

“A Single Purpose, Part 1”
(John 5:44)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

This morning, we’re continuing with the theme:

A heart for God.

What does the Lord want us to be?

What is He looking for in us?

How can we be His friend?

Last week, we saw

That one thing He’s looking for

Is that we do not love this world,

And that we do not conform to it.

John writes, “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15).

Paul writes, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom. 12:2).

We can’t be a friend of the world and God’s friend.

You have to abandon your marriage covenant with the Lord

To snuggle up to the world –

James tells us it’s spiritual adultery:

He writes, “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (James 4:4).

How can we love the things God hates

And love God at the same time?

You must choose one or the other.

Jesus says, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth” (Matt. 6:24).

That being the case,

We had better be sure

We know what the world is

So that we can avoid it.

How can you know?

The best way is get to know God better,

Because the world is the direct opposite of God.

The way bank tellers and store clerks

Are trained to recognize counterfeit money

Is by having them become

As familiar as they can with the real item.

When you can recognize the real item,

The counterfeit becomes obvious.

The better you get to know God,

The more easily you will recognize the world.

How can you get to know Him better?

The same way you do anyone else –

By spending time with Him.

The more time you spend with Him

In His Word and in prayer,

And by walking with Him throughout the day –

According to His will/commandments –

The better you will get to know Him,

And the more easily you will see the world for what it is.

If you don't walk with Him,

If you don't get to know Him better,

You won't be able to see the world

As clearly as you might otherwise.

Let's not forget at the same time

That we're not talking about a method

Of how to become a Christian.

You don't become a Christian by spending more time with God.

You do through the new birth –

Through faith and repentance,

By trusting in Jesus Christ

And turning from your sins.

What we are talking about
Is what is true of believers.
If you have trusted Jesus,
If you have turned from your sins,
You will spend time with the Lord.
And the more you spend with Him
In the Word and prayer,
The more you walk with Him,
The more you will grow
In your understanding of Him,
In your love for Him,
And in your hatred of this world.

It's just helpful to know how this process takes place
So that you can work with God,
As you are called to,
And grow into His image more quickly.

B. Preview.

Let's move on now to the next area
We should be working on
To become more of what God wants to see –
More of the kind of person

The Lord can support:

We need to live *with a single purpose!*

What should that purpose be?

Should it be to get the most fun we can out of life

Because we only go around once?

To get all the personal glory, fame, riches we can

Because the one who dies with the most toys wins?

No. That would be a waste of time.

The Bible says these things are vain, empty, worthless.

That's a recipe on how to throw your life away,

And to make it count for nothing.

If you want to use it for what really counts,

If you want to be the kind of person God can use,

Your purpose needs to be what He made you for,

What He redeemed you for:

To glorify Him (Rom. 11:36).

If you will do this,

Not only will you give greater glory to God,

But He will give greater glory to you:

He will make your life count.

Let's begin this morning by considering
That we should do our best to receive
The glory that God gives,
And not the glory of this world.

This evening, we'll look more at
What we can do to gain more of this glory.

Let's look at two things:

First, that seeking glory from the world is contrary to saving faith.

But second, that seeking glory from God alone is consistent with it.

II. Sermon.

A. First, let's consider that seeking glory from the world is contrary to saving faith.

Jesus says, If you want to be honored by men –
If you want the glory and fame of this world –
You will not enter His kingdom.

This is what He said to the Scribes and Pharisees
Who wanted this more than anything else.

“How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek
the glory that is from the *one and only* God?” (John 5:44).

What was Jesus saying?

First, He was talking about the way they lived.
Everything they did, they did for personal glory.

They did this in the things

They said they were doing for God.

When they prayed,

They stood on the street corner for all to see;

When they gave money to the poor

They blew a trumpet,

So all would take note.

When they worshiped in the synagogue,

They would take the front seats

So that everyone would look at them.

They did this in their social activities.

When they attended banquets,

They took the place of highest honor at the table.

They did this in their work/calling as teachers of the Law.

They particularly enjoyed the respect and honor

Of being called Rabbi or teacher.

They believed that when Messiah came

And set up – as they thought –

His political kingdom on earth

That would overthrow Rome,

And return the control of the kingdom to the Jews,
That they would receive the places of greatest honor in His kingdom.

They sought after glory,
But the glory they sought was from men.

