

**Exulting in the Hope of Worship
Regaining the Glory of God**

**Worship Matters!
Palmetto Baptist Church
Summer Series 2023**

Texts: Rom. 12:1-2; Rom. 5:1-2; Col. 1:25-27; Col. 3:1-4; Matt. 13:43

Romans 12:1-2

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 5:1-2

¹ Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Colossians 1:25-27

²⁵ of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, ²⁶ the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. ²⁷ To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Colossians 3:1-4

¹ If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Matthew 13:43

⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Introduction:

Last week we began a journey together that I am praying will be spiritually transformative, soul-satisfying, and corporately beneficial to our congregation as we strive to celebrate who God is, rest in what He has done,

and magnify His beauty to the Nations, whether around the corner or across an ocean.

Every journey has a destination that motivates the pilgrims to undertake the journey, sustains them when the path grows hard and the days grow long, and satisfies them when they finally arrive. The destination of our journey is stunningly jaw-dropping and spiritually breathtaking! It begins in the barren wilderness of life under the sun – a life marred by sin, broken by the curse, and lived out daily in the dark shadow of the reality of the violence of death – our own dying as well as the death of others!

However, this journey leads through that valley into a different realm – filled with a lost glory, light that overcomes darkness, and everlasting life that conquers the Devil and banishes sin and death.

In this realm is a throne surrounded by multiplied billions of redeemed people who are lifting their voice and praising the One who sits on that throne with all of their strength and in unrestrained joy for what He has done. John saw this scene from his prison cell on Patmos and wrote down what he saw so that we would see it as well:

Revelation 5:9–14 And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,¹⁰ and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands,¹² saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”¹³ And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”¹⁴ And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Our journey starts in the barren wilderness of this sin-cursed realm, but it ends in the glorious realm where God sits on His throne surrounded by His redeemed people who have been transformed by Him and will reign with Him on a curse-free, sin-banished earth made so by the glorious work of His

Son who is our Lord and Savior! And the response in heaven to this glorious reality is glad, joyful, unrestrained worship! (Rev 5:14)

As part of that redeemed throng surrounding God's throne, we are called to come together on the first day of the week (1 Cor 16:1-2; Heb 10:25) to render this same glad, joyful, unrestrained worship now as we make this pilgrim journey to that realm where all of our tears will be wiped away, our sorrows banished, our diseases healed, and our sins banished forever. This is why we worship! We worship because we have a sure hope (confident expectation) based on the promise of God Himself who told us that when Christ appears, we will appear with Him in glory! (Col 3:4)

This hope is both the grounds/cause of our glad worship and the fuel that, if we will let it, will ignite that kind of worship in our hearts as we gather together each week.

Last week I shared five big goals the elders and I share for this series that we desire and for which we pray for ourselves and for you:

- **That joyful worship would fuel our glad service to God as a church.**
- **That thankful worship would be our response to the grand story God tells in the Bible about His glory.**
- **That our corporate worship would both glorify God and help us intentionally magnify His beauty to the Nations around us.**
- **That our personal participation in gathered worship would transform us into the likeness of the One we worship each week.**
- **That we would see worship as so important that each of us would give it our spiritual focus and intentional engagement each week.**

Last week we began this series by looking at Psalm 95 to capture in our minds the biblical framework God has built for that glad worship and obedient service of His people as they come to bow down before Him in joyful, humble, Word-obedient worship.

This week, I want us to look at the incredible hope worship is intended to cultivate in us – a hope that when truly understood, elicits unrestrained,

uncontained joy in our hearts that fuels the kind of worship that delights God and truly satisfies our hearts by replacing our earthly pleasures with true and lasting treasure!

And so this morning we want to listen carefully to someone who found this hope, and who was uniquely equipped and enabled by God to help us see and grasp this hope for ourselves. That person is Paul, and the thing he came to understand is that through Christ, we have regained something we thought was lost forever – *the Glory of God!*

Paul wrote about this hope in several of his NT epistles. Perhaps the most powerful of those letters is the book of Romans, where he uses this hope to fuel a life of glad, sacrificial worship to God (Rom 12:1-2).

