

Easter Word: Glory

Our Easter word for today is glory. Jesus says the words glorify or glory so many times in this passage today, especially in the first part of the reading, that it becomes a bit confusing, who and what he is referring to.

Glory makes us think of shining brightness, of honour, of victory. A commentary I read this week gave an example of the glory we experience, as a candidate and their supporters at the end of a victorious election campaign, the candidate giving their victory speech, the crowd cheering, everyone caught up in this glorious moment. Glory of this kind seems to be about setting some people apart, and lifting them up above others.

That's not the kind of glory Jesus is seeking in this passage. Although we sing "Thine is the Glory", and we do talk about glorifying Jesus, the glory he is praying to God for, is not about him being honoured or lifted up above others. He prays, saying he did God's work on earth in order to glorify God, and he asks to be glorified only to further glorify God. As he prepares to leave his disciples, he doesn't want them to forget him and all he taught, and all they experienced together, he wants them to continue to know God and have the life he brought them. I think when Jesus asks for glory, it's the same as when, at the Lord's Supper, he asks the disciples to remember him whenever they celebrate that meal. And when he asks them to keep his commandment to love one another as he loved.

Glory here is more about relationship than about one person being lifted up above others. Jesus asks for glory not for himself, but, as he says "I am asking on their behalf", on behalf of his disciples. And he also says that he had been glorified in them.

Jesus drew this group of people together over his three years of ministry, not only the twelve apostles, but other women and men who were drawn to him, and who became community. They didn't always get it perfect, but they learned and grew in their time with Jesus. And it is in that community that Jesus was glorified. And Jesus prays to be glorified, so that that community will continue. That they will not break apart when the crisis and the horror of the crucifixion hits.

And God answered this prayer of Jesus. His community of followers continued, after his resurrection of course, but also after his ascension, when he was no longer with them physically, they continued. They worshipped, gathering around meals in remembrance of Jesus, they loved one another, they shared what they had, they cared for the vulnerable, and they welcomed others into their community. And they passed the tradition on, down through the years, to us today.

We also have experienced crisis, and yet, here we are, still gathered in this community of faith, really in less than ideal circumstances, and yet we continue to worship together. We pray, and we sing, and we glorify Jesus, but not just about worship for

worship's sake. Like the early disciples, we do it to remember, to remember all we have learned from Jesus, to remember this community of faith that we have been drawn into, and to remember what we are called to: to love one another, to share what we have, to care for the vulnerable, and to welcome others into community.

That's the glory Jesus is looking for: not being lifted up above us, but the glory of being with us, a community that gathers in his name and that loves, and shares, and cares, and welcomes in his name. Amen.