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## **The Measured Glory of God**

***By David Wilkerson***

October 16, 2000 "He said unto them...with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath" (Mark 4:24-25).

Jesus knew these words might sound strange to non-spiritual ears. So he preceded his message by saying, "If any man have ears to hear, let him hear" (4:23). He was telling us, in essence, "If your heart is open to God's Spirit, you'll understand what I have to say to you."

What, exactly, is Jesus saying in this passage? He's speaking of the glory of God in our lives -- that is, Christ's manifest presence. In short, the Lord measures out his glorious presence in various amounts, whether to churches or to individuals. Some don't receive any of his glory. Yet others receive an ever-increasing measure, emanating from their lives and churches in greater and greater amounts.

Here's an example: Have you ever been to a church where you sensed a small measure of God's glory? Maybe you experienced a flash of it during the worship or the sermon. Then you went to another church -- and as soon as you walked in, you were overwhelmed by God's glory in the place. You sensed the Lord's presence in fullness. And it convicted you, motivating you to remedy the lack of God's glory in your life.

God has promised to pour out his Spirit on his people in these last days. Indeed, all of scripture points to a triumphant, glory-filled church at the close of time. Jesus himself said the gates of hell will not prevail against his church. So, no matter how fiercely Satan bares his teeth, he can't stop God's work. Jesus has removed his bite.

We won't be limping into heaven -- beaten down, depressed, whimpering, defeated, discouraged. No -- our Lord is going to bring greater power to his church. Yet this power won't be manifested merely in signs and wonders. Rather, it will be revealed in his people -- in the glorious transformation of hearts touched by God's Spirit.

The Lord has already meted out -- or, allotted -- to each of us a measure of his Spirit. Paul writes, "Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Ephesians 4:7). Jesus alone was given the Holy Spirit without measure: "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him" (John 3:34). Simply put, Christ had the fullness of the Spirit, without limit.

By contrast, we've been given a measure of God's Spirit, according to his divine allotment. Paul writes, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Romans 12:3).

What is God's goal in measuring out his Spirit -- his glory and presence -- to us in varying amounts? He does this for a single purpose: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith...unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

Paul is saying two things here: First, if we're going to live God's way -- sober-minded, and with intensity -- our goal should be to have an ever-increasing measure of his glory, until we enter into full maturity in Christ. Second, the measure of faith we've been given is meant to serve and supply the

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rest of the body of Christ: "According to the effectual working in the measure of every part, (making) increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (4:16).

Paul is making a profound statement here. He's saying that every one of us is a working member of the body of Christ -- a joint here, a muscle there. And, being such life-giving entities, we are to supply an ever-increasing measure of health to the other members. We're each designed to be a source of faith, love, mercy, grace, glory -- all meant to produce a stronger, healthier body.

Obviously, the health of the body depends on each of us being in good health. If one of us is blessed, the whole body is blessed. Yet likewise, if one member sins, the whole body is affected. Therefore, each of us needs an ever-increasing measure of Christ's glory.

Let me ask you: how much health -- that is, how much glory and faith -- are you supplying to Christ's body? Is his love increasing in you daily? And, in turn, are you able to supply strength to other members? Is your state of health strengthening the body's immune system? Or has some disease infected you -- some worldly desire that has taken hold of you, and is affecting the rest of the body?

We All Need a Greater Measure of God's Glory And Presence in Our Lives. The Lord is preparing to pour out his Spirit on his people in these last days -- to do things we've never seen, heard or imagined. And I want to have a part in that. I want a greater measure of his glory in my life than I've ever had. And I want to see God's glory fill his church with such intensity it can't be contained.

How can we obtain such a greater, ever-increasing measure of Christ's glory? The Lord himself tells us, very clearly: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you" (Mark 4:24). Jesus says, "According to the portion of yourself you allot to me, I'll give back to you in like portion. In short, I'll deal with you in the manner you deal with me. Whatever measure you mete out to me, I'll mete out to you."

If you mete out to God sloth and laziness -- taking for granted his great work -- you'll be dealt a spirit of slumber. "Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger" (Proverbs 19:15). As a result, your soul will go hungry, unable to be satisfied. "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man" (24:33-34).

Isaiah warned of "watchmen...sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber" (Isaiah 56:10). Isaiah isn't speaking here of natural sleep, but disinterest in the things of God. He's describing a people who were inattentive to God's work. Israel measured out less and less of their time to the Lord, giving him only small moments of devotion.

Why didn't they want a greater measure of God's glory? They were hiding sin. And they knew that the first thing God's presence does is to expose iniquity. So they told Isaiah, "Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things" (Isaiah 30:10).

Spiritual Laziness and Sloth Are the Main Causes of the Loss of God's Glory in the Church and in Individuals. What happened in Israel is happening today in God's house. The major cause for the loss of God's glory in his church isn't drugs, alcohol or sex -- but a spirit of sloth. Multitudes of Christians allot hours for indulging in sports, movies, shopping, pleasures of all kinds. Yet they devote to God an ever-diminishing amount of time.

