

# The Honor of God: The Honor of the Christian

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*The Honor of God*  
By Grant Castleberry

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## **Capital Community Church**

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I would invite you to open your Bibles to 1 Samuel 2. We're going to be looking at a number of different scriptures this morning, so get your Bible handy and you can also follow along in your note-taking outline. But 1 Samuel 2:30 contains the rule of honor, and I'm just going to read this again and then we're going to launch off from there. Remember, this is the man of God who has come to Eli and this is what he says in verse 30, "Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,' but now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.'" And that's the rule of honor. God says, "If you honor me as the living God," God says, "I will honor you." And then, "likewise, if you despise me, if you dishonor me, then you will be dishonored, you will be despised."

So that's the hard and fixed rule of honor and that leads right to the gospel because the reality is this, is that no person keeps the rule of honor. This past week, I was asked by someone what about the good person that has never heard the gospel that's on some island in the Pacific? The reality is there is no good person. Paul says in Romans 3:12, "All have turned aside, together they have become worthless." Listen, no one does good, "not even one," not even one. He says in Romans 3:23, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." And that's why the Lord Jesus came into this world, is to keep the rule of honor.

The Lord Jesus fulfills the rule of honor. Why? Because he honored God perfectly. He never sinned, not once. Once the Pharisees accused him of having a demon, he says in John 8:49, "I do not have a demon, but," listen, "I honor my Father, and you dishonor me." Jesus honored God perfectly even at his trial. Pilate said, "I cannot find fault with

this man." He never did anything wrong, but then he went to the cross and he suffered the shame that we deserved. He died in our place for our sins and that's the good news of the gospel.

So the good news of the gospel is this, listen very carefully, that in faith God credits you with all of Christ's work. All of Christ's work. So when you hear, "He who honors me, I will honor. Those who dishonor me shall be lightly esteemed." When you hear that, what you need to know is the only way to get on the good side of that equation is in Christ. That's the only way. It's through his perfect life, his death, his resurrection in then trusting him in faith. You must believe, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. You must trust Christ in faith and then the moment that you trust Christ in faith, what happens is a switch happens and you go on the right side of the equation. Do you get me? Now God can honor you, but it's not on the basis of your own work, it's on the basis of Christ's work. Therefore Christianity, this is what is so different about Christianity, Christianity is not a religion of your own works working up to God. Christianity is the religion of Christ working up to God as our representative and then dying in our place for our penalty. Does that make sense? Okay.

Now here's what happens then: if you are in Christ in faith, you, as the believer, are given certain honors. You are honored in Christ by the living God. And I am convinced that one of the great problems for so many people in the Christian life is they live the Christian life completely unaware of the honors that have been given to them and bestowed upon them in Christ. Completely unaware. Have you ever met someone that was just off the charts, honored celebrity famous guy? At Texas A&M, I studied agriculture, I was in agricultural department. There was a gentleman there named Norman Borlaug. Has anybody ever heard of Norman Borlaug I see zero hands. I see one person, one person has heard of Norman Borlaug. Do you know what Norman was famous for?

[unintelligible]

Yes, Okay. Yes. So Norman Borlaug won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970 because he invented just biologically a new strand of wheat that saved over a billion people's lives. And then in 1977, he won the Presidential Medal of Freedom. So they named buildings after him at Texas A&M. In every class I had, they were Norman Borlaug this, Norman Borlaug that. You know, so you would see Norman Borlaug walking across campus, he was still teaching at A&M when I was there, and it was just everybody wanted to meet this guy, talk to this guy. He was bestowed honors upon honors, right? Now what would happen if he had earned those honors but he had never known that he actually was awarded them? How do you think his life would have been different? How do you think his life would have been different if he never actually knew that he won a Nobel Peace Prize? Presidential Medal of Freedom? Be completely different, right? But that's how so many Christians live their lives, oblivious to the honors that have already been bestowed upon you in Christ Jesus. So one of the great causes, I think, of depression and sin and aimlessness and lethargy into the Christian life is because of this, because believers don't know the honors that they've been given.

