

The Glory of Jesus

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[0:00] Good afternoon, can I add my welcome to that of Ash, especially if you are visiting us! It's great to see you. We turn now to God's Word in the Bible. We're reading this afternoon! from John chapter 13, John 13 from verse 31 through to 38. If you don't have a Bible with you, then there are some church Bibles, the green Bibles on the seats in front. That's on page 1081, 1081, and it's John 13 from verse 31, and the words are also up on the screen.

This is the Word of God. When he was gone, Jesus said, Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself and will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now, where I am going, you cannot come. And you command, I give you, love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.

Simon Peter asked him, Lord, where are you going? Jesus replied, where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later. Peter asked, Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you. Then Jesus answered, will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows, you will disown me three times. Amen. Well, let me pray and ask for God's help as we look at these verses together. Let's pray. Thank you, God, for your word that points us to your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And so we pray now that by your Spirit, you would open our minds and our hearts, that we would hear your voice, and that our lives would be changed as we discover more of all that Jesus has done for us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Well, someone has said, historically, it was your talent that got you noticed, and today that talent is to get noticed. And that's what drives social media, isn't it? The desire to get noticed, to promote yourself or your brand, or even to promote somebody else's brand if they pay you enough money to use your influence to do so. Because in this age we live in that is dominated by platforms like Instagram and TikTok and YouTube, you can make a job out of being an influencer, to create content, to get followers and likes and views and shares, where it's all about getting yourself out there, doing whatever you can to promote yourself to look good, where social media content is basically all about self-glory. I did some research to see who the top influencers were on social media, and I looked for the top 10 and then the top 20 influencers. Just some research for you, you're very welcome. And I've discovered that I knew only one person who was a top social media influencer.

So they're not influencing me, I don't think, but they're obviously influencing lots of other people. And it really is about glorifying yourself to the world, about showing everybody how great you are.

[3:59] And of course, that is one kind of glory, isn't it? It's self-glory. And we might not seek this on social media for ourselves. I don't think anyone here has got millions of followers and posts pictures of themselves on holiday or by the pool or wherever. But which one of us hasn't wanted the honor or the praise or the recognition, whether that be at work or in a friendship group or a social circle or in some kind of sporting or musical pursuit, we have all wanted the glory. And we love it when we get it, and we're disappointed when we don't. So what's going to help us with this approach to living our lives? How can we have a healthy approach to getting ourselves out there or promoting ourselves or simply just being us? Well, we actually need something that exposes our vain desire for self-glory.

And the answer comes in this Bible passage because what we see is a far greater glory, a greater glory that comes from Jesus on the cross that helps us better think about ourselves and how we should be. Now, if you've been with us in our series in the Gospel of John, we're in this section that is called the book of glory. It's basically the second half of John's gospel from chapter 13 through to chapter 21 where the glory of Jesus is revealed in His death and His resurrection because it's

through dying on the cross and defeating sin and death in His resurrection that Jesus is glorified. And so what Jesus does as the cross is imminent here is He teaches His disciples the implication of the cross for Himself, but also the implication of the cross for them.

And so the message today focuses on the glory of Jesus in the cross and what it means for us. And so we'll look at these three things on the screen. First, Christ's glory is revealed in the cross.

Second, our love must be shaped by the cross. And then third, our failure can be forgiven through the cross. So first, Christ's glory is revealed in the cross, verse 31 and 32. If you were here last time, Judas has just left the upper room where Jesus and His disciples were, and he's gone out into the night to betray Jesus. And his betrayal basically sets in motion a sequence of events whereby Jesus would then be arrested and tried and crucified. And so this was the point of no return for Jesus. There was no going back.

[6:42] He was moving towards the cross. And so Judas's departure is linked to what Jesus says next there in verse 31 and 32. When he was gone, Judas, Jesus said, Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him, God will glorify the Son in Himself and will glorify Him at once. Now Jesus here is talking about the cross, about His death.

That's the time for Jesus to be glorified and for God to be glorified in Him. Now this is the last time that Jesus refers to Himself as the Son of Man. And we've mentioned this before.

Son of Man doesn't just mean Jesus is a human being, though He is, but Son of Man is a title that is given to this great figure in the Old Testament in the book of Daniel chapter 7. So Jesus is referring to Himself as this figure, the one to whom God gives authority, glory, sovereign power over all peoples. One who would receive a kingdom that would never be destroyed. And so when Jesus says, now the Son of Man is glorified, He's got this great figure from Daniel in view. Because while the cross might seem like defeat for Jesus, it is in fact victory. The cross would reveal the glory of Jesus, where His death followed by His resurrection and then His exaltation would also glorify God. And so what's Jesus saying when He talks about being glorified? What does He mean? Well, we've been waiting for the glory of Jesus ever since the beginning of John's gospel. But if you remember in John chapter 1, He said,

The Word became flesh, made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. And then we caught that first glimpse of glory.

