

"Father, Glorify Thy Son"
John 17:1-11, Easter Sunday V
May 5, 2013

Beloved of the Lord.....Our lesson today is the simple yet very profound prayer of Christ. In all that Jesus did as a Man on earth, He did all to the glory of God the Father who sent Him. In other words, Jesus never did anything for Himself, He did all things for the Father whom He loved from the beginning, and Jesus also did all things for you and me. God's glory then cannot be seen, unless we see God's glory in our suffering Christ who suffered dearly for our sins. Though He was Lord of all, for the sake of all He came to this earth not as a Lord but a Servant. From day one to year 33, Jesus suffered poverty, contempt, and persecution, even death for our sins and salvation. "This is the True God and eternal life." If then you want to learn just how the Lord wants you to live, while God's commandments do shed some light on the subject and we should happily keep them by faith, it is far better to rest your eyes upon your humble Savior Jesus Christ. See how He lived. See how He obeyed. Learn how He taught. See Jesus pray. In His prayer hear Jesus reveal the innermost thoughts of His heart. "Father the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." Today then let us learn or understand better: *How the Father and Son glorify one another*, and also *How Jesus still prays or intercedes for us*.

I. How the Father and Son glorify one another. The time and place of this special prayer was after His Passover meal with the disciples, but before the betrayal in the Garden. Judas had departed into the night, and Christ now comforts and prepares His disciples for all that lies ahead with a long sermon which begins in John 14 where Jesus says, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." It is after this sermon Jesus is moved to prayer. This is called His Sacerdotal prayer [sas-er-dotol], which really means the prayer of a priest. Our catechism says "As my Priest, Christ fulfilled the Law in my stead perfectly [and] sacrificed Himself for me, and still intercedes for me with His heavenly Father." If we are to understand today's High Priestly prayer, throughout we must remember Jesus has both a human nature and a divine nature together as one in His own person. When these two natures are together in one person, God and Man are ONE in Christ, a profound mystery similar to Holy Communion. When we receive the visible elements of bread and wine, by the power of Jesus' divine words, we also receive God's own body and blood, "given and shed for you for the remission of sins."

That is really what this High Priestly prayer is all about: intercession for our sins by the very body and blood of Christ the Son of God. The hour had come for Jesus as a High Priest to intercede before God on the behalf of all sinful men. Therefore when Jesus prayed, He "lifted up His

eyes to heaven". His eyes were not closed but open in prayer, looking up. Usually when we pray our heads are bowed down and our eyes closed. Why? Because unlike Christ, we are sinners who have lived a shameful life of sin. We have gloried in the flesh by breaking God's commandments. While those who glory in their sins have no forgiveness, those who are ashamed will find mercy. We look down because the sins we have committed are shameful. This is why the publican in Luke 18 "would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." In a similar manner when we commune, we first bow our heads and kneel before God our Father above, confessing our sins to Him with our heart. However, because Jesus the Son of God has interceded on our behalf, we know our Father to be merciful and gracious, tender and kind. He did not spare to give us His only-begotten Son. Jesus is our peace. In Holy Communion, having heard the Word of God.....faith looks up to heaven without fear, faith receives, and faith praises "God from whom all blessings flow." Faith glorifies the Father who sent the Son. They and we are one in communion.

When Christ therefore prays "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee", Jesus is referring to that critical hour where "the Son of man would give His life a ransom for many". This hour is THE HOUR of the cross. But how can the Father glorify the Son in THAT HOUR? There is blood there, suffering and torment, even death? While it is contrary to reason to think that God can suffer, if God and Man are one in Christ it is nevertheless now true, God can and did suffer. Being moved by grace, Jesus came as a Brother to be punished in our place. This is the only way the heavens can be open before us. When the Gospel is taught, the heavens open behind the cross. When we see not just Jesus hanging on the cross, but God hanging on the cross suffering our own punishment in our place, IN THE HUMAN NATURE OF CHRIST THE DIVINE NATURE IS REVEALED! The heart of God is opened wide, for the Father sent the Son, and the Son reveals the heart of the Father. They reveal one another and both hearts are one heart, filled with the same grace toward sinners.

