

September 26, 2010 by Steve Brandon



Grace and Glory

(Various)

1. Enjoy His Grace 2. Extend His Glory

I recently heard a pastor speak of his experiences at a vacation spot. I'm not quite sure where he was. But, I believe that he was at some sort of hotel or resort. Somehow, while at the resort, he was told that every employee in the organization knows exactly what the company's mission is. They work very hard to train their employees to know these things. It matters not whether the employee is a maid or a cook or a waitress or a manager or the CEO of the organization, the claim was that every employee can tell you what the mission of the company is.

And so, he told us, he tested it. Sure enough, as he engaged in conversations with several people in the organization, every one of them was able to communicate with him the mission of their organization. He said that it really helped everyone in the organization work together toward a common goal. And then, he turned to us pastors and said, "How well do the people of your church know what the mission of your church is?" When he said those words, I was cut to the heart. Because, I know that you can't do that, and because, I know that it's my responsibility to see that you can.

I know that over the years, I haven't worked to instill within you a simple way to say what we are seeking to accomplish here at Rock Valley Bible Church. Well, I want that to change this morning. So, the aim of my message is simple today. I want you to be able to leave this place, knowing what the mission of Rock Valley Bible Church is. I want for you to be able to repeat it to anybody who asks. And in weeks to come, this may take a bit of effort. But, I believe that it is worth it, that we all might work together toward our common goal.

Now, in some regard, you all know what we are about as a church. Our purpose is to worship Jesus Christ. Our purpose is to serve one another in this life. Our purpose is to reach the world for Christ. I think that any one of you could come up with these sorts of things. But, in terms of a short statement, I would like for all of us to be able to quickly share our mission.

Now, many churches have come up with many ways to say it. Some say it this way, "Our mission is to reach up to God, to reach in toward one another, to reach out to the world." That's a good way to say it. Some say it this way, "Our mission is to exalt the Savior, to equip the saints, to evangelize the world." That's also a good way to say it. Some say it this way, "Our mission is to love God, to love men." That's a good way to say it, too. You could probably come up with many more different ways how to say it. "To know Christ and to make Him known." "Win. Build. Send." "Come. Grow. Go."

This morning, I want to propose a way for us to say it. It's not that my way is the inspired way. Nor is it that these words are even original to me. They came to me as I was reading David Platt's book, "Radical" to our children. Listen to what David Platt says, ...

Consider why God formed us in the first place. As the self-sufficient God of the universe, he certainly had no unmet need in himself, so why did he create us? The last thing I want to do is to presume to know exhaustively the mind and motives of God. Nor do I want to oversimplify his ways. But it seems that God tells us why he made us. There is a twofold purpose evident from the beginning of history.

On the one hand, we were created by God to *enjoy his grace*. Apart from everything else God created, we were made in his image. We alone have the capacity to enjoy God in intimate relationship with him. The first word the Bible uses to describe that relationship is blessing. God blessed the human race, not because of any merit or inherent worth in us, but simply out of pure, unadulterated grace. God created humankind to enjoy his grace.

But that was not the end of the story, because on the other hand, God immediately followed his blessing with a command. "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.'" God gave his people his image for a reason—so that they might multiply his image throughout the world. He created human beings, not only to enjoy his grace in a relationship with him, but also to *extend his glory* to the ends of the earth.

Simple enough. *Enjoy his grace and extend his glory*. This is the twofold purpose behind the creation of the human race in Genesis 1, and it sets the stage for an entire Book that revolves around the same purpose. In every genre of biblical literature and every stage of biblical history, God is seen pouring out his grace on his people for the sake of his glory among all peoples. ^[1]

When I read those words, I remember stopping and telling my family, "What a great way to summarize our mission in life. We are those who enjoy His grace and extend His glory."

One of the things that struck me was David Platt's claim, "In every genre of biblical literature and every stage of biblical history, God is seen ^[1]

pouring out his grace on his people for the sake of his glory among all peoples". [\[1\]](#) believe that he speaks the truth. Whether it's the time of the creation or the time of the patriarchs or the time of the kings or the time of the church, in every stage of Biblical history, this is how God works - He pours out His grace for the sake of His glory among all peoples.