Look carefully at what Paul actually states in these two pivotal verses. After 11 chapters explaining what God accomplished by Jesus to glorify Himself by redeeming an ancient people, reversing an ancient curse, and defeating His ancient enemy – Paul calls believers who have experienced the benefits of Christ’s atoning work (Rom 5:1-11) to present their bodies (their entire lives) to God for His use – and he describes this as our “*reasonable/spiritual worship*” (Rom 12:1).

In other words, when we rightly understand what God has done for us through Christ, we will respond in ways we never could have prior to becoming the recipients of this grace!

In Romans 1 Paul reminded us that though we knew the truth about God; we intentionally rejected His glory and refused to worship Him but instead rebelled against His word and worshiped whatever idols we made for ourselves, bowing down before them and serving them instead of the true and living God (Rom 1:18-32).

So what happened? How did people who despised God, rejected His Word, refused to recognize His glory, and rebelled against Him, come to give

themselves wholly and fully to the God they at one time hated but have come to love with their whole heart?

The answer is that this sort of worship is “spiritual” – it is produced in us and energized for us by God Himself through the Holy Spirit! This is why Paul calls this worship “spiritual” worship – it is the only logical/rational response that born-again believers can give to the immensity of what God has done for them – and they can only see and receive that work when the Spirit of God opens their eyes and quickens their dead heart!

Paul establishes the basis of this kind of worship-fueled life in in 11 chapters of doctrine presented carefully, logically, and irrefutably. When Paul looks for a word to sum up these 11 chapters – the Holy Spirit gave him the word “mercies” (Rom 12:1).

And one of the greatest of those mercies is that through the gospel that Christ made possible by His atoning work on the cross, we gained the hope of something we had formerly lost – and the thing we lost and have now regained is the “glory of God.” (Romans 5:1-2)

And the story of how we lost that glory and how God regained it for us through Christ is what fuels our white-hot worship of God and energizes a life of thankful service to God!

That story is our focus this morning – Exulting in the Hope of Worship!
As we look at the different parts of this grand story called “The Hope of Glory” we will see: 1) that our worship rightly done celebrates not just God’s unmatched glory; 2) it celebrates what He did so that we could once again share in that glory; and 3) such worship points the way for other sinners to join us in that glory!

This morning I want us to be reminded by Paul that our worship is:

I. Reflective of a Sacred Memory (Romans 3:23)

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who

believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, (Romans 3:21-24)

- Paul begins Romans by reminding his readers that every single person on the planet is under the just wrath of God for having despised and rejected something about God – His glory (1:18-23).

- The term *glory* speaks of God’s radiant character – His nature and His attributes. Theologians call this glory the “perfections of God” and they are so wonderful and unique they are breathtaking. When the universe beholds the radiant beauty of God in all His unveiled splendor, in awestruck wonder they lift their voices in unrestrained, uncontained joyful praise!

- When God is pictured on His throne, the Biblical writers consistently describe Him as radiant with splendor and blazing with brilliant, pure light that comes forth from within Himself. And the word that Scripture uses to portray all of this so we can grasp it with our limited eyes and earthbound minds is “*glory.*”

- When Isaiah saw God seated on His throne – he saw that the robes of God’s glory filled the entire heavenly temple (Isaiah 6:1-2).

- In Romans 3:23, Paul makes a stunning statement – because of our sin, “we have fallen short of that glory!” What is stunning about this statement is the implication it makes about us! If we have fallen short of that glory, there must have been a time we possessed and enjoyed that glory . . . before we lost it!

- In Psalm 8:5-8, David observed that when God made man, He crowned him with glory and honor – His glory and His honor!

- Think of the jaw-dropping implications of David’s statement – we were *created by God in ways that visibly reflected His glory*. We were *appointed by God to represent His authority* to the universe! We were created in ways that reflected God’s glory and represented His goodness to the entire earth!

- And the place where all of this came together was in a garden-temple God planted in the heart of a special land called Eden!