Just as the Father glorifies the Son through the cross, it is also true the Son glorifies the Father by the cross. Jesus was an obedient Son, and Jesus also prayed "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal that they might know Thee the only True God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." This "power over all flesh", is the power the Father gave to Christ as a Man, to redeem ALL FLESH from sin. It is somewhat like the Father saying to the Son, "Now that you are True Man, I give you all power and authority as a Man, to stand in the stead and place of ALL MEN, ALL FLESH. If you offer up to Me as a sacrifice YOUR OWN FLESH like a Brother come to take the place of fallen mankind, I will punish you instead of them, and thereby all sins will be forgiven." This then is the simple reason that though Jesus is God and God

cannot suffer, on the cross this God-Man suffers, - our sin being upon him. This is why Jesus "suffered, died, and was buried", but He rose again the third day.

It is thus AFTER THE CROSS, Jesus again assumes the glory He had with the Father before the world began. Thus Jesus prayed, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." Here is all the proof we need that Jesus is the ETERNAL GOD, with NO BEGINNING and NO END, Alpha and Omega. Before the cross in that State of Humiliation, Jesus hid or held back, did not fully use all His divine power His human nature possessed. But after He finished the work of redemption His Father gave Him, He again fully used His divine power which He never lost. He didn't hide it anymore. He rose Himself from the dead in that tomb. He entered into what we call His State of Exaltation. Our catechism rightly says, "that according to His human nature, Christ always and fully uses the divine attributes communicated to His human nature." Quickened in the tomb first bodily descends into hell "not to suffer, but to proclaim His victory over His enemies." Likewise He suddenly appears to His disciples behind closed doors, or He vanishes out of the sight of those two disciples in Emmaus. Likewise after 40 days before the eyes of all disciples His body visibly ascends up into heaven to sit at the right hand of God, ruling in the same glory He had with the Father "before the world was."

II. Jesus still prays (intercedes) for us. Even now in heaven Jesus is still True Man and God, and He still intercedes for us in heaven, every day, every hour, before our glorious Father. His shed blood continually pleads our innocence before the Father, therefore we need not fear His wrath, for we live under His grace. The Bible thus says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Romans 5 says similar, "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

When life then here becomes difficult and hard, we must remember as Christ suffered first for us before glory, so we first suffer here, but then we will be glorified. Moreover, Jesus is with us always, and still in heaven He continues to be our Intercessor, our Mediator between God and men. "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given me, for they are thine." By His blood, we belong to God - even God the Father. "They are thine". We are His children of faith, His beloved possession. Our names are written in heaven and the very hairs of our head are all numbered, for we have been redeemed by the holy blood of the Lamb, and God is happy to hear all our prayers through the saving name of Jesus. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Even death itself has been conquered, and through death we conquer death only to live forever in that life eternal Jesus promised us. Even the dead bodies of our fellow believers will one day

by the power of God's Word, rise up again. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." Let us therefore treasure the words of Christ who says "All mine are Thine, and Thine are mine, and I am glorified in them." If we suffer here in faith, such is to the glory of God. As Christ suffered all things for the glory of God the Father, so may we as First Peter four says, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."

Finally beloved of the Lord, Jesus said, "I am no more in the world, but these are in the word, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one as we are." These too are precious words. We cannot see Him, yet we know Him. Jesus came forth from the bosom of the Father, and His Words of Grace absolve and forgive our heart. One of the most blessed teachings in all of Scripture (then) is the simple truth, you have God's sweet promise to keep you and preserve your faith. Because Jesus prayed it, and the Father cannot turn away any prayer of His Son, so your Holy Father above promises to keep you in His name, for "we are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." God always keeps His promises and not one promise can fail. Though we all bow our heads and close our eyes in the remembrance of our sin, through our crucified Christ, our Father has opened our eyes causing us to look up into the heavens. By faith we now see and know He is tender and merciful, gracious and kind, for the Father has glorified the Son. And though our earthly eyes will one day surely close in death, by the power of the Gospel our heavenly eyes will still be open and He will lift us up. We will see Him as He is, face to face, and our hearts will rejoice. Amen.