

A Great Declaration: Revelation of the True Glory of God

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[0 : 00] Well, let's turn, shall we, and now to God's Word. And we are in the run-up to Easter, going to be looking at John's Gospel. So please turn your Bibles to John chapter 12, and we'll be reading from verse 20.

John chapter 12, and reading from verse 20. So please turn your Bibles there, and we'll read this portion of the Scriptures. I'm just going to start the reading at the very end of verse 19 here. Look, the world has gone after him, the Pharisees said to one another. Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks.

So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, Sir, we wish to see Jesus. Philip went and told Andrew.

Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone.

[1 : 18] But if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it. And whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

If anyone serves me, he must follow me. And where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this purpose I have come to this hour.

Father, glorify your name. Then a voice came from heaven. I have glorified it. And I will glorify it again.

The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, An angel has spoken to him.

[2 : 18] Jesus answered, The voice has come for your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world. Now will the ruler of this world be cast out.

And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. So the crowd answered him.

We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man? So Jesus said to them, The light is among you for a little while longer.

Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.

When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them. Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him. So that the words spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled.

[3 : 31] Lord, who has believed what he heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore, they could not believe. For again, Isaiah said, He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.

Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. Nevertheless, many, even of the authorities, believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees, they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue.

For they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God. Amen.

May the Lord bless his words to us this morning. John's Gospel Well, perhaps you'd turn with me to John's Gospel, chapter 12.

And we're going to be looking at this passage for a few weeks as we run up to Easter, focusing on the very heart of our faith, the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[4 : 51] Now, it's important that we do that often. Because the truth is that many people today have only the vaguest notion about what Easter is all about.

Most people today, it's just about school holidays, Easter eggs, the Easter bunny, goodness knows what. But the truth is that even for many churchgoers, there's a lot of confusion, and even ignorance about what the death of Jesus really means.

The blame, I suppose, for that is at the door really of church leaders and preachers, isn't it?

Because very often, they're the ones who ignore what Jesus himself taught.

They prefer to give their own interpretation, what Easter means to them. You know, you get that sort of thing, don't you, in the media at this time of year.

Everything's about what Easter means to me. That's a reflection, I suppose, of our culture today, isn't it? It's about what everything means to me. It's all about what I feel, what I think about something.

[6 : 02] So I'm sure that this Easter, like many others, we'll have, I guess, TV pundits, radio phone-ins and so on. Somebody will phone up and the presenter will say, well, John, tell me what Easter means to you.

And there'll be a thousand different answers to that question, won't there, from John and from Jemima and the phone-ins, or from Professor Vague or Dr. Vane, who are sitting in the studio giving their expert opinions on these matters.

But it's little help to anybody, really, is it, to just have their ideas, their interpretations, their sentiments about what Easter is all about.

We're not going to waste any time on that kind of thing, because frankly, my interpretation or your interpretation is really rather irrelevant. What we need, if we want to understand Easter, is the explanation of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

And that's what we have in the Gospels. That's what we have throughout the New Testament, because our Lord Jesus taught his apostles and charged them to pass on his interpretation, once and for all, to the whole world, so that we wouldn't have to be vague, so we wouldn't be ignorant, so that people could have the truth about what Easter really means, with all the significance of that message, with all the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

[7 : 30] And John chapter 12, a portion of which we read earlier, is an excellent place to focus our minds. That's why we're going to do that for the next few weeks. For two reasons. First, because here Jesus explicitly speaks, if you look at verse 33, to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

He's speaking about what his death is all about, and what it means. And secondly, of course, it's all the more powerful, because he's explaining it very clearly in advance.

This is not some kind of post-hoc analysis. This is Jesus purposely telling us about the death that he knew was coming. And he's telling us why it was coming, and he's telling us exactly what it would achieve.

So I want us to begin our studies by looking today at Jesus' words here in this passage, and very especially focusing on what he says in verse 23, where Jesus tells us that the fruit of his death will be a great revelation of the glory of God.

The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. In other words, what he's saying is the cross is a great declaration. It declares the climactic revelation of God's glory to this world in Jesus Christ.

[8 : 57] The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. And look down to verse 28. For this purpose I have come to this hour.

Father, glorify your name. And the voice from heaven, from the Father, I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again. So Jesus himself is quite clear, isn't he?

