

Easter 5C

May 2, 2010

Rev. Ken Wratten at St. Stephen's, San Jose

Acts 11:1-18 Peter sees that Cornelius and his family receive the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 148 All creation praises God.

Rev 21:1-6 The home of God is among mortals. Jesus said, 'See, I am making all things new.'

John 13:31-35 The Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him.

"Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once."

Is that clear to you? This confusing statement is worth working to understand. Its meaning directly relates to the reason for creation; for Jesus becoming human; for you and me existing.

First, let's look at some examples of bringing honor to someone.

Eagle award photo, the look of my mother's pride in the accomplishment (me-family).

High school graduation (me-family);

National DAE of the Year (me-company);

Doc Gordon with robot and me (me-teacher-school).

We receive glory when our accomplishments are honored. The source of the gift is also honored.

God's glory is His essence; His power, splendor, goodness, importance and love.

When we honor God we recognize His glory, we illuminate it for others to see it.

Today's Gospel lesson is a scene at the Last Supper. Jesus had just sent Judas away, knowing he was going to betray him. He told the remaining 11 disciples that, Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God is glorified in him.

There was a mutual glorification of Jesus and God in the incarnation, because through that, the presence of God in Jesus became visible to the world. That event points to the majesty and power and love of God. By recognizing that, we give the glory God; like my Eagle award brought glory to my mom and my family. Jesus' words and works continued the mutual glorification of himself and of God. The ultimate revealing of God's and Jesus' mutual glory happens in Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension. And the ongoing revealing of God's glory happens through you and me – his church.

If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once.

God's glory is the reason for everything.

Romans 11:36 "For everything comes from God and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to him forever!" (NLT)

Everything created by God reflects his glory in some way. The ultimate purpose of the universe is to show the glory of God. Look at the words of today's Psalm; Praise God from heaven and heights; sun, moon and stars; waters; sea-monsters and deeps; fire and hail, snow and fog and wind, and on and on.

In fact there is a significant theme of this in Scripture.

Psalm 19:1, 'The heavens declare the glory of God.'

Rev 21:23, Has this description of heaven; 'The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.'

God's glory is revealed in nature, in the complexity of the universe, in the birth of a child. But the best place we see God's glory is in Jesus Christ. Jesus illuminates God's nature. The Bible says, 'The Son is the radiance of God's glory.'

(John 17:4) Jesus said, "I brought glory to you here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do." Jesus did that by fulfilling his purpose on earth. You and I honor God in the same way. Fulfilling our purpose brings glory to God.

Isaiah 43:7 "7 Bring all who claim me as their God, for I have made them for my glory."

When we are in sync with God's purpose, we reflect God's glory. Now that is a life worth living.

We bring glory to God by worshipping him in everything we do (enjoying God motivates us);  
by loving other believers (being willing to give ourselves away for others; other-centered);  
by learning and practicing to become more like Christ (disciples);  
by serving others (not ourselves) with the gifts God gives us;  
by telling others about God (the e-word).

Using our gifts and abilities to help others honors the source of those gifts and abilities: our very lives reveal God's glory.

Using our gifts and abilities to help ourselves meet our own personal goals, or to make us more comfortable, or to increase our pleasure, might bring honor to ourselves, but not to God.

This involves a decision you and I need to make, again and again, every day; maybe several times a day. Will you live for your own goals, comfort, and pleasure? Or will you live your life to bring glory to God?

Will you work at your job in a way that brings glory to God?

Will you treat your spouse and your kids and co-workers and classmates, even when you are overworked and tired, in a way that brings glory to God?

Will you spend your money, invest your spare time, talk about other people, in a way that brings glory to God?

Will you select Mother's day cards, make a phone call, visit someone you have waited too long to visit, in a way that brings glory to God?

John said, "To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." (John 1:12) Focusing our lives toward giving the glory to God has high rewards; for eternity.

Reflect on this concept of God's glory this week. Where in your daily routine can you become more aware of God's glory? How can you more outwardly reflect God's glory?

The Son of Man has been glorified, and God is glorified in him. Amen.