So this morning, I just want to walk you through quickly, before we take the Lord's Table, several of the honors that have been bestowed upon us in Christ, okay? So the first one is the honor of sainthood, the honor of sainthood. If you've ever gone on a trip to Rome or stepped foot in a Roman Catholic Church, you'll often notice that the stained-glass windows have pictures of various saints on them. In Roman theology, a saint is someone who does super-meritorious work, whose life was so holy and so productive that they are given this title of saint. And the greatest saint in the Roman church is who? Mary. Mary is even greater than the apostles, and then after the apostles you have people like Saint Francis and Saint Benedict and so on and so forth. It's the idea that these people did super-meritorious works. But contrary to that theology, what the New Testament actually teaches is that every single Christian is honored with the title of saint.

I want you to turn with me to 1 Corinthians 1 and we're going to look at verse 2. Every single Christian is honored with the title of saint. Verse 2 states, "To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus," listen, "called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours." Notice that this sainthood is in reference to their relationship to Christ. Underline or circle that phrase "sanctified in Christ Jesus." This is the doctrine of justification by faith, and this is one of the Apostle Paul's favorite ways to describe the Christian. It is in Christ the Christian is sanctified, or you could say cleansed because the believer is in Christ through faith. Now listen very carefully: this sanctification that Paul is talking about here does not refer to us becoming more holy but us being declared holy because of the work of Christ on our behalf. That's what this sanctification is talking about.

How do I know this? I know this because the Corinthians were the worst Christians in the entire New Testament. They were the worst. There was a man living in incest in this church. This church was wrought with immorality of all sorts. This was a church that was in rebellion against the Apostle Paul. And here's a helpful cross reference, if you look at verse 30, look what Paul says regarding this sanctification, chapter 1, verse 30 he says, "because of him," who's that? Christ, "you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and," look at this word, "sanctification and redemption." He's talking about a finished sanctification in Christ, a cleansing in Christ.

Now if you look back at verse 2, he says that we are sanctified in Christ Jesus and then look at this next phrase, "called to be saints together." That word "called," you could say, means "appointed." He says God has appointed us to be hagioi, saints. That word means holy, set apart unto God. And notice that this word he uses is used to describe every single Christian because look at the next phrase, he says, "who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours." So it's all Christians are called, appointed to be saints. This marvelous title is given to every single Christian. Did you get that?

So let me just give you a little trivia, okay? What do you call the little girl who has just trusted Christ as their Lord and Savior at VBS? Saint. What do you call the man in the jail who has trusted Christ as their Lord and Savior and is leading a Bible study? Saint.

What do you call the 8th grade Christian boy who is just learning to study the scriptures and memorizing the Bible for the first time? What do you call them? Saints. What do you call the little old lady who has been in the church for 60 years and has walked with Christ all her life? Saints. All of them are saints. Why? Because of what Christ has done and because they've been united to Christ.

So really two very important implications of this. 1. This has a massive impact on how you treat other Christians. This has a massive impact on how you think about other Christians. Every single Christian is a saint and that means, as Paul says in Galatians 6:2, that we are to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. We are to treat one another as saints. So be careful about what you're saying behind the back of a saint, right? Be careful about how you talk about another saint. Be careful about what you say to another saint because they are a saint in Christ. And then second, just huge important implication is that if you're a saint, you're to live like one. If you're a saint, you're to live like a saint. That's who you are in Christ. You are a saint. And I get the feeling that this is what Paul is talking about in Romans 6 when he says, "Do you not know? Do you not know who you are, that you've been buried with Christ in his death, that you've been raised to walk in newness of life?" Paul says in Titus 2:11 he says, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age." The grace of God trains us to live the Christian life because it's who we are now. In Christ you are a saint.

That's the first honor I want to show you this morning. The second is the honor of being a friend of God. The honor of being a friend of God. You might not realize this but most people are not on good terms with God. Most people are enemies of God. Paul says in Romans 8:7, "For the mind that is set on the flesh," listen, "is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot." Colossians 1:21 Paul says, "And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death."

