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I've got to say, I'm really struck by divine timing this morning, and seeing God's ordering our steps. I see it with Catherine Sullivan, and I see it on the day that we had our home church. I'm glad that we didn't have to ask Rhonda to come in and put on a traditional Sunday morning service on that day. I see God's fingerprints all over that, and He is so good. So let's pray to Him right now. Our Father, our Father in Heaven, You are such a loving Heavenly Father. You are so good to us. We will never understand in this lifetime all the wonderful things You do for us behind the scenes, just to show us Your love. And we praise You and we thank You that You have shown this love to us not because we earned it or deserved it, but because You are glorious and magnificent. And You said, "I am going to show these people love, because that's who I am." We thank You and we praise You that that's who You are and that that's what You've done for us. Please help us to understand these truths, God, as we learn from Your Word. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen. This week, well, this week my computer died. So I'm going to be reading from handwritten notes, so bear with me. God has been speaking to me about His glory. And so we're going to start with some verses about the glory of God. They're in your bulletin if you want to read along. Revelation 4, 11. "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they were created and have their being." Revelation 5, 12. In a loud voice they sang, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength, and honor and glory and praise." Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth. Revelation 5, 13. I'm going to start on the second line. "To Him who sits on the throne into the Lamb, He prays in honor and glory and power, forever and ever." And then in Jude, verses 24 and 25. "To Him who is able to keep you from falling, and present you before His glorious presence, without fault and with great joy, to our only God and Savior, be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore. Amen. God is glorious. He is amazing and wonderful and all-powerful and all-loving. Everything He does glorifies Himself, and rightly so, because He is glorious. Everything He does brings glory to Himself, that's just how incredible and amazing He is. Even when God glorifies something, like when He glorified His Son, it was because His Son glorified Him. Everything God does brings glory to Himself. And I know when I hear that, I was raised with - my parents taught me, "Don't make a big deal out of yourself. Don't be proud and arrogant, and tell people how great you are." And so when I hear that about God, I say, "We shouldn't think of God like that, but the fact is He is supreme. He is ultimate, and He can glorify Himself, and rightly so, He can make a big deal out of Himself, and He is the biggest deal." And this is where we find ourselves. God created for Himself people to love, and who would love Him in return. And that was glorious. But those people were built. They did not glorify Him. And they got into sin and death, and they got separated from Him. And so God, without violating His perfect, glorious judgment, paid the penalty for our sins, and we are bought and rescued, and that also is glorious. Everything is for the glory of God. Everything He does, everything created was for His glory, and everything we do is supposed to be for His glory. When we are blessed, it glorifies God, because He is the one from whom all blessings come. When we worship, it glorifies God, because it shows that we love and honor and revere something far above than anyone else's opinion of us, and that our love for Him is worth more than anything on this earth. When we suffer and yet survive, it glorifies God by showing how He brought us through those difficult times. When we study the Word and live by its principles, this glorifies God because it shows His wisdom and love and grace that He teaches us how to properly live. When we are in need and we turn to prayer, this glorifies God by showing our dependence upon Him and how He is a Father who can be trusted and who cares for His children. When we refuse to cheat and yet we still get ahead, it shows His provision for us and His willingness to honor our righteousness. When we refuse to cheat and yet suffer for it, this glorifies God by showing our dependence upon Him and our love for His holiness. When we give away all our money and possessions for His cause, it shows our radical love and devotion for Him, as well as our complete reliance on Him to care for us and to provide for us. When we don't just do the easy good stuff, when we also go out of our way and do the difficult good stuff, this glorifies God because it shows our radical love for Him and our abandonment of self to the One who is greater and our reliance upon Him to sustain us. When we give up our security or our job or our luxury or our nest egg, any of the things that the world says are of the utmost importance and that we should never risk, when we give those up for Him, it screams to the world that there is no true safety in their safety nets and that there is a life worth living beyond this one and that there is treasure that does not spoil, fade, or perish. When we suffer and die for Him, it shows the world that there is something worth dying for and that we will believe and we're