

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and God the Son, our ascended and soon to be returning Lord.

Dear fellow disciples,

Martin Luther once said, "Prayer helps us very much and gives us a cheerful heart, not on account of any merit in the word [of praying], but because we have spoken with God and found everything to be in order." (AE 54:17) In today's gospel, Jesus prays to his Father. How does this prayer turn out? Will everything be in order?

## I.

Jesus begins this prayer by saying, "**Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.**" (v.1) Maybe you are asking yourself, "*What* time has come?" Remember when these words were spoken?! Maundy Thursday, a few hrs before his arrest, less than a day before his crucifixion and death. So what *time* has come? *The whole reason* why the Son of God shared in our humanity. The *time* for his sacrifice and death. The time that he would save the whole world by his sacrifice and death. Jesus wants to be glorified at this time and in turn he wants his death and resurrection to bring glory to God. This is the essence of Jesus' prayer: glorify the Son. Jesus prays for glory for a few reasons.

The first reason is because God, "**granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life.**" (v.2) Notice the certainty in Jesus' prayer. He said these words, claiming authority over all people before Good Friday, Easter, and even the Ascension, when Jesus said the words, "**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.**" (Mt 28:18) And God the Father *gave* this authority to the Son so that he in turn would *give* eternal life. Then Jesus gives us the way of entrance into eternal life.

"**Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.**" (v.3) Jesus is pretty clear on what eternal life means, isn't he? Knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ. It's like what he said earlier in chapter 14, "**I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me.**" (Jn 14:6) No matter what others or maybe even we may think, Jesus, knowing him, believing in him, is the only way to eternal life, to God the Father. Now Jesus gets back to his prayer.

"**I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.**" (v.4) The second reason for this prayer for glory. Jesus not only has all authority, but also has brought glory to God the Father. How? By doing the work he was given to do. What work was that? Living the life that we could not. Dying the death so that we would not. So now, since Jesus has done this work, he prays again ...

"**Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.**" (v.5) Notice what he adds this time to his prayer? He *again* shows his certainty and boldness. He describes the glory for which he is asking: it is the glory he had already before the world's beginning, from eternity. That right there tells us who Jesus is, he is *really* the Son of God, God himself, having that glory that only God can have, *an eternal glory*. When he came down to earth to take our place, he had set aside this glory so that he could do his work of saving us.

It's like if you were coaching a grade school basketball team. You are trying to teach them the fundamentals: dribbling, shooting, passing. Now what would happen if every time they got the ball, you would steal the ball, block the shot, intercept the pass? However fun that might be, would they learn anything? Would you be able to coach them and do what you are supposed to do? No, you have more skill than the kids, but you set it aside, do not make use of all your skill to do your work of coaching.

That's why the Son of God set aside part of his glory to do his work of saving us. If he made full use of his glory, could anyone have actually arrested, beaten, crucified, or killed him? No. But how would our salvation be accomplished then? It is that glory that now, Jesus asks to be restored. Jesus asks for that glory, because he is wrapping up his earthly ministry and life. He is wrapping up his work that the Father had given him.

"**I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word.**" (v.6) Jesus has revealed God the Father to the world and more specifically, those who are around him during this prayer, the eleven apostles, Judas having already left the group. These men have obeyed the Word of God and they know that Jesus is from God. They know that the words Jesus spoke were the very words of God. (v.7) These faithful men know exactly *who* Jesus is, God the Son, the promised Savior of the world (v.8) These 11 apostles would also be the foundation of Jesus' Church on earth and the ones who would carry the message about him into the world. Then Jesus again makes a bold claim in v.10.

"All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them." (v.10) No mere mortal could say these words. You would be a fool to claim that all that God has is your own. But not Jesus. Again we see the certainty in this prayer. And then Jesus ends this part of the prayer with the words.

"I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you." (v.11a) This is what was celebrated last Thursday, Ascension. When the words that Jesus spoke here, came true. He no longer would be with his disciples in a visible way. It would *not* be like the 3 yrs previous they had spent with him.

I'm sure you have noticed all the certainty and even boldness in Jesus' prayer? Remember, he spoke these words on Maundy Thursday. There was still the arrest, mocking, beatings, rejections, crucifixion to follow. Can you imagine what the disciples were *feeling* on that Friday? Can you imagine what the disciples were *thinking* on that Friday?

As the disciples were gazing up at that beaten and bruised body of their Lord on the cross, they must have been saying to themselves, "Jesus prayed with such certainty the night before, but look at him now. *This* is having authority over all the earth? *This* is glory?! *This* was what he was talking about?!" Wondering in their minds, if God the Father did indeed listen to Jesus' prayer.

But when would their thinking change? It started to change during Easter evening. It started to change during Jesus' 40 days he remained with them after Easter. But it also started to change as the disciples were gazing up into the air, trying to catch one more fleeting glance of the body of their Lord, they must have been saying to themselves, "*This* is having authority over all the earth! *This* is glory!! *This* was what he was talking about!!" God the Father listened to Jesus' prayer, he glorified the Son.

## II.

Jesus was certain that the Father would answer his prayer, glory after suffering. Our lives between the Son's Ascension and the Son's Return will also be the same, glory after suffering. Remember what Peter wrote in our second lesson?

**"Do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ."** (1 Pt 4:12-13a) We too are bound to suffer. When that does come, how will we react? Will we say, "This is glory?! Living in a world where I am mocked and called stupid for believing in Jesus. Living in a world where even among Christians, there are arguments, petty things that are used to divide us. Living in a world where at every turn, Satan tempts me with this and that sin. And I more often than not, fall into it. This is glory?!"

When we feel that way, remember that Jesus prays for his disciples in this prayer too. He prayed that God the Father would be with them. Remember also, Jesus lived through the same sufferings we do. He faced all that we faced, yet overcame them all. And by overcoming his sufferings, he won for us the same thing he received after suffering. We got the forgiveness our sins. We got eternal life. We got glory.

Peter said, "**so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.**" (1 Pt 4:13b) Jesus' glory will be revealed to the whole world when he "**comes back in the same way he went into heaven,**" (Ac 1:11) When *that time* comes. When we see him seated among the clouds with his legions of angels. At *that time*, we will say, "This is glory!" It is ours, his glory. This is what he was talking about. AMEN.

The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. AMEN.

Hymn of the Day: