

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**

Chapter 9- Luke 9:43-45

182- They Were Amazed at the Greatness of God

October 21, 2012

Luke 9:43-45

43 And they were all amazed at the greatness of God.

But while everyone was marveling at all that He was doing, He said to His disciples,

44 "Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men."

45 But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement.

Now we ended last time with verse 43- so look at that verse again with me very quickly:

Luke 9:43

And they were all amazed at the greatness of God...

And I told you last time that the word that was used here for "greatness" is also translated as "majesty". So it would also be correct to say:

And all were astonished at the majesty of God.

And so in **2 Peter 1:17&18**, the Apostle Peter is recalling the transfiguration, and he writes:

17 For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased" —

18 and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

So Peter says, "*We were eyewitnesses of God's Majestic Glory- we saw God's Majesty and God's Greatness.*" Peter says that he saw God's Greatness on the Mount of Transfiguration and now in **Luke 9:43**, all these people down at the foot of

the mountain also saw the very *same* Majesty- the very *same* Greatness of God in Jesus' Power over that demon.

And that was the main message in that Passage. Dr. Luke wanted Theophilus and us to know that:

- ✓ Jesus is the Majesty of God
- ✓ Jesus is the Greatness of God
- ✓ Jesus is the Glory of God

And so we can trust what God has said and we can place all of our hope and all of our confidence in what God has said, because God cannot lie.

So whatever God has said, you can believe it and you can pray believing that He will do what He said He will do, and He'll do it because His own Nature and His Own Integrity is at stake.

So you can't look at Jesus with any degree of depth or with any degree of accuracy and not be astonished. You can't possibly look at Him and not be amazed. Those who are not amazed have not really seen Him, because Jesus is just that glorious and just that wonderful. And so Luke tells us that all these people were amazed at the Greatness of God manifested in Jesus Christ.

And so once again- as I have said over and over since we started this Journey through Luke- Jesus was God in human flesh, and these people saw it. And what they saw- they were absolutely amazed at the *grandeur* and the *Glory* and the *Majesty* of God- the *exaltedness* of God. The Apostle John put it this way in **John 1:14**:

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

And this explains the great lack of love for Jesus in our day. Oh, everybody says that they love Jesus- but there is very little service toward the Lord; very little obedience to what the Lord said and what the Lord required, and very little stamina to endure hardship for Jesus. And I think this can be explained in understanding just what true, genuine, deep, and abiding love is based on. It is based on this amazement and this wonder that Luke mentions in **Luke 9:43**. And just as I was speaking about this to someone this past week, we must understand that true, genuine, deep, and abiding love is based on three aspects:

- Admiration
- Respect
- Awe

We have to know that you cannot truly love someone unless you admire them, and you cannot truly love someone unless you respect them, and you cannot truly love someone unless you are in awe of them.

So love is actually nothing more than the result of admiring, respecting and being in awe of someone. And this is why so many marriages fall apart today. There is no effort in those dysfunctional marriages to build up admiration for one another, and there is no effort to respect one another and no effort to be in awe of one another.

So a husband should be praying and laboring and cultivating admiration and respect and awe towards his wife, and he will know that he has done that when he no longer *disrespects* his wife (because disrespect is the lack of respect). He will no longer treat his wife *commonly*, because being "common" with someone is the result of a lack of admiration for that person as being unique and special. And he will no longer treat his wife *punitively* with either his words or his actions, because seeking to be punitive against someone (seeking to punish somebody) is the result of not being in awe of them. And the result of a husband admiring and respecting and being in awe of his wife is that he will love his wife like Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.

A wife should be praying and laboring to build up admiration, respect, and awe towards her husband. And she will know she has done that when she no longer disrespects him and when she no longer seeks to usurp authority over him, and when she gladly and joyfully submits to her husband as unto the Lord. This is when a wife actually loves her husband.

Children should pray to cultivate admiration, respect, and awe toward their parents. And they will know that they are doing that when they no longer disrespect their parents, and when they find joy and gladness in submitting to the authority of the parents and obeying them.

And as the one is building up those three qualities towards the other, the other one should be praying and living in such a way to *earn* that respect and to *earn* that admiration and *earn* that awe.

And the result of all this is there will be husbands who genuinely love their wives, and wives who genuinely love their husbands and honor them, and you will have children who do not talk back to their parents but who seek to obey and honor their mother and father; then the home will be filled with joy and peace and tranquility and the Spirit of the living God. Violence and strife and pain and misery will not be in the home.

And this is a microcosm of the Church because of three Truths:

- The Church is no stronger and is no more godly than the families who make up the Church
- The families of the Church are no stronger and no more godly than the individuals who make up the families
- The culture and society at large is no stronger and no more godly than the Churches who exist within the community

And so to try to rescue the culture without first rescuing the Church is meaningless, and to try to rescue the Church without going to the individual

members is a waste of time. And this also explains why there is so much raw sin in the lives of the individual people of the Church in our day, and why there is so little conviction over sin, and why people who say they are saved can compromise with Biblical Truth so easily and engage in terrible acts of lawlessness and not even be convicted about it. It is also why so many people in the modern Church who say they are saved turn so quickly away from God; it is why so many people get so easily offended so quickly at God and walk off and leave Him; they do not respect God, they do not admire God, and they are not in awe of God.

So preaching and teaching the Bible is all about learning what God has chosen to reveal about Himself. And as your knowledge of God grows through your understanding of the Truth, as the Glory of God makes you marvel, as your respect and your admiration and your awe of God grows; as those three qualities grow in your mind, then your love for God and your devotion to God will grow, and your fear of God gets stronger, and your desire to please God grows, and you will not tolerate as much sin in your life. Your walk with God will be strong and you will bear more fruit and your desire to compromise with this fallen evil world will diminish, and your hunger for Righteousness will grow, and your hunger for Truth will grow, and serving God will bring genuine joy to your heart. It will bring satisfaction to your life, and the things of this world that are passing away will offer you no pleasure and no peace and no comfort and no joy at all.

My dear friends, we should literally be amazed at God. We should be speechless at God's Glory. We should be in such admiration of God that it should transform our lives. We should be in such awe of God and hold God in such high regard that our lives will mirror that of Jesus Christ.

And that amazement and that awe and that respect and that admiration is not something that is "cool" or "neat", but something that translates into "Biblical Fear", the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of both wisdom and knowledge. Biblical fear of God is not that we are terrified of God, but that we have a reverential respect of God and that respect is based on two aspects:

- A. The knowledge that God has earned respect from us and is deserving of it based on Who He is and what He has done
- B. The knowledge that since God has earned respect from us, it is sin not to give it to Him

And that is what has just happened at the base of this mountain with these people. Jesus had just performed a really amazing and astounding miracle in delivering a young boy from a very powerful and obstinate demon who was trying to kill the boy over many, many years- and not only traumatizing the boy horribly, but also his father and his family as well. As you remember, the disciples were unable to deal with the demon, so Jesus cast the demon out in a very dramatic encounter.

But Dr. Luke is not teaching about casting out demons here, he is not even teaching about how to develop great faith here. Luke is teaching us how to be

... amazed at the greatness of God.

And this is huge so I don't want anyone here today to miss this. And I talked about this the other evening a few weeks ago, but I want to bring it out again this morning. I want you to turn with me to what is probably one of the most important Passages in the entire Bible that illustrates exactly what Dr. Luke means by saying this. It is a relatively obscure Passage, and one that is sadly passed over so many times: **2 Corinthians 3:12- 4:6**. Please turn there with me.

12 Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in *our* speech,
13 and *are* not like Moses, *who* used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away.
14 But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. **15** But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart;
16 but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty.
18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.
4:1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart,
2 but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.
3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,
4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.
6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

This is one of those passages that show that the Chapter and verse divisions in your Bible are not inspired and are not inerrant because this is a single thought and should have been kept together. But my dear friends, my heart is so full this morning about this message. There are multiple levels of longing for what I would love to see God do with these words *to* you and *for* you today, to the end that you and I would do what these people did here at the base of that mountain on that day... that we too would be:

... amazed at the greatness of God.

I so desire for God the Holy Spirit to cultivate here at The Covenant of Peace Church a unified, common understanding and conviction concerning three very important conditions of the human soul:

- ✓ What it really means to be lost
- ✓ What it really means to be saved and how God saves lost people
- ✓ What it really means for saved people to be faithful to the lost people you love

I long for all of us at Covenant to be bold and patient teachers of the unchangeable Truth about Christ to unbelievers. They need more than a lifestyle witness and historical data if they are going to understand the Gospel and believe and be saved.

And I pray that by the hearing of my voice in this message today some of you who are *not* spiritually alive, you who do *not* have the Spirit of Christ abiding within you as a result of never having been born again, would be granted repentance and a knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ, so that we may all be what **Luke 9:43** says:

... amazed at the greatness of God.

So to that end, I propose five statements this morning:

- 1. The Highest, Best, and Final "Good" of the Good News is the Glory of Jesus Christ**
- 2. We Have All Been Blind to this Glory**
- 3. God Alone Can Take Away the Blindness and Cause Us to See Christ for Who He is**
- 4. God Uses Messengers of the Word to Open the Eyes of the Blind**
- 5. In the Mouth of These Messengers- God Makes Patient Teaching About Christ the Means of Seeing the Glory of Christ in the Gospel**

So let's look at these closely this morning:

1. The Highest, Best, and Final "Good" of the Good News Is the Glory of Jesus Christ

Now as we all know, the word "Gospel" means: "Good News". So what specifically is so "Good" about the Good News? Is it Justification by Faith Alone? Is it the forgiveness of sins? Is it the removal of the Wrath of God from us? Is it Redemption from guilt and liberation from slavery to sin? Is it Salvation from hell? Is it entrance into Heaven? Is it Eternal Life? Is it periodic deliverance from pain and sickness and conflict?

All of these are precious Promises bought by the Blood of Christ for everyone who believes in Him. And all of these things are a *part* of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; they are some of the *benefits* of the Gospel. But I suggest to you that they are *not* the highest and best and final "Good" of the Gospel. In fact, I would say that unless

these things lead to something else, these things by themselves are really not good news at all.

You see, it is possible to believe in all these things, and to want them and expect them, and yet never taste and never enjoy what makes all these “good things” in the “good news” to be “good” indeed.

So what is that one thing? What is the highest and the best and the final “good” that makes every part of the gospel “good news”? What is it that will make us be amazed at the Greatness of God like Dr. Luke said these people were that day?

The answer is given in this Passage in **2 Corinthians**. And the parallels between these two verses show the depth and the wonder of what each of them means. Look closely at **2 Corinthians 4:4&6** with me again:

2 Corinthians 4:4

...in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

In whose case [the case of those who are perishing] **the god of this world** [that's Satan] **has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing...** Keeps them from seeing what? What is it that Satan blinded the minds of the lost to keep them from seeing?

... the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Now look at **2 Corinthians 4:6** again:

For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Now look at the end of that verse again:

... the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

So in verse 4, underline the words **“the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”** And in verse 6 underline the parallel words: **“the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”**

This is one of the most important statements about the Gospel found anywhere in the entire Bible. This explains both the Purpose and the means of Salvation. We are saved to see God's Glory in, by, and through the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished Work.

Now we know from **1 Corinthians 15:3-8** that the Apostle Paul puts forth the foundational events of the Gospel when he said:

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

- 4** and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,
5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.
6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;
7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;
8 and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

That is the foundational element of the Gospel; and yes, it is gloriously true. Without this, there is no Gospel at all. But what is it that we must actually see and understand *in* those wonderful events that God did through Christ, if they are to be "Good News" for *us*? **2 Corinthians 4:4&6** tells us:

We must see "the Glory of Christ- Who is the Image of God." In other words- We must see "the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ."

... and the result of that is that we too will be:

... amazed at the greatness of God.

Now why is that? Because that is what the Gospel is. The Gospel is not just a list of true historical events in which Christ died and was buried and rose. The Gospel is "Good News". But we do not see the decisive "Good" in the Good News if we do not see - *in* those true historical events - the Glory of Jesus Christ Who is the Image of God.

Now notice carefully the use of the word "Gospel" in verse 4. The Apostle Paul said it is:

...the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

So that is the Gospel. The Glory of Christ "seen" and "savored" and "enjoyed" in the Sovereign Work of Redemption *is* the Good News. That *is* the Gospel! And that Gospel will cause wonder, amazement, awe, and respect to be in us and those things will bring forth a true and deep and abiding love for God in us; which in turn will develop Biblical Holiness in us; which in turn will bring great Glory to God.

So that is the highest and the best and the final "Good" that makes all the other "good things" that are promised in the Gospel to be "good". In other words, *Justification* is good news because it makes us stand accepted by the One Whose Glory we want to see and savor and enjoy above everything else. *Forgiveness* is good news because it cancels all the sins that keep me from seeing and enjoying the Glory of Christ, Who is the Image of God. The *removal of God's Wrath against me, and the rescuing of my soul from eternal hell* is good news because now in my escape from eternal misery, I find eternal pleasure beholding the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ. *Eternal life* is good news because this is eternal life, Jesus

said, “that they know Me and Him Who sent Me”. And the ultimate *freedom from pain and sickness and conflict* in Heaven is good news because, in my freedom from pain, I am no longer distracted from the fullest enjoyment of the Glory of Christ Who is the Image of God.

And that is what those people saw that day at the base of that mountain, and that is why Dr. Luke said that the result of this was that they were all:

... amazed at the greatness of God

In other words, **2 Corinthians 4:4&6** tell us what the highest and the best and the ultimate “good” of the good news is:

- ✓ The Glory of Christ Who is the Image of God
- ✓ The Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ

That is a *real* Glory, a real spiritual Light that shines through the Gospel from Christ in His saving Work, and is seen - not with the physical eyes - but with the eyes of the heart.

I pray that this will become a unified, common understanding of the Gospel here at this Church with you. How I pray that we will all be at home with this reality and therefore be at home with this language. So may God grant us to understand and to behold and to embrace the highest, best and final “good” of the Gospel—the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ.

2. We Have All Been Blind to this Glory

Now here is a second point. *All of us were at one time blind, or are blind right now- to the Light of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ Who is the Image of God.* And the result of this is that we were not, or we are not, to this day:

... amazed at the greatness of God

Look at **2 Corinthians 4:4** again with me:

...in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Now I said a while ago that I wanted us to understand- as a Church- what it really means to be lost. And there is more than one way to say this, but this is *one* way, so let's nail this one down:

To be lost; to be unsaved; to be unregenerate—to be perishing- as **2 Corinthians 4:3** says— means to be unable (and unwilling) to see the Glory of Christ in the Gospel; or to be unable (and unwilling) to see the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ, displayed in the Gospel.

So lostness is being blind to God's Glory. Lostness is being blind to spiritual Light, the Light that really shines out *from* the Gospel of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen.

Now we all know people like this. Or some of you here today may be like this. And we who are saved pour out our heart to those people to tell them about their sin and how Christ is the only Person in the world who has died for sin and risen from the dead. We tell them about how beautiful and great his attributes of Love and Wisdom and Power and Justice and Meekness and Humility and Sovereignty are.

And they listen, and they hear the facts. And they may even believe the facts of history. But they see no Glory and no Beauty and no Treasure. They see no value in all of this. And we must take heed to ourselves that we simply don't scoff when we understand their true lost condition. But rather we must weep and tremble and pray because all of us were like this at one time too. And it could be that the Glory of Christ would become dim again in our eyes and we could wander off into terrible sin- apart from the preserving Grace of God.

And so this *was* our condition, but something marvelous happened to change all that. And that is my 3rd Point:

3. God Alone Can Take Away the Blindness and Cause Us to See Christ for Who He Is

2 Corinthians 4:6

For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

And this is how all of us got saved! O, that the Covenant of Peace Church would have a united, common vision not only for what the Gospel is, the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ, and not only for what lostness is- being blind to that Glory- but also to what true Salvation is: having our eyes opened so that the Light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Christ shines into our hearts... and we see it and savor it and treasure it and value it and enjoy it, to the end that all of us would be:

... amazed at the greatness of God

And we must understand that this is the Sovereign Work of God. You did not save yourself. Sovereign Grace saved you. Look at verse 6 again. The Apostle said that in the same way that God said "Let there be light" when He created the world in the beginning; He did that very same thing in your heart when He saved you.

Salvation is *that* Sovereign and *that* one sided and *that* miraculous and *that* monergistic and *that* creative and *that* gracious. Without any help or any assistance or any co-operation from us at all- and without waiting for us to either ask for it or even want it- while we were yet sinners, and while we were sinning as hard as we could, and while God was the furthest thing from our minds, all by Himself God

spoke through the blackness of our minds and the darkness of our hearts and God said

“Let there be light!”

