

THE VISION FOR THE GLORY

Dr. Steve McEvoy

The Vision for the Glory

As believers there are huge questions that we need to ask. To begin with, 'Why do we exist'? 'What is our ultimate mission while living here on Earth'? 'What are we to set our vision upon as we continue in our walk with God'? The answer to these questions establishes an important target that radically affects everything that we do both individually and corporately as we, the church, gather together.

I want to present a simple target for which we are to yearn. This target is the manifestation of the Glory of God on earth. I want to take you on a journey in the Word that will reveal this vision that we are to pursue with all of our hearts.

The journey begins with a key question and a simple point of focus. In all that we do as believers and in our work in the church, are we serving a "people first" mindset or a "God first" mindset? Many of our church battles exist because we have built the church on a foundation focused on the needs and wants of people as the first or main priority. In this article I want to introduce a different mindset. This mindset is about putting first the pursuit of God and His Glory revealed in our midst. It means setting our hearts on the manifestation of His Presence and His activity in all that we do. It is the Presence of God that meets needs. Many of life's challenges will be met simply by His Presence manifesting in greater fullness.

Jesus spoke to this issue of having a "God first" mindset. He spoke about the reality of the needs that we have in our earth walk. Those needs are food, clothes, shelter and more. These are all important and not to be denied. However, they are all earth focussed. Jesus said,

33. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things will be added to you.

Matthew 6:33

Jesus didn't deny the needs that are part of our earthly existence nor our right to enjoy the blessing of having them met. However, He pointed us to a different focus and pursuit for our lives. Although His language in this text is the language of the kingdom of God, I want to introduce to you an amazing aspect of that kingdom.

That is, the revelation of the Glory of God.

Glory Entered Glory Lost

In God's original creation of mankind, we are told that Adam and Eve were naked. What is interesting, however, is that they didn't know that they were naked until sin entered their lives. After their disobedience we are told,

7. *Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.*



Genesis 3:7

This tells us that something happened that affected them physically. When sin entered, something was forced to leave. That something was the Glory of God. We are given insight into this in Paul's teaching. He said,

23. *For all have sinned and **fall short of the Glory of God.***

Romans 3:23

This is a powerful truth. The Glory of God was in such manifestation in the lives of Adam and Eve that it covered them like clothing. Its departure caused a whole lot of problems in their lives. Shame concerning their nakedness was only one small part.

The generations that followed did not know what was lost. Only Adam and Eve had tasted of His Glory in full manifestation in their world. However, we see in God's Word that His clear intention is to lead His people in a journey of the restoration of His manifested Glory. The simple fact is, He wants His Glory in manifestation in our lives.

If we jump ahead many years, we are introduced to a man named Moses. Moses was raised up as a deliverer of God's people. It was God's plan to use Moses to lead His children towards the

manifestation of His Glory once again in their lives and on the earth.

During their journey in the wilderness, they were running out of food. While the people grumbled, God revealed to Moses that they would be provided for and that it would be a manifestation of His Glory. We read,

7. *And in the morning **you will see the Glory of the Lord,** for He hears your grumbings against the Lord; and what are we, that you grumble against us?*

8. *And Moses said, "This will happen when the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening, and bread (manna) to the full in the morning; for the Lord hears your grumbings which you grumble against Him. And what are we? Your grumbings are not against us but against the Lord.*

Exodus 16:7, 8

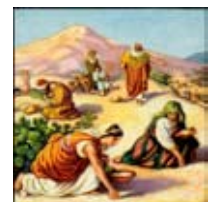
Aaron went on to explain that the Glory of God would manifest and provide bread (manna) and meat. This miraculous provision came through an immediate manifestation of God's Glory. As Aaron was explaining this to the people, God revealed Himself. We read,

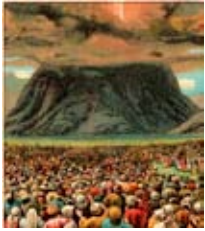
10. *And it came about as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, **the Glory of the Lord appeared** in the cloud.*

Exodus 16:10

While the children of Israel were focusing upon their need for food, God was focusing on His desire to bring back His Glory into the midst of His people. Each miracle that God did in the wilderness was a manifestation of His Glory making contact with the earth.

God led Moses to prepare the children of God for the encounter of their lives. Camped before the





mountain, they were about to meet this God that was leading Moses. Notice what happens.

16. So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.

17. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

18. Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently.

