

The Seventh Sunday of Easter  
St John 17:1-11

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Jesus was praying. He would soon be captured to be crucified, and He prayed. "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." He prayed for a glory unlike any other.

Now, it's nothing new, this world's idea of glory. Those who are highly esteemed are said to have the glory of men. They have medals and ribbons pinned on them. They are awarded gold, silver, and bronze medallions. They are presented with trophies. People will pay \$10 each to spend an hour and a half to watch them on a 30-foot high screen, and upwards of thousands of dollars to sit with thousands of others to watch them play a game. Fame, fortune, and beauty (and maybe valor) are the defining characteristics of glory to the world.

But Jesus was praying for a glory unlike the world understands. "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself," He once said. (John 12:32) Glory does draw people.

Jesus prayed, "I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed." He prayed for a glory unlike any other.

It's still nothing new, this world's idea of glory. One who is glorified is able to rest on their laurels. Glory means being able to receive service. Along with many accolades comes adoration and praise. With fame, fortune, and beauty (and maybe valor) comes the gift of being waited on hand and foot. Whatever the glorified person wants, that person gets. Being served is a defining perk of glory to this world.

But Jesus was praying for a glory unlike the world understands. Here is God-in-the-flesh who took up the trade of carpentry, making things for other people. He is the One through whom all things were made who had stooped down to wash His creatures' feet and then served them a meal. (cf. John 13) He has come, as He has said, to serve, not to be served. (cf. Matthew 20:28)

Jesus prayed,

I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and 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, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me."

He prayed for a glory unlike any other.

And, once again, it's still nothing new, this world's idea of glory. One who is glorified is idolized. They can say no wrong. People hang on their every word; people want to hear what a glorified person has to say, hoping for something new and wonderful and amazing (as the world defines those), and incorporate what it is they have said into their lives. And make no mistake, these are their words—they are not "merely" giving words from another. Being listened to and heeded is another defining perk of glory to this world.

But Jesus was praying for a glory unlike the world understands. He could have come and stood on the mountains and shouted commands to the rocks, winds, and waves, and they would have obeyed.

He could have, with a word, changed the ways things work. But this is God-in-the-flesh who speaks to His people the same words of Law and Gospel that God has been speaking from the beginning.

Jesus prayed,

I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one."

He prayed for a glory unlike any other.

Yeah, you know, it's nothing new, this world's idea of glory. Glory means not belonging to another, but maybe even having followers. It's being set apart as different and better than others, not one with others. Or, I could go the other route, too. The world's idea of glory is pretending to be one with others when no true unity exists. They keep themselves together. They keep themselves apart. They keep themselves above others. Haughtiness is also a defining characteristic of glory to this world.

But Jesus was praying for a glory unlike the world understands. He prayed that those who have been created through Him and heeded the word of God be given something: unity with each other as the Father and Son are one. He prayed that this unity be kept through His name, and later, by the Word of God, when He prays, "Sanctify them"—make and keep them holy, set apart—"in the truth; your word is truth." (John 17:17)

Yes, Jesus prayed for glory, and the glory He prayed for goes to the cross. It is His glory to serve, to do the work He was given to do (which He has been doing since His incarnation). In His life and teaching and work, He has fulfilled all that has been written about the Son of God in the Law and the prophets. He has been righteous—sinless—in all that He has done. And, He went to the cross with that perfect life to die for the world, to be lifted up and draw all to Himself, to credit all with His righteousness. There is no greater glory—there is no other glory.

What a fitting end this is to the season of Easter. At a time when an empty cross and empty tomb are celebrated, you are brought back to the one act of righteousness by which God is glorified: the death of His Son on the cross for the redemption of the world, the forgiveness of sins, the victory over death, the gift of eternal life.

You have God's Word on that. This is the word that Jesus gave to His disciples, which in turn has been preached and taught to the ends of the world, beginning in Jerusalem. His Word is His promise, His guarantee. It is signed, sealed, and delivered in God's holy name. It's the name into which you have been Baptized, meaning that you have God's name placed on you—you are claimed, dear Baptized, owned by the One who created heaven and earth and everything in them. It is the seal upon your forehead and heart that mark you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified. It is the name to call upon in every trouble, pray to, praise, and give thanks to (cf. Psalm 50:14-15, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)—the name by which you can call upon God as Abba, Father, Daddy...as His dear children.

It's a wonderful connection, God's Word and His name. For it is as you have been taught: God's name is kept holy "[w]hen the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead a holy life according to it. This grant us, dear Father in heaven." Furthermore, God's kingdom comes "[w]hen our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead a godly life, here in time and hereafter in eternity."

And as far as God's name and Word are connected, it's no coincidence that the Second Commandment—You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God—is followed by the Third Commandment—Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. What is this? "We should fear and

love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks." "We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it."

So then, when God's kingdom comes, when His Word is kept pure and undefiled, kept sacred, there true unity exists—where the people of God are being sanctified by His truth which is His Word, the whole, undefiled counsel of God. Such is what is confessed when pastors and teachers and congregations subscribe to the Augsburg Confession which states, "And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments." (AC VII, Triglotta) That is to say, true unity in the Church comes by the Word of Her Head, Christ the Lord, who is the very Word of God, in His name, and not by any other means; again, where His Word is purely taught, there His name is kept holy. But, you don't need to take my word on that, for you have the very Word of God: "Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one...Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth." Where God's name is, there His Word is at work to accomplish that for which Jesus prayed.

In today's Gospel, Jesus eyes were squarely fixed on His cross. He was in Jerusalem to die for you and for all, in order that you might be rescued from this vale of tears and its errant ideas of glory, with all its fame and fortune and beauty. But this is the glory of God: that He sent His Son to die for you, that you and all for whom He died may be perfectly one with each other and with Him. He was lifted up on the tree of the cross as the perfect Sacrifice, the flawless Substitute, the propitiation for your sins—for the sins of the world. (cf. Romans 3:25, Hebrews 2:17, 1 John 2:2, 1 John 4:10) This is the glory of God, that He sent His Son to die for you, and so you are forgiven you for all your sins.

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.