



St. Andrew**Academy**

The Gospel of John

Week 8

The Revelation of Glory to the Community

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The revelation of glory to the community

- ❖ Though the revelation of glory to the world reaches full flower in Jesus' death and resurrection, most of the gospel from chapter 13 onward is about Jesus and the disciples, the community of believers. Even the resurrection stories are all about Jesus and his disciples.
 - This revelation focuses on the work of the Spirit in and with the church.
- ❖ The church is grounded on faith. The noun "faith/*pistis*" never appears in John's gospel but the verb "believe/*pisteuo*" is used repeatedly. The same with "knowledge" and "knowing."
 - John's emphasis is on the act of believing/faithing/trusting. Disciples are obedient believers, as in the old hymn, "Trust and Obey."
 - As we've talked about so much, John speaks of both election and willing choice.
 - The life of the church, the shape of disciples', can be summed up in Jesus' teaching to love one another.

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The Holy Spirit/Paraclete

- ❖ John calls the Spirit, *paraclete*. *Paraclete* can be variously translated as “comforter,” “counselor,” even “advocate.”
- ❖ The function of the *paraclete* is to represent Jesus on earth after his return to the Father. The Spirit continues and interprets Jesus ministry for his disciples. The Spirit is the one through whom Jesus abides with his disciples, including you and me. The Spirit is Jesus’ presence to strengthen and encourage the disciples. Indeed, Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit as the “Spirit of Christ.”
 - “I will not leave you orphaned. I will come to you” (14:18). The Spirit will teach and remind (14:26).
 - This is why we can say that Jesus is with us. Jesus is with us in the person of the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ The Spirit enables the disciples to understand and to embrace the glorification of Christ. They were blind (before the resurrection) but now they see.

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Unity and community

- ❖ In his great prayer of ch. 17, Jesus prays for the community. This community is made one with Christ by the Spirit’s presence.
- ❖ As Jesus has glorified God, the believers glorify Jesus (v. 10). We are to be “one.” As Jesus is in the Father, the believers are to be in Jesus and the Father. The believers are pulled within the loving relationship of Father and Son. Why? So that the world may know and believe (v. 21 & 23).
 - Disunity in the church diminishes our witness to Christ. The Church, the body of Christ, should be far more unified than we are in the essentials, even as we live out the power of our diverse gifts.
- ❖ Jesus’ prayer is not only for the disciples with him that evening, but also for all those who will believe in Jesus through the words of the disciples (v. 20).
- ❖ The substance of this unity is love. It is love or its absence that demonstrates unity and disunity.
 - How can we learn to love even as we disagree? The hard question is this one: What disagreements threaten this loving communion with one another and which do not?
 - What is love? Jesus points the disciples to his own self-sacrifice (v. 12-13).

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Love as the commandment of Jesus

- ❖ God loves us. The Son loves us. We are to love God. We are to love the Son.
- ❖ The expression of our love is keeping Jesus' commandments and the heart of these is the commandment to love one another (13:34).
 - Jesus is asking of us no more than what he has done. This is why discipleship is a "curriculum in Christlikeness."
- ❖ In John's gospel, the commandment to love one another stands virtually alone. There is no long set or list of Jesus' teachings.
 - This "love one another" is directed inwardly – within the community. In John's gospel, this is not about loving our enemies or even loving those outside the community of believers.
 - If we can't love within the community, how can we love outside the community?
 - This journey through John's gospel ought to illustrate to us God's wisdom in giving us all four gospels.

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Life as eschatological gift and goal

- ❖ The essence of salvation in John's gospel, our eschatological goal, is *life*, eternal *life* (10:10).
 - This life is God's and is available to us now. Indeed, this life is given to us now. This is even bigger than what we mean by everlasting life or immortality.
 - We share in the life of Christ in God – now. Thus, we share in God's life now. This is the only real life there is – and it is both present and permanent.
- ❖ We often think of the eternal life of joy and peace as being something that we will have some day. But this life can be ours now. It is not only "future," it is "present."

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Prayer

- ❖ In John's gospel, Jesus doesn't really teach his disciples how to pray. Instead he talks to them about what their prayers will be like and what the results will be.
- ❖ The part we struggle with the most is Jesus' repeated promise to do anything the disciples ask (14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-24).
 - The key here is to grasp the unity that is both urged by Jesus and given to the disciples. Jesus is in the Father. The disciples are in both Jesus and the Father. There is real and concrete unity here.
 - The prayer of the disciples is to express this close unity. They will pray for whatever Jesus will give them. The disciple's prayers are an echo of Jesus' own *theos to theos* prayer.

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The Church

- ❖ There is nothing here about church structure or administration like we find in Paul's letters. This probably reflects the differing work and circumstances of John and Paul.
- ❖ The church in John's gospel is the community of Jesus' friends, to whom Jesus has fully revealed himself and the Father. This community is the creation of the Spirit, who is Jesus' presence.
- ❖ The mission of the church is to glorify God, to enable people to see God's true and essential character revealed in the believer's love. The believers are to carry on the work of the good shepherd (21:15-19).
- ❖ But the community will face a hostile "world/*kosmos*," much of which chooses to remain in the darkness. As Jesus was hated by "the world," so will the disciples be hated. It would be far worse for the disciples to be loved by "the world" (15:18-19).

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The essence of Christianity

- ❖ It is John's Christology (what is referred to as a "high" Christology) which lies at the heart of the Christian proclamation. It is John's and Paul's Christ who shapes the Nicene creed of a few centuries later.
 - Jesus is sent from the Father to a world trapped in darkness. He is sent to bring the light of God, to heal the breach, to restore the cosmos. We can participate in this restoration by trusting/believing/faithing in Jesus Christ. Those who believe are called to further Christ's work and to reveal Christ to the world through their own lives.
 - It is the cross that lies at the heart of the Christian faith, not Jesus' teachings, for the truth is that humanity has shown itself unable to love God and neighbor – teachings or not, moral examples or not. God must do what we are unable to do for ourselves.
- ❖ Perhaps this explains the ordering of the NT gospels. Maybe John's gospel is a bridge, a link, getting us from the Jesus of Matthew/Mark/Luke to the letters of Paul.