

The Ministry of Glorification (Joh 13:31-35)

* Dear Friend today is the 5th month of 2010 and the 5th time of our gathering in church for celebration of Jesus' victorious resurrection. At this moment the Word of God continues to elevate our mind towards the significant things in the past. The gospel lesson for today says that by means of these things God was glorified in Jesus and Jesus glorified God. Significantly, within the given context, the idea of glorification also can be embodied by Christians in this day and age. To know what Jesus has done for us is important in terms of our personal growth in faith, love and hope. On the other hand, to know and practice the things we were given are also important in view of the realization of God's good will upon us. Now, keeping in mind these important things, let's pray to the Lord of glory for wise advice and encouragement.

* Almighty God, the Father of our Lord, You gave us the words of truth and we've understood that all things we've received from Jesus are Yours. Father, You let us know that Jesus came from You, and we have believed that You gave us the Son through whom we received the command to love each other. Father, glorify Your Son through us and make us one body with Your Son, the one holy and priestly nation. And when our ending hours come, grant us to be with Him so that we may see His infinite glory and Yours in our resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen

* Friends, as we begin I want you to look at John's Gospel as a whole, it should help us to develop an idea centered round the fragmentary from Joh 13:31-35, the lesson for today. Now imagine John's Gospel as a Doctor of Sacred Theology. Although the Doctor doesn't have the breath of life in his nostrils, he is still able to convert the unchristian, even the stubborn among them. Notice, no one even the contemporary pastors or theologians can do it so skillfully.

* The Doctor starts the conversion from the moment when readers come across with him. The Doctor does evangelism by setting forth the words of truth that work as a sword. It separates the audience (Jews or Gentiles) into a Community of believers and Opposition, (Joh 6:64-66). The final division occurred where our Sunday text narrates Judas' exodus from the Church, (v.31).

Significantly, after Judas' departure there are no more false brothers and sisters in the Holy Community, only the true disciples of Jesus Christ, – if viewing the Church as *the inward fellowship of faith*. At that moment and for the next 5 chapters the words of Jesus address exclusively "to whom it may concern." To them Jesus addresses further instructions, commands and eternal bliss. In the very end the Doctor concludes that all testimonies on Jesus' account are true, and they are worthy to be believed and being believed, the readers may have eternal life, (Joh 20:31;21:24).

* Thinking of the 5 verses of the text for this 5th Sunday after Easter, we found the 5 usages of the word “to glorify”. *Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and he will glorify him right away, (vv.31,32).* Have you noted that the 5 usages of the word “to glorify” – *doxazo* in Greek were built into the 5 steps-parallelism! This phenomenon indicates the perfection of the moment. *Just now, God and Man are glorified in me, Jesus says.* All mighty things such as Jesus’ incarnation, baptism, temptations, the making of disciples, proclamation of the kingdom, institution of the sacraments were left behind at the moment of Judas’ departure. Now the gate for the Lamb of God is opened. The final glorification is near as never before, and its available. The anticipation of Judas’ betrayal has turned into reality in order to be seized, as Jesus suffered and died for the transgressions of many. After that the Father would glorify Jesus in Himself by raising him from the dead, as He said, *I have glorified my name, and I will glorify it again, (Joh 12:28).*

* The next of significance from the past refers to a new command given to the inner circle of the true disciples. *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another, (v.34).* In order that the idea of a newest of command may be reconsidered by Christians, if they think differently, I will tell you my story.

* Some years ago we discussed the same subject at my former home church in San Antonio. During the Bible class I asked our pastor, where does Jesus teach that we should love our enemies as much as our Brothers? He quoted (Mat 5:43-45) saying that the Father treats the righteous and unjust in an equal manner, so I should do the same. Then I asked him again, should I sacrifice my life for the sake of Jesus’ enemies and my own? Why not!, he answered. Didn’t Jesus come to save the world instead of judging? (Joh 12:47).

* Friends, some of you might be like-minded with that pastor, if it so, then you might be also like-minded with what the old Folks say. Children, *How things work in theory don’t always match with how things work in reality.* Friends, have you remembered how King Solomon settled the problem of two women disputing over a baby? (1Ki 3:16). In order to stop a quarrel between the women he ordered a sword to cut the child in two. In response, the true mother denied her baby and pleaded the King not to cut her son. Now imagine two children crying for help after being swept away by streaming waters; one of the two is yours. The distance between them won’t give you a chance to save both. Whom will you run to help? I apologize for these examples, but they vividly illustrate our preferences in love. Now are you with that pastor or with the truth? As for myself, I agree that we should love even those who harm us. However, our love regarding the children from the royal Family should not be equal with the love regarding the children of wrath.

Therefore, I may not pay back to my enemies, or withdraw my hand from helping them, but surely the Lord has not sent me to sacrifice myself beyond common sense; rather the Lord gave me and you a new command - to love his sheep without measure, (Joh 15:13).

* Our Lord asks us to be in his likeness, and we have known that God is love, (1Jn 4:16). Surely, we who were chosen and justified in Christ through faith are loved by God much, much greater, than those whom He is keeping according to His own purposes. Friends, it is not a theoretical declaration, it is my confession based upon God's acts in my life and His Word. Surely, Jesus' love is *more powerful than death*; surely it is *stronger than the grave* with respect to his Church. Jesus' love cannot be drowned by oceans of floods; his love cannot be bought, no matter what is offered, (Song ... 8:6,7).

* Now thinking of Jesus' ministry as a glorious ministry due to its perfect outcome, we cannot escape a question. Can we also glorify the Lord as he is glorified in us? Even though it might seem incredibly difficult because we are like a man of unclean lips, (Isa 6:5), nevertheless, the Scripture and tradition witness that Isaiah, Peter and many others glorified God, (Joh 21:18,19). How did they do it? Significantly, outside of giving up one's life there is a thousand other ways, you know, by which Christians can glorify their Lord. This thousand is very memorable, just knowing one we will remember all others 999s.

Besides, we are not powerless; God's love (*agape*) has been indwelled in us by His Spirit. As result *the one who loves (agapao) another has fulfilled the law*, (Rom 13:8).

* Friends, by virtue of Jesus' glorious ministering in us the Father is glorified, and if in this life we will glorify God, He will also glorify us with His Son in your and my glorious resurrection.

Amen

Beloved, love each other.

Amen