

Romans (90) **Glorifying God Together**

The last time we were together, we addressed the larger picture of God's purposes in history that the apostle Paul set before his readers in Romans 15:1-13. Paul desired to see that God the Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, receive the glory that was due His name. This desire for God to be glorified through Jesus Christ is what motivated the apostle through his ministry to make known the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentile world. Paul wanted the world to see the glory that God the Father deserved for having brought to realization His promises and purposes in history. Paul desired that God the Father would be glorified for having achieved all that He had promised to His people through His Son.

The specific manner in which God was glorifying Himself was through the fellowship of the Jewish and Gentile Christians as they together expressed their praise of God. In order for this to take place, the people within the church must be willing to welcome one another in church fellowship. They were to do so because each of them, indeed, all of them together, were in union with one another in Jesus Christ. Let us read again the first 7 verses of Romans 15.

We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ²Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. ³For Christ did not please Himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me." ⁴For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. ⁵May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

Now, in our study of this portion of God's Word we proceeded farther than this point. But I would like us to pause and consider a few matters in detail that that we either passed over when we were attempting to see the larger picture or that we were unable to address in detail. We read that we are to "live in harmony with one another" (v. 5). But we also read in order for this occur that God must be working in our midst. Paul stated specifically what it was that God must provide for us, if we are to fulfill God's will respecting our living in harmony. In **verse 5** Paul describes God, "***May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another.***" God is the God of "endurance" and the God of "encouragement." If we are to live in harmony with one another to the glory of God, God will need to impart to us the grace of endurance and the grace of encouragement. Let us consider what the Holy Spirit is revealing to us about our God about the task of welcoming one another as Christ has welcomed us.

First, our God is a "God of endurance." What is intended by this expression is that God is the One who enables His people to be characterized by endurance; God is the source for the believer's endurance.

The Greek word translated here as "endurance", ὑπομονῆς (*hupomonos*), is translated in other ways in the New Testament. We read back in **Romans 8:25**, "But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with ***patience.***" Endurance is to abide in one's faith and calling in "patience." But in **1 Thessalonians 1:2f** we read it translated by the word "steadfastness."

We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, ³ remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and ***steadfastness*** of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thess. 1:2f)

We read the same idea in 2 Thessalonians 2:1f.

“We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. ⁴Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your *steadfastness* and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring”

But elsewhere the Greek word is translated “endurance.” This may be seen in these verses:

Hebrews 10:36. “For you have need of *endurance*, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.”

Hebrews 12:1. “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with *endurance* the race that is set before us...”

Revelation 3:10. “Because you have kept my word about patient *endurance*, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.”

Because our God is a “*God of endurance*,” we may be assured that He will enable us to persevere all that challenges us and would discourage us from our faith in Him. He is able to enable His people to persevere.

God’s perseverance of the saints is a blessed and important biblical doctrine. Our *Confession of Faith* states the matter forthrightly:

Those whom God has accepted in the Beloved, and has effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, and given the precious faith of His elect, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but they will certainly persevere in that state to the end and be eternally saved. This is because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, and therefore He continues to beget and nourish in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit which lead to immortality (John 10:28-29; Phil 1:6; 2 Tim 2:19; 1 John 2:19).

And though many storms and floods arise and beat against the saints, yet these things shall never be able to sweep them off the foundation and rock which they are fastened upon by faith. Even though, through unbelief and the temptations of Satan, the sight and feeling of the light and love of God may for a time be clouded and obscured from them (Psa. 89:31-32; 1 Cor. 11:32), yet God is still the same, and they are sure to be kept by His power until their salvation is complete, when they shall enjoy the purchased possession which is theirs, for they are engraved upon the palm of His hands, and their names have been written in His Book of Life from all eternity (Mal 3:6).¹

Consider these verses that speak of God’s *ability* to keep His own, to enable them to have endurance or to persevere.

