

**Fifth Sunday of Easter – April 28, 2013
Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran Church**

Pastor Charles Heup

John 13:31-35

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."**

The Son of Man is Glorified!

In the name of Christ Jesus, our glorious Lord and Savior, dear fellow Christians,

It was June 18, 1815. Napoleon and his French Army had attacked the British army and her commander, the Duke of Wellington. As you might expect, the people of England were anxious for news from the front. Back in those days there weren't embedded reporters and satellite systems or an internet to beam news around the world. News from the battlefield was sent by a system of signals, used to flash messages from high points all over Britain. One of these signal stations was on the tower of the Winchester Cathedral. Late in the day on June 18th the cathedral tower flashed the message: "**W-E-L-L-I-N-G-T-O-N - D-E-F-E-A-T-E-D**" and then a heavy fog rolled in, dampening British spirits even more. News of England's defeat spread quickly throughout the region. The mood was one of gloom and doom. But, then, just as suddenly as it had appeared, the fog lifted, revealing the fact that there was more to the message from Waterloo. The people of England hadn't gotten the whole story. The news bulletin consisted not of two words, but of four. It read, "**W-E-L-L-I-N-G-T-O-N - D-E-F-E-A-T-E-D - T-H-E - E-N-E-M-Y**" It took only moments for the good news to spread. Instantly sorrow turned into joy. The agony of defeat had been swallowed up by glory of victory.

You and I can relate to that, can't we? It was just a month ago that sadness of Good Friday gave way to our great Easter joy. The rising of God's Son from the grave burnt away the foggy shadows of Calvary so that we could finally see the whole story and full significance of Christ's suffering and death. From the empty tomb came the wonderful news: "**C-H-R-I-S-T - D-E-F-E-A-T-E-D - T-H-E - E-N-E-M-E-Y**" But while that was shocking news to his disciples, it came as no surprise to Jesus. He had been proclaiming that victory all along. Look at the words of our text - words spoken by Jesus on Maundy Thursday evening just hours before all the trouble began. Already then Jesus was sending a clear signal, saying, "**The Son of Man is Glorified!**" So as we consider this text today, let's take Jesus' words as our theme, noting that the Son of Man is Glorified: 1) through the love he shows us; 2) and through the love we show each other.

Our text begins, "When he was gone" – the he was Judas – the one whom Jesus had said would betray him. The betrayer had just left the upper room on that Thursday evening. He was on his way to sell out the Savior. His actions would bring about a chain of terrible events. Jesus would soon be arrested. His disciples would all desert him; Peter would deny him, and ultimately Jesus would be nailed to a cross - all because Judas got up and left. This would seem to be the Savior's darkest hour, but what does he say? "**Now is the Son of Man glorified**" (John 13:31). How can this be? Where is there any glory in all of this?

The Son of Man will show us. That's the title by which Jesus often referred to himself. He, who has been God forever, chose to become the Son of Man - a human being like all of us. Why? Not to find glory in being served like a king. No, his glory would be to serve as the one who would rescue our world from the sin that was killing us. Jesus himself says so in Matthew 20:28: "*...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*" He would be glorified by accomplish the salvation of many souls.

During his years of public ministry Jesus had done many glorious things - he had given sight to the blind. He made the lame to walk and even raised the dead. But here Jesus tells us that all these wondrous acts pale in comparison to the glorious love he was pleased to show us when on that Maundy Thursday evening he turned to the traitor Judas and said, **"What you are about to do, do quickly"** (John 13:27). In perfect control of all that was about to happen, Jesus sent Judas on his way and so set into motion the chain of events that would lead him to where his love for us had always destined to take him - to the cross to sacrifice his life for ours. With that about to happen, he could finally say **"Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him."** How is God glorified in Jesus?

Remember that our salvation is a team effort, not a team made up of sinners and God, as if we somehow play a part in earning God's love and forgiveness. No the team I'm talking about is the team of Father, Son and Holy Spirit - the persons of the Holy Trinity. The glory that comes to Jesus for saving sinners is shared equally with God the Father and God the Spirit who sent him to rescue us. What comfort is ours to know that Jesus was not acting like some kind of renegade when he went to the cross! He was and is part of a divine team that has carefully planned and carried out our redemption. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all for us. Our salvation is their glory. Our safe arrival in heaven will bring all three of them eternal joy.

Knowing this, Jesus took on the horrors of our death in hell with complete confidence, absolutely certain that God would accept his sacrifice as our sin payment and would, in turn, glorify the Son for a job well done. So Jesus says in the next verse of our text: **"If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once"** (John 31:32). By the next afternoon, these words of Jesus were coming true. Having served our death sentence in hell's prison and having announced our debt of sin paid in full, our Substitute Jesus lovingly gave up his spirit into death for us; and when he did, St. Matthew tells us, **"At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split.⁵² The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life....⁵⁴ When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"** (Matthew 27:51,52, 54).

