

Fifth Sunday in Lent, March 18, 2018

St. John 12:20-33, Jesus' Road to Glory Led Through the Cross

Rev. George Ferch

Dear friends in Christ Jesus,

The road to the Final Four began this past week. 64 teams from around the country will go through cities like Detroit, Wichita, and Nashville to try and eventually get to San Antonio. The city of the Alamo and the Riverwalk is the host for the Final Four on March 31 and the championship on April 2.

Four teams will get to San Antonio. You may or may not have picked your winner. Already some of the favorites are out. The road to the final four is one of the tougher roads in sports. All the coaches and players are willing to work hard to get their shot at basketball glory.

In a few days after our text, Jesus would get his shot at glory. Jesus' road to glory would take him through Jericho, Bethphage, Bethany, and then to Jerusalem. Our Savior would take the road we know as the Via Dolorosa from Pilate's palace to the place of the Skull. On a cross on that hill outside the city walls of Jerusalem, Jesus would achieve glory.

Jesus' Road to Glory Led Through the Cross. Jesus' death would give life to many. Jesus's death would give glory to his Father.

Many people are looking for something though not sure what. There is a void in their lives. The natural knowledge of God is gnawing at their hearts. We have the Savior to fill that void. We have the Word of God that reveals that Savior. When they come looking, we want them to see Jesus.

The Holy Spirit had worked through the Old Testament to lead some Greeks to the true God. They believed the promise of the coming Messiah and had come to Jerusalem to worship at the Passover. They apparently had heard about Jesus' preaching and miracles. They found Philip and asked him, "Sir, we want to see Jesus." We may suppose they were with Philip and Andrew when Jesus spoke his words about his road to glory.

Death may not seem like glory. Had Jesus not died, he never would have had a living body. This is the essence of Jesus' teaching. Jesus' death would give life to many. He was like a wheat seed. A seed dies itself to produce a living plant. That plant produces a head with many seeds. We and all believers, the church, are Jesus living spiritual body. Jesus did not love his life in this world to the point he was not willing to die to give us life. He would not let the approaching pain and suffering deter him. He said, "Now my soul is troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour? No, this is the reason I came to this hour.'" Our Savior gave up his life here so that he would gain life, and we would gain new life, not only now in faith, but eternally.

Jesus lays those options before his servants. We spoke about it several weeks ago. Were we to love this life it would destroy the new life Jesus has given us. If we hate this life and serve him, we will hold on to eternal life. We will follow him through this life. We will be with him and the Father will honor us for his sake.

Jesus' road to glory led through the cross. Jesus said, "The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." Notice our theme is "through the cross," not merely "to the cross." There would have been no glory had Jesus failed to redeem us. There would have been no glory had Jesus

remained in the tomb. Jesus would be like that wheat seed that comes to life and produces the body of fruits. Jesus gained glory by going through the cross then out of the tomb.

Jesus' death also would give glory to his Father as well as give life to many. It gave glory also to the Father because he and the Son are one. It would give glory to the Father because Jesus was faithful to his Father's holy will, and plan to ransom us. When a son loves his father and obeys him, this brings glory not only to the Son but to the Father. Jesus always was interested in bringing glory to his Father who sent him. Jesus said, "Father, glorify you name." Jesus' death on the cross glorifies the Father's name as Jesus carried out the Father's love for the world.

Jesus used his commitment against Satan's attacks. Even though his heart was troubled, he was committed to go to the cross. The Father's voice affirmed that commitment in the crowd's hearing. "I have glorified my name and I will glorify it again." Jesus' redemption of the entire world would give glory to his Father. God the Father spoke not to strengthen Jesus, but to tell the world his Son's death would glorify the Father.

This was the hour for Jesus' to drive out Satan. He said, "Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be thrown out." Jesus would bring glory to his Father by bringing judgment against unbelievers and against Satan. The Father's glory lies not only in his mercy, but in his judgment. He does not permit his enemies to stand. It was time for Jesus to complete the work God first promised in Eden. Jesus would crush the serpent's head; end Satan's power, his claim on lost mankind. This was the Jesus that Philip and Andrew introduced to the Greeks. They would see the real Jesus who would take the road to glory that led through the cross.

It is from the altar of the cross that Jesus draws all men to himself. Jesus makes reference again to being lifted up. We heard last week how Jesus was lifted up like the bronze snake in the desert. The Son of Man, Jesus used that designation, would glorify the Father's name by going the way of the cursed tree the Old Testament Scriptures spoke about.

We who serve Jesus follow him to glory through his cross. The Father honors us who serve his Son also to his glory. We do not know, and some of you probably don't care, who wins March Madness. Jesus' victory brought glory to his Father and to us. Amen. <SDG>

