

Glory to God in the Highest
St. John 13:1-7, 31b-35

What do you think of when you hear the word glory? Please say the word out loud with me, "glory." It just rolls across your tongue and out of your mouth. There is about the word an inference of triumph and splendor. Glorious things have happened to me in the month of June. June 12, 1966, Sylvia and I were married. June 6, 1971, I graduated from college, the only one in my family to do so. June 18, 1975, I was ordained an Elder in the Free Methodist Church and on June 17, 2010, I became an Elder in the United Methodist Church.

I am sure you have your experiences of glory. It may be associated with a marriage or a sporting event or something else. Whatever they are they contain a broad sense of gleefulness or jubilation, a joyful triumph.

The thirteenth chapter of St. John stands in contrast: "*When he had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once' (vv. 31-32).*" Hesitate. Reflect. Pray. Immerse yourself in the jarring difference between our experiences of glory, and God's glory as Jesus talks about it. Absorb that this is God's glory, true glory.

Many sermons on this passage move quickly to Jesus washing his disciples' feet. It is a familiar, appealing expression of the Love of Jesus, urging us to wash one another's feet. And, it jives with verse 35: "*By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.*" But, these sermons often miss the full effect of Jesus' teaching

Please note verse 7: "***You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.***" Jesus, on this night, changes the Passover meal to the Lord's Supper. Through this action, we are called to embrace the glory of Christ. Biblically, glory means to worship. When you glorify someone you adore that person. Jesus is the incarnation

of God, the glory of God, God present and in action in us and for us. God is present in servant form. Here, glory is the revealed presence of God in Christ Jesus.

How is it then, do we understand and experience God in 2017? We do so by welcoming God's glory. The Holy Sacrament begun so long ago invites us again to the Table to encounter Jesus. When we act in sacrificial love for others, especially the marginalized, the poor, those who desert or betray us, lead us to stumble upon the revealed presence of God shown in Jesus.

In comprehending today's text, we see that it is more than just a calling to sacrificial service to others. We must proclaim who Jesus is. He is the Christ, the disclosed presence, the glory, of God. St. Augustine wrote: "*But the glorifying of the Son of man is the glorifying of God in him.*"

In Sunday School a little girl was drawing a picture. Her teacher asked, "*What are you drawing?*" Confidently, he replied, "*A picture of God.*" Kindly, with laughter in her voice, "*Oh, no one knows what God looks like.*" Even more confidently, the young girl replies "*They will when I'm done.*"

On this glorious night, we discover what God looks like. We meet God afresh at table with Jesus. Let the "Followers of the Way" delight in the Glory of God on this night of glory. We do not want to stop at hand washing or rush ahead to verse 35.

Then, we may move to the second part of our Gospel message. When we encounter God, we begin to understand the nature of God. Viewing Jesus' example, we learn again that God's nature is to sacrificially love. "So we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them." (1 John 4:16)

We need not fear living in silence and awe in our worship. God's presence brings us to the stillness of adoration and praise. Jesus' as God's glory inspires us to action. There will always be time for sacrificial service later. Jesus' as God's glory inspires us to

action, God's presence in Jesus at this Table with us and for us gives us hope and solace.
Let this be a night of glory. Alleluia. Amen.