

When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. ³² If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

³³ "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

³⁴ "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:31-35)

Where do We See Jesus' Glory?

When I was in high school, I once spent an evening watching a couple of guys playing pool. They were good friends and so there was a lot of banter. Every time one of them would get into the hole, he would say, "I'm just lulling you into a false sense of security. No guts, no glory." Of course, the joke was that he would come from behind at the end of the game and everyone would be in awe of his dramatic win and they would make a blockbuster movie out of it and we'd all remember him forever. That joke says something about how we regard glory. Usually, it means winning to us. Think how many sports movies follow that plot of coming from behind with a dramatic win. Does that apply to Jesus? Today, he talks about glory. What does he mean? Was the cross an example of falling behind and then pulling out a dramatic win at the end? Not really. Today, Jesus invites us to look at his cross the way he and his Father did and then to look at each other in light of that cross. He invites us to see his real glory. Do you know where to look? **Where do we see Jesus' glory?**

I.

Jesus tells us: "**Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him.**" What did he mean by "now"? This was Maundy Thursday, the night before Jesus died. Judas Iscariot has just left to go and get the soldiers to arrest Jesus. "Now" meant his death and resurrection. Jesus was glorified by the cross. Now, after two thousand years of preaching the cross, that may not strike us as being all that surprising. But in the world Jesus lived in, dying on a cross was the ultimate humiliation. The leaders of the Jews paid Judas to betray him and later they led the crowds in chanting "Crucify him! Crucify him!" because they thought that was losing. And Jesus wasn't lulling them into a false sense of security so that he could pull out a dramatic win the next day, like you'd see in a summer action movie. He died on Friday afternoon. When he did, his enemies thought they had won and his friends thought that he had lost.

But Jesus was glorified on that Good Friday afternoon and God the Father was glorified in him. Why? Because Jesus' greatest glory is his love. That's what drove him to the cross. The Romans didn't put him there. His enemies didn't put him there. No one could make the Son of God submit to crucifixion. Even his Father in Heaven didn't force him to go to the cross. Jesus went there willingly. He let himself be arrested and tried and beaten and whipped. He let them nail him to the cross and he chose to stay there and suffer far more than physical pain. He stayed there and let his Father pour hell itself out on him. Then when the time was right, he gave up his spirit. He died, but not because his body couldn't take the torture anymore. He died because his work was done.

Jesus died and paid for all of our sin. Every one of us was born a sinner. You hear me say that almost every week and I hope that it doesn't just go in one ear and out the other. Stop for a moment and examine your life just this week. What sins did you commit? Were you selfish this week? Did you hurt other people's feelings? Did you do something that you know God forbids and then make excuses for it? Did you steal? Did you lie? Did you lust? Were you lazy or unfaithful? Did you drink too much? Whatever sins you committed this week are really just symptoms of an underlying disease. Even if you could stop yourself from committing that particular sin ever again, you would still be a sinner at heart. You would still have an ego that thinks you come first. You would still lust and covet and exult in your own achievements. You would still want to sin. For all that, you and I deserve to die and spend eternity in hell. It would only be just for God to condemn us.

But in love, Jesus stood in our place and took all the death and hell that we have coming. He let God's wrath fall on his head so that we don't have to face God's justice on Judgment Day. That love of Christ is his greatest glory. And it gives glory to God the Father because the Father sent him to do all that. God the Father sacrificed his one and only Son so that we don't have to go to hell. He poured all the hell and all the wrath out

on Jesus so that even if we do die before Jesus comes back, we will rise and live. That's what Jesus was talking about when he said "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him."

That's why he continued, "**If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.**" Glory has to be recognized. The Church will sing to Christ and to the Father for all eternity – that's glory. We praise the Father because he sent the Son. And God made sure that we praise the Son, too. And it began right away – Jesus rose. Now, Jesus could've raised himself and there are even a couple of passages that speak that way. But overwhelmingly, the Bible says that the Father raised Jesus. Jesus humbled himself on the cross and the Father glorified him. His resurrection was God the Father's way of saying that he was satisfied with all the Jesus did. His death was enough to pay for all that we owe. The Father testified to all the universe that his Jesus was indeed his Son and that he won when he lost on the cross. The Father holds Jesus up for an eternity of praise.

