

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

Sermon: "Designed to glorify & enjoy God.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:23-33

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July 26 2026

Opener: Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee 410

Choruses: Come, Now Is The Time To Worship, You Are Holy (Prince of Peace)

Song after sermon: Take My Life And Let It Be 637

Closer: Be Thou my vision 461

Everyone lives for something.

So what gets you out of bed in the morning?

When I survey the world around me

It seems that most people are living for family,

Or for fun,

Or for freedom.

They build their lives around these ends.

These are not bad things.

Family is a gift.

Rest and enjoyment are gifts.

Freedom is a gift.

The question is not whether these things matter.

The question is whether they are ultimate.

Today we recited the answer to the first question

Of the Westminster Shorter Catechism:

Question: What is the chief end of man?

Answer: Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.

Last week I told you that catechisms and confessions provide us with

A good summary, a Coles' Notes of our faith.

Last week I introduced you to the Heidelberg Catechism.

I joked that I preferred it because it was written by poets

while the Westminster Catechism was written by lawyers.

The truth is they each had different purposes.

The Heidelberg Catechism speaks as a pastor speaking to a congregation.

The Westminster Catechism speaks as a professor carefully defining the faith for the church.

So to return to that Westminster Shorter Catechism,

It begins its teaching by defining humanity's purpose.

We have been made not for fun, family, or freedom,

But to glorify God.

At first glance this strikes us as strange.

Why does God need to be glorified?

The problem is that we often imagine glory

as something we give to God,

as though God is lacking something.

But God's glory is not like human attention-seeking.

God does not need our praise because He lacks something.

God is perfect, complete.

When God calls us to glorify Him,

He is inviting us to recognize what is already true.

God invites us to glorify Him because He is the One

in whom we find everything we were made for.

God is worthy of glory.

And like the creatures above us and below us

We were created to glorify God's name.

(two of the 5 reasons to glorify God given by Thomas Watson "A Body of Divinity")

That we would seek God's glory

Isn't to our detriment.

Our happiness and God's glory aren't in competition.

Our joy finds its fulfillment as we direct our lives to God's honour.

So how is this lived out in daily life?

Paul's letter to the church at Corinth provides
An example from something as simple as sitting down for a meal.

You may recall that in Paul's day, Corinth was a wealthy, diverse
Roman port city known for commerce, culture, and religious activity.
The church Paul planted there had some Jewish members,
But was mostly comprised of Gentile converts
many of whom had come out of pagan worship.

We can glean from the slogans Paul repeats here
(And in the passage we read last week)
That the people of Corinth valued personal freedom:
"I have the right to do anything."

Paul affirms that his Gentile church was not bound
To keep kosher (like the Jews) to be a follower of Jesus.
For "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." (Psalm 24:1)
They should feel free to buy meat from the butcher
Even if it has been offered by a priest to a pagan God.

But while Paul agrees that Christians possess genuine freedom,
He doesn't believe freedom is an ultimate value.
He says that if you are out for dinner
And someone you know is anxious about the fact
That some food has previously been offered as a sacrifice
You should take a pass on the dish,
Not because you are worried that it will hurt you,
But because you don't want to injure the faith of another believer.

For Paul, God's glory is the ultimate value,
and seeking the good of others is one way we pursue God's glory.
Within this greater framework
We are free to eat whatever we like with thankfulness
(see Richard B. Hays *First Corinthians* 175)

Did you get that?
The people in Corinth valued freedom.

Paul ALSO values freedom, but it is not his ultimate value.
His ultimate value is whatever is necessary to bring glory to God.
This principle applies far beyond the question of what we eat or drink.
It touches every area of our lives.

It affects our words.
We live in a culture that celebrates the freedom to say whatever we think.
Ever been shocked by what a friend or acquaintance has posted?
Ever shocked by what you have said?
Paul reminds us that Christian freedom asks a deeper question:
not simply, "Am I allowed to say this?"
but "Will these words glorify God?"
Will our works build others up?
Will they help people see the love of Christ?"

Living for God's glory impacts our words
And it impacts how we use our time.
We have more options than any generation before us.
Work and rest and recreation are gifts from God.
But Christian freedom asks:
"How can I use the time God has given me
in a way that honours Him and blesses others?"
Sometimes this means serving others:
Spending time with someone who is difficult or lonely,
or making room for the needs of another person.

Living for God's glory impacts our words
And the way we use our time.
It also impacts how we use our resources.
We have the freedom to spend our money
and enjoy the blessings God has given us.
But Paul reminds us that our possessions
are not simply about our own comfort or status or needs.
The question is not only, "What can I afford?"
but "How can what God has entrusted to me
be used for His glory and the good of others?"

In each of these areas, the question changes.
 We move from asking, "What am I allowed to do?"
 to asking, "What will glorify God?"
 For followers of Jesus,
 freedom is not ultimately about serving ourselves.
 Freedom is the opportunity to love God and others.

Is this self-imposed limitation of freedoms good news?
 At first glance the call to glorify God sounds like duty.
 But the catechism refuses to stop there.
 It says that our "chief end is to glorify God,
 and to enjoy him for ever."
 We are to 'enjoy God forever'.

Christian faith is not ultimately
 about losing ourselves through endless self-denial,
 but about discovering our truest selves in God.
 As we spend time in God's presence,
 we begin to understand his goodness,
 And more than simply appreciating his good gifts
 we begin to comprehend the loving heart that is behind them.

Our recognition of this loving heart
 Draws out of us a corresponding love and gratitude
 That desires to reorient our lives to God's glory.
 Sometimes this is by giving things up or setting things aside.
 Other times it is a choice to be content in our situation,
 Or letting other people shine,
 Or doing our best in our work,
 Or focusing our efforts on drawing others to God.

This is a training ground for eternity.
 Eternal life isn't simply endless existence after death.
 Heaven will not introduce us to a completely different purpose.
 Heaven will be the completion of the purpose
 we were created for: knowing, enjoying, and glorifying God forever.

Modern people tend to assume:
 If I enjoy God, I'll glorify Him.
 The catechism almost suggests the two work together.
 We glorify God in our lives because he is worthy.
 And as we fulfill our ultimate purpose,
 we discover even greater joy.

This week, when you are tempted to ask, "Am I allowed to do this?"
 consider instead, "will this glorify God?"
 Whether you eat or drink
 or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
 How unsearchable his judgments,
 and his paths beyond tracing out!
 "Who has known the mind of the Lord?
 Or who has been his counselor?"
 "Who has ever given to God,
 that God should repay them?"
 For from him and through him and for him are all things.
 To him be the glory forever! Amen. (Romans 11:33-36)

Amen