

Sermon - Jesus glorified in us

- On Thursday this last week, the Church traditionally observed the Ascension of Jesus into heaven.
- Part of the tradition was that it occurred 40 days after his Resurrection.
- We can understand that 40 days is a metaphor for something having been completed - brought to completion.
- So maybe these 40 days then brought to completion the resurrection appearances of Jesus.
- Interestingly enough, Paul later on at his conversion considered that he had also encountered the resurrected Jesus.
- And many Christians over the centuries when they have come to faith, or come to a point where their faith is profoundly deepened, have a sense of having somehow encountered the resurrected Jesus.
- So it would be interesting to know what Luke, as he wrote his Gospel, was thinking had come to completion when he chose the metaphor of 40 days to bring the resurrection account to the ascension of Jesus.
- It is also good to bear in mind that none of the other Gospel writers - Matthew, Mark and John - made any reference to Christ's ascension - it would appear that they did not consider it to be relevant.
- So I find it useful to understand the ascension event as part of the Resurrection, rather than as a distinct event in its own right.
- As Luke describes it, this is what the first disciples experienced as they came to recognise and acknowledge that Jesus was no longer physically with them, and had effectively returned to the source of love, light and life.

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- After Jesus' ascension, the primary focus for those first disciples then becomes a time of prayerful waiting, and of expectancy of God at work in a way that is not quite visible, not quite tangible, not quite discernible.
- We know what happens next in the story: the dramatic outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost - and we will be celebrating that next Sunday.
- However, at this point in the experience of those early disciples, they do not know what is coming.
- And yet they do remember that Jesus had assured them that if they kept their faith in God - if they stayed true to their faith relationship - then God would make himself manifest to them in a fresh way:
- that the love, light and life of God that Jesus had revealed in a new way in his own life and ministry, would continue through them.
- During this time of waiting, they must also have been talking amongst themselves, and reflecting on the works of Jesus, and his teaching - both the public teaching to the crowds, and especially the private teaching when only his immediate friends and followers were present.
- And they might have remembered what we have heard from our Gospel passage today, when Jesus speaks about God's glorification, and his own glorification - both in his own right, and in his disciples and followers - including us.
- As Jesus prayed aloud in the presence of his disciples, he said: *'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.'*

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- This is reasonably straightforward to comprehend, I hope - at least at the simple level of recognising that through the activity of God's Spirit in Jesus, that God is glorified in and through Jesus, and because of the direct relationship that Jesus has with God the Father, Jesus is also glorified.
- What is really interesting for us is what Jesus prays next: *'All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.'*
- When Jesus refers to 'them', he is not just referring to those followers of his who are immediately present, but through the Gospels being handed down through the generations to us as well, Jesus is referring to all Christians - all disciples and followers - including us present here today.
- So Jesus talks about being glorified in both those first disciples and in us as well as his 21st century disciples on the Surf Coast.
- I find that to be both quite a challenging idea, and an encouraging and affirming idea.
- But what might Jesus mean when he talks about God being glorified, or himself being glorified in God?
- One of the stories we heard and reflected on during Lent, the season for preparing for Easter, was that of the blind man in John's Gospel, when the disciples ask about the reason for the man's blindness.
- And Jesus turns the perspective from what has gone wrong - from what has been life-draining, to what is going to go right - to what is going to be life-affirming.
- He says, 'This man is blind so that God might be glorified.'
- And then proceeds to heal him, enabling his sight.
- And glory is indeed given to God, by the healed blind man, and by those who can recognise the blessing of God made manifest in their midst.

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- The story of the miracle is not just a story of a physical healing.
- It is also a story whose deeper meaning is relevant in all kinds of situations.
- Whenever people and situations are turned around so that the focus changes from what is wrong, from what is unloving, without light, and life-draining - and changes to what is right, to what is loving, light-filled, and life-enhancing - then God is glorified.
- Because if God is the source of all love, all light, and all life, and this source is tapped into, recognised and acknowledged and celebrated, then God is automatically glorified.
- To me it's as simple as touching the switch that turns on the light.
- We either stumble around in the dark and proclaim how dark it is, or we turn to the source of light and find ourselves proclaiming how light it is.
- And when we do this through Jesus, and in the name of Jesus Christ, then Jesus is likewise glorified in us.

So may you hear and respond to Jesus' prayer to God the Father, that *'All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.'*

May you intentionally look for, and ask God to show you, God's point of view for people and situations that make you concerned.

May you ask God to make his love, and light, and life manifest.

And may you give God the glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.