

Holy Cross Day—September 14, 2025

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”

A telling thing in this Gospel reading today comes from these Gentiles who have a request. St. John recorded for you, “Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.”

You think about that for a second and what they are asking is profoundly simple. They don't come in some lofty speech. They don't come with some profound wisdom of their own. They want to see Jesus. They want to see him and so they come to his disciples. This is right after the Triumphal Entry of Palm Sunday. Many people saw him on that day, and many people are in Jerusalem for the Feast. Now, these men, want to see Jesus.

Jesus responded to Philip and Andrew. “And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.”

Wanting to see Jesus is a noble thing (some pulpits have this carved on them where the pastor sees it before he preaches). In fact, you could say it's a glorious thing. The response of Jesus tells you that. How? Jesus said his time had come to be glorified. The glory of Jesus is an important theme in John's Gospel; he brings up the word “glory” at least fifteen times. Jesus also speaks as well about “the hour.” On more than one occasion in John's Gospel, Jesus told the people his hour had not yet come. One instance was to his own mother, Mary, when she wanted him to intervene at the wedding at Cana. Now, though, the hour had come. The time of glory was here. The Greeks wanted to see Jesus and very soon many would see Jesus and his glory. He teaches the people about what God's glory really is and where it is found. Everything comes to a head in Holy Week when the hour of his glory had come.

Jesus shows you that God's glory is found and known not in the glory of men, fame, riches, or even simply exercising his rule. The glory is Jesus, as he says himself, is seen in Jesus dying. Now, that doesn't sound very glorious, does it? The cross is folly to the world. It's folly, or foolishness, to those who look to Jesus loving themselves and everything in the world. It's denying God.

God is admonishing you in this reading as you take to heart what this glory of God is and what this all means for you. Seeking your own glory is not seeking God's. The wisdom of the sinful heart, or rather the foolishness of it, is to look at yourself and want to see yourself exalted before others. It wants to see a life where you are a household name and liked by the multitude. It's a life lived to where God is distant and not a God who sent fiery serpents to bite his people. It wants to see yourself free from suffering and wants every situation you face to have your will and your way rule the day. It doesn't want to follow where Jesus leads because following Jesus and being his disciple entails picking up your cross and following him. The glory of sin is the glory of the self and great pride which is the farthest thing from God's glory.

The response of Jesus to the request teaches you where to find your glory, the way to glory is through death. “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.”

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St. Paul proclaimed this to the Corinthians in the Epistle reading, “For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

Listen to your Lord and what he is saying to you. Jesus is calling you to die. He’s calling you to die to your sin. He’s calling you to die to the world when it tries to lead you to follow it and lead you away from Jesus. Jesus is calling you to die to those things which entice you to love them and lose your soul. He’s calling you to die to yourself. Jesus is calling you to repent and seek him and his glory. “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”

You know what? The glorious thing in all this is that the way to glory is through death and your Lord is the one who has conquered through his death. “Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle; sing the ending of the fray. Now above the cross, the trophy, sound the loud triumphant lay; Tell how Christ, the world’s redeemer, as a victim won the day.”

The glorious battle has been won. The victory is proclaimed, and the glorious victory is yours. So, what does God say about you? “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” He says that in Romans 6 and he also says in Colossians 3, “Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”

The glory of Jesus is found in him crucified for you. In what appears to be as far from glorious as something can get, the Lord is glorified for on the cross is where your Lord was sacrificed to atone for your sin. Baptized into Christ, the glory of Jesus is your glory. His life, suffering, death, and resurrection are your glory. In Christ, his glory is the glory of life. It’s the glory that does not fade away. It’s the glory that looks to one who was lifted up on the cross and has life. Jesus said in John 3, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.”

Today is a day to rejoice in your crucified Lord. It’s a glorious day because your sin is forgiven and you have eternal life. See Jesus. See him as the Victor who is here even now as his word is read and preached, and his Supper is given out. The spoils of glorious battle are yours as he is truly here giving you himself, his own body and blood, given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins. Taste and see that the Lord is good and his mercy endures forever. Rejoice and confess the glory of the crucified and risen one who has won the day. “Far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

Be comforted in all this and confident as you live each day, then, as one who belongs to Jesus. You belong to Jesus, and this is glorious. Make the sign of the cross each day when you get up in the morning and when you lay down your head at night as one who has been marked with sign of victory and bears the very name of God. Daily die to your sin and live in the new life which has been given to you. Face the day as one who lives in an eternal day. Face temptation as one who has deliverance from it and the victory over it. Face Satan and his lies as one who is clothed with Christ and sends the devil fleeing for he is the defeated enemy who has lost. Face death as one who has eternal life. Boast in the cross of Christ for your redemption has been won.

In Romans 8 God inspired St. Paul to write, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, fix your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of your faith. See Jesus and behold his glory. Know something too in all this too, you will see Jesus with your own eyes. Your pray of “we wish to see Jesus” is granted know as you walk through this world by faith and not by sight, but you see the day is coming when you will no longer walk by faith but will see your Lord without the veil. The final day, the day of resurrection is the glorious day that is your future. That hour has not yet come but it

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will, it most certainly will. The glory of that is beyond compare as you will be forever with the Lord and all his saints. That glorious day will be the eternal day that does not end. That glory is yours even as the glory of the cross is yours. Rejoice in the glory of Jesus and see him now and forever.

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.