

THE SERMON SUPPLY



A Resource from
Region 6



Seventh Sunday of Easter, Year A

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Gospel Text – John 14:-15-21

John 17:1-11

¹ After Jesus had spoken these words [to his disciples,] he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, ² since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴ I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. ⁵ So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

⁶ "I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me is from you, ⁸ for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹ I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹ And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one."

SERMON TEXT:

Grace and Peace to you from the one who is glorified above all things, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

And Jesus said, "Glorify the Son so that the Son may glorify you." Here, Jesus is praying that even his own glory should not belong to him but is only for the purpose of glorifying God in heaven.

Jesus is so selfless, and how hard is that to emulate in our lives?

How often do we do something purely for the purpose of glorifying God?

There are a few things that could fall under that category. Our tithes to the church should be one. We give to God because God gives to us. The first fruits, the best of the crops go to God. In the act of tithing, we acknowledge that we have nothing apart from the grace of God. All is a gift. So we give back the best portion.

But there is something else, too. It is the act of praising God that is purely for God's glory. We praise God with our lives, but as we know, we too often don't make our lives "living acts of praise." We live for ourselves and set idols up to feed our own egos and our own desires. We think this is how it is supposed to be and we justify it in many ways. But in the end, we don't give God the glory that God deserves. I mean, we are talking about the author of

creation. We are talking about the one who gave us the spark of life when we were still a theoretical future in our parent's minds. God deserves the best of who we are and dedication beyond what we can give.

So... we try. And I suppose this is the important part. We try. We are conscious of the need to glorify God and we try, even if but feebly.

And it is with this attitude of "but we try" that we come before God each Sunday and raise our voices in praise and song to sing of God's glory. We glorify God by paying tribute to the holy one.

Yet, there is some danger in worshiping God for us. We come to worship God, but all of us have a tendency, at times, to wonder what we get out of worship. What's in it for us? This isn't the type of glorifying of God that Jesus is talking about, obviously.

Jesus doesn't want the Father to glorify himself so that he (Jesus) can be glorified. Yet, all too often, that is the way we look at it. Some say to God, "show me your glory that I can believe and have satisfaction and blessing because of it." Whole churches are growing up around that way of thinking.

If we say, disappointed about our congregation, that we don't "get anything" out of worship then we make worship about us.

But on the other hand, if we come to worship God but that worship doesn't aid our relationship with God, we start to lose our spirit and our faith.

This debate within us, and indeed the church, if I can put some words to it, is between two different understandings of worship. These two understandings are the ecclesial and the sociological.

The ecclesial says that worship is only to glorify God, that no other factors need to be a part of it. The very act of worshiping is all that is required and our hearts are secondary. We need to worship in spirit and truth, and what we feel while doing it is not important.

On the other end, the sociological understanding of worship says that we worship to help our lives and connect with each other. We worship together, we fellowship, we are of "one mind." And we experience God in that connection. In this side of the debate, we only go to church to get something back. We feel good, we like the music, the people, the pastor. Yet, we also learn how to be a child of God in the world.

I believe our lives are set up similarly to this. We do good when it feels good to us. If it doesn't feel good, or it impinges on our sense of satisfaction, then we don't do it. Real altruism is actually a very hard thing to achieve. We often believe that we give to receive, we love to be loved back, we care to be cared for.

I believe, the truth of who we are and who God would have us be is somewhere in between. We should come to worship God with our whole selves and w/o reservation to glorify God expecting nothing in return. With the Ecclesial purpose of worshiping to Glorify God, while doing it together, that sociological purpose, to truly be of one mind we acknowledge our true God.

We worship together and in love with our neighbor and that experience of being church and worshiping together should fill us with a desire, equip us with the tools, and energize us in mission to respond to God's grace by living faithful lives of love and holy obligation.

Therefore, we come to God with cymbals, trumpets, organ and piano and make a loud noise to the Lord. We raise our voices, sometimes in the wrong key, and shout to the Lord.

We put our hearts in it, knowing that God is worthy to be trusted with them.

We worship together, in one voice, one spirit, one mind, transcending human politics, barriers or divisions. We worship without expecting something in return, yet receiving our lives and the whole world, because lose our lives for service to the world.

If we worship God without reservation on Sunday mornings when we gather, we might just find that we can do so through our lives throughout the rest of our week.

And when we are open to receiving the Gospel Word of God, dying to ourselves and rising in Christ's life, we might find we are much more open to seeing that word of God alive around us in our lives.

Amen.

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