

The Fifth Sunday of Easter

GLORY BE!

John 13:31-35

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Analysis by Kris Wright

31 When 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: Glory from Below

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) – *Glory Seekers*

Jesus speaks of being glorified. We can identify with that. We love glory – our own, even if it’s only our “two minutes of fame.” Why else the popularity of these “reality shows” with people willing to do outrageous things on camera in the hope of glory, or their definition of it; i.e. power, success, fame, riches, love (or what passes for it), the largest congregation, the most sermon compliments. This is the glory of this world, glory “from below,” and if we don’t consciously seek it, we certainly don’t run from it. The glory of this world promises “this is the life,” but its promises are empty. It cannot last.

It burns itself out.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) – *Blinded by Glory*
Being born “from below,” (8:23), we are so blinded by the glow of this false glory, we don’t see (and, therefore, don’t believe) there is an other glory hidden where only faith would look. The glory of God, the love of God, hidden in humiliation, suffering, death, in the flesh and blood of the Son of Man/Son of God. We put our trust in what we can see with our own eyes, what the powers of this world tell us is true. Glory in the cross – that’s an oxymoron. No way!

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) – *Left Behind – No Way!*

Jesus says, “Where I am going you cannot come.” Blind, clueless, faithless, without him we do not know the way. We are trapped “here below.” “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). We are left behind with our sin and death to await our fate and God’s judgment and as Jesus said, “You will die in your sins” (8:24).

PROGNOSIS: Glory From Above

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) – *Yes, Way! Cross Way!*

“But you will follow later” (v. 36). God has provided a way for those “left behind”: Jesus – the Way, the Truth and the Life, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The cross is the key to glory. “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you” (17:1; also see 1:23). It is here Jesus’ true identity is revealed. It is here that God saves the world, reconciles the world to himself. God’s true glory, his light and life and love is revealed not primarily in the resurrection and ascension, but in the cross. It is here that God’s love is manifested, a love that gives up everything, withholds nothing on behalf of those God has given him. This is

the glory from above.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution) – *We See the Way*

“And we have seen his glory, the glory as of a Father’s only son, full of grace and truth” (1:14b). God’s glory now glows on us. We are witnesses to this distinctive love that stops at nothing to save us. Believing now we see Jesus is the model and the motive for the love he commands us to share (i.e. the Thomas story which prompts faith in the One with wounded hands, recognizing him as “My Lord and my God!” 20:24-29).

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) – *We Show the Way*

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (v. 35). Jesus forms a new community: a “Glory Be” Church whose mark is love. Not just any love, but love from above – sacrificial, unexpected, persistent. This new way of life and love and action is the sign to outsiders who will glimpse the glory of God shining in his Church as it was said of them, “see how they love one another.”