19. When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder.

Exodus 19:16-19

This is a manifestation of the Glory of God. We are told that the Israelites were being brought out to “meet God”. As they encountered a manifestation of His Glory making contact with the earth, the outcome was thunder, lightning, a thick cloud, smoke (where there is smoke there is also fire), a violently shaking mountain and a loud trumpet. The people trembled because of what they were seeing and experiencing from this all-consuming God.

Stop here and imagine what would happen to our meetings if we, the church, had this kind of encounter with God’s Glory. Would anything change about our gatherings? Would anything change about our conversations? May I suggest that this would abruptly shift our mindset from ourselves, our needs and our preferences and suddenly and swiftly place our eyes and hearts upon God Himself.

The Glory Returned

Now, as a result of this mountain experience, the children of God know Him and His amazing Glory (at least from a distance). They knew what the Glory of God looked like because they saw it firsthand. God called Moses to lead a nation of people to a place where His Glory could be in their midst all the time. God placed Moses upon a mountain and led him into an encounter with Him and gave him significant revelation. Notice a small piece of this encounter. It says,

8. And let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them.

9. According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it.

Exodus 25:8-9

This place that Moses was to construct was called a “**tabernacle**”. The word in the Hebrew has a basic meaning of ‘residence’. God was revealing to Moses that He was going to lead a building project that would become a home where God’s Presence could “**dwell**” again on the earth. What was lost in the fall was on the verge of beginning to be restored and brought back to the earth. In the garden, mankind was meant to be the permanent place where the Glory of God resided. In this critical step of restoration, the Glory was about to return and be housed in a building upon the earth.



Included in this instruction was the charge, “**as the pattern of**”. The word “**pattern**” implied the plans for the building. God is the builder and the plans for this building must come from Him and be obeyed precisely. Why? Because this building was going to be a house for the Glory of God!

Moses listened and obeyed. In chapters 39-40 we have the phrase, “**just as the Lord had commanded**” repeated 18 times. What is the point of this repeated emphasis of Moses actions? The point is, in all that was given from God to Moses to do, Moses did it to complete perfection. All direction came from God’s revealed blueprint. Moses’ authority was simply to put God’s plan into action and lead the people to make it happen.



Notice the result. We read,

33. ...Thus Moses finished the work.
34. Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the **Glory of the Lord** filled the tabernacle.
35. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud (a manifestation of the Glory) had settled on it, and the **Glory of the Lord** filled the tabernacle.
36. And throughout all their journeys whenever the cloud (the Glory) was taken up from over the tabernacle, the sons of Israel would set out.
37. But if the cloud (the Glory) was not taken up, then they did not set out until the day when it was taken up.
38. For throughout all their journeys, the cloud of the Lord (the Glory) was on the tabernacle by day, and there was fire (the Glory) in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel.

Exodus 40:33-38

Isn’t this amazing! God accomplished His goal of bringing His Glory back to the earth to dwell continuously in the midst of His people. It wasn’t the Garden of Eden restored, but this was one big step along the road to recovery.

If you study the history of Israel, you will see that there was a constant battle for the Glory of God to remain in their midst. The Glory could not stay because the people rebelled and strayed from the commands of the Lord. Despite this battle,

God repeatedly uttered prophetic promises that His Glory would return and manifest on the earth again.

The Promise of the Glory

There are many passages concerning the Glory of God returning to the earth. One of many that I love is a prophetic picture that pointed ahead to fulfillment in Jesus. We read,

1. Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the **Glory of the Lord** has risen upon you.
2. For behold, darkness will cover the earth, and deep darkness the peoples; But the Lord will rise upon you, and **His Glory will appear** upon you.
3. And nations will come to your light, (His Glory) and Kings to the brightness of your rising.



Isaiah 60:1-3

We certainly live in a time of great darkness. What is the answer to removing this darkness? It is not about exposing sin and trying to fix everything that is wrong in people. If the light of God’s Glory was shining, darkness would be exposed and flee every time. Our answer is seeing the light of the Glory of God enter our world and be manifest once again.

God made His intention clear with some astounding declarations in His Word.

He said,

21. But indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the **Glory of the Lord**.

Number 14:21

14. For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the **Glory of the Lord**, as the waters covers the sea.

Habakkuk 2:14

Here lies planet earth and all of its contamination from sin in the lives of people. How does God respond? He declares that it is His intention to release His Glory back into its midst. This is an incredibly amazing evidence of God's mercy, grace and love for mankind. God's Glory residing on the earth was God's plan in the Garden and it is still His plan to restore it on the earth today.

