

*After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, 2since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. 4I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. 5So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. 6" I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; 8for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. 9I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. 10All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. 11And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.*

If we had it on video, they would give it an R rating. Graphic violence, offensive language, no one under 17 admitted without a parent or guardian. If we could show it to someone who did not know the story what would they think? They would witness a man, his back torn open by the thongs of the whip. A circle of vicious laughter surrounds him next, a crown of thorns soaked red with his blood, a reed in his hand mocking his claim to power, an old purple robe draped over his shoulders. Spitting, slapping, disgust, disdain, contempt.

Then out of the darkness and into the light of day, they parade to the hill. As the camera moves in close, nails are driven into his hands and his feet, the cross thrust into the air, then hours of waiting. A few words are spoken, more mocking, but mostly his dying until it is finished.

How would it look to someone who did not know the story? Awful, disgusting. Surely no one would ever think to look for God here in this dying.

But hear Jesus prayer: "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him."

Glorify your Son.

I look out a window; I see squirrels chasing one another through a canopy of apple blossoms. A robin searches out breakfast nearby. A rabbit nibbles and hops through a feast of green. I think of the God who provides for all. God's glory?

My dentist asks, "What are you doing for a vacation this year?"

"Going to Colorado," I respond just before he sticks his hands in my mouth once more. Then as he works I think of blue lakes reflecting patches of snow, grey peaks, elk and marmot and sky so deep and clear. God's glory?

A mother and a child come down the hall, one watching, loving, the other fearlessly exploring this space and all that is in it. I smile in the depth of my heart as the child looks at me and gives me a smile so fresh and wide. Certainly this is God's glory.

But Jesus said in his prayer, "I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do." Jesus glorified his Father by finishing the work that the Father gave, by dying.

This is the glory of God? This shame and weakness and pain, this that makes us want to turn our heads away? Here is where God gives God's own self for us to see and know? Here in Jesus dying you see God and meet God and know God? That is what Jesus is praying.

"Father, the hour has come, glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you." Father glorifying the Son - Son glorifying the Father in giving his life for you.

We have a part if this video, you and I. You and I mock the only Son of God, choose to drive nails into his hands and feet, spit on him, ridicule him, murder him.

Certainly not me -it was those kinds of people: Jews and Roman soldiers. Not me - not you.

Every one of you who had something to confess to God earlier in this service - sin, failing, unbelief - you know that you are the one who has mocked Jesus. The nails that cause his blood to flow are your sins, my sins. My life mocks his name that he has given me. What is spoken against your neighbor in your hearts are thorns scratching the holy brow.

Yet he gives his life gladly for you. Never can the pain and mocking caused by your life keep him from loving you. In his dying you know God. Here is eternal life, the love of Jesus that cannot be broken even by death.

Jesus prays, "So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world began." Now in this dying which is love for you, the glory of God which is from the beginning to the end is seen. This love is eternal life for you.

In time the mountains that are so glorious now will be turned into the sands of the seashore - that fresh young child will grow old and gray and wrinkled and die - and squirrels and birds and blossoms may not even survive a season.

But there is no limit, no end to the love of Christ for you.

And for every person.

God has called us together here that we might tell the world of this glory of God. More and more the world would settle for mountains and birds and squirrels at play, But Jesus wants every child that is born to see God's glory in Jesus' dying for her and being raised for him.

"Go make disciples of all nations," he speaks to you. Beginning at your home and in your places of play and work, tell of Jesus' glory.

His dying for them is not very pretty, but it is certainly glorious.