faithful even unto death. When men go to heaven through a saving faith in Christ, it glorifies God by showing what greater price He paid out of love to save us. And when men go to hell through their rebellion against Him, this still glorifies God because it shows His holiness and His fairness and that He does not sneak anyone in through the back door, judges as a perfect, righteous, holy judge, each man fairly according to their works and repays each according to what they have done. It shows He does not break His promises and is never unfair but that He is completely holy, entirely devoid of corruption, and entirely fair and impartial in His judgments. Everything God does glorifies Him and everything we do should glorify Him. 1 Corinthians 10.31 says, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." Do it all for the glory of God. God has been convicting me this week of all the decisions that I've made that aren't based on His glory. Do I love Him? Is He the greatest? Is He first in my life and in my heart? If God and His glory and His kingdom and His will are truly first in my heart, then how should I be making this or that decision? Am I passing all the glory I receive onto Him or am I withholding part of it for myself like Anna Nierson's supplier? Because of what Christ has done, my entire life is to be a demonstration of a man entirely dependent upon Him, entirely dedicated to His glory, and entirely sustained by Him. For a long time, I found it difficult to live like this, to glorify God in everything. That's because I didn't feel it in my heart. I wasn't overcome with love and devotion and hunger for Him. But God showed me that this is not His style of love. When you or I love something or someone, it's because we get something from what we are loving. Our love is reciprocal. But God has no needs. He's perfect. He does not need someone to love Him in return. This is difficult for us to understand because we have so many needs in our heart. But His love was a choice. He looked at someone knowing that He could get absolutely nothing from them. He said, "I choose to show my love to those people." He did it to demonstrate His glory because that is who He is. This is also the love He commands us to show. He doesn't want us to just live our lives with reciprocal love. He wants us showing one-way love to people who don't give us anything in return. Whether it's physical or financial in return, or whether it's emotional, He wants us to love and bless the people who can do nothing for us, even the ones who hate us and spitefully abuse us in return. He wants us to show that kind of love because that's the kind of love He showed us, love towards His enemies. This would be impossible for us to do if God did not love us first. When we love those who are difficult or impossible, it glorifies God because it shows that the love that we're using is not from us, but from Him. God's glory is to be our aim. His grace and His mercy frees us from our sin and our past to pursue that aim, and His love empowers us to pursue that aim. We are to live for the glory of God. We are to pursue His glory with His grace and mercy and empowered by His love. I look at my life and I see how long I have wrongly thought that any of my life was about me. It's all about Him. Yes, He loves me. Yes, He saved me. But not because I'm special and not because I deserve it. I was one of the most wicked men you'd ever meet. He loves me and He saved me to glorify Himself. He wanted to show all of creation how amazing He was, and that's why He chose to love and save me. The whole purpose of my life is to glorify Him. All the living that I've done and the decisions I've made to try and make myself more comfortable and prosperous and blessed, it's just all been a waste because it didn't glorify Him, or at least not as much as it could have. In hindsight, I see that all the blessings I had, even that which I acquired during the time of living for myself, was actually blessings from Him. It was disgusting and shameful that I didn't give Him all the praise and the glory for those blessings, and that I didn't use those blessings for His glory. Because I see now that any good thing I have has been given to me to glorify Him, to obey His will, and to accomplish His purposes. I used to tell myself that because I was a Christian, that people would look at my life and they would see my blessings in my car, in my job, in my savings account, and they would say, "He's just a real blessed person. God really blesses you." That's not what they say. They say, "He's worked hard at His job just like me, and He's earned all that stuff from the sweat of His brow just like me, and God had nothing to do with it." That's what they say when I take that glory and that blessing for myself and I don't pass it on to Him. When my love and passion and obedience and service to God amounted to nothing more than a hobby in my free time, it did not glorify God. When I gave Him only what I could afford, it did not glorify Him. When my service stopped short of becoming uncomfortable, it did not glorify Him. Dogs are not glorified when you toss them to scraps. Kings are glorified when you lay down your life with them. I've come to realize that if He is truly who the Bible says He is, if He is as great and as amazing and wonderful and glorious as the Bible says, and infinitely greater than me, than anything from me short of radical devotion, departure from my self-interest, and radical obedience to His will, it is unworthy of Him. I don't give Him my all in order to be saved. I give Him my all because I've been saved. He didn't save me for my sake. He saved me to glorify His name. How often I have waited until I felt led, what a waste. I have here in my Bible crystal clear instructions that I don't need to wait to feel led on before I obey. Instructions like Matthew 22, 37, 38. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest command, and the second is like it. "Love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 28, 18, and 20. "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." James 1, 27. "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and thoughtless is this, to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." Matthew 5, 44. "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." We do not need to wait to feel led to do those kinds of things. "I see a good thing that needs to be done." The Bible says, "Do it." The Bible also says that if you see a good thing that needs to be done and that you don't do it, that that's sin. So now I look at my collection of board games and video games and movies and I just think it's such a waste. And I say, "I'm sorry God for spending so much on myself. How can I redeem what I've done here?" I remember a time that I was playing board games with some friends and we went out to eat and as I usually do, I said, "Shall I pray?" And they said, "Yes." And afterwards, I found out that one of the people with us that I thought was a Christian who wasn't was amazed at how naturally that I spoke to God. Because they came from a background where everything was formal and traditional and it was a witness to them. And I said to myself, "Well, the light came on." And it said, "You know, if unintentionally my board game friends, I can be this witness to them, what if I became intentional about it? Can I redeem this or that? Can I redeem what I have and use what I have to glorify God?" I'm not so foolish to think that I need just to give away everything and live in poverty. God might call some people to that. But as long as you live for Christ, then whether you work or play or eat or drink or whatever you do, do it to His glory. Work at your job, earn enough, provide for your family, but anything above that, return it to Him, bless Him and glorify Him. It doesn't mean you can't have nice things. Just stop thinking about the nice things you want to buy for yourself and start thinking of how you can use nice things for God and His glory and His kingdom. I used to think the point of Christianity was my own happiness, that if I would obey the human owner's manual of the Bible, that everything would go great with me and my life, would be happy. Me, me, me. Now I understand that the point of Christianity is to glorify God. I understand that the point is to kill myself, sinnerness, and make it Him, Him, Him. He promises to provide strength and joy as I do this and praise God. But my joy is not end goal. His glory is the end goal. So when Keith steps onto this stage and I pass him the microphone, my job here will be over and I'll have to pray to God and say, "God, where do you want me next?" Maybe he'll say more ministry and more pastoring, maybe he'll say more computer programming, or maybe he'll say there's a tribe of cannibals that have eaten the last three missionaries and you need to take the word to them. Now some of these options may seem less desirable to you than others. Programming, yeah. But all three of these replies should be the same for me if I'm truly committed to God and His glory. By obeying God and leading where He follows, it will bring Him glory regardless of the cost to me. If you're terrified of what God might call you to give up if you ask Him, then I need to point out, it sounds like you may still love something more than God. He calls us to die to sell and to lose our self-centered lives for the sake of Christ. And so I challenge you this morning, lay it all down in front of Him. Go through everything you have, whether it's material possessions, whether it's your status and reputation, whether it's your security, your safety net, and offer a prayer for each one of those things and say, "God, I love you more than this." Lay it down before Him, because whatever your this is, it's not worth what God is worth. It will not give you the peace and security and purpose and destiny that God will. And you don't even realize it, but it is an anchor bringing you down to death. Let it go. Live for the glory of God. It is what every human, all of creation was created for. Give it all up for the glory of God. Our glorious, wonderful Heavenly Father, we praise You and we thank You. We are brought to life through the love that You have shown us. We are in awe and we are inspired. By Your grace and Your mercy. And we, as Christians, now dedicate our lives to You and to Your glory. Show us in every corner of our lives, in every relationship, with everything that we have, how we can bring more glory to Your name and how we can further Your kingdom in this world, because You are worth it. You are worth it all, God, and we give it all up to You. We thank You for this meal now that we can share together, and we ask You to bless the hands that prepared it. Go with us this week. Continue to teach us and speak to us on this truth. We ask in the name of Your precious Son, Jesus. Amen.