- What did we look like when we possessed and reflected some of God’s glory? Perhaps we looked like Moses appeared when he came down from the mountain after being with God and his face radiated such

blazing light that he had to cover it with a veil because it was “fading and coming to an end” (2 Cor. 7). Or perhaps we looked like Moses and Elijah looked when they showed up to talk with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Or perhaps we looked like slightly lesser versions of Jesus in Revelation 1:12-17 where, after seeing the glory of Jesus, John fell down on his face and worshipped.

- **We could say it this way – there was a time when our first parents enjoyed unbroken fellowship with God and pure delight in Him in a garden-temple where they walked in unhindered, unrestrained, unbroken worship as they walked (lived and served) with God, basking in and radiating with the light of His glory!**

- **What happened to all of this glory that was ours? It was lost the day Adam sinned (Gen 3:18). Perhaps to cover their shame as the blazing glory that radiated from them faded and was darkened, our first parents made pathetic garments out of leaves to hide the fact the glory that once radiated from them had faded and was gone!**

- **And Paul reminds us of this sad fact in Romans 3:23 – because of the sin of which we are all guilty, we all have fallen short of something we once possessed – the glory of God!**

- ***Our sin was deep* – it corrupted every part of every one of us (for all have sinned).**

- ***Our sin was dark* – it caused us to suppress the truth about God that was plainly set before us and it rendered us futile in our thinking and “darkened” our foolish and immoral hearts to the point that we exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made in our own likeness or in the likeness of the creatures we were designed to rule over (Romans 1:18-23).**

- ***And our sin was deadly* – Paul’s stated this clearly when he reminded that “the wages or consequence for our sinning is a violent death by execution” (Romans 6:23).**

- **BUT – an amazing thing has happened in Romans 5:2 – there are people who have regained this glory that was lost on account of sin!
*“We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God!”***

- And when these people worship, they don't worship like the people with darkened hearts and foolish minds – they worship by the Spirit and by the light of the truth of God (John 4:23-24)!
- And their worship reminds them of the spiritual reality that once was in Eden – a reality that was lost because of sin but that has been regained for them by the work of Jesus.
- Which brings us to the second reality we need to see about worship this morning – worship is based on God's sure promise.

II. Based on a Sure Promise (Col. 3:3-4)

For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

- On the day sin killed the human race, God made a solemn promise to our first parents that He would send a Son through Eve that would kill sin and give us life! (Genesis 3:15)
- This is why the death of Jesus on the cross is so central to our worship – because on account of His death, God gives us life!
- This is what Paul refers to in Romans 5:2 when he announces that because we have been reconciled to God, we rejoice in the confident assurance (hope) that the glory of God has been regained by Christ and is being restored to us by the Holy Spirit.
- But what does this “life” look like? What will we, who have been made alive in Christ, look like when the glory we lost is restored?
- Paul announces an incredible promise from God to us – *when Christ appears, we who are in him will appear with him – and we will share His glorious appearance – “we will appear with Him “in glory.”* This does not refer to us being with Christ in heaven – it refers to us sharing in His glorious appearance – in other words, we will look like He looks when we appear with Him!
- This is what Jesus was talking about in Matthew 13:43 when He promised, *“Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”*
- This is what Paul meant when he stated that as we look intently into God's Word, we are transformed by that Word from one level of glory to another (2 Cor 3:18).

- This is what John meant when he said, *“Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.”* (1 John 3:2)
- And this is why we worship thankfully, hope confidently, and live obediently – *“And everyone who thus hopes in him (Christ) purifies himself as he (Jesus) is pure”* (1 John 3:3).
- And all of our worship is designed to remind us of this promise and to ground our daily life in a commitment to purify our lives as we grow in grace – the grace won for us by Christ, extended to us by the Father, and energized in us by the Spirit!

These two massive spiritual realities are the foundation for six important observations about worship we will mention briefly.

