



*The LORD your God is among you,  
a warrior who saves.  
He will rejoice over you with gladness.  
He will bring [you] quietness with His love.  
He will delight in you with shouts of joy.  
(Zephaniah 3:17)*



## Glory Revealed Through Quieting Love

If you're looking to find history and art that moves the soul toward the glory of God, Rome is the perfect place to start. From the works of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel to the history of thousands of Christians martyred at the Colosseum, you just see glory—God's glory brightly revealed everywhere you look. Even in the most unexpected places.

A few years ago, I found myself alone, wandering the cobblestone streets of Rome. I was in the middle of a sabbatical season, traveling in search of reflection and inspiration. After a few days there I found my rhythm. I would wake up at noon, spend time in prayer, and get ready to head out for the day. I would visit one, maybe two places for reflection—not rushing, but sipping slowly what God was rationing out to me. I didn't want to miss the message behind the art.

This routine would take me late into the night when, around 10:00 pm, I'd end up at a patio restaurant. I'd dine alone and revisit the day's journey

## GLORY REVEALED

over an authentic bowl of pasta. By the way, this is typical in Rome. The Italians eat lunch around 3:00 pm and have dinner at 10:00 pm. When in Rome... right?

One night I found myself in a little trattoria just outside the Vatican. The large patio was well lit with candlelight, and the people were loud and boisterous. It was everything you would imagine an outdoor Italian restaurant to be.

As I sat there, I noticed a big Italian family starting to gather for some sort of reunion. As all of the family members began arriving—the father and mother, the children, the grandparents—it was only fair to say that this family was not quiet. Every time another member of the family arrived, you could hear the welcoming cheers. Grandma was yelling and gesturing about whom should sit where, while the rest of the family went around greeting with kisses and giant embraces.

Even though I don't speak Italian, it was obvious who was who in this dramatic and verbose family just by watching their body language. At the center of the table, equally confident in calling the waiters to attention as weighing in on all the conversations, was the family patriarch. And seated next to him, a wide-eyed princess with curly hair—his little daughter, no more than eight or nine years old. She reminded me a bit of my daughter, Grace.

I sat at the table across from them, reading and watching, when the local flower peddler entered the scene. You know the guy—the one from the touristy street corner or romantic restaurant. The guy with the huge painter's bucket filled with long-stemmed roses who, right in front of your date, tries to guilt you into buying one? Well, his cousin is alive and well in Rome, and he found my table. I guess he assumed my date had gone to the bathroom while my nose was buried in the Bible. I politely declined his pitch, and watched him as he moved onto the family gathering.

Just as I suspected, our family patriarch would have none of the peddler's antics. With the crinkle of his brow and the flick of his wrist, he sent the street peddler on his way, barely skipping a beat of conversation. But then something happened that changed everything. The father caught a glimpse of his daughter's eyes, engaged by the sight of the roses.

He stopped talking to the grandfather and kept looking at his daughter, whose eyes were fixed on the roses. He jumped from his chair and ran to catch up with the peddler. He whispered something in the peddler's ear, exchanged nods, and with one sweeping movement, grabbed every rose from the bucket and thrust them into his daughter's arms.

## GLORY REVEALED THROUGH QUIETING LOVE

I don't know if you've ever seen a little girl holding nearly one hundred long-stemmed roses—I certainly hadn't before this moment—but it's a sight that will suck the wind out of an entire room. Everyone in the restaurant fell silent as the loudest and most expressive guy there left us all speechless. Even those who didn't see the amazing gesture of love were sucked in by the gaze of all of us who had just witnessed the amazing act. That father quieted us all with his love.

### ***This is no ordinary love the prophet is referring to.***

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The little girl was absolutely stunned. The peddler offered his bucket, but she refused to let go of the giant pile of roses she could barely wrap her arms around. Instead, she sat there quietly through dinner, intermittently staring down at the roses and up at her dad. She didn't need words to thank him, they would have just fallen short—she was speechless with awe.