After a few days, I thought to myself of how these words would make a great mission statement for a church - for our church. Enjoy His Grace; Extend His Glory. As I have reflected upon these words over the past few weeks, I have become convinced that they will fit our assembly very well. And so, we arrive at the core of my message this morning. This is the way that I want for us to say it. **"Rock Valley Bible Church exists to enjoy His grace and extend His glory."**

I want for each of you to be like an employee at the organization where my pastor friend visited. When you are talking with those outside the church about our church, I want each of you to be able to tell them, "Rock Valley Bible Church exists to enjoy the grace of God and extend the glory of God."

Now, obviously, this statement has its disadvantages. It doesn't say everything that we believe as a church. Nor does it address some key areas of belief in our church. There is no mention of Christ, nor is there mention of the gospel, nor is there mention on the specific ways that we do things. But, as with any vision statement, you sacrifice the details for the sake of brevity. But, I believe that there are some details of this statement that are particularly helpful for us as we seek to grasp some sort of statement for the mission of our church.

Now, one of the reasons why I like this particular way of saying things is that it has a subtle tie with history. The first, and most famous question of the Westminster Catechism asks this, "What is the chief end of man." The answer comes like this: "The chief end of man is to glory God and to enjoy Him forever." These words are very calculated. These words have stood the test of time. They have been repeated and memorized for generations. "The chief end of man is to glory God and to enjoy Him forever."

This is the chief end of every single one of us. It's to glorify God by believing in Him, by worshiping Him, by proclaiming His worth to all who will hear! But, that's not all. We are also called "to enjoy Him." That is, we are called to delight in Him. We are called to find our happiness in Him. We are to be satisfied in Him. I love the way John Piper speaks about these phrases in the introduction of his book, "Desiring God." Listen to how he begins the book, ...

You might turn the world on its head by changing one word in your creed. The old tradition says, ...

The chief end of man is to glorify God
AND
enjoy Him forever.

"And"? Like ham *and* eggs? Sometimes you glorify God *and* sometimes you enjoy him? Sometimes he gets glory, sometimes you get joy? "And" is a very ambiguous word! Just how do these two things relate to each others.

Evidently the old theologians didn't think they were talking about two things. They said, "chief end," not "chief ends." Glorifying God and enjoying him were one end in their minds, not two. How can that be?

That's what this book is about.

Not that I care too much about the intention of seventeenth-century theologians. But I care tremendously about the intention of God in Scripture. What does God have to say about the chief end of man? How does God teach us to give him glory? Does he command us to enjoy him? If so, how does this quest for joy in God relate to everything else? Yes, everything! "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

The overriding concern of this book is that in all of life God be glorified the way he himself has appointed. To that end this book aims to persuade you that

The chief end of man is to glorify God
BY
Enjoying him forever. [\[2\]](#)

Let that sink in a few moments. "The chief end of man is to glorify God BY Enjoying him forever." I do believe that John Piper has it exactly right. As many of you know, he says it this way all the time, "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him." In other words, God receives the most glory when we find our happiness and joy and delight in God, so much so that we are compelled to give Him glory. We can do no other!

Let me illustrate what he's talking about. When does the conductor of a symphony get most glory? Isn't it when the concert finishes and the entire crowd, lost in themselves, spontaneously stands and claps loudly in utter ecstasy over what they just heard? That's way more glorious than when we a few people stand and clap, and out of obligation (or duty) a few more stand and clap until finally, the conductor receives a standing ovation. In the end, both cases ended in a standing ovation. But which one glorified the conductor most? The first: when nobody could contain themselves over the joy of the music that they had just heard! That's what John Piper is saying, "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him."

Or think about a marriage. When is a wife most loved? Isn't it when a husband has a multiplicity of options of things to do. He can go bowling with his friends. He can watch the game on television. He can go to the speedway. He can test drive a car down at the dealership. He can

take a motorcycle ride. He can work in his shop on some project. But when he finds none of these things as thrilling to him than spending the evening making his wife happy, it is at that moment that the wife is most loved and most honored and most cherished. In other words, a husband shows his love for his wife when she is the supreme object of his affections and desires.