You remember Jesus' first sign, the turning the water into wine? So John chapter 2 says, What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which He revealed His glory.

[9:07] So glory, a little bit, but there was more to come. So later, John says in chapter 7, The Spirit had not been given since Jesus had not yet been glorified. His glorification was still to come. And then remember chapter 11 in John where Lazarus dies. And the raising of Lazarus again was to reveal the glory of Jesus and the glory of God. So we read in John chapter 11, verse 4, This illness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it. So Jesus revealed His glory in raising Lazarus from the dead. And that is an amazing display of glory, isn't it? Somebody who's dead being brought back to life. But there's this fuller revelation of glory that is still to come, and it would come at the cross. That's where it would be fully revealed and where it would be seen at its brightest. And the glorification of Jesus at the cross, we're told, would be twofold. Because the glorification of the Father and the glorification of the Son are inextricably interlinked. So the Son is glorified by the Father, and the Father is glorified in the Son. Whereby the obedience of Jesus to the Father in going to the cross to die would bring glory would bring glory to the Father. And the raising of the Son, Jesus, by the Father would bring glory to the Son. And that's why the death of Jesus is never defeat or tragedy, but it's the beginning of His glorification. Jesus was no victim. Jesus was the victor because He defeated sin and death at the cross. And then began this reversal of the consequences of the fall.

The cross is where God did His saving work, because the cross would lead to the resurrection and then the ascension, followed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And now we're waiting for Jesus to come again in power and glory. And so the cross is at the very heart and center of it all. It's where the glory of Jesus was displayed. It's like the light had been switched on to reveal God's great salvation plan for the world. It's seen at the cross. It's fully visible there, where we see the Son die in obedience to the Father for sinners. And we see the love of the Father for the world in giving us His Son to die for us.

Let me use an illustration to help us just think about the glory of Jesus. When we were in Edinburgh last week, we walked along Ravelston Dykes. If you know Ravelston Dykes, it is just a street full of huge houses.

And bears the animal guide, don't even get a look in compared to the size of houses in Ravelston Dykes. And it was dark, so you could only see a house if it had its lights on, either on the inside or lights on the outside. So taking your phone out and shining your light on the house was never going to help you see the scale and the size of the house. The light had to come from the source, whether lights on the outside, to light it up or lights on the inside so you could see in.

And only when light came from the house could you, in a sense, see the house in all of its glory. Now, not the best illustration, I know, but that's what John's gospel shows us. And what Jesus says to His disciples is that the fullest revelation of His glory comes at the cross. The cross reveals the glory of the Son and of the Father in Him. And so if you think the glory revealed when Jesus turned water into wine, that's a bit like a light going on inside one room in a house, maybe a light going on in the bathroom or in the kitchen. And then Lazarus being raised from the dead, that's like a light going on inside a bigger room in the house, like the lounge or the living room. And so then the cross is like all the lights in the house being switched on at once for everybody to see. And that's why Jesus speaks of the glory being revealed at the cross. Yes, suffering, but also glory. Like the writer to the

[13:56] Hebrews says in Hebrews chapter 12, for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. So the cross led to God glorifying the Son and the Son glorifying Him. So that's our first point, Christ's glory is revealed at the cross. Second, our love must be shaped by the cross, verse 33 to 35. So in His teaching with His disciples, Jesus is focused on the cross. And so He tells His disciples He's leaving them, verse 35.

Sorry, verse 33. My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you, where I am going, you cannot come. Jesus is saying He's about to be separated from them. And they'd be confused about what's happening because Jesus was about to die, and they can't go with Him. And so Jesus is preparing them for what He wants from them, what He expects of them when He's gone. And so verse 34, Jesus says, a new commandment I give you. Love one another as I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another. He's commanding them to love one another. But how should that love be defined?