That father lavished his little girl with his love. He wasn't the least bit interested in those roses until he saw her face. The moment he realized what those roses would mean to her, he didn't hesitate. He wasn't afraid to make a mess when the roses were dripping water from the bucket. He didn't haggle with the peddler over the price or wait until the next day to get a better deal at Costco. He refused to lose the moment.

That's what the grace of God is—an enormous bundle of roses. More than you can wrap your arms around. Given in a moment so right that it floors you. A moment so right that you're left speechless.

Have you ever gone to Niagara Falls and found yourself covered in the mist, thunderstruck? Did you catch your first glimpse of the Grand Canyon and find yourself with absolutely nothing to say? Have you ever seen a groom, after watching his bride walk down the aisle, be so caught up in the moment that all he could do is choke through his vows?

There are moments in life when it's better to resign your lips as you think, *I'm not even going to try*. This must have been the kind of magnificent love the prophet Zephaniah was referring to.

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## GLORY REVEALED

***He will bring [you] quietness with His love.  
He will delight in you with shouts of joy. (Zeph. 3:17)***

This is no ordinary love the prophet is referring to. It's mighty. It's more roses than you can wrap your arms around. A deeper canyon than any you've ever seen. Beyond your wildest dreams, it rushes in like Niagara Falls. God lavishes us with so much more than we could ever deserve.

### ***He wants us smitten. Dumfounded. Flat-out taken.***

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But why does he do it? Because his glory is revealed when he shows us a love so mighty, powerful, and pure that we find ourselves wanting him even more. He wants us smitten. Dumfounded. Flat-out taken.

There was one image that night in Italy that left a searing impression on me. It wasn't the roses or even the little girl that blew me away. It was the amazing love of the father. He took great delight in the act, and the little girl just went along for the ride. It made me want to introduce myself and shake his hand. I would have liked to have gotten to know the man who had the ability to quiet an entire restaurant with one undeniably generous act.

Thinking back to the little girl, I'm certain that act will sear itself in her memory as well. She'll be affected by it for years to come. Once you've been given that kind of love, you'll never accept any less. Can you imagine that little girl growing up to marry some selfish loser? No! She'll be immune to a man like that. Her daddy raised the standard for her forever.

God does the same for us so he can forever win our hearts and steal our affection! He's constantly looking for ways to suck the air out of the room so that we have no choice but to recognize his glory. But sometimes, just like in any relationship, we begin to take his love for granted. Instead of being quieted by his all encompassing love, we whine.

Look around you. You have more than one book to read. More than just a slice of bread to eat. More than one shirt to wear. Do you ever lose sight of how many blessings touch your life? Do you ever let yourself come to expect it? Is it time to reflect upon just how much he's done for you?

How does he love you? Let me count the ways.

GLORY REVEALED THROUGH QUIETING LOVE

***LORD, Your faithful love [reaches] to heaven Your faithfulness to the skies. (Ps. 36:5)***

***But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us! (Rom. 5:8)***

***...nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will have the power to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord! (Rom. 8:39)***

***Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:10)***

***For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)***

God loves us so lavishly, that in addition to the ways he pours out his love on our lives now, he left us a trail of love letters through his infallible Word. He created a masterpiece that speaks to us from history even as he speaks to us through blessings and grace in our every day lives. Talk about leaving us speechless!

I went to Rome in search of revelation through art, and I left with an understanding so much more profound than what I was looking for. Sitting there in that piazza, reflecting on everything that happened, it became clear to me—I am the little girl in this story. I'm a constant target of the glory of God—a love revealed at any expense.

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Additional scriptures for personal study:

Exodus 20:6

Romans 8:28-29

1 John 4:16

## Q U E S T I O N S

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How is God's glory revealed through his quieting love?



Think of the times in your life when God has sucked the air out of the room on your behalf. Describe those moments when he quieted you with his love.



Take stock of all of the blessings in your life. Have you taken his love for granted? List the things, apparent and not apparent, that display his love for you.

JOURNAL

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USE THIS PAGE TO JOURNAL ABOUT WHAT GOD IS REVEALING TO YOU TODAY.

