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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
May 19, 2019
4th Sunday after Easter

Scripture Lessons: Acts 13:44-52, Revelation 21:1-5
Hymns: 541; 464; 307; 309

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: John 13:31-35

So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. ³²If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately. ³³Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you. ³⁴A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, our Risen Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Reflection

Sometimes we use this word with reference to what we see in a mirror or on the surface of a lake. It can be quite pretty to see the reflection of a landscape or the reflection of the sun as it is rising or setting. But of course the sun

itself is far more brilliant than what is seen on the water. Even when one is looking in a mirror things appear more distant than they really are, so a reflection doesn't quite grasp the whole of reality.

Sometimes we use the word reflection in a very different manner, as when we are thinking about our lives, or trying to absorb some truth into our consciousness, and perhaps even into our lives. Again, we find that we have limitations.

This morning we are going to approach our text with this word reflection, praying that the Holy Spirit would open our hearts to more fully comprehend that which is truly beyond our comprehension. So let us proceed with --

THEME: Reflections of Jesus' Glory.

Our text takes us back to the upper room where Jesus and the disciples observed the Last Passover Supper. Judas had just been revealed as the one who would betray Jesus, and Jesus had dismissed Judas to go and do what he was about to do. After Judas left Jesus made an announcement of what was about to happen, but perhaps not with the words you or I would have expected. Jesus spoke of -

I. The Son of Man being Glorified.

Our text reports:

John 13:31-33 "So, when he (that is Judas) had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. ³² If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately.

³³ Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you."

These words require more than a bit of reflection, but with that prayerful meditation you will see a beautiful reflection of Jesus' glory as our Redeemer.

First of all one must consider what it is that Jesus was talking about. Since we reading these words after all was fulfilled we have a far easier time understanding that Jesus was talking about the things that were going to happen to Him in the next several hours. Jesus speaks of Himself as the "Son of Man." During His life on earth only Jesus used this title for Himself. This title came from the Book of Daniel referring to the second coming of the Christ. It is significant that Jesus called Himself the Son of Man here in the upper room as He spoke of His approaching sufferings and death. It reminds us that Jesus, who is and was and ever shall be true God, was also true man, born of the Virgin Mary. The Son of God came down to earth and became incarnate to be our brother, to save us from sin and death. Isn't that what makes Jesus great and glorious in our eyes? He died for us that we might live. In order for Jesus to die for us it was necessary for Him to be one of us. He had to be the Son of Man to die. More than that He had to be one us to be our substitute, to die in *our* place. This lies at the very center of God's plan to save a sinful mankind, a glorious and most gracious plan. As Jesus went forward to a most ignominious death on the cross, that death would also be His glory! As our Champion He saved our lives by sacrificing His! Do you see the glory?

And yet we know that there is more for us to reflect upon. On the third day Jesus rose again, and He rose both triumphant over death, and glorious. The disciples struggled to recognize the Lord as they beheld Him in His exalted glory.

Now we move on a little further into Jesus' words and how He told the disciples that they could not go where He was going. It would be only 40 days after Jesus' resurrection that He would visibly ascend into heaven, and Jesus' visible presence would be removed from this earth. It was not yet time for them to go where Jesus was going. However He was going to prepare a place for them in

heaven. He would come again in the fullness of His glory and receive them to Himself. He would bring them **and us as well** into that glory which was His since before the world began.

That, my friends in Christ, is the glory that awaits us. *“We shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is.”* (1 John 3:2)

While at that time they were not going to be going to the Father as Jesus was about to go to the Father, Jesus didn't leave them wondering what life was to be about while they awaited His return. He gave them a purpose, a purpose that also extends to us for our earthly sojourns. Let us consider how --

II. Jesus' Glory Is Revealed in our Lives of Love.

Jesus said:

John 13:34-35 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Jesus' glory is revealed in His *love* for us. He *loved* us and so laid down His life for us. He *loved* us and took our sins upon Himself and endured the curse that was rightfully ours. He *loved* us with a sacrificial love that will always be unparalleled in this world. He *loved* us and in that love, that great and generous love we see Jesus' glory.

Now keep that reflection in mind as you consider Jesus' words to His disciples, not just the twelve, but to all His disciples. *“Love one another, as I have loved you.”* Are you ready to reflect Jesus' love so that others may gaze upon that reflection and marvel at the glory of Jesus they see in you, in me, in the *sacrificial* love with which we love one another, especially in how we love our brothers and sisters in Christ?

The difficulty we have with this is twofold. First of all our sinful flesh makes us selfish, not self-sacrificing. Oh yes, Paul grants that on the rare exception it may be seen in this world that *“for a good man someone would even dare to die,”* (Romans 5:7) but sinners that we are, do we love like Jesus loves us? Do we forgive those who hurt us as Jesus forgives us? Do we set our concerns for self aside in our concern for others as faithfully as Jesus sacrificed Himself for us? You see, we fall short; even at our best we fall short of loving as Jesus loved us.

And so then difficulty two is that we feel **compelled** to love, compelled by the law which demands that we love others even as we love ourselves. Once the moving force is the compulsion of the law then we find our flesh rebelling all the more.

What Jesus is calling forth from us is something different, that pure love that flows from faith in Christ, that flows from the Spirit incorporating the love of Christ into our hearts and then also into our lives. It is by the power of the Holy Spirit, and only by the power of the Spirit that we can love one another even as Christ has loved us. *“We love because He first loved us.”* (1 John 4:19 ESV) We love with that pure love, that Agape love, when the Holy Spirit turns our cold stony hearts into hearts of flesh, warm-blooded hearts that actually feel for those whom Jesus has bought with His precious blood.

What’s the difference? Why should it matter as long as we do right by others? The “why” is so very important if the glory of the gospel of Christ is to be revealed! Jesus told the disciples, *“then all will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another”* (v.35) When it is the power of Jesus’ love that moves us to love then there is a reflection of Jesus’ glory that others see. Jesus’ name is glorified before the world. People will praise His name. People will seek to know the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Crucified and Risen Savior. They will behold **His** glory, not ours.

Reflections of Jesus' glory. That is what life is all about. As we reflect upon the glory of our Savior as His glory was revealed in His suffering and death and resurrection that meditation will move our hearts. We will be moved by the power of the Spirit to love even as Jesus loved, and continues to love us. We will be like that glassy lake reflecting the sunrise of of Jesus glory as He shines upon our hearts. That reflection will be seen by others, and it will cause others to marvel, and then maybe to wonder, and then to praise our glorious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To Him alone be all praise and glory!

AMEN.

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Amen. (Romans15:13)