The Glory Appeared

Jumping ahead to Jesus' ministry, we see that during His earthly ministry, the Glory of the Father was revealed through a human body. In John we are told,



*14. And the Word became flesh (Jesus), and dwelt among us, and we **beheld His Glory, Glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.***

John 1:14

34. For He (Jesus) whom God (The Father) has sent speaks the words of God (The Father); for He (the Father) gives the Spirit (To Jesus) without measure.

John 3:34

These two amazing scriptures tell us that in one human body (Jesus), the Fullness of the Glory of God was revealed on the earth. This Glory manifested without any restrictions and met the brokenness of mankind throughout the land. In summary of Jesus' ministry we are told,

38. You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God (The Father) anointed Him (Jesus) with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He (Jesus) went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God (The Father) was with Him (Jesus).

Acts 10:38

So, what does the Glory of God do when it is present? It heals and restores whatever is broken. It drives out darkness and replaces it with light. It takes whatever is hopeless and brings hope back into existence. It heals marriages, fixes bodies, removes addictions, and I could go on and on. The revealed fully manifested Glory of God restores things back to the original intent of God. The Glory of God is the cry of mankind regardless of whether or not mankind knows it.

As Jesus walked the earth, the Glory of the Father manifested through Him and met people right where they were. If the Glory cloud of God were to arise into its fullness today, this same Presence of God would be meeting people right where they are in incredibly powerful ways.

Are the needs of people important? Absolutely! This is what the Glory of God is all about. I will inject again the thought stated at the beginning of this article. When we serve a church system that is "people first", we fall short of ever seeing the needs of people met as God intends. What we are left with is a lot of hard work. It is so easy to let the mission of the church become just serving the needs, preferences or even complaints of the people. But when the Glory of God is on scene, everything changes and it ceases to be "first about people" and becomes "first about Him".

We could ask an evaluative question at this point. How many battles have been fought in the midst of the church that had their root in this very issue? When the restored manifestation of God's Glory is the foundation of what we are pursuing and why the church gathers, our focus changes drastically. The Glory of God will meet needs. This is a beautiful by-product of God's manifested Presence. When the people of God come together with this as the foundation, then the manifested Presence of God becomes what the church is all about. Preferences,



complaints and silly battles will disappear when the manifested Glory of God is the focus of the gatherings of the church.

The church must return to the Glory of God being our first pursuit, and everything else will be met in the process.

The Pattern for Us



If we are going to align ourselves with God's vision for the church then our sight also must be set on the restoration of the manifestation of God's Glory. After all, if God said that the earth will be filled with His Glory, then our response is simply to

join Him in seeing this come to pass.

During the earthly ministry of Jesus, there was one body (Jesus) and the fullness of the Glory was revealed.

Now, in the church age, we have the same fullness in a different location.

Paul said,

22. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,

*23. Which is His (Jesus') body, **the fullness of Him** who fills all in all.*

Ephesians 1:22-23

So, here is the pattern in the New Covenant. The Glory of God is here. So, why don't we see it in similar ways as it was revealed in the Old Testament? Because it takes the body (many people) to reveal the same fullness that Jesus walked in as He lived in His one physical body. No leader or single individual can walk in this fullness. It is reserved for a larger corporate gathering of people. The Glory of God deposited in you is

meant to join with the Glory of God deposited in others and together lead us to a place of a fuller measure of the Glory revealed. The body (the church now) is where the fullness of His Glory is meant to be revealed.

Paul gave us this vision in chapter two. He said,

21. In whom the whole building being fitted

together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;

22. In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

Ephesians 2:21-22

This passage directly links us to the Old Testament tabernacle with which I began this article. Earlier we read that Moses was instructed by God to build a tabernacle. When completed this tabernacle was to be a place for God to house His Presence. You will recall that when Moses did "**just as the Lord had commanded**", God showed up and made His home in their midst. The word "**dwelling**" in this verse is a word that refers to a 'habitation'. A habitation is a home, residence or place where someone lives. God is telling us that it is His desire to create a New Testament place where His Glory is present all the time.

This is the fulfillment of the Old Testament pattern but it is much better because this home is in the midst of His people and not in a physical building. Individually we are a "**temple**" of God (1 Corinthians 6:19) and corporately are meant by God to become a big house full of His Glory (Eph. 2:22).

When the people of God gather and the Glory of God manifests, needs are met, lives are changed and the influence of sin simply disappears. This is God's vision for His church.