And it's the same with God. God may be worshiped and glorified by multitudes and receive glory. But, if their worship is sad and lifeless and heartless, there is little glory in that. But, when the multitudes are eminently happy in God and worshiping Him out of sheer delight, "there's no place I'd rather be than here with the saints in worship of our God together." "A day in your courts is better than a thousand outside" (Ps. 84:10). "One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD and to meditate in His temple" (Ps. 27:4). When these sorts of things are felt in our souls, it's then that God receives the most glory because, it shows that God hasn't created a mindless multitude, who chant mantras of praise to Him. No, it shows that God has created a multitude that have found Him sufficient to satisfy all of the deepest longings of their hearts. And we worship the Lord out of sheer delight in Him!

And so, the saying goes, "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him." John Piper has devoted His life to explaining and expounding these words. And if you haven't wrestled with them, I encourage you to. "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him."

And the phrase that we are considering this morning as a mission of Rock Valley Bible Church contains some of these elements. It contains the elements of God's glory. It contains the elements of our joy in His glory. We enjoy the grace of God. We extend the glory of God.

I want for you to notice the four big words in this statement: Enjoy, Grace, Extend, Glory. Each of these words are helpful to us as a church. Let's consider these words one by one. First, ...

1. Enjoy

If there is anything that I want to see of Rock Valley Bible Church, it's this flavor of Christianity that is happy and joyful. A frumpy Christianity that worships and serves God out of duty and not delight is dishonoring to the Lord. There's a big difference between saying, "It's Sunday, I have to go to church." Rather than, "It's Sunday, there's no other desire that I want than to go to church." There is a big difference in these things. The one is detached and burdensome. The other is part of our being and communicates with the world around us the source of our joy. — it's in God and His people.

Sadly, I think that there's too much of the former in churches across our lands. I had the opportunity this week to speak with two older women. The one woman was telling me about her church. She said something to the effect of this: "I've been there at my church for many, many years now. You would think that I should have some friends there. But, I still feel like an outsider. I don't, maybe I should go to another church." You could easily sense the burden in her soul. Such a burden isn't glorifying the Lord.

The other woman was telling me about her church. She said something to the effect of this: "I love my church. The people there are genuine. Their love for Jesus is evident. They love each other; they love me. Why would I go any place else?" This is the sort of Christianity that I want to promote.

See, God hasn't called us to be a dis-interested people, who obey because He said that we must obey. Rather, we are called to be joyful worshippers. "Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth. Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before Him with joyful singing" (Psalm 100:1-2). "Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD. Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation" (Psalm 95:1). And that's what our mission is seeking to communicate: a joyful Christianity.

It also communicates the source of our joy: the grace of God.

2. Grace

At Rock Valley Bible Church, one of our core commitments is to the doctrines of Grace. That is, the doctrines that put forth God as absolutely sovereign and supreme in every way. He is sovereign over the creation. He is sovereign over the animals. He is sovereign over the angels and He is sovereign over man. As Abraham Kuyper once said, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'" R. C. Sproul has said that there is no maverick molecule in the universe. Daniel 4:34-35 reads this way, ...

Daniel 4:34-35

His dominions is an ever-lasting dominion.

And His kingdom endures from generation to generation.

All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,

But He does according to His will in the host of heaven

And among the inhabitants of the earth;

And no one can ward off His hand

Or say to Him, "What have You done?"

His sovereignty reaches even to our salvation. God is the author of our salvation. He is the One who has chosen us from the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4, 5; 2 Tim. 1:9). He is the One who gives us repentance (Acts 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25). He is the One who give us faith (Eph. 2:8-9). He is the One who changes us from those who were dead in our sin to those who are alive in Christ. He changes us from being blind to the spiritual realities of Jesus Christ to seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

And God has done this all by the sheer kindness of His grace. And we, at Rock Valley Bible Church, embrace these things and find our great joy in these things and enjoy these things. Such thoughts are what drives us to love and serve the Lord.

I remember a few years back meeting a visitor in our church. He came in very excited about the things that he saw on the website as well as in church. He loved that fact that we were into the Bible. He loved that fact that we weren't into trying to please everybody with a show each Sunday morning. He loved the fact that we didn't simply do fun and games with our youth. Anyway, on the Sunday that he came, we were launching some home Bible studies. He was very excited about this, so, he and his wife showed up at our house on Sunday evening. We were studying the doctrines of grace. And so, I gave him a book that we were loosely using as a supplement. The book is called, "Journey in Grace." We have it in our church library. It's a great book.

