

Rev. Beth J. Costlow

Lent 5 Year B

John 13:1-17; 31-35

March 21, 2021

Prepared for: Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, Greenville SC

- “We wish to see Jesus.” Something about the Messiah has caught the attention of these outsiders.
 - But they don’t approach Jesus themselves. They go to Philip, who goes to Andrew, and then the two disciples go to tell Jesus about the request.
 - And Jesus responds with...well, nothing that addresses the strangers who wanted to see him.
 - “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”
- Jesus in John’s gospel—the gospel of light, the gospel of wisdom, the gospel of glory
 - Matthew, Mark, Luke—synoptics (one-eye); they have many stories in common, although often told from differing perspectives.
 - John is unique.
 - Instead of starting with Jesus’ genealogy or birth, John’s opening words (“In the beginning...”) take the reader right back to creation.
 - No story of Jesus’ baptism; John the Baptist is present and baptizes others, but not Jesus
 - Instead John the Baptist identifies Jesus as the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” and describes the Spirit “descending from heaven..., and it remained on him.”
 - There are no parables in this gospel.
 - There is, though, a lot of talk about glory.
 - Variations on the word happen more than twice as many times as in any other gospel, including in today’s lesson.
- Why does this matter? Because the author of this gospel is explicit in understanding that, in and because of Jesus, God is no longer some distant, unapproachable, hidden deity
 - In Jesus, the glory of God is made visible
 - Not through his miracles (water to wine, healing the sick, walking on water, feeding a crowd, raising a man from the grave)
 - God’s glory is made visible through Jesus’ death and resurrection
 - This makes no sense! Death is not a source of glory!

- God is doing a new thing, says Jesus. Glory looks different than you expect.
- And then this, “Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.”
 - Wait! What?! If I have a good life and am content, I’m going to lose that life. But if I am miserably unhappy, I’m going to keep it!?
 - That’s good news?!? Well, let’s be honest.
 - Loving life often becomes sinfully idolatrous
 - People strive to maintain a standard of living, a level of income, and/or a collection of “stuff” over caring for God’s creation
 - People give ourselves credit for God’s abundant care for us.
 - Hating life often results sinful neglect
 - to care for creation, as individuals become focused is on what lies ahead, and
 - ignoring the needs of God’s children who are naked, hungry or thirsty.
 - But after several hours of reading, studying, and wrestling to get to it, I found the good news.
 - The next verse is absolutely crucial: “Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.”
 - God comes first. Service to God comes first! And service to others is service to God.
 - “Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.”
 - But let’s be honest, aren’t we always a bit of the one who loves life, and the one who hates it?
- The last paragraph of today’s lesson is the most crucial part. It’s the promise of the resurrection.
 - Jesus will be the one whose acts bring us eternity. “When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself.”
 - “Will draw.” “All people.”
 - This is hopeful, good news for all of us, regardless of how much we love or hate our lives.
 - Jesus’ life is the one that glorifies God, and his glory shines over us even when we fall short. Amen.