

**Reading:** John 13:31-38

**Theme:** The Glorifying of God.

Last week we saw solemn lessons in v18-30 and the passage ended with Judas going out into the darkness of the night. From v31 onwards Jesus was there in the upper room with His true disciples as the betrayer had left. John seems to emphasise this at the start of the verse and from this point onwards Jesus opens His heart to them. Now there is no one to cause Him pain by betrayal. Judas had gone off to do his dastardly deed and now the Lord Jesus speaks to the 11 faithful disciples with love, tenderness, warmth and concern. During the evening He will answer questions from them, but all the time He is seeking to show His love for them and prepare them for the future.

Thankfully John was enabled to remember and write down the things Jesus told them - we have much to be thankful and grateful for what he recorded, as he tells us of so many precious things. In v31-38 we see 4 main things:

1. The Glory of the Son of Man and God. (v31-32)
2. The Physical Absence of Christ. (v33)
3. The Physical Presence of Christ's People. (v34-35)
4. The Questioning Self-Confidence Smashed. (v36-38)

We will only look at the first main area this morning:

**1. The Glory of the Son of Man and God. (v31-32)** and in these 2 verses Jesus shares a triple glorification process, perhaps a better description is the 3 intertwined strands of glorification. In these 2 verses, the idea of glory, glorified is mentioned 5 times in NIV.

As we come to look at these verses and something of what they mean, we are to realise here is something magnificent, wonderful and full of glory. Jesus is speaking of an event He knew would display His glory, the glory of God - Father and Holy Spirit and

results in even more glory being His and the event which bring all that about is, amazingly, His sufferings and death!

I know I keep mentioning the death and cross of the Lord Jesus and someone may think me a morbid, solemn, melancholic Welshman (*which I may well be!*) Yet we are to understand that the cross and the death of the Lord Jesus has to be viewed not as a tragedy, a mistake, but as something amazing, something glorious and reveals to us Jesus and God's glory at its highest and most wonderful. I hope we will all come to realise this as we look at these verses and see this triple, 3 stranded glorification.

### **A. The Son of Man Glorified in His Sufferings.**

Even with all that lay ahead of Him, the Lord Jesus doesn't mention His sufferings except in connection with this amazing idea of "glorification". He knew His hour had come to depart from the world and He knew very clearly the way of His departure! He knew all the physical sufferings that lay ahead, the shame, the pain. Also, He knew the spiritual sufferings that lay ahead as He was going to be made sin for us, become the cursed One on the tree, would be as the damned and suffer our hell in our place in and on His own body on the tree. He would taste physical and spiritual death, for He would know separation from the Father and the Holy Spirit.

As He viewed all these horrors, He saw them shining forth with "glory". It is incredible that the cross of shame was the cross of glorification; the sufferings, the humiliation were all part and parcel of that mysterious glorification process. Note in the start of v31, as Judas had just left and was putting his whole betrayal plan into action, Jesus said "*Now is the Son of Man glorified*". Jesus knew the plan of salvation and it would be completed, but now with Judas' leaving, the final piece was in place and the whole would move on to a rapid conclusion and Jesus knew that by the same time the next day, He would have suffered, died and be buried in a borrowed tomb.

Jesus, in dismissing Judas to do what he had to do quickly, was showing His love for the Father's will and for the Father's purposes and plans for Him. In a sense, Jesus is glorified in His submission, His obedience and love to the Father's purposes in His suffering. Yes, it troubled, hurt and grieved the Lord Jesus that one of His own close followers would betray Him. He knew who it was and yet He surrenders Himself to it. He could say "*Now*" - even now, as Judas was on his way to betray Him, Jesus was being glorified. Yet here, Jesus uses the term "Son of Man" with reference to Himself. Not the Son of God, or Saviour, Redeemer or Christ, but "Son of Man".