Philippians 3:20, 21. “For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, (that it may be) conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby *He is able* even to subject all things unto Himself.

2 Timothy 1:12. “For which cause I suffer also these things: yet I am not ashamed; for I know Him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that *He is able to guard* that which I have committed unto him against that day.

¹ *The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, Article 18.

Jude 24, 25. “Now unto Him that *is able to guard you from stumbling*, and to set you before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, (be) glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen.”

There are also those passages that speak of the *certainty* of God keeping His own.

Jeremiah 32:37-42. “Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. They shall be My people, and I will be their God; *then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever*, for the good of them and their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; *but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me*. Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.’ “For thus says the LORD: ‘Just as I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will bring on them all the good that I have promised them.’”

Ezekiel 36:22-27. “Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name’s sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD,” says the Lord GOD, “when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. *I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.*”

1 Corinthians 1:8, 9. “I thank my God always on your behalf, for the *grace of God which is given you* by Jesus Christ; that in everything you are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: *Who shall also confirm you unto the end*, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. *God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*”

Philippians 1:6. “*Being confident* of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you *will perfect it* until the day of Jesus Christ.”

2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14. “But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, for that God chose you from the beginning unto salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto *He called you* through our gospel, *to the obtaining of the glory* of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24. “And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body *be preserved entire*, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Faithful is He that called you, who will also do it.*”

1 Peter 1:3-5. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

1 John 2:1. “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, *they would no doubt have continued with us*: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”

Not only is our God is a God of endurance, but **secondly**, our God is *a God of encouragement*.” Again, Romans 15:5 reads, “May the God of endurance and *encouragement* grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus.” What is meant by this expression? It means that God is the *source* of encouragement; God is the One who is able to encourage His people.

Actually the Greek word, *παράκλησεως*, (*parakleiseos*) is translated in one of three ways in the New Testament. It is translated as “comfort” in these following verses:

2 Corinthians 1:3f. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all *comfort*, who *comforts* us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to *comfort* those who are in any affliction, with the *comfort* with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

2 Corinthians 1:6. “If we are afflicted, it is for your *comfort* and salvation; and if we are *comforted*, it is for your *comfort*, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer.”

The word is also translated as “exhortation.”

Acts 13:15. “And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, ‘Men and brethren, if you have any word of *exhortation* for the people, say on.’”

Hebrews 12:5. “And have you forgotten the *exhortation* that addresses you as sons? ‘My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.’”

But the word is translated here in Romans 15:5 as “encouragement” as it is in **Acts 4:36**. “Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of *encouragement*), a Levite, a native of Cyprus...”

And so, again, Romans 15:5 reads, “May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus.” Paul is saying that these two great gifts of God are essential to the body of Christ in order for the people in the body “to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus.” The church of Jesus Christ is an order of people like no other. The Lord takes disparate people, from all walks of life, from all manner of backgrounds, from all kinds of different sinful backgrounds, and He knits us together into a single body in order for us to live to the glory of God. But in order for this to happen and to happen over time, He needs to impart to His people the two gifts of “endurance” and “encouragement.”

There are many things that could divide the body of Christ or could cause the cohesiveness of the body to disintegrate. Dissension and factions can result. Fellowship would no longer present or even possible given the issues with which the body suffers. There is enough sin in any one of us to wreak havoc among the rest of us if it were not for the mercy and grace of God. But God is able to enable His people to persevere with one another, to grant to His people both endurance and encouragement so that the body grows, develops, and fulfils its purpose, which is for them to glorify God as the church of Jesus Christ.

How does God impart endurance and encouragement? The previous verse in Romans 15 teaches us the means by which God gives us these two gifts of grace. We read again in Romans 15:4, “For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through *endurance* and through the *encouragement* of the Scriptures we might have hope.” God gives His people the ability to maintain fellowship in the church because He is the God of “endurance” and “encouragement”, who gives His people “endurance” and “encouragement” through the Scriptures.