Already on Good Friday afternoon God was glorifying his Son with powerful works that led a Roman centurion and others to praise and worship the crucified Jesus for who he was and is, God's Son and the world's Savior. But God didn't stop there. On Easter Sunday he raised Jesus' dead body to life. Forty days later he received his risen Son back into heaven as a victorious King. All this glory God gave to his Son -- and all of it for our sake so that we might know that Jesus accomplished everything he set out to do to bring us sinners back into God's family. The fact that God is pleased with Jesus who saved us, can only mean that God is at peace with us sinners.

This is the truth that Jesus wanted to share with his disciples on Maundy Thursday, because this truth alone would see them through the dark days ahead. So he told them: **"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"** (John 13:33). Months earlier Jesus had told the unbelieving Jews that he would be returning to his Father in heaven. He warned them that because of their unbelief they would not be able to come to that blessed place. Jesus speaks similar words to his disciples, but for them and for us, these words have an entirely different meaning.

During these days that we spend on earth, we cannot see our Savior with our eyes. We cannot go to visit him in heaven, though we may long to do just that. But the fact that we can't see Jesus or go to him right now doesn't mean that he's not with us. Jesus went to heaven by way of the cross so that we might live with the assurance that no matter what happens in our lives, he is with us to guarantee that all is well between our God and us.

We have a God who took the death of his Son and turned that awful event into our salvation and into his greatest glory. Do you really suppose that it is beyond God's desire or power to bless us through the far less awful, but still painful trials we experience day by day? Do you really suppose that our Savior God either can't find or fails to

look for a way to bless us when sickness, or unemployment, or family strife, or even death touches our lives? By sacrificing his own Son for our sins, hasn't he already proven that there isn't anything he won't or can't do to bring us safely to himself in heaven? My friends, the Son of Man is still glorified by all the love he is still showing us each and every day, love that has brought us into his kingdom and love that uses even our troubles to keep us his people forever. Some day, perhaps very soon we will go to be with Jesus, but until we do, it is enough to know that our glorious Lord is with us here on earth to care for us every moment of every day.

This is the same glorious Lord who says to us today: "**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 13:34-35). This is a new command, not in the sense that God had never before told his people to be loving; but new in the sense that for the first time in all of history, we have the perfect example of love to follow - the Savior's love. And better than an example, we now find in his love for us, the power and motivation to love one another in a brand new way.

In a couple of weeks we'll celebrate Mother's Day weekend and we'll say and do a great number of loving things for our moms. And well we should, not just on Mother's day but always! More than that, we always want to thank God for the feelings of love that he has created between us and the special people in our lives. But realize that when Jesus says we should love one another as he loves us, he's not talking about feelings of love. It wasn't a loving feeling that brought Jesus to this world. He didn't save us because he felt that we God-hating sinners were so loveable. Not at all! Rather his love for us is an unselfish act of his will. It is a love that takes action to help even when there is no particular feeling of love for the one who needs help.

Jesus says that we Christians are to love one another in this same special way (with our actions) in our homes, in our congregation, in our synod. In a spirit of unselfish love Jesus would have us spend our lives taking care of each other. So what can I do to help you experience the love of Jesus in your life? How can I serve as his voice, his hands, his legs for you? Do you need someone to talk to? Do you need some one-on-one encouragement from God's Word? Could you use hand with some project at your house? Do you need some help paying an unexpected bill? Jesus would do any and all of these things for us, wouldn't he? He wants us to do these things for each other; and when we do, when we show each other his kind of love, then he will be glorified - not only by us who are the receiving end of this love, but by the people all around us who witness this love at work among us. This kind of love will draw our friends and neighbors to Jesus like a magnet when we point to him as the source of our love. And then before you know it, our friends and neighbors will have the love of Jesus in their hearts and lives too.

But of course we no sooner start talking about Jesus' new command to love one another, and our hearts become heavy with guilt. In our selfishness we've given little or no thought to many of the people around us. We haven't even taken the time to get to know some of them, let alone to help them. What kind of Christians are we? The kind who need Christ's forgiveness. So we confess our selfishness and lovelessness to Jesus today. We plead for his mercy; and in his unselfish love he forgives us yet again. Even better, by virtue of the holy life he lived for us, he proclaims us right with God and with each other; and now he promises to go with each of us to forgive us, and provide for us and protect us throughout the week ahead. So we leave here today forgiven and with more reasons than ever before to thank Jesus for his love by showing love to each other. Jesus gives us the reason to love and he gives us the power to love by freeing us from our selfishness. You see, we will get better and better at caring for each other as we become more and more convinced by the power of God's Word that we don't have to spend all our time looking after ourselves because Jesus is looking after us. And when that happens, when we are growing in our faith and the love that flows from it, there will be no end to the glory that Jesus receives now and forever. Amen.