Anyway, he read the book that week and called me and told me that he did not believe the things written in the book. Furthermore, he went on to say that believing such things would be detrimental to his faith. He said, "If I believed that God chose me, and that my salvation was primarily because of His will and not my will, it wouldn't be helpful to me. I think that I would get lazy." I tried in vain to tell him of my experience, both personally and pastorally. I said, "In my experience, I have found just the opposite. Rather than stifling growth, such things stimulate a happiness and joy and eagerness to serve and love such a God who has been so incredibly kind to us."

The Puritan prayer says it well, ...

O God of grace,
teach me to know that grace

precedes,
accompanies, and
follows

my salvation;
that it sustains the redeemed soul,
that not one link of its chain can ever break.

From Calvary's cross, wave upon wave of grace

reaches me,
deals with my sin,
washes me clean,
renews my heart,
strengthens my will,
draws out my affection,
kindles a flame in my soul,
rules throughout my inner man,
consecrates my every thought, word, work,
teaches me Your immeasurable love.

How great are my privileges in Christ Jesus.

Without him I stand far off, a stranger, an outcast.
in him I draw near and touch His kingly scepter.

Without him I dare not lift up my guilty eyes;
in him I gaze upon my Father-God and friend.

Without him I hide my lips in trembling shame;
in him I open my mouth in petition and praise.

Without him all is wrath and consuming fire.
in him is all love, and the repose of my soul.

Without him is gaping hell below me, and eternal anguish.
in him its gates are barred to me by His precious blood!

Without him darkness spreads its horrors before me.
in him an eternity of glory is my boundless horizon.

Without him all within me is terror and dismay,
in him every accusation is charmed into joy and peace.

Without him all things external call for my condemnation;
In him they minister to my comfort, and are to be enjoyed with thanksgiving.

Praise be to You for grace,

and for the unspeakable gift of Jesus. [\[3\]](#)

Such is the nature of our church. We rejoice in the grace of God. **Enjoy. Grace.** I want to take the next two words together.

3. Extend Glory

God is all about His glory. God created the world for His own glory. "The heavens are telling of the glory of God" (Ps. 19:1). "The whole earth is full of His glory" (Is. 6:3). When Jesus walked among us, we saw the glory of God. "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory" (John 1:14). When Jesus returns, He will return "in His glory" (Matt. 25:31). Throughout eternity, it will all be about the glory of God. "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever" (Rev. 5:13).

We are called to acknowledge His glory. We are called to bring attention to His glory. "Ascribe to the LORD, O sons of the mighty, Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name; Worship the LORD in holy array" (Ps. 29:1-2). God says in Isaiah 48:11, "My glory I will not give to another." This is the chief end of our life, "to glorify God forever."

What is forever our call is our call today. But, it's not merely us. God calls us to spread this glory. "O magnify the LORD with me and let us exalt His name together" (Ps. 34:3). This is what I mean by the word "extend." We "enjoy God's grace and we extend God's glory." I believe that this is what Jesus was getting at in the great commission. "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" (Matt. 28:18-20).

As people believe the gospel and come to faith in Christ, God is glorified. Peter said that "The proof of your faith, ... will be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7). When multitudes - which no one can count - are around the throne saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb," God is greatly glorified.

Rock Valley Bible Church isn't merely for us. Oh, it's nice. Oh, it helps us all. Oh, it meets our spiritual need. But, Rock Valley Bible Church isn't merely for us. We are beggars and have found our bread here. We are called to go and tell others to come and feast with us. The second phrase of our mission ought to help remind us of these things. Our mission is to extend the glory of God. It's to spread the glory of His name. And I do believe that having this phrase on our minds will help us in extending His glory.

Yesterday, I was out filling up my car. Along came a young couple alongside the other side of the pump. She went into the store to get a drink or snack or something like that. He remained to fill up his car. He was happy and greeted me, saying, "Hello! How are you?" I said, "Doing great." Although I was in a hurry, because I was running a bit late for my appointment, this phrase was in my mind, "Extending His Glory." So, rather than being silent, I tried to engage him in conversation, thinking that perhaps, I might have an opportunity to extend God's glory. And so, I asked him, "Are you from out of town, just filling up for your trip, or are you from town." Then, he explained why he was so happy. He said that he was from Iowa City, Iowa, but was in town, getting an engagement ring for his fiancé (who was in the convenience store at the time). He had the diamond, but was looking for a ring to set the stone. He said that he had troubles with the jewelers in Iowa city, so he came here to Gruno's on Perryville. Now, why he did that, I'm not sure. I said to him, "Well, I hope that you have as much happiness in your marriage as I have had in my marriage." He said a few words, and then I rushed off to my appointment.