So what is hindering us from moving towards this destination?



The Battle for the Glory



The answer is both our “*mindset*” and a misunderstanding of Jesus’ “*functions*”.

The first thing is our “*mindset*”.

We are so familiar and cultured to serve a “*people first*” mindset that the pursuit of God’s Glory takes a subtle different priority. Jesus has given pastors and their function is massively important. However, as I will explain shortly, the pastoral eyes of Jesus focus on people. This is not a wrong focus as it is from Jesus Himself. But when it is out of order with God’s priority, we attempt to build something entirely different than what God intended. A simple evaluation of the current church would tell us something. Pastoral burnout is normal and pastoral commitment to one church is typically short-term. Pastors quitting their ministry entirely and pursuing other vocations is statistically seen to be happening on a large scale. I will say it again, the pastoral gift is not wrong. It is given as part of Jesus’ ministry to the church. But, when this pastoral function stands alone, it often finds itself trying to fulfill its design apart from an essential foundation that this gift may not necessarily establish.

This leads us to the second hindrance which is our lack of understanding Jesus’ design and intended “*functions*” of the five-fold ministry gifts.

I will end this article with a focus on a key element of what is required to get us to the place where the Glory is revealed in greater fullness. In this Ephesians text, Paul said,

19...God’s Household (the place where His Glory manifests),

20. Having built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,

Ephesians 2:19-20

This house that contains God’s Glory has two ministries that work to establish and ensure that a God intended “**foundation**” exists. These gifts are “**apostles and prophets**”. They are in no way more important than others. What is important is the priority in the order of their function. A “**foundation**” in a building always comes first before the walls, roof and the rest of the structure. This “**foundation**”, once set, will ensure that everything else that is built will be for the same purpose. That is, the house built will be a place where the Glory of God can dwell. This results in all work being done is to serve the singular purpose of God manifesting His Glory in our midst.

A basic element of the apostles’ work (and prophets with them) is to constantly point the church to the kingdom of God coming now. Apostles thrive on Jesus’ prayer, “**Come Kingdom of God**” (Matthew 6:10). Apostles push for the release of a heavenly atmosphere to invade now in every gathering of the church. Where this is only one aspect of the apostolic ministry, this is radically different from making “*people first*”. Apostles push to make God and the pursuit of His Presence “*first*” all the time.

We see in Acts that the needs of the widows were increasing and this challenged the apostles to pull away from their focus on prayer and the Word (Acts 6:1-7). They appointed others to serve the needs of the people so that they could stay in their primary function of engaging the manifest Presence of God in their midst. No wonder the signs and wonders were normal amidst the apostles’ work. The simple fact is apostles will even pull away from the needs of people to pursue this mandate in their life.

I understand this now like never before. During the years of my pastoral ministry, I was caught in this tension. Pastoral work focuses on people. Apostolic gifts focus on bringing God into our midst. We are



so familiar with pastoral ministry that when an apostolic leader finds himself in a pastoral role, he will face this immense struggle. I tried again and again to meet the expectation of moving toward the people. The culture and system of the church demands it. However, the apostolic nature would pull me away into a pursuit of God.



In the end, I failed to meet the need of people and I failed to satisfy my call to pursue the manifestation of the Presence of God.

Many apostolic leaders are trapped in pastoral roles. Why? Because in our current church system, few will fund a leader who pulls away from the people! If we are going to receive apostolic leaders on the inside of the church, then we are going to have to be willing to release them from meeting the demand of people. Apostolic leaders need to be free to be part of the life of the church and yet be known for their ongoing pursuit of heaven manifesting now in the midst of the church.

Prophets link up with the apostles. The prophets yearn to see and hear what the Spirit is saying and doing. Prophets look into the future and work to pull it into the now. They thrive in creating or being part of atmospheres that focus on pursuing the Presence of God. At times, the apostles will do or lead what has been heard by the prophets. Together, they are an incredible team intended to establish this vital and supernatural Presence of God in the life of the church.

As the building is rising into the place of God's intent, the apostles and prophets keep the pursuit of God's Glory and His Presence as the first and foremost reason for the church's purpose.

The evangelists who are raised up from this foundation are not just proclaimers of Jesus. They bring God's power and Glory to lost people and meet their real needs. As they demonstrate the kingdom through a supernatural lifestyle, they

include the proclamation of a Saviour that cares for their eternity (see Philip in Acts 8:4-13). The result is that many get saved and the church is built.