So what you need to know and understand is when you walk out into this world there is no neutral ground. We've been taught this nebulous idea that the public square is naked, that it's just that ideas and postures are just neutral. But they're not. You're either in one of two camps. You're either a friend of God, or you are an enemy of God. You are either at peace with God or you are hostile to God. So think about that in terms of the implications for that in the public square, government, media, school. There's no neutral territory and the Bible says that until you come to Christ, you are an enemy of God. Our minds are hostile to God, but what happens when you trust Christ in faith, when you are justified by his grace, is a great change takes place, and I want you to turn to the left to Romans 5. Romans 5 and I want you to see this change that takes place in verse 1, Romans 5:1. Paul says, "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Underline or circle that word "peace." This peace that he is talking about is not a subjective feeling. It's not an ooey gooey inside in the pit of your stomach. It is a reality. This peace is a reality that you have now entered into a status of peace with the living God, that God who once was your enemy is now

your friend. Remember, Abraham was called a friend of God and now you have entered into a status as friend. You who were once an enemy of the crown are now counted as one of God's friends. And I'm convinced that many believers do not realize that in Christ they have this peace with God, that they have this peace with God as a reality. So many think that when they sin that God is just waiting to strike them down with a thunderbolt from heaven. They're worried that God will react and treat them as his enemy. But friends, if you are under the blood of Christ, you are under terms of peace with God, and you have now become his friend, and that's your status.

So let me just flesh this out a little bit because when you understand this, this status of being a friend of God, it changes how you think about God, it changes how you live your life. When I was in the Marine Corps, I was stationed over in Japan and we worked with the Japanese military self-defense force and their aircraft and all those things, and they told us stories about these Japanese soldiers after World War II who just never surrendered. They were out on some island somewhere and they never got the news that World War II had ended, that terms of peace had been accomplished, agreed to. And there's this one Japanese soldier, his name was Hiroo Onoda, and he was stationed in the Philippines and listen to this, he lived in the jungle continuing military operations for 29 years after World War II ended. So his commanding officer went and relieved him, found him in 1974 and brought him back to Japan 29 years after peace had already been established. Now peace was there, right? The problem was he didn't know it. He didn't recognize it. He didn't realize it.

That's the problem with so many believers, is that you are in a place of peace with God, therefore you don't have to run from God, therefore you don't have to live in rebellion against God. He's no longer your enemy, he's your friend. And that's why James says, "Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Stop thinking that you're an enemy of God when you're his friend in Christ. Repent, confess, draw nearer to God because you have restored fellowship with him. Don't let sin come in the way. Don't stay distant because you who were once in an enemy are now a friend." That's what Paul says if you look just a few verses down in verse 10. He says, "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." In other words, Jesus Christ, the ascended Christ right now intercedes for us and is present at the right hand of God the Father so we can continue to have this reconciliation with God the Father. You are a friend of God in Christ, and that is an honor that has been bestowed upon you.

Third, every Christian has the honor of being a child of God. Every Christian has the honor of being a child of God. Sometimes I go to different churches and they say, you know, every single person is one of God's children and that is fundamentally not true. That title of being a child of God in the New Testament is only given to the Christian. John says in John 1:12, "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." This is an honor given only to those who receive the Lord Jesus Christ in faith, who believe in his name.

Now Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, right? The eternal Son of God. He has always existed for all of eternity as the Son of God. We are not the son and daughter of God that way. We are adopted children of God. That's what the New Testament says, and God planned this before the world began. Paul says in Ephesians 1:5 that, "he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will." So we become children of God through adoption, because of what Christ has done.

Now, there's several very important privileges that you need to understand and know that come as a result of this honor of being a child of God. The first is special access to God. Special access to God. Look at verse 2 now in Romans 5, "Through him," through Christ, "we have also obtained access," there it is, "access by faith into this grace," think of like grace as a sphere, a place "in which we stand," that we come and we essentially can live in this sphere of grace in the presence of God, and then he says, "and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God." The idea is, think of a king and you have now been given access as the child to the palace and you can enter in and you can stay in that realm and that you have that point of entry. You know, I just got back from England and it was the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, which I think is 70 years on the throne, and my son asked me, he said, "Did you, were you, were you able to enter the palace? And did you see the guys with the red suits and, you know, the tall black hats?" And I said, "No, you know, I walked past Buckingham Palace, but they wouldn't let me in because I'm an American," and I'm glad for that, by the way. They wouldn't let me in. But if I was a son, if I was a prince, then I could feasibly come in, right?