And as I was driving up the street, it hit me how I failed in extending God's glory. I could have said to this man, "You know, I've been married for 18 years. Let me give you some advice. If you want true happiness in your marriage, I encourage you to love Jesus more than you love your wife." And regardless of his response, I would have done a little part to extend the glory of God. As I would have had opportunity to put forth the glory of Jesus in making a marriage better. And I believe, as we keep this phrase in mind, "extending His glory," we'll be better prepared to look for opportunities and take them to extend God's glory.

This weekend, many of us men will be over at the Krauss' home, helping Andy to put a new roof on his house. It will be an act of love on our behalf to serve the Krauss family in this way. I do believe that such is an opportunity to extend God's glory. Jesus said, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

In other words, we should so shine that others see and God's glory is extended. Think about it, with this many men helping the Krausses, it will surely create a stir in their neighborhood. I'm sure that Andy will be asked by his neighbors, "Where did you get all that help?" He then will have a platform to talk. He can tell them and that his friends from his church have come to help. He can then talk of the ways that this is the way that our church works. "We enjoy God's grace, so we can extend God's glory." He can talk of how we have been transformed by the grace of the gospel of Christ to come and serve each other, thereby extending God's glory. He can invite others to join us for worship.

The mission of Rock Valley Bible Church is to enjoying His grace and extend His glory. Now, I do believe that there is a link between these two phrases. **We enjoy His grace, so we can extend His glory.** There are those who seek to do much about extending the glory of God without enjoying His grace. Such efforts create a rules-based, burdensome Christianity that lacks joy. May this not be the case for us at Rock Valley Bible Church. May our labors toward extending His glory always flow from our enjoyment of His grace. I say this, because, I believe that such a perspective is Biblical Christianity. We extend God's glory, because we have been recipients of His grace.

I want to spend the rest of our time this morning looking at passage after passage of Scripture that shows us the connection. We enjoy His grace, so we can extend His glory.

Genesis 12

Open your Bibles to Genesis 12. This is a great place to begin, because it's where God's great grace appears. It begins with a man, named

Abram. He was living in Ur of the Chaldeans, that is, in the land of Babylon.

Genesis 12:1-3

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.

This is the beginning of the nation of Israel. It all began from this man, Abram. It all came by divine declaration. God would take this one man and build an entire nation from his seed. And it wouldn't be merely any nation. It would be a great nation. God says of this man, "I will make you a great nation" (verse 2).

Do you see the grace? It comes in verse 2. Consider the promises that God made to him.

Genesis 12:2

I will make you a great nation. I will bless you. I will make your name great.

There was nothing in Abram that deserved such great blessing. In fact, he was from a family who worshiped idols (Josh. 24:2). According to Jewish tradition, it was worse than that. His family was in the business of making idols. When it comes to Abraham, himself, He wasn't the most righteous man. We see him lying on several occasions. And yet, nevertheless, God comes and chooses Abram from all the peoples on the earth, and says, "I will make you a great nation."

The joy of Abraham in the birth of Isaac surely must be unsurpassed. He was 100 years old. His wife, Sara, was 90. And God, by His grace, gave him a son! Isaac ... laughter ... joy! Abraham enjoyed the grace of God. But, the purpose of Abraham's life wasn't merely for him. It was for us.

Genesis 12:3

In you all the families of the earth will be blessed.

This is the anticipation of the gospel, because from the seed of Abraham came Jesus, who has brought blessing to every nation and all tribes and tongues and peoples (Rev. 7:9). The grace that Abraham experienced was the means of the glory of God extending throughout the entire earth. Not only does Abraham show forth grace and glory. We also see it in the account of the Exodus.

Exodus

Turn over to Exodus, chapter 3. At this point, God is appearing to Moses, and telling Him what's going to take place in Egypt. Beginning in Exodus 3:16, God says to Moses, ...

Exodus 3:16-22

"Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt. So I said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'" They will pay heed to what you say; and you with the elders of Israel will come to the king of Egypt and you will say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us So now, please, let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.'

