

GLORY IN THE LORD

John 12:20-33 Text: vs. 28 *"Father, glorify your name!"*

As we begin the last week of Lent, it's perhaps fitting we should look at the true meaning of discipleship. Our text this morning is short. Yet, it's profound. It's a verse that captures a moment of intense importance in Jesus' life during the final days of His earthly ministry. He was in Jerusalem. The Passover festival that celebrates the liberation of the Jews from slavery in Egypt and their Exodus under the leadership of Moses was near. Emotions were running high. Pilgrims from all over had gathered. As the Festival drew near, Jesus knew His hour had come. The hour of His ultimate purpose. He lifted His voice in prayer calling God His *"Father"* which revealed His deep connection and relationship with God. The focus of His prayer was *"Father, Glorify your name!"* In those four words, Jesus summed up His whole mission. Glorification! Praising and honoring God with acts of worship.

Jesus glorified His Father when He gave His life by dying on a cross. And His resurrection showed His Father's Glory. God's Glory is God's majesty. His awe-inspiring greatness. It can be seen in the heavens. The earth. And in all His creative works. It's a celestial display throughout the sky. And may also be a private revelation, just for you. Now, the cross was a place of shame. Yet through Jesus, it became the greatest display of God's power and love. Jesus' resurrection assured that God's name was raised up. And it's in Jesus' prayer you can hear His unwavering obedience to God. He willingly walked the path of suffering knowing His Resurrection would lead to His Father's Glory! And His submission to His Father should make Him a role model for *you*. This was the time Jesus decided it was time to say good-bye. And it was difficult for Him! The problem was, He was the one who was leaving, and His disciples had not yet grasped what was about to happen. Even though Jesus had talked plainly about His leaving, it wasn't something that was easy for Him to do. He said, *"My soul is troubled"*.

But when *you* grieve and weep over someone who's departed, or one who is about to be departing, you need to understand - there's good news. You can always look up for your help. Jesus did! When Jesus looked up, He glorified the Father. When Jesus looked up, He defeated the enemy. When Jesus looked up, He chased away the darkness. And you should be like Jesus! Look up! He knew from where His strength came. Now, you like to do good things, don't you? Everybody enjoys getting a little recognition. An occasional pat on the back. A *"well done!"* But Jesus didn't operate that way. He told those around Him He wasn't doing those miraculous things for His own account! *"When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He. And that I do nothing of Myself."* (John 8:28) He declared His divine identity. He acknowledged His role in salvation. And He affirmed His acceptance of His Father's will. His mission was guided by His Father's instruction. And His authority came from God Himself.

You see, God gets all the glory! Jesus never performed a miracle for His own benefit, because *"Jesus did many other things in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that believing, you may have life in His name."* (John 20:30-31) Did you get that? You receive eternal life - *in God's Name!* And God gets the glory! Remember, Jesus glorified the Father through actual physical proof. When the people heard God's Voice, they knew something was going on. They didn't quite understand what the Voice said, but *"the crowd that was there and heard it said, it had thundered. Others said, an angel had spoken to Jesus."* (John 12:29) It was evidence of God's supernatural presence. *"Nevertheless,"* Jesus said, *"I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away. For if I do not go away, the Helper"* that is the Holy Spirit, *"will not come to you. But if I depart, I will send Him to You"*. (John 16:7)

And what will the Holy Spirit do? He will give gifts! And what are the gifts? They are the physical evidence of spiritual truths. They are gifts for teaching the church. Gifts for bringing glory to God. And *"whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."* Because Jesus is Truth. And His word glorifies God who is the Truth. Jesus also said, *"the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I have said to you."* You too, as a follower of Christ, are to share His mission in glorifying God. Your life should echo Jesus' prayer: *"Father, glorify your name!"* Whether in your work, your relationships, or your daily activities, seek to glorify God's name. Your worship. Your service. Your witness. All contribute to His Glory.

But like Jesus, you must surrender your desires, your ambitions, and your plans to God's glory. Are you willing to do that? Will you say with Jesus, *"Not my will, but Yours be done."* Jesus prayed that out loud! And so should you! Boldly declare God's glory in your conversations. Your actions. Your worship. But when people are given the choice between right and wrong, by their very nature they often choose wrong. They still walk in that darkness we learned about last week. However, God's Grace is constantly pointing toward the light. You know how it is when out of the darkness someone turns on a light in the middle of the night. You've been in darkness so long the light hurts your eyes. That's the way it is with the light of Jesus. The longer people walk in darkness, the harder it is for them to look toward the light. Just as Jesus' prayer

united Him with His Father, we as the body of Christ, the church, are united by glorifying God together as One. And our diversity reflects His worldwide glory.

There was a river that wanted to flow out to sea through a desert. But the river was afraid when it saw the huge expanse of dry desert sand. The river complained, "The desert will drink up my water. The hot sun will destroy me. I will be reduced to just a stinking swamp". Then the river heard a voice: "Trust the desert!" The river replied: "If I do, will I still be the same? Won't I lose my identity?" The voice said: "There's no way for you to remain the same!" So, the river trusted and began flowing through the desert. The heat of the sun turned the river's water into vapor. The wind carried the vapor up as clouds over miles of hot desert sand. Then the vapor formed into rain clouds. And out of the clouds came a new, fresher and a more beautiful river - *on the other side of the desert!* The river was happy with that, and said: "Now, I am my real self!"

And like that river, some are pushed into their own personal desert. The scary stages of life. But that river story says only those who will let change come into their life will ultimately be successful and reach their goal. Change is what helps you grow. You will mature. And one day you will be able to say: "Now I am my real self!" In the Bible, the "River of Life" is mentioned in the book of Revelation as a symbol of eternal life. It's spiritual nourishment. *"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city."* (Revelation 22:1 NIV) That river symbolizes the Divine Source of life. Of healing. Of restoration. And as it flows through the heavenly city it gives support to all who dwell there.

Mac Powell has a song titled "*River of Life*". The lyrics point out that coming to the river of life loaded down with burdens and seeking healing, you will find hope in the blood of Jesus. The chorus goes like this: *"Let that river of life wash it all away. If you've been searching. Carrying burdens. If you've been lost and looking for a home. If you've been drifting, and something is missing, you should know. You are not alone!"* That song invites you to find relief and be changed in the river of God's grace. Because in a real sense, rivers sustain life on Earth. They provide water. Nourish environments. Rivers connect people. The Nile. The Ganges. The Amazon. All their waters bring life to countless beings.

So, whether it's a biblical image. A song. Or a natural happening, the "River of Life" represents the life of Jesus. Hope and renewal. The connection with all existence. It's the sea toward which your life-river wants to move. When you take courage and trust the desert of your life, you come to the sea of happiness and the love of God. Believe the sea is beyond the desert. You don't have to desperately cling to it. But trust in what Jesus taught His disciples. *Anyone who loves their life will lose it. And anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it, for eternal life.*" (John 12:25) Jesus said, *"Father, glorify your name!"* Those words echo across time and eternity. And may they echo in your heart as well. Live for the glory of God, and you can eternally be your *real self*. Amen.