

Seventh Sunday of Easter - A (2026)

Acts 1:6-14

Psalm 68:1-10, 33-36

1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11

John 17:1-11

‘All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.’ In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

What an amazing statement from Jesus, that he ‘has been glorified in them.’ The ‘them’ to whom he refers is his loyal, though generally clueless, band of several fishermen, a tax collector, a Canaanite zealot, and one who John refers to as a ‘thief and an embezzler,’ Judas Iscariot. We know the names of the rest of those whom Jesus called to follow him: Bartholomew, James, Philip, and Thomas, but Scripture does not provide how they made their respective livings prior to Jesus’ call on their lives.

Think through some of the circumstances in the gospels where we, who have the supreme advantage of history, see where the disciples just don’t get this Jesus fellow from Nazareth. They have followed Emmanuel, God made flesh, for several years and yet in a pique of anger want fire brought down upon the rude and inhospitable Samaritans, who fail to comprehend how Jesus could feed 4,000 with little more than a basket of fish and bread AFTER experiencing this very miracle earlier with over 5,000, and hole up in despair with fear and trembling of the Jewish authorities after Jesus’ death thinking that the kingdom they had envisioned was no longer a possibility. They had witnessed miracle after miracle, signs and wonders, including the exorcism of demons, the calming of storms, and the dead brought back to life. Before the resurrection, they were rather clueless about the mission and ministry of Jesus. After the resurrection, however, they laid claim and gave voice to the nearness of the kingdom, continually spread the teachings of the

One True God, oversaw the growth of the church, and some died a martyr's death for their unshakable faith in their Lord.

Jesus has, as he said, been glorified by them and by those who have followed their lead down through the millennia, and the same can be said for those who believe today, including us here this morning.

This band of twelve disciples gives me continued hope in that I am just as clueless at times as they were, while at the same time challenging me to walk my faith, not only in thought or word, but in deed; of living daily in a way that brings glory and delight to Jesus.

In today's Gospel lesson, Jesus is praying to the Father for these devoted followers not only with a sense of brotherhood, but, as Arthur Gossip notes in his commentary, with a 'sense of pride.' They have committed themselves, endured tough times, and learned and matured during their time with him. Even though they still do not fully understand the implications of Jesus' mission of salvation, they have nonetheless received his teaching and believed that he had been sent by the Father. While the events of Holy Week will see them hiding and denying their relationship with Jesus, their post-resurrection transformation and commitment change the world and the trajectory of human history.

So, what does it mean to bring 'glory to God?' How do we bring glory to God? At its core, to bring glory to God is to acknowledge God as the Creator and we as the created; to recognize the awe and majesty of God's very presence; to honor God in the way we live our lives as we respond to his grace and mercy. It's really that simple, though not that easy.

As followers of Christ, we know what this looks like, right? We've gathered today to worship, to hear the revealed word of God in scripture and song, to share with thanksgiving the breaking of bread and drinking of wine, the body and blood of Christ given for us, and to fellowship with each other. We seek to serve others through the prism of faith that seeks the benefit of others over our own. We bring

glory to God when we encounter him in prayer, when we give generously of ourselves and our resources, acknowledging as we do each week that everything we have and share with others is really a gift from God in the first place, and when we seek to follow the leading of the Spirit in the day-to-day life of being a Christian.

We bring glory to God when our lives exhibit the fruit of the Spirit among ourselves and with the world around us in behaviors grounded in love, forbearance, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. We bring glory to God when we persevere when challenged for our faith, and when we resist evil and call upon his Name for help and protection. We glorify God when our thoughts, words, and deeds are predicated on God's Word; when our focus is on the ways of God and not the ways of the world. This is why gathering regularly for worship and the continual practices of prayer, service, and fellowship are the core of who we are as a faith community. It's really that simple, though not that easy.

As I mentioned in a recent Reflections article in the E-Blast, one of the reasons Julie and I decided to send our boys through the parochial school system was that we wanted help teaching them Godly ways of living. By God's grace, we trusted that the Spirit would move in their lives in ways that would help shape how they thought, how they behaved, and to whom they truly belonged. The motto of their high school was *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*, All for the greater glory of God, or *AMDG* for short. *AMDG* is a way of life that not only Jesus exemplified, but about which the apostles Paul, Peter, and James speak extensively in their letters to the faithful in the New Testament. *AMDG* focuses our efforts on ways that build others up, soothe the brokenhearted, seek the dignity of every human being, and foster behaviors and attitudes that bring glory and delight to God. We are what we eat, says the familiar adage, and when we consume the Word of God, scripture tells us it is better than the taste of honey, and we become the mirror image of God, a source of light and truth to all whom we encounter.

Dear friends, I leave you with this, an excerpt from an article written by Eric E. Castro about the meaning of *AMDG*:

To live *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam* is a way of being that permeates every thought, every deed, every action and inaction - all is contemplated and weighed, *all for the greater glory of God.*

To live *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam* is to lay claim to a legacy of 'other-ness' that sets us apart and puts us at ease with the culture of people, a completely integrated other-ness that seeks to make all things whole, that approaches the liminal without hesitation, that finds God in all things, finds the Good in all things, and seeks to proclaim his glory in all that we do.

It is a heritage of service however, whenever, and wherever needed, of leadership in service to those impoverished in mind, body and spirit.

It is a complete inability to be unaware of injustice or impervious to inequality.

To offer one's heart and one's hands, one's whole self in desolation and in consolation. To give up even liberty for the sake of the love of the other.

To be unattached to any outcome except that which God wills, leaving behind comfort zones, releasing the ego into the bosom of the Creator. Rooted in the confident security and the joy of knowing Love beyond words.

Called together at one table, unity in diversity, one family, working together to realize heaven on earth. Answering the call to serve and to glorify, in all ways, that Love that always finds a way.

It's really that simple, and by God's grace, it will be made easier.

