyond physical splendor to its eternal, unseen source in the splendor of the ascended Christ. Until one day faith becomes sight, when regenerate eyes will take in the radiance of the glory of God. But you must see him now, by faith, to see him then, by sight. What is so lovely about him? In addition to everything else we've observed Hebrews tells us he is *just*, doing right every time, that he *glad*, anointed with the oil of joy, *compassionate*, sympathizing with our weakness in every way, *sinless*, good all the time, *merciful*, atoning for our sin, *humble*, suffering temptation to help the tempted, *eternal*, his years never ending; *glorious*, angels worship him. Jesus is worthy; Jesus is radiant, shimmering with unimpeachable glory and grace. Train your faith on him. Owen: **If we regularly behold the glory of Christ our Christian walk with God would become more sweet and pleasant, our spiritual light and strength would grow daily stronger and**

our lives would more gloriously represent the glory of Christ. What is holding us back from beholding the glory of Christ?

Mercy

Sin. Every single sin is a willful act of self-blinding. **Lust**, indulging sexual desires of the self obscures the radiance of Christ. *I'll satisfy myself thank you very much.* **Pride**, someone cuts us off on the road or in conversation and we snap back in anger. How dare they get in my way, talk to me like that. *I'll stand up for myself, thank you.* We become bigger, Christ becomes smaller. **Despair**. Scrolling people on IG you think why can't I have legs like that, a family like this, a car like that? Obsessed with poor self-image, we are plunged into despair, eyes inward unable to behold the beauty of Christ. Sin, repels us from the glory of God. Just as one human error ruined our entire city's water source for days, so also our sin in Adam ruined the whole human race, blinding us to the glory of God. What can we do? Verse 3:

[After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.](#)

After making purification of sins. The word means not only to forgive but also *to purify*. Sin and God are opposing magnets, unable to unite they are repelled; oil and water unable to come together, and each of our self-indulgent sins leaves a film on our hearts, a residue the radiance of God was mired in to cleanse. The filthy sins of the self-indulgent sinner heaped upon the sinless Savior. Now do you see? Such mercy! Such staggering love. Won't you look at him? He has mercy in his eyes. Won't you behold him? He is beautiful like no other.

Won't you stand in awe over him? Or will you settle for a Christless window frame? He is creator, sustainer, heir of all things. If Jesus is this glorious, consider three things today: 1) Make up your mind to behold the glory of Christ as your greatest privilege. 2) Fill your mind and heart with biblical understanding of the glory of Christ. Immerse yourself in the treasury of his glories. 3) Plead—plead—for his glory and beauty and mercy to be more appealing to you than your sex drive, your ambition, your thirst for significance. Plead for the glory of Christ, and he will reveal it—satisfying and changing you from one degree of glory to the next.