The fellowship that is spoken about here in Romans 15 between Jewish believers and Gentile believers was not an easy matter to achieve. It did not come natural to them. They were going to have to work at it through obedience to God's Word as God enabled them to believe and apply the truths of the Gospel to their church fellowship.

We should not think that the kind of fellowship that is to characterize our church is something that is easily acquired, or once acquired, easily maintained. We, too, are in need of God's grace, and this is not just so that we can "get along with one another", but so that we may develop the kind of friendship and fellowship that should characterize us as the people of God. Conflict within the church can become heated and wearisome. God must grant each of us, indeed, all of us, both endurance and encouragement so that we continue together and grow together as the single body of Christ.

The kind of fellowship that should characterize us requires effort on our behalf. We read of this in **Ephesians 4:1ff**.

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

And perhaps the word translated "eager" in verse 3 could better be translated as it is in the NKJV, "endeavoring." It takes great effort and intention to be what we can be and should be as the church of Jesus Christ.

Now let us put it altogether once again. **Romans 15:5-6** read, "May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Let us consider in more detail what it is that we "may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

First, we are told in **verse 7**, "Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God." The idea of welcoming is to extend fellowship and friendship to another Christian. We are to welcome other Christians into our church fellowship. Those whom Christ has accepted, we are to accept. In other words, any and all true Christians who desire to be a part of us who give evidence that the Lord has received them through the gospel, we are to also welcome into our fellowship.

This verse sets forth a principle that runs counter to some ministry models. There are churches who have intentionally designed their ministry and outreach to draw and include only a certain kind of people from the community in which they find themselves. They do this intentionally. They come in to a community to establish a church and they make a study of the demographics of the place. They shape their church's image and formulate its ministry in order to reach, say, the young professionals, or the young family with children, and the church is designed specifically to reach that niche within society. But a church is to be a place where all are sought and all are welcomed who have been welcomed by God unto Himself through faith in Jesus Christ.

I was speaking to a couple recently who had been part of a church in a major metropolitan city of our nation. They expressed frustration with the church body in that they did seem to fit the model of the folks of that church. They were professionals, very educated, very successful, who had career goals and had similar expectations or standards for the people in their church. The woman I spoke with was on several occasions marginalized because she desired to be a stay-at-home mom, a mother to her children. Her husband along with a friend had sought to establish a ministry to the homeless in the area. But it became clear to him that the church had no desire nor would it encourage such a ministry. That was simply not what their church was like. There are other churches that go to the other extreme. Not long ago I mentioned a church in Oregon that would not allow those families to join their church whose wives worked outside the home or whose children were not homeschooled. No, the church is to be as wide and as welcoming as the gospel by which we were brought into fellowship with God through Jesus Christ. What God has cleansed, we are not to call or treat as "unclean" or "common." If you are in Jesus Christ, you are welcomed here, and we promise that

you will be embraced as a brother or sister in Jesus Christ no matter where you have been or where you happen to be. If God has accepted you through Jesus Christ, then we do so also.

The Word of God tells us through the apostle, “Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” This may be illustrated in the passage of Scripture we read today, if you are following the Scripture Reading Chart we distributed at the beginning of the year (which will enable us to read through the Bible in a year). After God had established King David as His king in Jerusalem, King David, knowing how God so graciously blessed him in all that he had experienced, sought to show favor to the former king of Israel, king Saul. We read in 2 Samuel 9 the account of David’s kindness to Mephibosheth.

And David said, “Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?”

²Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David. And the king said to him, “Are you Ziba?”

And he said, “I am your servant.”

³And the king said, “Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God to him?”

Ziba said to the king, “There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet.”

⁴The king said to him, “Where is he?”

And Ziba said to the king, “He is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar.”

⁵Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar.

⁶And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage.

And David said, “Mephibosheth!” And he answered, “Behold, I am your servant.”

⁷And David said to him, “Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always.”

⁸And he paid homage and said, “What is your servant, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?”

