

Sermon Notes for Easter V C 2010

We take a step backward in John today

In the upper room, but with the Lord **before** the crucifixion
An odd move of the lectionary
These words of farewell were preparation for the Cross
For us, preparation for the Ascension.
A great farewell discourse.

We cannot doubt that the Lord had the attention of the disciples that night

In the days before, he had raised Lazarus.
Some mysterious Greeks had come seeking him.
And he had spoke with passion about his coming death.
And then washed their feet.

Strange and powerful things; they were paying attention.

His words were deathbed words.

Most go into some haze or unconsciousness.
Our last words are likely to be from our childhood; calling for our mothers.
But Jesus was in control; speaking as a dead man walking.
He measured his words.
He said the most important things.

He spoke of Glory and Love.

Glory

An old word; little used?
Readily applied to the dramatic beauty of a spring day; other natural wonders.
Applied to a certain worldly renown.
Some are seeking glory in Washington or Hollywood or New York City.

Jesus spoke of his glory of in two registers.

In the first instance, the glory of the cross.

The Son of Man glorified in his betrayal; glorified in his self-giving on the
Cross.
His particular glory to defeat the power of sin and death through suffering love.
The Father glorified in that; a god of wondrous, sacrificing love.

In the second instance, we hear him speaking of the glory of his Ascension.

Glory on top of glory, the crucified and risen Lord will return to the right hand
of the Father.

The Resurrection will change in that moment of glorification.
When Jesus, the Word who came down, ascends to the realm of glory.

As he prepared for that glorification, he spoke about love.

You do not need another sappy sermon about love.
Jesus did not give them a sappy sermon that night.
Told them plainly to love as he loved them; nothing sentimental.
His love was bold and sacrificial.
His love was best seen in his cross.

And his love was unbounded by human conventions

He called to himself a strange band of fishermen and tax collectors.
Impetuous Peter; his bossy mother; the ambitious rest.
He welcomed secret disciples who shared in Jerusalem's corrupt leadership.
He revealed his glory as he loved that bunch to the end.

His final commandment that our love be like that.

A love wide and powerful, a love that overcomes the world's.
Peter wrestling with that in the lesson from Acts.
Not clear at first that the love of Christ would extend to dirty Gentiles.
But Peter was given this vision.
And heard the voice of the Lord saying:
 "Do not call unclean those who I have cleansed."
Peter came to understand that God shows no ethnic partiality,
but loves those in every nation who are obedient to his gracious will.

Let's get glory and love back together as I finish.

The glory of the Christian is the capacity for self-giving love.
Our glory is a life given over to the power of God.

When we embrace his sacrificial love, God gets glory

Irenaeus of Lyon: The glory of God is a human being fully alive."
The love you show one another gives glory to God.
When you love the people you don't like, God gets glory.
Your very life is the location for the glory of God.

Yet God gets glory whether we give it or not.

If we live indifferently, God is glorified.
If we live with hate or prejudice, God is glorified.
God will raise up daughters and sons to love and serve to his glory.

Let it be us; let's abide in the glory of Christ's love.