

A Glorified Saviour Expounds The Glory Of Love.

Text: John 13:31-35

Suggested Hymns:

354, 344, 381, 51, 258

1) The Son Of Man Is Glorified By The Father

2) The Father Is Glorified In The Son

3) His Disciples Shall Live In The Glory Of Love

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is John 13:31-35, ³¹ *So, when he [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. ³⁴ "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."* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Judas has left the Upper Room. He has gone out, out into the darkness, out into the night, into the darkness and the night of bitter betrayal. Judas, at last, has left the company of the Twelve. He has parted company with the little group of men who for three years had walked with faltering steps in the sacred footprints of their divine Teacher. Judas has gone out, away from the Light of the World, into the darkness that surrounds his deed of treachery.

At long last, Jesus finds Himself alone with the Eleven, whom He knows to be faithful. They are weak, and perhaps trembling with fear, but they are faithful. The wicked one among them has gone away. His disturbing presence, his shifting gaze, his insinuating voice are no longer there to mar the unity and destroy the perfection of this inner circle of friends.

Now we can enter, as one commentator puts it, *"the holy of holies in the Passion history."* Here the Saviour of the world bids tender farewell to His

sorrowing friends. Here, in this last hour of fellowship, reminiscent of so many hours and days they had spent together in the months and years gone by, Jesus seeks to prepare them for the harrowing experiences which are yet to come.

Here Jesus interprets for them the importance and the meaning of His imminent suffering and death. Here He promises them comfort and power from on high and a peace such as the world can never give.

We see in His eyes a wealth of all-embracing love. We hear it in the tone of His voice. We find it in His words. For the first time we hear Jesus say to these rough and rugged men, many of whom were older than Himself, 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.*

In the love of His heart He sees them as orphaned children who will soon be deprived of Him, without whom they would be scattered abroad as lambs without a shepherd. This is His way of bidding them a fond farewell.

In that portion of His farewell address we see *A Glorified Saviour Expounding the Glory of Love*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. The Son Of Man Is Glorified By The Father

A glorified Saviour? Is that possible, there in the Upper Room, on the night of betrayal and agony, the night before the death of the Cross?

It is not only possible, but a fact. Perhaps you didn't expect to hear those words, with Judas dashing out into the night to set into motion the machinery of death. But hear them you do, nevertheless, from the lips of a calm and even triumphant Saviour.

Listen to Him, *“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.* Granted that the disciples only had a little understanding of what Jesus was talking about, He knew. Jesus was speaking of the whole drama of the Passion, the awful disgrace, the shameful mistreatment, the excruciating torture, the contemptuous scorn, the way of sorrows, and the agonising cross.

This, Jesus knew, even though all the world be ignorant of it, it was the beginning of His ultimate and final glorification. Perhaps Jesus recalled what He

had said to the people not long before, *if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.*¹ He was thinking, too, of the glory that lay beyond, the glory that was visible and understandable even to the eyes and minds of mortal men, the glory of His resurrection and the glory of His triumphant ascension into heaven.

He was thinking, with that infinite wisdom which knows and sees all things, of the whole cycle of events that would forever leave the Cross standing at the center of human history, towering over the wrecks of time.

Yes, this was glory, the glory of a battle which has reached its crashing climax and is about to be turned into a triumphant victory. The ultimate triumph was now in sight, triumph over the powers of darkness, triumph over sin and Satan, and over death and hell.

This was glory, for it meant the glorious deliverance of His people, the eternal redemption of souls that were bound in chains under the curse of sin, the everlasting liberation of men and women who were slaves of sin, the opening of the doors of heaven for great armies of His ransomed saints.

His suffering and His death would pay the penalty for all their sins. The outpouring of His blood in willing sacrifice would appease the righteous anger of an offended God. The breaking of His body and the giving of His life would spell atonement and peace and reconciliation. The events of the next eighteen hours and the next forty-three days would make possible the eternal salvation of all the generations of people.

As our text tells us, *Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified ... and [God shall] glorify Him immediately.*

2. The Father Is Glorified In The Son

This, too, the Saviour tells us, *God is glorified in Him.* God is glorified in the Son. There are many emotions with which the children of men, in the course of the ages and in the tumult and turmoil of their search for God, have approached the Deity.

There are pagans without number who, in the blindness and darkness of spiritual ignorance, have fashioned themselves a variety of hideous gods and worshiped them in a frenzy of fear.

There are humble people who have seen the beauty and the glory of fields and streams, of plains and mountains, and have come to think of God with reverent wonder and deep respect.

There are men of science who, with telescope and microscope, have seen the glory of Him whom in their ignorance they call the unknown and the unknowable God.

There are pitiful derelicts of humanity, to whom misfortune has come again and again, who think of God with bewilderment and consternation.

There are souls, hardened in the ways of sin, who challenge the Deity with the bitterness of hatred and contempt.

But in these examples they have all fallen short. Not one of them has really learned to know and come close to God.