⁹Then the king called Ziba, Saul’s servant, and said to him, “All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson. ¹⁰And you and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him and shall bring in the produce, that your master's grandson may have bread to eat. But Mephibosheth your master's grandson shall always eat at my table.” Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

¹¹Then Ziba said to the king, “According to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so will your servant do.”

So Mephibosheth ate at David’s table, like one of the king’s sons.

¹²And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Mica. And all who lived in Ziba’s house became Mephibosheth’s servants. ¹³So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate always at the king’s table. Now he was lame in both his feet. (2 Sam. 9:1-13)²

As we read these verses we are drawn into the story related to us, I suspect that you found yourself identifying with one of the characters. I tend to identify myself with Mephibosheth, and I hope that you do as well. He was struck with the honor and privilege so freely extended to him. And so we should be amazed and humbled of the undeserved and unexpected blessing of the Lord in welcoming us to His table and to His household. As Mephibosheth expressed to David, we express to our Lord, “What is your servant, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?” But for the sake of our lesson in Romans 15, let us place ourselves in the place of King David. Maybe we have been in the Lord for a while. He has brought us

² The paragraph division of these verses in the ESV is terrible, in my opinion. It has been customary to separate the speech of characters into different paragraphs, but the ESV runs this entire dialogue between David, Ziba, and Mephibosheth into two paragraphs, verses 1 through 8 and verses 9 through 13. The division reflected above is the same as the NKJV.

through many trials and has given us victories in many battles. But now let us remember to demonstrate the kindness of God toward us through the Gospel of His Son to others that the Lord has received. May we extend blessing and acceptance to any and all who are associated with our Savior. Just as King David showed kindness to Mephibosheth because of his father King Saul, let us extend full fellowship to any and all whom God has received through faith in Jesus Christ. “Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.”

My dad had a life-long friend, Darrel. They grew up together. They went to school together. They entered the Navy together. They flew Grumman F6F Hellcats together during WWII. After the war they lived far apart, but they remained in contact with one another through the years, by telephone mostly. However one of them one year sent a New Year’s card to the other. And to show how “cheap” he was, one of them sent the same card back the next New Year’s Day. That card was sent back and forth for many years. When I was 10 or 12 I met Darrel for the first time. I recall he looked at me with great fondness and welcomed me warmly, for I was the son of his good friend. He regarded me as close to him because my father was close to him. Now I would think that we are to at least have that kind of regard for any brother or sister in Jesus Christ. Because he or she is beloved of the Father whom we love, our Father’s son or daughter should also be loved warmly.

Now all this is to be done with view to bringing glory to God. “May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ‘that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ’ (Rom. 15:6).

We are to glorify our God together “with one voice.” We do this when we read the Scriptures together as we each affirm the truth of the matter that we are reading. We do this when we sing together the hymns and songs of Zion. We do this when we sit under the authority and hearing of the Word of God. We do this in our mutual enjoyment of our relationship with God through Jesus Christ and we feel and express the joy and appreciation of our shared blessing.

When we welcome one another in Christ, we do so “for the glory of God.” This means that we do so in order that the glory of God would be enhanced among us and advanced beyond us. The church community of Jesus Christ testifies to the reality of who God is and what He is like through its corporate life of embracing and treating one another in Christ with love and respect. Not only what we say and proclaim makes known by us who God is and what He is like, but equally, how we act and react to one another testifies to the nature and reality of our true God. Our Lord said this, essentially,

“I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.” (John 17:23)

There is something “extra” in weight and affirmation of truth when it is expressed or illustrated by many rather than just advocated by one or only a few. One of the benefits brought to churches through the Bolton Conference that the New England Reformed Fellowship (NERF) sponsors each October is the coming together of many who espouse Reformed theology and practice. When I first arrived here 16 years ago, some of the ideas and many of the terms seemed to be rather new to us in this church. And although the folks received what I said, as I sought to show them to be true to the Scriptures and to history, it was with attendance to the Bolton Conference that our doctrine and practice was affirmed and confirmed. I think that the unvoiced response of some was, “Well these are not just the views or the ravings of this guy from Germany or originally California, of all places, but others hold to these matters as well. There seems to be validity to these matters.”