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Like the Israelites, these people don't want to hear a sharp, prophetic word. They're addicted to prosperity and ease. And their excitement about the things of God is decreasing. They spend hours in front of their TV, allowing their minds to be saturated with filth -- because they've become increasingly lazy in spirit.

Some of these Christians are the same ones who complain, "God's glory isn't present in my church the way it used to be." The truth is, his glory isn't being meted out in their individual lives -- because they haven't meted out quality time to him.

Don't misunderstand -- I'm not suggesting we can measure out to God something good in ourselves, causing him to measure out his glory to us. No -- we can never earn his presence, by any amount of works, zeal or human goodness. We have to remember, our Lord found us in our sins -- loving us in our helplessness, when we had nothing to mete out to him. "I was found of them that sought me not" (Romans 10:20).

Indeed, God's love, mercy and grace toward us are boundless. Yet, the issue here isn't obtaining his love, mercy or grace -- but having the blessing of his glory in our lives.

Jesus states plainly that he measures out different amounts of his glory to us, according to how we measure out our hearts to him. Our part is simply to move ever closer to him -- in our worship, obedience and diligence.

We see this truth repeated throughout both Testaments: "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8). "If from thence thou shalt see the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Deuteronomy 4:29). "The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles" (Psalm 34:17).

Jesus' statement is a direct challenge to us: "How desperately do you want my presence in your life? If you want more, it's going to require something of you. Yet I promise you -- if you make an effort to draw closer to me, giving me an ever greater measure of yourself, I'll mete out greater amounts of my glory to you. I'll keep coming back to you with more, more, more."

Right now, the church of Jesus Christ in America is in trouble. Our nation boasts God-exalting churches by the thousands. Yet, in many such churches, no one is getting saved. The people trudge in as if they're going to a funeral. Others are leaving in droves. Young people don't even want to enter the doors. As a result, an entire generation today doesn't know God. They've never experienced God's presence or anointing -- ever.

Something is dreadfully wrong when God's people can shout, sing, dance and praise him in church, yet never be delivered from their chains of lust and besetting sins. It's troubling when God's shepherds are satisfied if their church is running smoothly, their budget is met, and they have a steady paycheck.

The only churches being visited today with an ever-increasing measure of God's glory are those that cry out to him in desperation. They're convinced, "The hour is late -- we have to wake up. We've got to be about God's business in this final hour."

Jesus assures such believers, "Unto you that hear shall more be given" (Mark 4:24). What is the "more" Christ promises to give? And what does it mean for us to hear? The Greek word for hear

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means to understand. Jesus is saying, in other words, "You must comprehend what the Spirit is saying to you."

Motivated Christians hear God's Spirit urging them, "Measure out to me a heart that's set on seeking me. Let me see something of concern, of stirring, of need, of brokenness. Serve up to me a cry like you've never cried before. Then I will hear -- and I'll mete out to you my ever-increasing power and deliverance."

These believers hear the Holy Spirit telling them their heart condition must change. They realize they've been taking the things of God for granted -- merely going through the motions, with no deep conviction. So they've begun to make changes. They're meting out to God more time for communion. And they're taking an inventory of their heart attitudes toward his house and work. They're praying, "Lord, I want more of you. Don't let me backslide in my diligence toward you and your holy concerns."

Now they're seeing results. A new joy is flowing deep in their souls. They sense more of God's presence in their lives, and they have peace like a river. They're receiving what the Lord promised them -- a greater measure of glory, blessing, anointing -- because they've meted out to him a greater measure of themselves.

Jesus assures us, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). He's saying, "Keep giving more of yourself to me -- and I'll pour out more of my glory on you. All your worldly affairs can wait. Seek me first instead, and I'll take care of your concerns. I can do more for you in a single hour than you could do in years of trying."

Just When You Rejoice in Your New Touch From God, He Promises You More. Now that you have God's glory back in your life, Jesus pledges, "More shall be given to you" (see Mark 4:24). He's saying, "You haven't seen anything yet, I see your diligence in measuring out more of yourself to me. And I'm going to do more for you."

God always desires to pour out more of his glory on his people. He longs to do for us "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20). This is why he wants a people who have a ravenous appetite for more of him. He wants to fill them with his awesome presence, beyond anything they've experienced in their lifetime.

Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Yet, to obtain this abundant life, we must abound more and more in pleasing the Lord. Paul writes, "We...exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more" (1 Thessalonians 4:1). "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

The Greek word for abound means to exceed, excel, super-abound -- to have enough and to spare, over and above, excessive, exceeding abundantly above, beyond measure. Paul is saying, "God's glory in your life is going to exceed the little moments you've gotten up till now. But your prayers have to be more than just asking a blessing over your meals. Now you're going to pray morning, noon and night, without ceasing."

"So walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" (Colossians 2:6-7). Paul is instructing us, "To have this

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abundant life of God's glory and presence, you must serve him above measure -- with a love and commitment exceeding that of lazy, slumbering servants."

"Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence" (Ephesians 1:8). God wants to mete out to you glory and revelation beyond any previous measure. "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself" (1:9). The Lord is saying, "I'm going to open to you a deeper understanding of my word. I want to give you revelations of its mysteries."

The Lord wants to supply you in all things, so you can serve him without measure. "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8).

Jesus' Statement Gives Us A Promise and a Warning. "He that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath: (Mark 4:25). Whenever God hears his people crying out to him, He comes to them faithfully. Yet, during times of apathy and sloth, God may step aside, removing his presence completely.

This is what Jesus' warning is about. Before God removes his presence from a person or church, he always brings a warning. How does he do this? He directs his Holy Spirit to stir every person on the church staff. He lays message after message on the pastor's heart, calling everyone in the church to cast off all sloth, fall on their faces and deal with every root of sin. (The Lord has done this several times at Times Square Church, throughout our thirteen years of existence.)

Suddenly, the people fall under conviction. They realize they've heard God's truth preached week after week yet haven't taken it seriously. They've lifted up unclean hands in worship. And they've held onto bitterness and resentment. They simply haven't allowed God's word to stir them. Instead, they've let it slip by without heeding it.

Now God has given the church notice. He tells them, "All this lukewarmness and apathy I see -- it's enough. I'm going to end it." This is not a threat -- and it's not spoken in anger. It is merely God's way of saying, "I placed this church in this neighborhood, this community, this town for a reason. I want it to abound with a measureless glory. I want the lost to know when they walk in here that something powerful is happening. I want them to realize, 'This is what I've been looking for all my life.'"

Be Warned -- It Is Possible to Miss the Glory Jesus Promises. If we linger in a state of sloth, never allowing the Holy Spirit to possess and cleanse us, we can miss what God wants to give us. "He that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath" (Mark 4:25).

You may remember the parable of the talents, in which a slothful servant was given one talent and buried it. This servant was satisfied with the status quo. He wasn't going to mete out and measure beyond what he had. How did his master react? He took away the servant's talent and gave it to another servant, who already had ten.

We see this kind of sloth illustrated in Israel's history. The Israelites had God's presence at one time. But over the years, they allowed idolatry and lust to creep in, corrupting them completely. Eventually, they lost their heart for the things of God. They continued to attend his house, but only out of tradition and fleshly fear.

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God told Israel, "Go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh...and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel" (Jeremiah 7:12). The Psalmist testifies, "He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men" (Psalm 78:60). "The Lord appeared again in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord" (1 Samuel 3:21).

Shiloh had been the house of God. A clear word was preached there by the prophet Samuel, and God's Spirit was present mightily. But over time, Shiloh fell into corruption under the high priest, Eli, and his wicked sons. Now God appeared in Shiloh again, anxious to rebuild his house and bring the unholy priesthood to repentance.

But Eli and his sons remained slothful. Eli grew fat and lazy, living in ease, while his sons continued to mock God, even as they ministered in his house. Eventually, God said, "I won't allow my glory to abide in a place where corruption is present."

So the Lord forsook Shiloh. He removed his glory from Israel, and a spiritual dearth befell the nation. First, the ark was stolen. Then Eli toppled over from his own weight and broke his neck. Finally, the high priest's daughter-in-law gave birth to a boy, naming him Ichabod -- meaning, "The glory is departed from Israel" (1 Samuel 4:21).

If you think this is strictly an Old Testament judgment, leveled because of sloth and corruption, read God's warnings to the New Testament churches in Revelation:

- To the church at Ephesus: "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of this place, except thou repent" (Revelation 2:4-5).

- To the church at Pergamos: "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth" (2:15-16).

- To the church at Laodicea: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (3:15-17).

In each instance, God gives a literal "or else" warning to his church. Why? He's preparing a pure, spotless bride for his son. He's waking sleeping virgins, his Spirit crying out to them, "Behold, the bridegroom comes. Prepare yourself to meet him."

Today, a spirit of wickedness and a mockery of holy things still comes forth from many pulpits. Yet God's pure word is also coming forth, just as it did through Samuel. The Lord is warning, "If you insist on clinging to your sins, I'll take away even what you think you have. I'll remove my presence from your life, your church, just as I did at Shiloh."

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This has already happened to churches all over the world. The glory these congregations once enjoyed has totally vanished -- because they refused to mete out anything to the Lord.

Likewise, if you refuse to stir yourself up to seek the Lord with all your heart -- if you're still meting out to him a small measure of your time, devotion, obedience -- your conviction and knowledge will vanish.

I ask you -- are your prayers not being answered, because you've given God so little of yourself? He doesn't want to remove his presence from you. On the contrary, he wants to heap on you a great measure of his blessings. Right now, he stands ready to wake you from your sloth and slumber -- to draw you close to himself, and fill you with his glory.

It doesn't matter how weak your flame may have become. Simply cry out to him, "Oh, Jesus -- I don't want to miss what you're about to do." He is faithful to come to you -- and he will give you more. Therefore, mete out to him a greater measure of yourself -- and you'll see evidence everywhere of his presence, glory and love for you.