

*Fifth Sunday in Lent*

March 25, 2012

Amazing Grace Lutheran Church – Pastor Chip Wilke

John 12:20-33

*Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus. Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.*

Listen to the beginning words of the well known poem by Alfred, Lord Tennyson: *The Charge of the Light Brigade*. **Half a league, half a league, Half a league onward, All in the valley of Death Rode the six hundred. 'Forward, the Light Brigade! Charge for the guns' he said: Into the valley of Death Rode the six hundred. 'Forward, the Light Brigade!' Was there a man dismay'd? Not tho' the soldiers knew Some one had blunder'd: Their's not to make reply, Their's not to reason why, Their's but to do and die: Into the valley of Death Rode the six hundred. Cannon to right of them, Cannon to left of them, Cannon in front of them Volley'd and thunder'd; Storm'd at with shot and shell, Boldly they rode and well, Into the jaws of Death, Into the mouth of Hell Rode the six hundred.**

This poem of course is about a cavalry of 600 soldiers who were ordered to charge into battle, an order which cost every one of them their lives. These 600 men bravely rode to their death so that not one of them survived. While it may be a story of courage, a story of tragedy, I also find it to be a story of obedience. They obeyed the order without hesitation, with question, without delay. **Their's not to make reply, Their's not to reason why, Their's but to do and die.** Many honor this sacrifice and consider them to have brought glory to their name and those they served because of their obedience. The last verse of this poem states: **When can their glory fade...Honour the charge they made! Honour the light Brigade, Noble six hundred!**

This morning we focus on a sacrifice and story of obedience even greater as Jesus says it is time for Him to be glorified and to glorify His Father's name. I pray we learn from Him how to give glory to God in all that we do after seeing what has been done for

us. This morning may we pray along with our Savior: **Father, glorify your name: through your obedience Son, through your obedient children.**

Our lesson takes us to Tuesday of Holy Week where Jerusalem is buzzing due to the Passover. ***“Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast.”*** These Gentiles are non Jewish people who converted to the Jewish religion. These Greeks seek out Philip and say ***“We would like to see Jesus.”*** With Jesus’ reputation who wouldn’t want to see Jesus? So Philip and Andrew take this request to Jesus. But our text never goes on to answer if Jesus goes out to see them. Instead, Jesus goes into detail about what He will do to draw all people to Himself. Jesus replied, ***“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”***

How will the Son of Man be glorified? Jesus is glorified by obeying His Father. Jesus says: ***“Father, glorify your name.”*** By doing the will of His Father Jesus was bringing glory to Him. Remember the words of the Father at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry at His baptism? Remember those same words repeated again recently on that mountain of transfiguration: ***“This is my Son, whom I love, with Him I am well pleased?”*** Jesus brought the Father glory by perfectly obeying His commands. He fulfilled the law of love by His words and works. Just think of that for a moment. Jesus never had a dirty thought. He never spoke a harmful word. He never committed a single selfish act. He always did what was good. God the Father suddenly makes this clear one more time. ***“Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it.”*** The people standing there said this voice thundered and others said an angel spoke to Jesus. Jesus tells us this voice was for their benefit. God wants all to know Jesus is His obedient Son.

Then the voice also added ***“I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”*** How will the Father’s name be glorified again? After all, Jesus had already obeyed every command of God. What else could Jesus do? We know the answer, don’t we? So does Jesus: ***“Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? Father save me from this hour? No it was for this very reason I came to this hour.”*** Jesus understood the Father gave Him one more command to obey. Many times Jesus said His time had not yet come, but now Jesus knows the hour is at hand, and His heart is troubled. Soon He will be betrayed, arrested, beaten, and falsely accused. Soon He will be ridiculed, scorned & flogged. Soon He will be pierced and hung on a cross. Soon He will suffer all the wrath of God for the sins of an entire world. God’s command was that all sin be paid for and that Jesus’ blood and death be the price. Jesus literally was ordered to go into the jaws of death and enter the mouth of hell.

But Jesus says for this reason I came to this hour. ***“Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”*** ***“Now is the time for judgment on this world.”*** Does that sentence make you sit up and take notice? It should. It is the most crucial time in all of history. This is it – on the basis of faith in this all will be judged. Now is the time! Now is the time for Jesus to destroy the devil’s work. On Friday Jesus would die, but that death would bring life. He uses this example: ***“I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”*** As these Gentiles come asking to see Jesus, Jesus points out how He draws all people to Himself by being lifted up on a cross to save them. He has come to die, so a harvest of life may take place as the Holy Spirit brings people to faith in Jesus.

Jesus glorified the Father's name by obeying God in His life and with His death. He brought glory – the greatest glory of all. Come celebrate on Easter the glory Jesus attained for Himself, for His Father, and for us. Jesus has won for us a glory of life over death, won for us a glory that comes from being free from the devil and being children of God, won for us a glory in heaven that far outweighs all of our earthly sufferings. Since Jesus brings glory to sinners like us, since God commanded the Son He loves to die to save us don't we too now want to pray: "*Father, glorify your name through your children?*" Don't we want to do everything for the glory of our Father in heaven?

So how do we glorify our Father's name? Jesus tells us: "***The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.***" We bring our God glory by our obedience to God - to all of God commands. We are to obey God even if it means denying ourselves some of the temporary pleasures this world has to offer. We are to obey even to the point of hating our life, because Jesus has something much better for us – eternal life! We obey as we follow Jesus and serve one another in love as Jesus did. I thought about this yesterday people were here working inside and out to beautify our church for Holy Week. What did people see as they drove by here? God's name was being glorified. For whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, we do it to the glory of God.

In the town of Stepanavan, Armenia, there was a woman whom everyone called "Palasan's wife." How would you like to just be known as someone's wife or husband or brother or child? Sounds kind of demeaning for a woman who has her own name just to be called Palasan's wife! But the townspeople actually called her by her husbands name to show her great honor. When the devastating 1988 earthquake struck Armenia, it was nearly noon, and Palasan was at work. He rushed to the elementary school where his son was a student. The front of the building was already crumbling, but he entered the school and began carrying children out to safety. After Palasan managed to save 28 children, an aftershock hit that completely collapsed the building and killed him. So the people of Stepanavan honor his memory and his young widow by calling her Palasan's wife. She was glad to be called by that name. Don't you also think she wanted to live up to such a name?

How much more of an honor is it that we are called children of God! How awesome to be known as disciples of Jesus, Christians, believers in Him who laid down His life to save all? Do we not want to bring glory to such a name? What kind of poem would we write for Jesus who obeyed God's order to go to the cross to die for us that we might live? Follow Jesus all next week as He rides into the valley of Death and then comes out again. Listen to His Word and obey it. When God says "Go," charge, Christians, charge, for ours not to make reply, ours not to reason why. We obey and love because He first loved us. Father, glorify your name! Amen.