III. Designed According to a Divine Pattern (Ex. 25:40; Heb. 8:5)

- Central to the promise God made to Adam and Eve was His intention to call, redeem, sanctify, and dwell among a People that would be His chosen nation – the nation of Israel.
- Like Adam, they were to be a kingdom of ruling priests – radiating the light of the knowledge of God and mediating the blessing and wisdom of God found in the Torah to the surrounding nations living in moral and spiritual darkness.
- And the very structure of their corporate worship was designed by God to remind them of the beauty that had been lost by sin and was being restored by God for and through His appointed people.
- This worship was designed according to the pattern God gave Moses on the mountain (Ex. 24:40), and it was to reflect the worship happening in Heaven (Hebrews 8:5).
- And to help Israel live and rejoice in these realities, God designed their worship around three things that were to be constant reminders of much greater spiritual truths!

A. Sacred Space – dwelling with God

- The tabernacle and later the temple were to be visible reminders of the Garden where Adam and God dwelt together in unbroken, unhindered, unrestrained fellowship.
- Everything about the tabernacle was designed to remind them of what Adam enjoyed, what sin ruined, and what God was restoring as they wandered in the wilderness.
- Everything about the Temple was designed to astonish the nations with the beauty, wisdom, abundance, kindness, goodness, and mercy of God toward His people.

B. Sacred Time – living for God

- The sabbath day was designed for God to rest upon his people the way He rested on creation by dwelling in the completed garden with Adam.
- Once a week, God's people could cease from their back-breaking toil (laboring under the Curse) and enjoy the bountiful, refreshing presence with God they had once had in the garden!
- The Sabbath festivals were designed to remind God's people that three times a year they were to make their way to the glorious temple at Jerusalem and celebrate what it meant to be God's people and to enjoy the blessing He had given them.

C. Sacred Sacrifices – Enjoying God and being satisfied by Him

- The sacrifices for sin were intended to remind God's people what was demanded in order for them to dwell safely with God.
- The *sacrificial meals* were intended to remind God's people of what it meant to be satisfied by Him! The abundance of food in Eden was replicated by the abundance of savory food to eat when you came to God's house, be it the tabernacle or temple.

IV. Made Possible by an Acceptable Sacrifice (Heb 1:3)

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

- In order to dwell with His people, God had to make them safe from His wrath by forgiving their sins and cleansing them from the iniquity that separated them from Him and caused Him to hide His face from them (Is. 59:2).
- And the way God reopened the way back to His presence was by means of an acceptable sacrifice that He himself provided.
- He provided the substitutionary, atoning sacrifice for Adam and Eve in Gen 3:21.
- He provided the sacrifice He required of Abraham (Gen 22).
- He provided the full and permanent sacrifice through the sinless life and substitutionary, violent death of His Son, Jesus Christ who, after making full atonement and purification for our sins, is now seated at the right hand of His Father (Heb 1:3).

V. Expressed by Joyful Praise, Glad Obedience, and Sacrificial Service

Hebrews 13:15-16 Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. ¹⁶ Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

- Repeatedly, Scripture reminds us that God is enthroned in heaven where He receives the joyful praise and glad obedience of the heavenly hosts as He rules and reigns in righteousness and in the beauty of His holiness. In other words, no one in the realm of heaven has any questions about who is seated on the throne of the universe or about the righteousness of His rule or the justice of His reign over everything and everyone.
- However, that is not the case on earth – the nations are enraged at the thought of God ruling and reigning over them from His throne in Heaven, and they are determined to cast off and break away from His rule over them (Psalm 2:1-2).
- But there is one nation – one group of people – who, like those in heaven, are joyfully celebrating His righteous rule over them and who are praying for His kingdom to come on earth so that what is happening in heaven can happen on earth!
- And those people have enthroned God in their personal and corporate lives by means of their praise (Psalm 22:3)!