Because love is such a common concept, isn't it? And it's a word that we use often. We talk about love all the time. But what does it mean? I think our culture does a really poor job of defining love, because the focus of love tends to be on a feeling or an emotion. And so it's sung about in popular music, and it's presented in the plot lines of popular movies. And yet one of the hardest things to do is to define love. And so what's Jesus wanting when He says, a new command I give you, love one another? Well, it's a new command. Not new in the sense that the command to love one another has never been said before, because it comes from the Old Testament, where people were commanded way back in Leviticus to love your neighbor as yourself. And then Jesus also, in His own teaching, said that the greatest commandment and the second greatest commandment, they are to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. And the second one, to love your neighbor as yourself. So it's a new command in the sense that it's given a new significance by being fulfilled in Jesus, where the standard is not only to love your neighbor as yourself, but to love as Jesus loved. Jesus said, as I have loved you, so you must love one another. Where love for one another is to be modeled on and patterned by the love that Jesus had for His disciples.

So how had Jesus loved them? Well, it surely goes back to John's comment at the start of this chapter and this section in chapter 13, verse 1, where we read, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. And then what did Jesus do after that? Well, He then washed His disciples' feet. That's how He demonstrated His love for them. And then it's an action which was symbolic, of course, of Jesus' saving work for His disciples on the cross. Where the foot washing symbolized the washing away of sin that would happen when Jesus died. So that's how much Jesus loved His disciples.

He loved them to death, loving them with a selfless, a self-giving, a sacrificial love. And so that's the standard of love that they were to have for one another. Love that is defined by the cross.

[18:18] And so Jesus' death in our place for our sins is the model and the pattern for us. And so it's an others-centered love in contrast to the self-love that characterizes our culture these days. The kind of love that seeks self-glory. And it's in contrast to the transactional love that characterizes relationships today. The kind of love that says, well, I'll love you to the extent that you give me what I want. And as soon as you stop giving me what I want, then, well, I'll stop loving you.

No, Jesus' love is a self-giving love. Jesus' love for His people is the kind of love He wants His people to have for one another. And He's shown this love through His life and His teaching, of course, but significantly He's shown it through His death. And so the cross gives us this ultimate definition of love. And that's why, as Ash quoted earlier, Isaac Watts put this in his hymn, when I survey the wondrous cross. He says, love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all. Because the love that Jesus speaks of should be the distinguishing mark of His people. Isn't that what Jesus is saying in verse 35?

By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another. It's our love for one another that shows us to be Jesus' disciples, whereby we behave differently from the world. Our demonstration of love is different from how the world loves. So that Jesus' church is a place where people are loved, whoever they are, whatever background they've got, whatever they're from, or whatever their circumstances are in life right now. Jesus' love through His people is a love for all people, because we seek to love other people as Jesus has loved us, with a love that you just don't find anywhere else. It's distinctive, and it's attractive. And it causes people to ask, who are these people that they should love in such a way? Interestingly, what Jesus said soon came true in the lives of His disciples, because the early church was characterized by their love for one another. It was so real and so good and so tangible that people couldn't miss it. So one of the early theologians called

Tertullian, he reported what the pagans were saying about the Christians. The pagans were saying, look how they love one another and how they are ready to die for each other. The love of the early church was such a powerful witness to the good news of Christianity. It was revolutionary in society.

[21:39] It was like the love that Christians had for one another was like a magnet that attracted unbelievers and drew them towards Jesus. And so our love for one another should do the same, shouldn't it? People should be able to look at us, you and me, and see what it means to follow Jesus.

Because if we want to be a beautiful display for Jesus here at Christchurch Glasgow and in our city, then we've got to love one another. Let me just share something of this. This is a message that came from one of the mums who's been coming along to our Tots and Tunes group.

She no longer comes, but this is what she said about last session. And it came on the WhatsApp chat that the parents of the toddlers have. And she said this, she said, we had an amazing time. We had an amazing time there. But X, her child, is at the nursery on Fridays. I honestly miss coming to this wonderful playgroup. People were so nice and kind. Hopefully we can see you again on Sundays at church. I've been to so many playgroups with my daughter, X, but this is by far the best one.

Very well done for the people who organized it. It encouraged the leaders of the group because she noticed there was something different, something distinctive, something attractive about the people who were running this group that she hadn't really seen in any other group. And surely she's expressing that Jesus' people have this love for one another. And it's evident how they relate.

[23:28] But for the mother who came, she experienced that love for herself. Because what Jesus is saying here is that our love for one another should always be a distinguishing mark in our lives if we follow Him.

When the love of Jesus for us impacts our lives, then it makes us more loving people, or at least it should. So that's our second point. Our love must be shaped by the cross. First, Christ's glory is revealed in the cross.

And then thirdly, our failure can be forgiven through the cross, in verse 36 to 38. We're pointed now, if you follow the text, remember this is all happening in the upper room.

