

Jesus' Glory in Cross, Resurrection, and Ascension.  
Our Glory through Faith in the Word — John 17:1-11

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Easter 7a

Pastor Douglas Punke

In the name of ✠ Jesus.

Perhaps the time when we are most honest is in our private prayers. Nobody there but you and God. No one to impress and make yourself out to be better than who you are — better than who you know yourself to be, with all your flaws, all your foibles, all your faults, all your failures. We hide these. We may try to deny them, or at the very least, try to keep them hidden from others; but before God, we know our lives are laid bare. Prayer is that kind of honest time. We cannot hide from God.

Today, we are privileged to listen in on some honest prayer time with Jesus. He is not teaching His disciples here or correcting them. He's not chastising the Pharisees or pronouncing woes. He is praying. Jesus *"lifted up his eyes to heaven, and [prayed], "Father ...."*

Jesus prayed first for Himself, for His glory: *"glorify your Son."* But this glory is not what we expect. *"The hour has come,"* for this glory, Jesus said, on this night of His betrayal. Here He is echoing the words that He had spoken earlier that week: *"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified,"* referring to His crucifixion (John 12:23).

Jesus' suffering and death was imminent, and yet He did not flee. He did not hide. He met death head on, His face resolute. Although His soul was troubled, yet He said, *"what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour."* Indeed, Jesus came to do the Father's will, to honor His Father, to glorify the Father's name. And in His own death, Jesus would accomplish it (John 12:27-28).

For there on the cross Jesus proclaimed, *"It is finished"* (John 19:30). There He accomplished everything that the Father had given Him to do. There He judged the world. There He bound the strong man (Matt. 12:29) and cast out the ruler of this world. There, lifted up on a cross, He would draw all people unto Himself and give eternal life to all whom the Father had given Him (John 12:31). For this is how God loved the world: by giving His only Son unto death on a cross that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). As Jesus said on that most holy night of His betrayal, *"this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."*

Jesus also prayed for another glory on that night: *"And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed."* Here the eternal Son of God reminds us what is His according to His divinity: *"the glory equal, the majesty coeternal"* with the Father and the Holy Spirit, as we say in the Athanasian Creed—this He laid aside as He became man. Jesus was *"for a*

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*little while ... made lower than the angels*" the writer to the Hebrews says (Heb. 2:9), quoting the Psalmist.

But Jesus, by His suffering and death, made man perfect again and a worthy recipient of the glory of God. When Jesus ascended on high and was crowned again with glory and honor, seated at the Father's right hand, He took our human nature with Him. Man was placed on the throne; man received the Divine glory of the eternal Son of God. As we sang on Thursday, "*Thou has raised our human nature On the clouds to God's right hand; There we sit in heavenly places, There with Thee in glory stand. Jesus reigns, adored by angels; Man with God is on the throne. Mighty Lord, in Thine ascension We by faith behold our own.*"

Truly, Jesus brings us into this eternal glory. Truly this glory is ours through faith in Christ Jesus. It's a done deal. That's what Jesus prayed on the night before His crucifixion—He had accomplished the work that the Father gave Him to do. That's why Jesus also prayed as if He had already ascended. He prayed, "*I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world ...*," for He knew that "*[our] adversary the devil [would prowl] around like a roaring lion, seeking ... to devour*" us (1 Peter 5:8). And so, He prayed, "*Holy Father, keep them in your name.*" This is how we are glorified now—when we remain in the Father's name, that is, when we believe God's word of grace, looking to Jesus—as we are being prepared, even through affliction, for "*an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison*" (2 Cor. 4:17).

This is what we pray for when we pray in the Lord's Prayer: "*Hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done ....*" You know that when we pray these, we're praying that "the Word of God [be] taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it"; we're praying that "by [God's] grace we [may] believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity"; we're praying that God would "[strengthen] and [keep] us firm in His Word and faith until we die."

For Jesus was given words to speak, to make the Father known—as Jesus taught, "*I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. ... they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me ....*" Remaining in the Father's name means listening to Jesus and remaining in His words, for "*no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him*" (Matt. 11:27). Believing in this revelation, you, too, will be glorified.

And, of course, this is all by God's grace, for let's be honest: there is nothing in you that would make you desirable to God—even if you try, you cannot deceive

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God, who knows all things. It's only yourself that you are deceiving if you are not honest in your prayers. It is only out of His great love for mankind that He sent His own Son to become one with man, that man might have fellowship with God. And honestly, it is a rather amazing thing that God would desire fellowship with us sinners. But this fellowship is not on our terms as sinners, but on our faithful God's terms, with sins forgiven, and us cleansed from all unrighteousness. Then "*our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ*" (1 John 1:3). Brought by Holy Baptism into the fellowship of the Holy Trinity, sins washed away, we are one, as Jesus prayed, even as They are One.

May this glory be our desire, too, and this prayer: to be kept in the Father's name; to hear and believe God's word in its truth and purity; to be kept in this Word and faith until we die; to receive eternal life by knowing the Father through the Son; to ascend to glory and everlasting fellowship in the oneness of the Holy Trinity. God grant this prayer for the sake of Jesus.

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.