Now more specifically, how do we “glorify God?”

1) We glorify God by having high *thoughts* of God. We are to be “casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5).

2) We glorify God through our *speech*. **1 Peter 4:11**, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: *that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ*, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

3) We glorify God *by living holy lives*. **1 Corinthians 6:18-20**. “Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

4) We glorify God through our good *deeds*. **Matthew 5:16**, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and *glorify your Father in heaven*.”

5) We glorify God by *servicing others*, seeking their well-being. This is the idea in our passage of **Romans 15:1ff**.

We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and *not to please ourselves*. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.” ... Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be likeminded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, *that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

6) We glorify God in the nature and manner in which we deal with *suffering*. Jesus Christ glorified His Father most in His submission to His suffering according to the will of God. Similarly, when we suffer patiently for doing rightly, we glorify God. Paul wrote to the suffering church at Thessalonica:

Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thess. 1:11f)

And Peter wrote: “Yet is anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter” (1 Pet. 4:16).

7) We glorify God through *praying*. Jesus encouraged His people, “And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, *that the Father may be glorified in the Son*” (John 14:13).

8) We glorify God by our private and corporate *worship*. **Ephesians 3:21**, “*Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*” When we gather on the Lord’s Day, we come to glorify God. We attempt to rehearse before ourselves who He is in truth and what He has done and will do through Jesus Christ. We celebrate these things. We exalt His name.

Do you see how shallow and empty it would be if we were to shape our church according to how people perceive their needs and whether or not they feel that they are being met? We are not here to serve ourselves, but we are here to serve God and one another for Christ’s sake.

9) We glorify God *by bringing others to Christ for salvation*. We glorify God by bringing great sinners to Him. Consider these words:

Recollect, again, that God has been pleased to stake His honor upon the gospel. Men desire a name, and God is jealous of His glory. Now, what has God pleased to select for His name? Is it not the conversion and the salvation of men? ... And do you think God will get a great name by saving little

sinner by a little Saviour? Ah! His great name comes from washing out stains as black as hell, and pardoning sinners who were the foulest of the foul. Is there one monstrous rebel here who is qualified to glorify God greatly, because his salvation will be the wonder of angels and the amazement of devils? I hope there is. O thou most degraded, loathsome sinner, nearest to the damned sinner, if this voice can reach you, I challenge you to come and prove whether God's mercy is a match for your sin. Thou Goliath sinner, come to Him; you will find that God can slay your enmity, and make you yet His friend, and the more His loving and adoring servant, because great forgiveness shall secure great love . . . Will you depreciate Christ so as to imagine that what He has accomplished is, after all, little, so little that it is not enough to save you? If it were in my power to single out the man who has been the most dishonest, most licentious, most drunken, most profane--in three words, most earthly, sensual, devilish--I would repeat my challenge which I gave just now, and bid him draw near to Jesus, and see whether the fountain filled with Christ's atoning blood cannot wash him white. . . There is in Him pardon "enough, and to spare." (C. H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 17, pp. 386-91)

Let us conclude with some words from a document produced by a group of Reformed leaders in 1996. **The Cambridge Declaration** made this statement:

We affirm that because salvation is of God and has been accomplished by God, it is for God's glory and that we must glorify Him always. We must live our entire lives before the face of God, under the authority of God and for His glory alone.

We deny that we can properly glorify God if our worship is confused with entertainment, if we neglect either Law or Gospel in our preaching, or if self-improvement, self-esteem or self-fulfillment are allowed to become alternatives to the gospel.

We say "Amen" to that statement and we are resolved as best as we are enabled by Him to order our lives and our church life to the end that He might be glorified.