What does Jesus say to them?
If that is what they wanted,
Then they would not be able to believe in Him!
They would not be able to trust Him,
And receive Him as their Messiah,
And enter into heaven at last.

Why not?
Because they wanted the exact opposite
Of what Jesus was offering
And what the kingdom is all about.

Jesus taught that when you pray
You must do it in secret
So that only your Father sees.

When you give money to the poor,
You must do it away from others,
Not even letting your left hand
Know what your right hand is doing,

So that only the Father sees.

When you go to a banquet

Or to worship,

You should take the lowest places,

So that if the Lord is pleased to do so,

He might exalt you ().

And as far as having places of honor in a political kingdom on earth,

Jesus said far from seeking to be lords,

You should humble yourself to become the servant of all ().

How could men who loved these things

Ever love and embrace a Savior

Who was opposed to everything they wanted?

They couldn't, and so they would perish,

Unless the Lord changed their hearts.

John said, If you love the world,

The love of the Father is not in you.

James said, If you become a friend of the world,

You become the enemy of God.

B. They were seeking honor from men,

But what should they have been seeking?

The honor that comes from God.

This alone is consistent with saving faith.

His honor is what you get

When you do what's right

For God and not for yourself.

Jesus said,

That's why they should pray in secret,

Give in secret,

Seek the lowest places in public,

And humble themselves and serve

Rather than be served by others.

These are the things God will honor.

Jesus says, "Your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."

He will move you up higher

So that you will have honor in the eyes of all.

He will make you the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

This is what they should have been seeking.

It's when you seek these things

That you show you really believe

What Jesus says is true.

It also shows that your heart
Really has been changed
Because now you want
What God has to give and not the world.

It shows you have saving faith,
And that you will enter the kingdom at last.

C. Now how can we apply this?

1. First, examine your heart.

What is it that you want?

What do you hope to gain out of life?

Do you want the things of this world?

A big house?

A nice car?

Enough money to do whatever you want?

To be the CEO of a great company?

Do you want to be a celebrity?

A great sports figure,

A great actor,

A great singer?

Do you want people to come see you perform?

Watch your movies,

Come to your concerts?

Do you want to make great discoveries?

Or do some great thing,

To have your name written down in the history books,

So that you will be remembered?

If that's what you want,

How is it any different from the Scribes and Pharisees?

All they wanted was honor and recognition

For the things they did,

For who and what they were.

It really isn't any different.

But if this is what you want

What does Jesus say to you?

“How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the *one and* only God?” (John 5:44).

How can you love Him

When you're only seeking things for yourself?

If you're going to follow Him, you must let go of the world.

You can no longer do what you do to be seen by others,

You must do it in secret, so that only the Father sees.

You can no longer serve yourself,
But you must humble yourself to serve others.

You can no longer live for your own glory,
You must strive after His.

You can't serve two masters.
You must choose one or the other.

If you would go to heaven,
You must choose to serve Him.

2. Second, do you really want the honor that comes from God?

Do you want the honor He gives in this world
By strongly supporting those whose hearts are fully His:
By making your life count for something?

Do you want the honor of being His children, His sons and daughters –
Which is a far greater than being the children of kings or presidents?

The honor of bearing His holy image,
Of being made like Him?

The honor of being raised to heaven when you die,
Receiving the crown of life,
Ruling and reigning with Jesus,
Being heirs of God

And fellow heirs with Jesus
Of a kingdom of perfect righteousness, peace and blessing,
That will exist long after all the kingdoms of this world
Have turned into dust and been destroyed –
Along with all the honors they had to give,
Including those of this country?

What do you really want?

If you have been born again from above,
If you are a true child of God,
Then you want these honors that come from God,
Because your eyes have been opened
To see how precious they really are –
To see their beauty and value –
As well as to see that what Solomon had to say
(As John Bunyan pointed out in Pilgrim's Progress)

About the honors of this world:

They are vanity!

They are worthless!

If you find after comparing them

That you really do want

The honors of this world more,

Than those that come from God,

Then consider what Jesus says this morning:

“How will you be able to believe if you seek honor from the world and not from God?”

If you choose to go the way of the Pharisee,

You will also arrive at his destination.

If that's your situation,

Turn from that path.

Trust the Lord to save you,

And then begin seeking the honor He has to give

Which is infinitely more precious. Amen.

This evening,

We'll consider how to gain more of this honor.

<http://www.graceopcmoesto.org>