There's a conversation between Jesus and Simon Peter, who is one of His disciples. And because Simon Peter doesn't understand the cross, he responds to Jesus with an obvious question.

In verse 36, Simon Peter asked Him, Lord, where are you going? Jesus replied, where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.

[24:41] So Simon Peter's less concerned about Jesus' command to love one another. Fair enough, Jesus, but where are you actually going? He's more interested in that.

He doesn't realize Jesus is about to be arrested that night and then crucified. And so Jesus going here refers to His death, which of course is then followed by His resurrection, and then His ascension to heaven.

And so that's why Peter can't follow Jesus now. Jesus is going to die on a cross for sin. But Peter will follow Jesus later, because Peter will die, and then he will join Jesus in heaven.

And so it seems here like Peter wasn't listening. He hasn't grasped that Jesus must die for him. And so he doesn't get why he can't follow Jesus straight away.

Verse 37, Peter asked, Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you. Peter doesn't know what's going on.

[25:54] And yet, Peter is sincerely committed to Jesus at this point, isn't he? To the extent that he claims he is willing to die for Jesus.

Now, there's an irony here. Firstly, because it's not Peter who will lay down his life for Jesus. It's Jesus who will lay down his life for Peter and for all his people.

But the irony also, secondly, because Peter would eventually lay down his life for Jesus. He would die for Jesus. Jesus predicts Peter's martyrdom in chapter 21.

And church tradition has it that Peter died eventually for Jesus. And yet, for now, all of this bravado that Peter claims to have about giving his life for Jesus, Peter just doesn't realize his own weakness.

And that's why he answers Jesus as he does. And so Jesus says in verse 38, Will you really lay down your life for me?

[27:03] Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows, you will disown me three times. Jesus knows that Peter will fail him. And by repeating Peter's exact words, Jesus is surely forcing Peter to consider the massive claim that he's just made.

While Peter thinks he's got the strength to die for Jesus, the reality is that he is about to deny that he even knows Jesus.

And so he must have been shocked by Jesus insisting that he deny him three times. It's like Jesus says, Never mind claiming that you're ready to die for me, Peter.

Peter, you will desert me before the night's out. Now, remember last time with Judas Iscariot, we thought about his betrayal of Jesus.

And now we've got Simon Peter's betrayal of Jesus. And of course, we know the end of the story for these two men. What happens to Judas and what happens to Peter.

[28:15] But at this moment in time, we're in no position to give Simon Peter a pass. Yes, Judas failed Jesus, but so did Peter.

And that's why Peter needed to know that Jesus would lay down his life for him. Jesus shed his precious blood on the cross for Peter's sin.

Peter would fail, but Peter would be forgiven because Jesus laid down his life for his. Which should humble us in case we think, well, I'm okay.

I don't need to worry about my sin. I mean, after all, my sin, my failure is not as big as his. But we need to know that Jesus laid down his life for me.

Without his death in my place for my sin, there's no hope for me. Jesus had to go to the cross for me. Jesus had to go to the cross for me so that I can be forgiven.

[29:26] Because I failed my Lord so many times and in so many ways, just like Peter. I have misunderstood. I have made big promises.

I have underestimated my weakness. I have failed to stand up for Jesus. We all have. And that's why, like Peter, I need Jesus to be my Savior too.

And so do you. And so it's not about what I think I can do for Jesus or even seeking the glory for me for what I have done for Jesus.

It is all about the glory of Jesus and what Jesus has done for me. Peter needed to grasp this. And so do we.

And that is the good news of the cross because it not only sets the pattern for how you and I should live by loving others as Jesus has loved us, but it also provides the forgiveness we need for when we fail because we have and we will.

[30 : 32] And so Peter is a beautiful reminder that our failure can be forgiven. Peter was restored by his loving and gracious Savior.

And we can be too. Through the cross of Jesus, our vain desire for self-glory is exposed and the greater glory of Jesus is revealed so that we would turn away from ourselves and our self-seeking self-glory and turn to Jesus, full of gratitude for all that he has done for us and follow him, wanting all the glory and honor to go to him.

Let's pray. We thank you, our God, for sending your son, Jesus, to be our Savior. We thank you that he is a gracious Savior who went to the cross to lay down his life for people like us so that we can be forgiven for all of our sin and for all of our failure.

And we can find acceptance from you because of your great love shown for us and displayed supremely at the cross where Jesus was glorified and you were glorified in him as he did your work. And so help us not to live for ourselves, to seek glory for ourselves, but to live for Jesus and seek first his kingdom, his righteousness, and his glory.

[32 : 02] We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.