In the NT this term is used in 2 ways. In the first 3 gospels it is used as a title of humility to designate the Son of God in real human body. It emphasises His state of humbleness. Yet at the same time it is also used to speak of His power and glory. It derives its origin from Daniel 7:13 where the Son of Man is seen with great power and glory. We are to realise that the Son of Man, God the Son in human flesh, is coming to the pinnacle of His work and ministry and it is going to be glorification by the shame of the cross and all its sufferings. The shame and the glory are put together, are placed, intertwined with each other. It is incredible that this dreadful, awful, shameful death was paradoxically, mysteriously, the demonstration of Christ's glory!

It is all too easy to see the shame, but have we glimpsed of His glory in His sufferings and death? He is glorified in His love for ones such as you and me, in His dying to save us, allowing Himself to be maltreated, manhandled, crucified by mere creatures, to be made a curse, to be made my sin, your sin, by being willing to bear the unknown, unimaginable agonies of sin and hell on Himself as He is as the damned, as He is separated from the Father and Holy Spirit's love and presence and has the wrath of holy God poured out on Him in our place. He could have said "*Enough*", called thousands of

angels to set Him free, but He did not as His love kept Him there for us.

It shows us of His infinite person and power; the glory of His might that all the sin of His people was voluntarily taken by Him, He took all the weight of our awful sin, took it all and its punishment in our place. We see His glory as He defeated Satan, disarmed him, destroyed death, triumphed over principalities and powers. We see the glory of redemption - the price fully paid for you and me, all our debts to God satisfied. We see the glory of heaven secured for us, the glory of every gift and grace in Christ Jesus accomplished there, we see the glory of God's love and mercy being harmonised with the glory of God's holy wrath and righteous judgement. We are to see the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus as all glorious, as glorification.

At this point I'm not yet speaking of His resurrection or ascension; this is just His death! There are countless glories that circle the cross of Christ and in heaven and only in heaven will we fully understand this, but we need to grasp something of it and not just leave it as a nauseating piece of inhumanity to a great man. The Lord Jesus' own view is that it was glorious and so it should be to our view also. We should be as Paul, who said "*God forbid that I should boast save in the cross of Christ*" (Galatians 6:14). Here the glory of Christ is reflected and seen more clearly than if we were witnesses of His speaking and bringing all Creation into being. It is the foundation, the glorious foundation of our eternal salvation and so we should glory in the cross. The Son of man was glorified in His sufferings, but also we see:

## **B. God Was Glorified in the Son.**

In the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ i.e. His glorification, we read that God is glorified in Him. It is not only by Him, or through Him, but **in** Him - in union, in connection with Him,

in His Person, in His suffering, in His office as sin bearer, Redeemer, Saviour and High Priest.

We have to question as to who is meant by God here. Is it God the Father, God the Holy Spirit or God the Trinity? Being perfectly honest after much reading, it is difficult to decide! Yes, God the Father is glorified, as is God the Holy Spirit, but so is the triune God in the whole scheme of salvation. From my reading in John, I have to say that I feel the primary emphasis would be on God the Father as I feel John 17v1 underlines and endorses this "*Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.*" So, in Jesus' glorification, God the Father would be glorified in and by God the Son - all Jesus suffered and went through.

The death of the Lord Jesus brings glory to and is the glory of God the Father. The cross is not to be played down, Jesus' death and suffering are to be exalted, given prominence, the pre-eminence as it is in heaven - for the Lamb who was slain is at the centre of heaven's praise (Revelation 5). Very briefly consider that God the Father is glorified in Jesus' obedience while on earth - obedient to His utter purity and to death on the cross; He is glorified in Jesus' sacrifice, death, resurrection, ascension and exaltation. Yet the cross of the Lord Jesus also glorified the Father as it demonstrates, shows, exalts, glorifies His wisdom, faithfulness, holiness and love. It shows the glory of God in His wisdom in providing the only way for the holy God and sinful man to be at one; for God to be just and still be the justifier of sinners like us. It shows He is faithful in keeping His promises of salvation and the Saviour; it shows Him holy in requiring all the demands of the law be fulfilled in the Saviour who was our substitute, our atoning sacrifice (*propitiation*) in our place for our sin. We see His love is magnified as He loves us so much to send heaven's best, His only Son, to be our Saviour.

