

Sermon October 18, 2026

Bountiful God,

We thank you for the fruits of the earth, the work of human hands, and your endless provision.

Bless these gifts with gratitude for your abundance. May they nourish those who are hungry, bring hope to those in need, and reflect your love in our community.

Bless the work of our hands and all those who are served by you. Keep our hearts generous and thankful.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

Matthew 22:15-22

Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said.

So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one, for you do not regard people with partiality.

Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the Caesar, or not?"

But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them, "Whose head is this and whose title?" They answered, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to Caesar the things that are the Caesar's and to God the things that are God's."

When they heard this, they were amazed, and they left him and went away.

Show Me Your Glory

Today we find Moses as he stands on the edge of exhaustion. He has led a people who are tired, afraid, and not always easy to shepherd. He has seen miracles, but he has also seen disappointment, rebellion, and heartbreak. And in that vulnerable place, Moses asks God for the one thing to steady him:

"Show me Your glory."

Moses is grasping for the fullness of God... a glimpse of the nearness of God. A sign that he is not alone. This is a prayer that comes from a soul stretched thin. And God answers—but not in the way Moses expects.

"I will make all my goodness pass before you. But you cannot see my face... I will hide you in the cleft of the rock."

God's glory is too much to take in all at once. Too bright and overwhelming. Too holy.

So Moses is tucked into a safe place and held. He is both shielded and steadied, but he only sees the back of God as God passes by.

But sometimes a glimpse is enough to keep going.

How many of us have longed for a glimpse of God's glory? Especially in those times when we feel isolated or alone; unheard and unseen. We long for shelter and sanctuary and to be held in the palm of God's hand.

But for most of us, this sacred glimpse never happens. At least, not in the ways we expect it.

Years ago, I took a class at Wesley Seminary in DC. We explored innovative education and mission programs in the DC community. We went to several churches that were doing church "in a new way." One evening, we were scheduled to go to Luther Place, to experience how a fading, inner city church adapted to a new reality. But, I really didn't want to go. Like Moses, I was exhausted and depleted. I had worked all day with children in the poorest area of DC, and this felt like more of the same. I tried to figure out a way to just go home and rest for the next day. But, I got in my car and drove to class. Not because I wanted God to show me the Glory, but because I felt obligated.

Jesus reminds us that we experience God's Glory in the most unexpected ways in the most unexpected people... especially when we think we don't need it. Confronted by people who want to trap him with a political question, Jesus teaches them a valuable lesson about faith:

"Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar?"

Holding a coin with Caesar's face and imprinted on it, *"Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."*

Jesus reminds us of something we all need to remember. **God's image is imprinted on us.**

"Do you want to see God's glory?" Jesus asks. "Look at the people made in God's image. Look at the vulnerable. Look at the neighbor. Look at the enemy. Look at the ones the world overlooks.

God's glory walks around in human faces.

We don't need to wait for a dramatic moment on a mountaintop or burning bush. Scripture shows us time and again that glory can be quiet and humble... it is found in a baby born in a stable. It is found in following in the footsteps of the man that baby grew to be.

We see God's Glory in courage of everyday disciples trying to make our world a better place. Glory shows up in the people who choose love when fear would be easier.

When we arrived at Luther Place, we entered an old Lutheran church on Thomas Circle. A statue of Martin Luther is in the circle, but it was covered in the dirt of the inner city. This beautiful church once was filled with some of the powerful people of the area, but as the area changed and new neighbors moved in, most of the neighbors found a new church home in the suburbs. The circle by the church was filled each night with sex workers and addicts. Those who stayed, were determined to resurrect their beautiful church. "Show me your Glory," they cried out.

And the Glory passed over them in the most amazing way... in the faces of the people outside their doors. The church founded a mission to serve women. This dynamic ministry offers emergency shelter, transitional and permanent housing. Ongoing services include addiction programs, mental and medical health care. This church became a place where women rebuild their lives with support, safety, and belonging.

The day we went there, we arrived in time for their dinner. "We are not here to serve them food," we were told. "We are here to share in the community." So we each got a tray of food and scattered to different tables.

I immediately regretted the table I sat at. The only resident that sat there was a woman who clearly had severe mental health issues. I looked around and wished I was at one of the tables filled with people to hear their stories. In other words, I was being a brat. But as the meal progressed, I started to hear her story. She had been a bus driver for many years, but was no longer able to work. She talked about the lessons learned from her grandmother. She told me that she was a permanent resident and had her own key to her own room, for the first time in years.

When she was done eating, she stood up and grabbed both my hands. "Don't forget the hands of God!" I looked at her, unsure how to respond. She repeated it again: "Don't forget the hands of God. That's what my grandmother used to tell me. When you look up at the sky and see the sun streaming through the clouds, you see God's hands reaching out to you. Don't forget the hands of God." I didn't realize it immediately, but this woman served me more than I have ever served anyone.

The next morning, as I drove to work, I looked at the sky and I saw them! God's hands stretching out towards me.

Show me your glory, O God. God's glory walks around with a human face.

When Moses asked, "Show me Your glory," he wanted reassurance that God was truly with him. We ask the same thing.

Show us Your glory, God in a world that feels fractured, in a nation that feels divided, in communities carrying grief, in families stretched thin, in hearts longing for peace.

God's answer is eternal: *"I will make my goodness pass before you."*

Look for goodness. Look for love. Look for God's hands stretching out to hold you as God's glory passes over you. We may not see God's face. We may only catch glimpses. But glimpses are enough to keep going. Amen