

God Loves Us, but He Desires His Glory, Not Ours

In the American church today, we hear so much about God's love for us that we often think the gospel centers around "me" and "my needs" and "my goals" and "my dreams" and "my destiny." Rather, the gospel centers around the Lord—on His desires, His goals and His plans. And while He cares deeply for us, sending His Son to die for our sins, He is working to see His name glorified—not ours. Put another way, it's not about us; it's about Him. We are replaceable; He is not. And what matters most is not our reputation but His.

That's why the Lord's prayer begins, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name" (Matt. 6:9, NIV), meaning, "May Your name be revered as holy by the people of this world." Nothing is more important.

That's why God took action when the children of Israel were languishing in exile with their temple destroyed. But His was not first and foremost an act of mercy on their behalf. They were still in rebellion and sin. Rather, they were making Him look bad, as if to say, "The God of the Israelites has been defeated by our gods. He is not powerful enough to save His own people."

As we read in Ezekiel:

I had concern for my holy name, which the people of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone. Therefore say to the Israelites, "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them.

Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord when I am proved holy through you before their eyes” (Ezek. 36:21–23).

God will act for His own reputation. And when He does, it is for our good.

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