

Fifth Sunday of Easter

EASTER LIGHT, EASTER LOVE

John 13:31-35

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Analysis by Michael Hoy

31When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. 32If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. 33Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' 34I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. 35By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

DIAGNOSIS: Dimming Light

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) : *Going Out ... without Love*

The community is being diminished. Like a candle that is burning out, one of the chosen ones has "gone out" (v. 30). This one's going out is not a good sign. It is not only that this going out is to do evil, to betray and to bring the hostility of enemies upon Jesus and the community. Worse is that this going out signals that love is not operative in the midst of the community. We don't have to go looking for similar lovelessness in our world or even wider community. We can find unloving behavior close to home, in our own diminished communities.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) : *Splintered*

This lovelessness means also that the community is splintered. And that splintering runs to the very core of our own lives. And without love, we are also without faith. We despair and become protective of our own turf. We turn inward, all along missing how the light is going out in our very beings.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) : *Going ... and Leaving Us Out*

And finally the Son of Man must leave his followers, so he says, "Where I am going, you cannot come." Note the kind of company the disciples are left with: those who also heard this message, those who are opposed to the Light (v. 33). Finally, when all the light has gone, even the light of God, we are left only with the dark. Lights out!

PROGNOSIS: Lightening Dimness

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) : *Going ... and Glowing for Us*

Yet do we not come to cherish the very reason that Jesus speaks these words about his "going"? Where he is going is to the cross and the grave. He takes and makes his place in the very midst of our darkness, there to do what we could not do: love us into new being. And his going there is not a sign of our final diminished and lost light, but of how Light may finally and fully shine upon us. The final and full glory of Christ's Light comes in the cross and resurrection!

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution) : *Splendid!*

No longer are we fractured and splintered, but made whole in the glory of God in Jesus the Christ. "Glory" is what we get to experience, right down to the very core of our being. It is the gift of faith by which we hang on Jesus' words that we are "little children" (v. 33) of the same heavenly (glorious) Father. We trust that as God looks upon us, we are seen in this

new, splendid light. Glory is shared with us, by faith!

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) : *Going Out ... with Love*

And as Jesus came to us and went out for us in love, taking that brilliant Light to bear upon the world, so do we. We do it among one another, in community, seeing one another as brothers and sisters to be loved. And we go out also with that light where there is brokenness and betrayal and hostility. As the community is embraced by Christ's love, so love enhances the community; and the loving community increases the Light in the world.