But I know that the king of Egypt will not permit you to go, except under compulsion. So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it; and after that he will let you go. I will grant this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be that when you go, you will not go empty-handed. But every woman shall ask of her neighbor and the woman who lives in her house, articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and you will put them on your sons and daughters. Thus you will plunder the Egyptians."

That's sheer grace. The Israelites were slaves in Egypt. They had no rights. They had no privileges. They had no hope. That's why we see them crying out to the Lord at the end of chapter 2. In grace, the Lord came and delivered them. In verse 16, God said that He was concerned about them. In verse 17, God said that He would rescue them. In verses 18-22, God said that they would leave Egypt as wealthy people. Because of God's power, the Egyptians would be so afraid of the people that they would willingly give them silver, gold, and clothing! On the way out, they would enjoy the grace of God.

But, the Exodus wasn't merely about the Israelites enjoying the grace of God. It was also about extending the glory of God. Look at chapter 9, verse 16. Moses was speaking to Pharaoh, "Indeed, for this reason I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth." (9:16) Look at chapter 10, verse 1, ...

Exodus 10:1-2

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may perform these signs of Mine among them, and that you may tell in the hearing of your son, and of your grandson, how I

made a mockery of the Egyptians and how I performed My signs among them, that you may know that I am the LORD."

In other words, Israel enjoyed God's grace, so that they were able to extend God's glory by telling their children and their grandchildren what a glorious God He is to make such a mockery of Pharaoh and his army. They were mocked in the plagues. They were also mocked in the Red Sea. Look at chapter 14:16. Here we find the Israelites at the edge of the Red Sea, with the Egyptians in hot pursuit. The LORD said to Moses, ...

Exodus 14:16-18

"As for you, lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, and the sons of Israel shall go through the midst of the sea on dry land. As for Me, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. Then the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD, when I am honored through Pharaoh, through his chariots and his horsemen."

Some of your versions here translate this "I will get glory over Pharaoh." It's grace to Israel; It's glory over Egypt. God's glory extended far beyond Egypt. Turn over to Joshua 2. This is about 40 years later. The spies have come into the promised land. They meet a harlot named Rahab. She took the two spies into her home. Verse 9 records what she said to these men. Listen to the glory of God, ...

Joshua 2:9-11

and said to the men, "I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. When we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

1 Samuel 12

Let's move forward in the history of Israel, to the time when they installed their first king, King Saul. I want to show you an obscure passage that ties the grace of God into the glory of God. So, turn in your Bibles to 1 Samuel 12.

Now, if you remember, the installation of King Saul wasn't such a great time for Israel. Their desire for a king came from their desire to be like the other nations surrounding them (1 Sam. 8:5). When Samuel heard this, he was saddened. But, the LORD told Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them" (1 Sam. 8:7). So, Samuel warned the people of the troubles they would experience with a king (1 Sam. 8:10-18). He will take your sons for war. He will take your daughters for cooks and bakers. He will tax your vineyards and your seeds and your animals. Samuel said that when Israel realized this, they would cry out to the LORD for relief. But, he said, "the LORD will not answer you in that day" (1 Sam. 8:18).

Despite the warning, Israel still refused to listen to Samuel. So, the king was installed. Samuel spoke at the inauguration and didn't give an inspiring message. Instead, he rebuked those in Israel for their sin. In verse 19, we see how he finished up his talk.

1 Samuel 12:19-22

Then all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, so that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil by asking for ourselves a king."

Samuel said to the people, "Do not fear. You have committed all this evil, yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. You must not turn aside, for then you would go after futile things which can not profit or deliver, because they are futile. For the LORD will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the LORD has been pleased to make you a people for Himself.

Now, think carefully about that last verse, "For the LORD will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the LORD has been pleased to make you a people for Himself" (1 Sam 12:22). In other words, "The LORD will pour forth His undeserving grace upon His people, Israel, for the sake of the glory of His name." This is grace shown to Israel so that the glory of God may go forth.

Psalms 67

Let's continue on. Psalm 67. This is a great missionary Psalm. It speaks of spreading the glory of God's salvation throughout the whole world. As I read it, I want for you to see the means by which God extends His glory.

Psalm 67

God be gracious to us and bless us,
And cause His face to shine upon us - Selah.
That Your way may be known on the earth,
Your salvation among all nations.
Let the peoples praise You, O God;
Let all the peoples praise You.
Let the nations be glad and sing for joy;
For You will judge the peoples with uprightness

And guide the nations on the earth. Selah.
Let the peoples praise You, O God;
Let all the peoples praise You.
The earth has yielded its produce;
God, our God, blesses us.
God blesses us,
That all the ends of the earth may fear Him.

