Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

**To Him Be Glory**

**Ephesians 3:13-21**

16th Sunday after Trinity

09.19.2021

In our epistle lesson, Paul says, *so I asked you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory*. And then he concludes our epistle: *now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

Twice in our text we see the word ‘glory’.

There are many words that we hear in the church on a regular basis that are not a part of our regular language. Sometimes people will ask what certain words mean. Sometimes people believe a word means something which it really does not. And there are still other words which people are not really sure of their meaning., Some of those are so common they are embarrassed to admit even to themselves that they are not 100% sure what they mean.

One such word is, ‘glory.’ It is a word used in different settings, so sometimes it is confusing to know exactly what it means. For example, there is the glory of the Lord, and then there is the glory that we are to give to Him. Are these the same thing?

First is the glory of the Lord. This is His holy Majesty, His perfect righteousness. It is awesome, and terrifying. Sinners cannot stand in the full presence of the glory of the Lord because His holiness cannot stand unholiness.

We see this reflected when Moses goes up on the mountain to see the burning bush that is not consumed by the fire. God speaks, telling Moses to take off the shoes from his feet because he is on holy ground.

Years later, after bringing the people Israel out of bondage in Egypt, we encounter Moses coming down Mount Sinai having received the Torah, and bringing it to the nation of Israel. Having been in the presence of glory of the Lord, God's glory had been so incredibly intense, that Moses' face shone with it. Even after departing God’s presence, God's glory reflected from Moses' face with such radiance that the Israelites could not look at it. Whenever Moses met with God and returned to speak with the Israelites, he had to cover his face for they could not stand to look at this reflection of God's glory.

Again, we see the glory of the Lord when the angel appears to the shepherds on the Judean hillside to announce the birth of our Savior. And what do the shepherds do? They were terrified for they knew their sinfulness in the presence of God’s glory was a thing to be feared.

On the Mount of transfiguration, Peter, James, and John when confronted with the glory of the Lord, fall on their faces in fear and trembling.

Consider that the Greek word for glory is, doxa. We see that word in another word, doxology. It is a compound word made up of doxa, glory; and logos, meaning, word. Doxology simply means, a glorifying word, or a word that glorifies. Do you see why we call singing or saying, “Glory to God in the highest,” a doxology?

In our text, I want to look at the fact that we are instructed to give God glory, *to Him be the glory*. To Him be the glory – in the church and in Christ Jesus. And this glory is to be throughout all generations – forever. Amen. Yes, so let it be!

How does this happen? It is something we are to do. We are to give Him all glory. It is of course obvious that He has Glory of His own. His holiness, Divine majesty and power, are His glorious name, it has glory beyond what we can even imagine.

How then can we give Him glory?

As Lutherans, you already know the answer to that. You may not know that you do, but at one time you even memorized how to do it.

You know the second commandment. *You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.* You also know Luther's definition of it, and by fulfilling that definition, you are giving glory to God's name – you are making it holy. *We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceived by his name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.* By avoiding some things, and by doing others, we give glory to His name.

Who we best do this is also revealed in the third commandment, *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.* How do you keep it holy? By receiving! The highest form of worship, praise, and giving glory to God, is to receive the gifts He desires to give you. Luther's explanation of the third commandment shows this so well. *We should fear and love God that we do not despise preaching and his word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear it and learn it.*

It is God's will that his name be kept holy in all our life. That is how we give Him glory. You know the first petition of the Lord's Prayer, *hallowed be Thy name*. Luther asks, what does this mean? *God's name is indeed holy in itself; but we pray in this petition that it may be holy among us also.*

We could, and we do ask in the catechism, how is this done? Answer! When the word of God is taught in truth and purity, and we, as the children of God also lead holy lives according to it. This grant us dear father in heaven. Note here, that while we are doing it, it is not our work. Instead, it is what God's work in us.

The explanation also continues: *but he that teaches and lives otherwise than God's word teaches, profanes the name of God among us. From this preserve us, heavenly Father.* Again we note that only God can keep us from profaning His holy name.

I know that you and I share a problem. We wear the name of Christ, for we are called Christian. ***BUT***, do we always bring respect, honor, and dignity to God’s name? That is, do we bring glory to that name of Christ – the very name of God we bear?

The honest answer to that question is, “No!” Our words and actions are not always in line with God's Word and will for our lives. And how often do we believe, teach, and/or confess something other than what God's word teaches? We often bring shame and not glory to the name we bear.

Every time we sin, we profane God's name. That is the exact opposite of giving God glory. Anytime we confess or teach something other than God's word teaches, we profane God's name. That is the exact opposite of giving God glory.

In our world today it is so very easy to do just that. Whenever we speak ill of our neighbors, we are profaning God's name.

Whenever God's name flows forth from our lips in a manner other than prayer, praise, thanksgiving, or in evangelism, we are profaning God's holy name.

When we fail to defend the clear teaching of God's word, we are profaning God's name.

Thanks be to God that He is the one who makes His name holy, even among us. It is Christ who brought Glory to God in all that He did. Born of a virgin, there was no sin in Him. Although tempted in every way we are, He was without sin. Most of all, as He Himself tells us, He brings glory to the name of the Father in His innocent suffering and death.

In Ezekiel 36, the Old Testament lesson for Exaudi Sunday, we hear God foretell that He going to glorify His name, which we have profaned.

Before His crucifixion, Jesus declared, “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” (John 12:27-28) At this, the Father's voice came from heaven so that others heard it, declaring, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” (Jn 12:28) And Jesus explains what all present heard, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” (Jn. 12:30-32)

God is glorified in the crucifixion of His Son. All glory goes to the father, for Christ, obedient to the Father's will, takes into Himself your sins and mine. He assumes in His body our failures to give glory to the name of God in our thoughts, words, and deeds.

Now, it is in bestowing that forgiveness which He purchased, upon us, that He gives Glory again.

Your desire to be in God's house on this day and receive those gifts, gives to Him glory.

Our text declares: *Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than we ask or think*. Do we even understand the price paid for our forgiveness? Can we comprehend exactly what it is when Christ says that He is present in the Word we hear? Who would ask for the flesh of another to eat? Or desire to drink of another's blood? And yet, even though we cannot wrap our minds around it, that is what Christ gives to us! He gives us the very same body which was pierced for us to eat. He gives us the very same blood He shed, to drink. In eating and drinking we receive the very forgiveness that they purchased, and are partakers of His eternal life as ours.

As our text says, *according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever. Amen.*

It is in receiving these incredible, unfathomable gifts, that all glory is given to Him who created us, redeemed us, and makes us holy. It is only receiving these gifts that those things happen. How are you redeemed? It happened upon the cross, but it is delivered to you as the word cleanses you of sin. It is bestowed as His flesh and blood fill you with Himself. This is why ***RECEIVING***  God’s gifts in Christ Jesus is our highest form of worship. It is in receiving that the Spirit comes to us, and this is at work within us that we are sanctified. It is in receiving that Christ lives and dwells within us – and Christ in us and through us makes us holy in our word and in our actions.

It is as Christ comes to us and His Spirit fills us, that we give glory to His name. Let us then receive these gifts from Christ in all thanksgiving, that to Him be all glory forever and ever. Amen.