The glory of each person in the godhead reaches its climax on the cross and all the many perfections and beauties of God in all the fullness of His being are distilled there. William Gadsby glimpsed something of this and wrote of it in a hymn (O what matchless condescension) and wrote in v3-5 *“Would we view His highest glory, here it shines in Jesus’ face; sing and tell the pleasing story, O you sinners saved by grace; and with pleasure, bid the guilty Him embrace. In His highest work, redemption, see His glory in a blaze; beyond mortal comprehension, higher than an angel’s praise; grace and justice here unite to endless days. True, ‘tis sweet and solemn pleasure, God to view in Christ the Lord; here He smiles, and smiles for ever, may my soul His name record, praise and bless Him, and His wonders spread abroad.”*

Redemption, the plan of salvation in all its vast fullness is the greatest work of God; it glorifies Him the most - not only His power and wisdom, but His love, His holy law, His wrath, His grace. Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have embraced each other (Psalm 85:10). As the Son of Man was glorified in His sufferings and death, God was glorified in the Son. Yet even more, we find a third strand and theme of glorification:

### **C. The Son Will Be Glorified In God.**

The word “If” at the start of v32 may appear to give a condition... Probably we should see “If” as *“If then”* or *“Since then”* or even *“Because”* - there is no doubt or uncertainty in Jesus’ mind that He would glorify God the Father. Because Jesus would glorify the Father in His own glorification, this in turn leads to God glorifying the Son in Himself and do so at once, straightaway.

Because God was glorified in the Son, there would be a special glory set on the Son and it would be done without delay, without hindrance, without any doubt of it being done. Here we probably come to the intimation about the resurrection, ascension, the

receiving to glory at the right hand of the Father, the Son's sitting down until all His enemies are made of footstool, till all the kingdoms of the world are His. Paul probably has this in mind when he wrote Philippians 2:9-11 to emphasise and enlarge on the glorification of Christ after all His sufferings.

Neither the Father, or the Son, go it alone for their own glory. Neither takes the glory exclusively for themselves and their aim is to each glorify the other. It was part of the joy held out before Him that Jesus prays concerning this in 17:5 & 24. He knew there was glory in His sufferings and death, but beyond that was glory – the glory He had even before the world was. The future was lit up with the glory from the past and yet the past glory was to be eclipsed by the future glory of the Son and be done in a way to show this was real and true - by His resurrection, ascension, enthronement and exaltation in heaven.

God would glorify the Son in Himself - the Father, Son and Holy Spirit together glorified, exalted in all their character and attributes through the way of salvation they have made. Would you want to be a sharer of that, would you want to see and be there in that glorious place where God is most glorified? You may think that would be impossible for someone like you or me. Yet there is a way for people like us to rise to that absolutely amazing glorious place, it is possible due to an offering, a sacrifice and advocate, someone who will stand in our behalf - and His name is Jesus. You question if He would have or want us there? The answer is “Yes” and He prayed for such in 17:24 *“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.”*

The way God has planned, brought about and accomplished to allow us to be there in heaven brings glory to Him and Him alone. We cannot earn or deserve such salvation. We're saved by the free grace of God alone and grace means that we do not deserve it one little bit,

but it is given us freely and without personal cost to us, but great cost to Him. We are saved to the praise of His glory and grace. The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever - which is contrary to what many people think!

Everyone will one day glorify God. Those who are lost will glorify God as holy and just, even as they are condemned and cast into hell and yet His praise will be rung from their reluctant hearts and mouths and own that Jesus Christ is Lord. Those who are saved will glorify Him most clearly and yet our lives **now** are to echo, show that glory, as we boast and glory in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Such ones are to live lives that would show that we are partakers already of that glory in our lives by the salvation we have.

That shameful death of the cross was glory for the Son, to God and by God to the Son again. Despite my attempt to open up such things, I pray that we would understand and grasp more of such things and that we would live for the glory of such an amazing, wonderful and glorious Saviour.