

What's the first thing you think of when you think of Jesus being *glorified*? When you think of Jesus being glorified you might think of Jesus being raised from the dead in glory. And that's certainly true. Jesus was glorified when he rose from the dead. Or you might think of Jesus ascending into heaven and sitting down at the right hand of the Father and there right now he reigns on his glorious throne in heaven. And that is certainly true too. Jesus was glorified when he ascended into heaven. But what you might *not* think of when you think of Jesus being glorified is Jesus dying on the cross. On the cross Jesus doesn't look very glorious. He is bloody and beaten and suffering terribly. But today when Jesus says, "**The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified**" (John 12:23), certainly part of what Jesus is thinking of is his resurrection and ascension into heaven, but another part of what he's thinking of when he says "the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" is his death on the cross.

Why do I say that? Well, Jesus says "**The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.**" And whenever the gospel writer John talks about "the hour" he's talking about Jesus' death. For example in John 7:30 it says, "**At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come**" (7:30). They couldn't kill him because it wasn't time for him to die yet. His hour had not yet come. Again in 8:20 it says, "**No one seized him, because his hour had not yet come.**" So now in our passage for today when Jesus says, "**The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified**" he is talking about his death on the cross. So Jesus is glorified by his death on the cross and we might think, "How can Jesus be glorified by his death on the cross?" Well, Jesus did a very wonderful and glorious thing for us when he died on the cross. He took away all of our sins. We worship and glorify Jesus for taking away our sins by his death on the cross. We just sang "Glory be to Jesus" for dying on the cross for us. So you can see how it makes a certain amount of sense that Jesus is glorified on the cross. Today we will see that Jesus is glorified on the cross in two ways. First, on the cross Jesus is a magnet, drawing us to himself. Second, His death give us life.

First, Jesus on the cross is like a magnet, drawing us to himself. The story just before our passage today is Jesus riding into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. We will celebrate that next week. On Palm Sunday a great crowd of people were celebrating and praising Jesus. And in the verse just before our passage for today, the Pharisees are very upset that Jesus is so popular and they say very angrily, "**The whole world has gone after him.**" (John 12:19) In the very next verse John gives us an example of how true that was. Jesus was drawing the attention of people from the whole world. John says, "**Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. 'Sir,' they said, 'We would like to see Jesus,'**" (John 12:20). Jesus is Jewish. All of his disciples are Jewish. But these Greeks come and want to see Jesus. This shows that Jesus is like a magnet who draws people to himself from every nation. Jesus died for the sins of the whole world and the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus is for every nation: for Jews and Greeks, for Africans and Germans and Americans. Jesus died for the sins of the whole world and he calls people from every nation to believe in him and have eternal life.

Jesus is like a magnet he draws people to himself from every nation. He says at the end of our Gospel. "**And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself**" (John 12:32). That phrase, "when I am lifted up from the earth" is talking about his crucifixion. When Jesus was crucified he was literally lifted up from the earth. I really like the picture that Jesus uses here: "**when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself**" (John 12:32). Jesus lifted up on the cross is like a magnet pulling us toward himself. When we see Jesus on the cross dying for our sins we are drawn to him and we put our faith in him and we receive eternal life. Jesus being lifted up on the cross reminds us of last Sunday's Gospel from John chapter 3: "**Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life**" (3:14-16). This Lenten season let your eyes be drawn up to Jesus on the cross like a magnet. Let your eyes and your faith be drawn up to Jesus on the cross.

Put your faith in him and live. So the first way that Jesus is glorified on the cross is he's like a magnet drawing us to himself. The second way Jesus is glorified on the cross is that his death gives us life. Jesus says: **"Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies it produces many seeds"** (John 12:24). Jesus is saying that he is the seed and if the seed stays above ground it will not turn into a plant or tree and produce fruit. But if the seed goes into the ground, the seed dies in a sense, the casing breaks open, but up comes a beautiful tree and that tree produces fruit. Jesus is the seed that goes into the ground and dies but because he dies we can have life, eternal life in heaven.

Not only do we have eternal life in heaven because of Jesus' death, but we also have a fruit bearing life right now. Our translation of verse 24 says, "if the kernel of wheat dies, it produces many seeds." But a better translation of the Greek here is "if the kernel of wheat dies, *it bears much fruit*" (see KJV; ESV). Does that make you think of any other Bible passages, "bears much fruit"? In John chapter 15, Jesus says, **"I am the vine you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit."** (John 15:5) So just like Jesus died and bore fruit: you are I are that fruit, we are alive because of Jesus. You and I also die and bear fruit. The fruit of good works. The fruit of obeying God's commandments.

But in order for us to bear fruit, we need to die. Look what Jesus says: **"Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life."** (John 12:25) In order for us to bear good fruit in this life and in order for us to keep our life for eternal life, we need to die. I don't mean die physically. Each one of us has a sinful nature with sinful desires. We need to let those die, otherwise those sinful desires are going to overtake us and we are going to lose our eternal life. I was reading a devotion on this passage written by a Norwegian Lutheran pastor and he said, **"Christ wants to draw all to himself – on the cross and on the throne of heaven. But whoever will not die with him Him cannot live with Him. Our life on earth: our evil nature, all sinful desires in us ... pride and deceit – this worldly life in you must die if you shall live. ... You are baptized into the death of Christ. ... Seriously try out the power of your baptism. If you believe in the Lord, then you truly have grace to mortify the flesh and to live a new life in Him."**¹ The Bible says that we died with Christ in baptism (Romans 6:4). Let's return to our baptisms every day let our sinful desires die there and live a new life bearing fruit for in service to Jesus.

When you bear good fruit a part of you dies, when you put money into the offering plate or give money to charity, part of you thinks, "I could have used that money for something else." When you volunteer your time to help someone else, part of you thinks, "I could have used this time doing something for myself." But remember, if we spend this life on ourselves, then we are going to lose it. But if we spend this life in service to Jesus and to others, then we will have a fruit bearing life now and eternal life in heaven. To serve Jesus we will find that we need to give up some things, but we will find that a life serving-self might give us a kind of happiness for a little while, but it won't last, but a life spent serving Jesus and our neighbor will give us joy and fulfillment in this life and forever. **"Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life."** (John 12:25) A life serving Jesus also glorifies God. **"My Father will honor the one who serves me."** (John 12:26) Jesus' main goal in his life was to glorify God. We are getting close to Holy Week and in this passage Jesus knew that he was getting close to his death on the cross. He says: **"Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour?' No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!"** In less than a week, Jesus was going to die on the cross and bear the wrath of God for all of our sins. We can't begin to imagine how Jesus felt as that hour stood before him. But he did it because he wanted to glorify God. How does Jesus' death on the cross glorify God? Well, God loved us so much that he gave his one and only Son so that we could have eternal life. So Jesus' death brings our glory and worship and thanks to the Father. And Jesus' death also brings glory to Jesus. His death on the cross is like a magnet that draws us to him and because of his death, we have life. Amen.

¹ Nils Jakob Laache, *Book of Family Prayer*, devotion 167. Translated by Mark Degarmeaux.