God the Father glorified Jesus on Easter Sunday when he raised him from the dead. God the Father glorified Jesus on that same morning by sending him to hell, not to suffer, but to announce to the devil that all our sins are paid for and the devil had lost. God the Father glorified Jesus forty days after Easter when Christ ascended into heaven and the Father seated him at his right hand, where Jesus rules all things for the good of the Church. The gospel triumphs in human hearts because Jesus sends it out and controls all things so that his purpose is always accomplished. He rules all things even now. And he will return in glory accompanied by the angels. We and the angels will gather around his throne and sing his praises for all eternity. The cross is the reason for all that praise, because Jesus chose to die there for us. **Where do we see Jesus' glory? In Christ's love for us.**

II.

Jesus knew how the Father was going to glorify him. He also knew that it would have a profound effect on how we live our faith. So he said, "**My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.**" That's the life we live, right? We don't get to see Jesus. His disciples didn't realize it, but they were well into the last 24 hours of Jesus' time among them as an apparently normal human being. After he rose, he came and went and was obviously more than just a human being. Then he ascended and left us to live down here without his visible presence. You and I have never seen Jesus, except in the gospel. Until the day our life ends, we cannot go to heaven where Jesus went.

There is a reason for that. God's plan is that all those who trust in Jesus will have eternal life. But faith is trusting in something we can't see, something that maybe even seems contrary to logic and reason. Faith is taking God at his word when our human hearts and minds would ordinarily reach a different conclusion. If Jesus reigned openly in this world today, it wouldn't take faith to trust in him. So he left. And he hides himself behind the word and the sacraments, behind people in churches and in ministry, behind the universe that he still rules for the good of the Church. When we look for him with our physical eyes, we're disappointed. When we look for him anywhere but in his word, we find counterfeits that hurt our faith.

But Jesus is present among us. This morning, he points to one way that we can make clear that Christ is here and is a part of all that we are and all that we do. He said, "**A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.**" Our faith gives glory to Christ. The greatest way that we can show our faith is by loving each other just as Christ has loved us. That love is the new command Jesus gave us. A command is not an option. Jesus requires that the Christian Church be characterized by love. When we love each other as Christ loved us, then we show that Jesus really does live among us.

But what does that word love mean? All too often, we think of love as a feeling. Certainly, that is a part of it. But feelings come and go. It's hard to command or to generate a real and honest feeling. When the Bible talks about love, it's talking much more about attitudes and actions. Love is when I am committed to doing what is best for someone, even if they don't deserve it. Love means that I will sacrifice what I want and even what I need for the good of the person I love. Isn't that what Christ did for us? Because he loved us, he left behind the glories of heaven to live as a poor carpenter's son, to preach and teach and face rejection, to finally stretch out his arms and suffer death and hell on a cross? That didn't do him any good. It was all for us. It was what we needed to escape an eternity in hell. And because he loved us, he told us the truth. Again and again he enraged the people of his day because he told them what they needed to hear, not what they wanted to hear.

Finally, real love forgives. It lets go of all the hurt that people have inflicted on us, and it doesn't wait for them to apologize. Real love simply puts the past into the past.

Do we love like that? Do we give glory to Christ by reflecting his love? Do we forgive each other for the hurts and slights that we've inflicted on one another? Do we do say what the people around us need to hear or are we too chicken to really be honest? Do we put the needs of our spouse, of our children, of our parents, of our brothers and sisters in Christ ahead of what we need or want? Or are we too selfish to sacrifice ourselves for the good of others? Do we love as Christ has loved us?

That's a tough question, not because you can't understand it, but because there is only one honest answer to it. No matter how hard we try, we cannot claim to do this, not perfectly. We are all sinners and again and again, we are too selfish to love, too self-absorbed to forgive, too prideful to put other people ahead of ourselves. That is simply a denial of Christ. It deserves nothing but death and hell.

But remember who we are and who he is. We are Jesus' disciples. He did die and pay for all our selfishness and sin. God has wiped it all away. Jesus did rise and announce that we are fully paid for and forgiven. And now, he has sent the Holy Spirit into our hearts so that we trust that and so that we can give glory to God with Christian lives. Can we perfect here? No. But Christ lives in us. The Holy Spirit lives in us. God strengthens us with the good news that Jesus died and rose and that good news is power to change our lives. God calls us today to commit ourselves to living in love. Day after day, put the people around you ahead of your own selfishness. Be humble enough to forgive. Do and say the things that people need, not what they want or what you want. That's love. Every time we bring forth that fruit of faith, we point to Christ. **Where do we see Jesus' glory? In our love for each other.**

That love is real. That is the mystery of the Christian life. On the one hand, we are born sinners and the only love we know is love for ourselves. On the other hand, we are reborn and recreated by the power of God in the gospel. And love is our native language. The Christian life is a real mystery. But it is real. God is working in us. Follow him. See the glory of Christ in his love and show that same glory by loving the people around you. Amen.