That same evening, there in the Upper Room, Philip said to Jesus, *“Lord, show us the Father.”* And Jesus answered Him, *“Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father.”*² Just a moment earlier Jesus had said, *No one comes to the Father except through Me.*³ In Jesus the children of men have learned to know the Father.

In the Cross that was raised on Calvary they learned to know the fullness of the Father’s love. And since that Cross was raised on high, bearing the bruised and bleeding body of Jesus who died that men might live, men have approached the Father with faith and love, with gratitude, praise and willing service. So the Father has been glorified in God the Son.

Since Jesus went to Calvary and made known to all the world that God is a pleading, yearning, loving, forgiving heavenly Father, the redeemed among the children of men who have received the Gospel of redemption with trusting and believing hearts have glorified the Father with hearts and hands and voices and find their greatest joy in doing His work and singing His praise.

3. His Disciples Shall Live In The Glory Of Love

Having spoken of His own glorification, so inseparably interwoven with the love of the Father and the love of the Son for each other and for all mankind, Jesus goes on to tell His disciples that they shall now live in the glory of love.

But first a warning, expressed in words of tenderest affection, 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.’”*** Once again Jesus tells them something they never wanted to believe. Something which they had always preferred to put out of their minds completely. It was that He leave them. That He must sever the bonds which for three years had held them close together, and that He must remove from their company, the blessing of His bodily presence.

Jesus was telling them that the time was drawing near when they would have to carry on alone, when He would entrust to their keeping the future and the destiny of His kingdom here on earth, when He would return to heaven and have them build His Church in a hostile world.

And so He told them, too, of the one and only way in which they could possibly succeed, the only way in which the Christian community and the Christian Gospel could possibly survive in the kind of world into which they would soon be thrown.

Jesus gave them a new way of life, in which they would now have to walk, or they would utterly fail. ***“A new commandment I give to you,”*** He said, ***“that you love one another.”*** The way of love! Was it really a new commandment? In the Word of God, that was already given to Moses as we read in Leviticus 19:18, ***you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.***

Yes, but here was a new application of the law of love, in an age which had forsaken and forgotten the ancient Commandments of Almighty God, in a civilisation which reeked with lust, greed and hatred and the exploitation of man by his fellow man.

“Love one another,” Jesus said to the faithful Eleven. ***“Love one another,”*** He says to the faithful among His disciples today. And this was no mere request, or plea, or petition. This was the new commandment of the Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

Jesus didn't say, “Take it or leave it,” or, “Try it if you want to.” He said, ***“I command you to love one another.”*** I am sure there were times in those trying, difficult years of the Church's early history when the disciples had to remind themselves of that commandment again and again.

There are times today, in our own congregational life, in the fellowship that Christians have with one another, when Christian disciples ought to remember the mandate of Jesus, ***“Love one another.”*** We know it is not easy when differences of opinion and personalities become involved. It is not always easy to walk in the ways of love. And yet this is what the Lord demands.

Jesus demands a perfect love when He adds, ***as I have loved you, that you also love one another.*** Did Jesus love His disciples because they deserved to be loved? Did He love them because they were great and noble, or wealthy and intelligent, or sympathetic and understanding? Did Jesus love them because they were always in agreement with His purposes and always ready to walk in His ways? Did Jesus love them because of the depths of their love and the extent of their faith?

Isn't it true that they failed Him in practically every point, disappointed Him again and again, and almost broke His heart with the weakness of their faith and their pitiful lack of understanding?

Isn't it true that He loved them anyway, enough to lay down His life for their sins and to go to the Cross for their sakes? Wasn't His love the essence of unselfishness, of self-sacrifice and self-denial? Has not that same love reached out to you and me, over the miles and across the centuries, to bring the eternal redemption of our God and the joyful hope of heaven even to us, today? With that kind of love, He says to the Eleven, and to you and me, we are to love one another.

And this love, He tells us in the closing verse of the text, is to be the distinguishing mark of His disciples in the world of men. ³⁵ ***“By this all will know that you are My disciples, He says, if you have love for one another.”***

Ever since then, brotherly love has been the proving ground of the Christian life, the test by which people know and make known to others that they belong to God the Father through Jesus Christ His Son, not miracles, or eloquent speech, or distinctive attire, or the wearing of a golden cross, not a certificate of church membership, or the chairmanship of a church committee, or a record of generous giving, but brotherly love — these other things, too, perhaps, but, first, brotherly love, Christian love, unselfish, unrewarded, undemanding love, like the love of the Saviour for His own.

Have we, have you and I, seen that kind of love in the life of the Church? Have we demonstrated that kind of love in our contacts with our fellow men?

It was St. John, the Apostle of Love, who wrote, ¹⁴ *We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.*⁴ And, in the same letter, ¹⁰ *In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*⁵

Think it over. Search your soul. Examine your daily life. And remember the command of Jesus, *“Love one another as I have loved you.”* Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ John 12:32

² John 14:9

³ John 14:6

⁴ 1 John 3:14

⁵ 1 John 4:10-11