The missionary emphasis is all over this Psalm. Verse 2, "that your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations." Verse 3, "Let all the peoples praise You." It's not just us. It's every nation. Verse 4, "Let the nations be glad and sing for joy." Verse 5, "Let all the peoples praise You." Again, it's not just us. It's all the peoples. Verse 7, "that all the ends of the earth may fear Him."

But, do you see the means of this great expansion of God's glory? It's grace! God pours out His grace upon us, so that we would be enabled to extend His glorious salvation to the world. Verse 1, "God be gracious to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us. ... that Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations." Verse 7 puts it plainly, ... "God blesses us, that all the ends of the earth may fear Him."

We enjoy His grace, so we can extend His glory.

Acts 4

This is the pattern of the early church. Turn with me to the book of Acts. In Acts, chapter 2, we read of the Holy Spirit being poured out upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost. This gives Peter an opportunity to preach Jesus. Three thousand people believed and were baptized. In Acts, chapter 3, we read of Peter and John healing a lame beggar. This gives Peter another opportunity to preach Jesus. Another two thousand believe.

Such disturbances alarmed the religious establishment of the day. And so, they arrest Peter and John and place them in prison. Why? Because they were "proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead" (Acts 4:2).

The next day, they were placed before the counsel and asked to give an account for what they were doing. Peter said this, ...

Acts 4:8ff

... Rulers and elders of the people, if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead--by this name this man stands here before you in good health. "He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the chief corner stone. "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

In preaching the gospel like this, he was extending the glory of God! The gospel wasn't only reaching the people - many of whom believed - but, he was also reaching the religious leaders at the top. But now, note the connection between Peter's boldness and Peter's experience.

Acts 4:13

Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

It's right here that we see the connection that I'm talking about. Peter enjoyed the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in the power of his preaching. Remember, this is the one who pledged to stand by Jesus' side, even if it meant death. And yet, he was the same one who denied Jesus three times before his crucifixion. But, Jesus restored Peter into ministry. Peter knew, experienced and enjoyed the grace of God in his life, and being with Jesus gave Him the boldness to extend His glory. Verse 14 continues the story, ...

Acts 4:14-18

And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply. But when they had ordered them to leave the Council, they began to confer with one another, saying, "What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. "But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name." And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

But, please notice again the connection between grace experienced and glory being extended.

Acts 4:19-20

But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."

Peter says, "We have experienced the grace of God. It has sunk deep within us. We can't help ourselves. We must speak. We must extend His glory." And that's exactly what happened in verses 21 and 22.

Acts 4:21-22

When they had threatened them further, they let them go (finding no basis on which to punish them) on account of the people, because they were all glorifying God for what had happened; for the man was more than forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

There are many other places that we could go to show that it is the grace of God that empowers extending the glory of God. For instance, 1 Timothy 1:12-17 is a good place to show the connection. The mercy shown to Paul is, in part, the power of his ministry. Furthermore, Paul's testimony in Galatians 1:15-16 contain many of the same elements.

OK, one final turn in our Bibles.

1 Peter 2:9-10

1 Peter 2:9-10

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

This is a picture of enjoying God's grace and extending God's glory! The first sentence shows us who we are in Christ. We are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession." These are all phrases used in the Old Testament to describe the people of the scattered churches, many of whom were surely Gentiles (see 1 Peter 4:3-4). But, Peter identifies them using covenant terms! This is sheer grace!

Furthermore, the phrases used in verse 10 describe grace to the full extent: "you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." This is almost the definition of grace. At one time, you were not God's people and expecting the wrath of God. But, now, you have been called into being the people of God, who know mercy and not wrath. This is pure grace!

Why was all of this grace shown? Peter writes, "so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." That's how we extend God's glory, ... by proclaiming the excellencies of Christ.

So, experience the grace of God in your soul and let it flow out to all who will hear. Proclaim the excellencies of Christ.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on September 26, 2010 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] David Platt. Radical, pp. 64-65.

[2] John Piper. Desiring God, pp. 13-14.

[3] "Privileges," from The Valley of Vision.