A little bit different situation. I was out at the Shepherd's Conference recently, this is John MacArthur's conference out in California in Los Angeles. There were probably about 5,000 pastors at this conference, give or take. And the third day of the conference, I'm just sitting there with some guys and this guy comes up and it's John MacArthur's son, Mark MacArthur, and we start talking to him and then he goes, "Hey, do you want to go hang out with Dad?" And we were, "Sure." So we put our stuff up. We walked across the campus. We walked right up to the church offices. There are all these security guys, secretaries, we walked past all of them up into the office and there have lunch with Johnny Mac. How did we do that? Because we had access with the son, with his family member. And what the New Testament says is this, is that as a child of God, you have that type of access to him. You don't have to go through another priest now. You don't have to have another mediator. In Christ you have that access whenever you want.

The writer of Hebrews says this. Hebrews 10:19, "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." So we can draw nearer to God with full assurance that we have access as his beloved children. Isn't that remarkable, access to God? That's why Paul says pray without ceasing. Anytime. Anytime access.

Also, in addition to access we are given, God promises providential care as his children. God has a special love and provision for his children that he does not have for all people.

Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount, this is Matthew 6:31, he says, "Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." He says a few verses later, Matthew 7:11, "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven." We take care of our children. Good parents, take care of our children. Jesus' argument is this, that if we know how to take good care of our children, how much more, how much more will our heavenly Father take care of you?

And what the Bible says is that for the believer, God works all things together for good for the believer, for his children, and what a remarkable thing it is to wake up in the morning every single day knowing that God, your heavenly Father, has planned every single moment for good for you as his child. We live under the kind hand of providence of a loving Father, and that gives perspective, doesn't it, when we're in a tough time. You know, you wake up, you wish your circumstances were different, you wish you were making more money, you wish things at your office were better, you wish that you had more respect, whatever it is, you can know in those moments that your kind heavenly Father has you exactly where you're supposed to be doing what you're supposed to be doing, and that this moment is ordained by God for your good. That is a really remarkable way to live your life when you begin to understand that you are God's child and he is providing and guiding everything in your life.

We also have an inheritance as his children, a heavenly inheritance. So Paul says in Galatians 4:7, "So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God." So what's an heir? An heir is someone who receives an inheritance. So any trust fund kids in here? You don't need to raise your hand, but you know, how you read these stories of these people that all of a sudden they find out that that they've inherited a fortune from somebody that they didn't even know. This is a reality and what the New Testament teaches is that every single child is an heir. And what's your inheritance? Well, Paul tells us Ephesians 1, he says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," listen, "who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." Isn't that remarkable? Every single blessing in the heavenly places is yours if you are a child of God.

You know, when you understand the inheritance that is awaiting you in heaven, the things of this world start to fade away pretty quickly. I remember seeing a bumper sticker when I was growing up in Texas that says, "He who dies with the most toys still dies." And that's true. That's basically a paraphrase of what Paul says in 1 Timothy 6:7, "for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world." Jesus made this promise before he ascended into heaven. He says, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself that where I am, you may be also." So Jesus right now is preparing a place for you. This life is so short. This life is so insignificant compared to the eternity that we will have with God with every spiritual blessing that we will inherit. The things of this world, friends, will go strangely dim in light of his glorious grace. Every single blessing.

So are you going through a tough moment? Don't lose heart. Don't lose heart. You are God's child and you have been honored with that. Two more very quickly, very quickly. Every believer is honored by being baptized with the Holy Spirit. Did you know this? Some Christians don't realize that they have been baptized with the Holy Spirit, and part of that is because some people teach that it's a second blessing that's only attainable for super-special Christians. That's not true.

Every single believer is baptized with the Holy Spirit and really, that's one of the great teachings of the book of Acts, so Acts begins with Jesus about to ascend into heaven and Jesus says, this is Acts 1:5, he says, "for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." And of course, we know 40 days later in Acts 2, the apostles and many other Jews were baptized with the Holy Spirit. But was it just Jews? No, it was not. So Acts 8, remember Phillip went and evangelized the Samaritans, and then the apostles come in Acts 8 and lay hands on the Samaritans and what happens? The Samaritans also receive the Holy Spirit. So is it just Jews and Samaritans? No, it's not. It's also the God-fearing Gentiles. That's Acts 10. Remember Cornelius and his whole house believe and what happens? Acts 10:44, "While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word." So is it just Jews, Samaritans and God-fearing Gentiles? No, it's also those pagans who had never converted to Judaism but then ultimately become believers and convert and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and that's Acts 19 when Paul is in Ephesus. Remember they had only received the baptism of John and Paul comes and lays on hands and they received the Holy Spirit, and that's why Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:13, listen, "For in one Spirit we were all," all of us, "baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and all were made to drink of one Spirit."