... and the scales fell away from our eyes and the veil was lifted and the Light of the Glory of God streamed into our minds; we saw Jesus for Who He really is in His true and beautiful Grace and Love and Power and Wisdom and Justice and Meekness and Patience and Mercy. And with eyes that were Sovereignly given to us we saw; and with ears that were Sovereignly given to us, we heard; and with a new fleshly heart that was Sovereignly given to us, we believed. And now we love what we used to hate and we hate what we used to love and we cannot turn away from Him anymore!

4. God Uses Messengers of the Word to Open the Eyes of the Blind

Now here is the striking link between the blinding effects of Satan and the work of Gospel messengers. It's found in **The Acts 26: 17b-18** where Jesus is giving Paul his commission on the Damascus Road. The Lord says to Paul:

The Acts 26:17b&18

17 ... I am sending you,

18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.

This is exactly the remedy called for in **2 Corinthians 4:4**. Notice the Commission that Jesus gave to Paul in **The Acts 26:18**:

... to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light...

And look at the parallel in **2 Corinthians 4:6**:

... the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

... and **2 Corinthians 4:4** speaks of the *god of this age* blinding the minds of unbelievers so they can't see the Glory of Christ.

So the exact *reversal* of satanic blindness and spiritual darkness comes from Christ's messengers. And we do that through the preaching and teaching of the Gospel. So just when we feel the most helpless- and who has not felt helpless before the spiritual deadness of those we love?- just when you felt most helpless you must hear this word:

“Go, for I am sending you to be the agent of what only I can do. God alone says to the dead and dark human heart: Let there be light! And there is light. God alone can raise the dead. God alone

gives spiritual light. God alone makes Christ appear true and beautiful and desirable. So go. Be his agent. He promises to use you! And when Christ opens their eyes- they too will be amazed at the greatness of God”

Seed must be planted, cultivated, watered, and protected. But the miracle of Life itself is God’s Alone to give. In the moment of your greatest sense of helplessness, remember: God sends messengers **“to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God.”** He sends us to do what only He can do.

2 Corinthians 4:7

We have this treasure [of the Gospel] in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us

5. In the Mouth of These Messengers God Makes Patient Teaching About Christ the Means of Seeing the Glory of Christ in the Gospel

Here is another very closely linked text to what we have seen in **2 Corinthians 4:4-6** and **The Acts 26:18**. These are Paul’s words to a very timid Timothy in **2 Timothy 2:24-26**. Please turn there with me.

2 Timothy 2:24-26

24 The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,

25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,

26 and they may come to their senses *and escape* from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

So here again is Paul’s remedy for the satanic blindness and darkness he talked about in **2 Corinthians 4:4**:

Teach the Truth about Jesus Christ

Teach it loud and proud, and teach it fully and rightly. Do it patiently and take your lumps without being quarrelsome. Say it over and over and never compromise the Truth about Jesus with the god of this age. And God—in and through you, but GOD nevertheless Sovereignly- may grant them repentance.

We must know that God is entirely “free” to give or not to give the change of heart and mind that we call “repentance”. And if He does—and He often does- it truly is a glorious thing. And that is when spiritual knowledge happens in a person.

Unrepentant people can have a *human* knowledge about God and Jesus Christ, but not *spiritual* knowledge. That is a Sovereign Work of the Spirit and it is what Paul calls **“the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”**.

So by the mighty Power of God through repentance and spiritual knowledge of the Glory of Christ, the power of the devil is broken from the lives of people. Paul told Timothy in **2 Timothy 2:26**:

They escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

And it is then and only then that people who were sinful and arrogant and aliens away from God will then be:

... amazed at the greatness of God

So if you are a Christian, I pray that you will embrace these things and be courageous as a messenger of the risen Christ. He will use your patient teaching about Christ to unbelievers, to give sight to the blind and liberty from the snare of the devil. Don't be ashamed, and don't be silent, and don't be impatient. Keep on telling and teaching about the glorious Christ.

And if you are unsaved and you are in this terrible condition of lostness- may the Lord use this message this morning to open your eyes to turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. In Jesus' Name.

Let's pray