

Draw Us to Thee

✠ to see your hidden glory (vv.20-26)

✠ to glorify your name (vv.27-33)

Through the cross of Lent to the crown of Easter, dear fellow redeemed, loved by God:

If you were put on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Along those lines, if people know you are an “evangelical Christian,” what does that mean to them. A Christian author made it a point to ask everyone he met, “What do you think of when you hear the phrase ‘evangelical Christian’?” We would hope for answers like *forgiveness* and *grace*. Unfortunately, they usually equated evangelical Christians with *negative* and *judgmental*.¹ It’s good for each of us to ask ourselves, “What message am I sending?” When friends, neighbors or strangers describe you, what do they hear and see? Someone negative and judgmental? Or a kind person who is passionate about God’s forgiveness in Jesus Christ? Does the love of Jesus and his grace show more clearly than your favorite sports team or political opinions? When earth’s little day ends, all that will matter in the final judgment is God’s forgiveness in Christ. We have every reason to pray for everyone we know: **Draw Us to Thee**....

✠ to see your hidden glory (vv.20-26)

There must have been something especially kind and winsome about these two disciples. It’s not the first we’ve heard of Philip and Andrew. In the beginning of Jesus’ ministry John (1:35-46) reports how Andrew brought his brother Peter to Jesus. And when Jesus called Philip, “**Follow me,**” Philip right away found Nathanael. His excitement was unhindered when Nathanael retorted, “**Nazareth! Can any good come from there?**” You should memorize Philip’s classic answer. Three words: “**Come and see!**”

Three years later we’re near the end of Jesus’ earthly ministry. He has just entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. The Jews are plotting to kill Jesus and rekill Lazarus; too many people were excited that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead. Somehow in the mass of pilgrims in Jerusalem for Passover, some Greeks found Philip and asked, “**Sir, we want to see Jesus.**” **Philip went to tell Andrew. Andrew came with Philip and told Jesus.** (EHV)² Philip must have seemed very approachable. And he was quick to call in a teammate. Jews did not associate with Greeks. Did he wonder what Jesus would say?

The normal response for any political leader would be to grab hold of whatever support you could. Capitalize on your gains from the Palm Sunday crowds and get your ground game organized. That’s what makes Jesus’ answer seem so strange: “**The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.** ²⁴**Amen, Amen, I tell you: Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it continues to be one kernel. But if it dies, it produces much grain.**” Why does He start talking about death again? And comparing Himself to an ugly little seed that dies and sprouts into grain, what’s that all about?

Before anyone could object, Jesus clamps down harder: “**Anyone who loves his life destroys it. And the one who hates his life in this world will hold on to it for eternal life.** ²⁶**If anyone serves me, let him follow me. And where I am, there my servant will be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.**” It just sounds so strange to “**hate**” your life in this world. And where is Jesus anyway?

We’re very blessed to be studying *The Theology of the Cross* right now in Sunday’s Adult / Teen Bible Class. If you’ve been able to attend, you probably know the answer to these questions.

¹ Mark Cares, *Building Bridges* – Spring 2018, p. 3. Quoting Philip Yancey in *What’s So Amazing about Grace?*

² EHV ~ *Evangelical Heritage Version*, the Wartburg Project. Northwestern Pub. House, © 2017. Order: 800-662-6022.

Jesus is hiding His glory as God under the ugliness of the cross, the gruesome death He is about to die. At the same time He's pointing His disciples to the glory that awaits them on Easter when He bursts the chains of death to rise with a glorified body. Still His glory will be hidden from everyone else; only eye witnesses like the disciples will get to see Him. But they will flood the world with God's glory in Christ that shines through His Word. Jesus is the Savior of the world and your personal Savior too. All who listen and believe the Good News will see Jesus with the eyes of faith. Many will die a martyr's death on the way home to heaven. But Jesus will make good on His Word of promise again and again as the saying emerges from centuries of persecution: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." Under the cross is where we find Jesus. There also are we – honored by His Father!

If you love to grow beautiful flowers, you demonstrate Jesus' point in living color. You know from experience what can grow from tiny seeds. They don't look anything like the wonderful flowers they produce. Yet the sea of brilliance in your garden through the summer will reflect the glory of what God the Creator will do on the Last Day. Tiny seeds in His garden of earth will flourish and grow as glorified bodies of believers rise to enjoy eternal life with God in heaven. No longer will God's glory be hidden. It will bloom and grow forever. But for now, God's glory is hidden under our crosses too. We fail and falter in our walk as evangelical, Gospel-motivated Christians of grace and forgiveness. But that is why Jesus suffered and died to wash all our sins away. This includes our sins of weakness, worry and carelessness about our neighbor. With God's **glory hidden** in us we pray, **Draw Us to Thee...**

✠ to glorify your name (vv.27-33)

Jesus feels the weight of His cross just as ours cut into our back and shoulders at times: "**Now my soul is troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'?**" Any reasonable human being would expect Jesus to escape from Jerusalem. His disciples had warned Him about going up to the Festival. Everyone knew the Jewish religious leaders were gunning for Him. But Jesus is following God's plan to hide His glory under the cross of suffering, shame and death in our place. So Jesus answers His own question: "**No, this is the reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!**"

Remember Philip's classic answer to every unanswerable question? "**Come and see!**" Say that twenty times to invite your friends and neighbors. That's what it takes, once is not enough. Then use Jesus' prayer, only four words long. When you're in the middle of a crisis, down in a hole of hurt, where it seems the whole world is shoveling dirt on top you....remember Jesus, how He prayed. See Him answering our longing **Draw Us to Thee**. Jesus prayed: "**Father, glorify your name!**" So can we!

Some thought it thundered. Some were sure an angel must have answered Jesus. But our Lord set the record straight. That voice was meant not for Him, but for them and, my dear friends, for us as well. The thunderous voice of the Father answered: "**I have glorified my name, and I will glorify it again.**"

Did that mean the heavenly Father would send legions of angels to rescue Jesus from the evil Roman soldiers? Would heavenly hosts of fiery seraphim guard Jesus from the Jews and Judas' treachery? Would everyone finally glorify this miracle worker as the Son of God and Savior of the world? No! No! A thousand times, No! For all of that would leave us no Savior at all!

By His death Jesus will triumph: "**Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be thrown out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.**" John lifts high the cross one more time: "**He said this to indicate what kind of death he was going to die.**"

Are you drawn to Jesus' cross? We shall see. Many today want to skip the trauma of the cross on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday and jump right into the joy of Easter. None of this death and dying, bloodshed and violence. But "**without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.**" (Hebrews 9:22) Savior, **Draw Us to Thee!** Help us **glorify your name** in kindness that wins our neighbor too. Amen.