You say, "Well, that's nothing special. I know that." Let me tell you why it's special. It's special because in the old covenant only the prophets, the priest and the kings were baptized with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's presence was there in the tabernacle and in the temple. It was only those with the special officers who were baptized with the Spirit. And even then after David's sin, you remember he was worried that God would take the Holy Spirit from him, "Take not your Holy Spirit from me."

So in the new covenant you need to know this: every single believer is honored with the baptism of the Holy Spirit and what that means is, is that you have been given a special gift in the body of Christ in order to build up and edify Christ's body here on earth, that you have been given a gift to be used for the purpose of ministry. Every single Christian has at least one and often multiple spiritual gifts. So the question is, do you know that you've been baptized with the Holy Spirit? Paul says Ephesians 5:18, "Don't be drunk with wine but be," what? "Filled with the Spirit." The question is, are you yielding to his presence and his work? Are you endeavoring to use your spiritual gift in the life of the body? Don't just come here and give money and come and learn, but come here and exercise your spiritual gift for the building up of this body.



So question for the Spirit-filled believer: how right now are you using your spiritual gift? If you're in the Old Testament, it's obvious you're a prophet, priest or king. That's how you're using it. But how are you using your gifts for the edification of the body of Christ? Paul says in Ephesians 4:7, "But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift." Christ has honored us with these gifts.

Now I'm going to give you one more very quickly. If you turn to 1 Corinthians 15, 1 Corinthians 15, fifth, and finally, each believer, this is in the future, will be honored with a resurrection body. Each and every believer. This is the great hope that we look forward to, is honored with a resurrection body that resembles the body that Christ was raised with and ascended into heaven with. Now, right now, if you were to die when you walk out here in a crazy firework accident tomorrow, what will happen is this, is that your soul will immediately go into the presence of the Lord, and we will bury your body, and we will hold your funeral here later this week. But your body, your body will stay in the ground. Your body will stay in the ground till the moment of resurrection and that moment happens when the Lord Jesus returns. And then when the Lord and your soul will be with the Lord, your soul does not sleep in the ground. Your soul will be in the presence of the Lord, but you will be awaiting the resurrection of your body. But then when the Lord returns, your body will be raised and your soul will be reunited with your body, but it will not be a body like you have right now. It will resemble the body you have right now. You'll probably be able to recognize your friends and family, but it will be an upgraded version of you.

So look at verse 41 of chapter 15. He says, "There is one glory of the sun and another glory of the moon and another glory of the stars." In other words, they shine at different variables, different levels of brightness, "for star differs from star in glory. So it is with the resurrection of the dead." Now here's the contrast. He's contrasting our current bodies, which are aging, which are perishing, which will die, with our future bodies. He says, "So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body and then he goes on and talks about how the Lord Jesus Christ is the guarantee of this. Why does this matter? Because we know how things end for us. The believer doesn't have to doubt their future existence. You know whether it's a year from now, five years from now, or 70 years from now, that ultimately you will die but your body will be raised. Hallelujah. Glory be to God. You will be honored in Christ with a resurrection body like his.

So listen, are you depressed? Are you down? Are you trying to figure things out with your life? Don't go to the world to try to figure things out. Part of what you need to do is just remember who you are in Christ and remember how you have been honored that if you are in Christ you are a saint, you are a friend of God, you are a child of God, that you are baptized with the Holy Spirit, and that you will receive a resurrection body. You are honored all because of what Christ has done. And lastly, all of those honors are reserved for the believer and therefore it is a necessity that if you are here this morning and have not trusted Christ, that you trust in him, that you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe

in faith apart from works, not one ounce of your own works, and the moment that you believe in him, just like that, you're a saint. You don't earn it. It's earned for you. So come to Christ. Come to Christ. All of these honors are reserved for you. And live for his honor and his glory in Christ's name.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you, Lord, for these glorious realities that have been promised to us in Christ, that he honored you perfectly, that he died the terrible death that we deserved, the ignoble death that we deserved in our place for our sins but, Lord, we come and confess that we could not earn this on our own but we need you, we need your perfect life and your death for us. And we praise you, Lord, for the honors that have been given to us in Christ. We rejoice in these. Lord, may this be the theme of our song. We pray all this in Christ's name. Amen.*

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