- **And this means of enthroning God has immense implications for our worship as God's people redeemed, thankful people.**

VI. Celebrated Together in a Corporate Setting as a Gathered Congregation (Psalm 22:3; Heb. 10:19-25)

A. We Celebrate God's Righteous and Gracious Reign Over Us

Psalm 22:3 - Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

- **When God's people gather in obedience to His command to come and bow before Him, we declare to ourselves, to each other, and to the watching world that God is our King! He rules and reigns over us. But why do our joyful, willing praises enthrone Him?**
- **Because the voluntary, joyful, consistent praise from His people demonstrates in powerful ways what kind of God rules over us!**
- **Is our King a brutal, harsh ruler who exacts hard obedience and brutally punishes any real or supposed infraction against Him? OR is He a kind, gracious, loving God who rules in ways that promote our well-being? Who forgives our sins by bearing the punishment Himself? Whose mercies never come to an end but are new every morning? And whose right hand are true and lasting pleasures?**
- **The glad praise we give Him in gathered worship gives testimony that our holy, righteous King is also good, gracious, and kind.**

B. We Congregate to Promote Glad Obedience in Our Lives

Hebrews 10:19-25 - Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God,²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

- **Because we have confidence to enter the holy place by means of the blood of Jesus and since we have a great High Priest in Jesus, let us not fail to:**
- 1. Draw near in confident faith with purified lives;**

- 2. ***Hold our confession*** (what we believe about Christ) firmly and unwaveringly throughout our entire lifetime on earth;
- 3. ***Stir up one another*** to love and good works through our commitment to participate faithfully in gathered worship.

VII. Announcing a Glorious Blessing for the Nations (Ps. 96:1-4)

*Oh sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth!*² *Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.*³ *Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!*⁴ *For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods.*

- **Question:** Why is every generation of God's people called to sing new and fresh songs of praise to the Lord?
- **Answer:** Because they are to add their own testimony to that of past generations of the salvation they have experienced from God; of the goodness and mercy they have received from God; and of the reasons for which they themselves are blessing God!
- **Purpose:** To declare His glory among the nations! (96:3)
- **Reason:** We are the one group of people on the planet who remember that the glory once had in Eden was lost due to sin and rebellion, has been regained by Christ, is being restored to us by the Spirit, and is being extended to the nations!
- **Worship** has an upward component focused on God; an inward component where we offer corporate praise to God through Christ; and an outward component where we announce to the nations:
 - a. *What it is like to belong to this great King*
 - b. *What it is like to be ruled by this great King*
 - c. *What it is like to live in His great kingdom*

VIII. Anticipating a Sure Future Reality (Rev. 15:2-4)

*And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands.*³ *And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations!"*⁴ *Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."*

- **Where is all of this worship headed?**

- We worship in the confident hope of something – namely that Christ has regained the glory of God that was lost to us: and which is now being restored to us by the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God (2 Cor 3:18).
- But are we the only ones who will worship in this way?
- Why does this kind of worship and the demands it makes on a congregation like ours matter? Will it ever work as a means of reaching the nations?
- Listen to how John answers this by pointing us to a scene in heaven where he sees and declares, *“All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed!”*

Conclusion: What are we to do in light of these realities?

- Where have these righteous acts that John talks about in Revelation 15 been most clearly revealed? In the work of Christ.
- Where are they clarified and explained? In the Scriptures.
- Where are they most evident? In the lives of His redeemed people.
- Where are they most validated and celebrated as something to be treasured above all other earthly pleasure or treasures? In the gathered worship and praise of His people (those who have been made righteous by His righteous acts)!
- This kind of worship is exhilarating! It is life transforming! This is why Paul said, “We exult in this hope – the hope of the glory of God!” (Romans 5:1-2).
- But this kind of worship is also demanding. What will it require of us as a congregation to worship in way that reflects the worship of the nations in heaven? A worship that comes from the hearts and mouths of every nation, tribe, and tongue?
- It will require that we commit ourselves to being radically governed and shaped by Scripture in our worship.

- **It will require that we mortify our desire to be comfortable and our pursuit of convenience in worship.**
- **It will require that we set aside some of our earthly preferences in order to bring worshipers from the nations as a sacrifice to God, which is our priestly service to the gospel of God (Rom. 15:16).**