Pastors who are raised up on this foundation recognize that, unless they are gifted apostolically, they may not be the one to create the "kingdom first" environment within the people. They can have a heart for it and try with all their might. However, one of the greatest gifts a pastor brings is to connect their people with this awesome life giving Presence of God. Whether they are used to create it or lead others to it, pastors are essential for the health of the body. Pastors move towards the people and make it safe for them to make contact with the Presence of God. The result is that more and more sheep meet the life changing Presence of God and the church is built.

Teachers who are raised up on the foundation laid by the apostles/prophets are not focussed simply on teaching what is right and what is wrong. They teach people how to connect with the kingdom of God and walk in its greater fullness now. The things that are wrong will be removed by the release of and the ministry of the Presence of God. These kinds of teachers take people by the hand and use the Word to guide others into a vital encounter with our awesome God. The result is that more and more people are demonstrating the kingdom of God in their individual life and the church is built.

In all that I just said, God and the restoration of His Glory are central. People get swept up by His Presence when it is manifesting in the midst of the church.



The Conclusion



One of the greatest and critical discoveries that I have made is the foundational difference between the gifts of apostle and pastor. Significant misunderstanding can arise because those whose gift mix is singularly apostolic or singularly pastoral can be complete opposites. In conclusion, it is imperative that the nature of Jesus in one who has been given an apostolic gift and the nature of Jesus in another who has been given a pastoral gift recognize that both have come from Jesus. This understanding is also important in the hearts of those who receive from the ministry of these individuals. Without a deep level understanding of these differences, division can take place between these ministries or with the people who are drawn to either of their ministry gifts.

By Jesus' design, apostolic leaders are so passionate and focussed on the Kingdom of God entering into our existence now that they make this a major area of pursuit. Apostolic leaders by nature move away from the work of meeting the ongoing needs of people and look for ways to bring the pursuit of the manifested Presence of God into every gathering. As we saw with the case of the apostles in the book of Acts, they maintained their focus on the Word and prayer but empowered others to serve the needs of the widows. This is a major way in which apostolic leaders care for people. They demonstrate their care by continuously pushing the body of Christ forward in pursuit of God's Presence in everything that is done by the church. The mindset of the apostle is that the manifested Presence of God should be entering the midst of every gathering of the church. The by-product of His Presence manifesting is that the needs of people will be met again and again through the activity of the Holy Spirit at work through people. It is upon this foundation that the other gifts are designed to build structures.

Pastors have a gift mindset that moves them

deeper into personal interaction with the lives of the sheep. It is easy to see that pastors care for people because they express it through direct engagement with people and they meet or ensure that their need is met. Pastors push the church towards developing structures that pull the sheep together and establish deeper community in all that they attempt to achieve. This does not imply that pastors do not have a heart for God's manifested Presence in the midst of the church. For some this may be the case, and there would be a need for this aspect of apostolic ministry to establish this essential foundation. For others, the partnership with those gifted apostolically will help ensure that the church is making the Presence of God a firm foundation in all that they do.

The end result is that *matured apostolic leaders* will have a heart for the sheep yet potentially lack the gift design to create community where every individual feels safe and valued.

The end result is that *matured pastoral leaders* will have a heart for the kingdom of God manifesting now yet potentially lack the gift design to create this environment and make it the priority of each individual.

The end result is that these two opposite natures and unique designs have come from Jesus and are meant to serve the church together.

We need apostles to ensure the priority of the kingdom is present in the everyday ministry of the church. We need pastors to ensure that every individual is valued and that structures are in place to ensure that they are growing in their walk with God and each other.

In Corinthians, Paul stated that God gave to the church **“First apostles, second prophets and third teachers...”** (1 Corinthians 12:28). These gifts are in this order because when





the foundation has been laid to make the manifested Presence and Glory of God central to the gathering of the church, every other gift will use their unique design to build it into a living reality.

There is a house that God is building that is meant to bring His Glory back into the earth and drive darkness from our midst. We need the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, each free to fulfill their unique role to help see this house built and His Glory return.

It is my prayer that pastors will recognize their need for the apostles' work on the inside of the church. It is my prayer that apostles will not have to pull their ministry away from the church but will use their gifts to build the church and help us to see the Glory of God manifested more and more.

Will you join me in making it your prayer as well!

Come, Glory of God, come! God, we are desperate for Your Presence to impact everything that we do!

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- Through his apostolic teaching ministry, Steve assists leaders in the church in *“helping activate their people in fulfilling the calling of God on their lives”*.
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