His death is supremely about revealing God's unique glory, ultimately, in this world and to this world. And at last he's saying the hour is coming for that great climax of the story.

Now, we're here in chapter 12 of John's Gospel. We need to remind ourselves about the story thus far. It's been unfolding right from the beginning. And from the beginning, it's been a dramatic story unfolding with two very distinct strands that run through it.

Very often good stories are like that, aren't they? Great dramas. Think of Les Miserables. It's been so well known through the musical and so on. There's two great strands, isn't there, in that story that are bound together.

[10:14] There's the unfolding romance. There's the love story that's coming towards its climax. But there's also the tragedy that plays out as they end up on the barricades.

And those two stories come to the climax at the same time. It's the same with the film Titanic. You've got the climax of the love story and the climax of the disaster story, haven't you, when the ship hits the iceberg.

And all the way through these stories, there's hints of both sides of these things that come through. And in a similar way, John's Gospel is like that. There are two strands that are present right from the very beginning.

And that gives a real sense of tension, a sense of paradox as the story unfolds. And the first strand is that mention of the glory of God and waiting for the hour, which has not yet come, but is going to come when that glory will be revealed.

Way back in chapter 1 in John's prologue, John says, do you remember, we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father. We have seen his glory.

[11:22] So right from the beginning, you're reading through and thinking, well, when are we going to see this glory that you've seen, John? And always, as you read through the early chapters, the hour has not yet come.

So in chapter 2 in the wedding in Cana of Galilee, when Jesus' mother speaks to him and he says, my hour has not yet come. Chapter 5, he heals the man at the pool.

And he says, the hour is coming when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear shall live. It's coming, but it's not yet. Chapter 7, they tried to seize Jesus, the Jewish leaders.

But we're told no one laid a hand on him for his hour had not yet come. And we're always waiting. When is this hour of glory going to come and be revealed?

But then there's a second strand that is unfolding through John's story at the same time. And that is the sense of Jesus' impending death.

[12:25] So in chapter 5, when they were persecuting Jesus after that healing, that's a premonition of that. Jesus does a wonderful thing, and yet they persecute him.

Chapter 7, they try to seize him, but they can't because his hour has not yet come. Again, in chapter 10, after the feast, they try to seize him, but he slips through their hands.

And here, if you look in chapter 12 and verse 7, in the story of the anointing of Jesus' feet by Mary of Bethany, he says there in verse 7, she's doing it for the day of my burial.

So Jesus is constantly speaking prophetically about his coming death. He knows that the priests and the leaders want to kill him. Why is that?

Well, chapter 12, verse 11, because many Jews were believing in Jesus and following him.

[13:30] In fact, we're told there that they even tried to kill Lazarus, plotted to kill Lazarus, because Jesus had raised him from the dead, and they wanted to get rid of the evidence because of him.

Many people were following Jesus. They couldn't refute Jesus' miracles, and yet they still wouldn't believe in him, and they wanted to bury the evidence.

By the way, that's something worth noting for us, isn't it? Because there are people today in the Christian church who say, well, if only we had enough miracles, everyone would believe in Jesus.

Well, it didn't even work for Jesus himself, raising people from the dead irrefutably.

Irrefutably. And we're told people still didn't believe in him. But anyway, here we are in John chapter 12. And these two strands, the coming glory that were waiting to be revealed, and the coming death that Jesus keeps speaking about, these two things, which apparently were being complete opposition to each other, Jesus' death, and the day of his coming glory.

Now, actually, Jesus brings these two things together and shows that, in fact, these are one and the same thing. So it's not like the story of Titanic, where you've got two quite separate stories that come to a climax together.

[14:53] No, what John is saying to us, these are two sides of the same story. The coming glorifying of Jesus, and the coming death of Jesus.

So in verse 23, the hour has now come for Jesus to be glorified. Everything that we've been anticipating and waiting for, everything that Jesus has foretold and foreshadowed and all the signs

and the wonders that he's been doing, showing that he is the Lord of glory, come to earth. Now, that is coming to a climax. The hour has come. And notice when that happens. It happens after the climactic sign of all of Jesus' signs, raising Lazarus from the dead in chapter 11. Jesus brought a dead man to life right out of the tomb. And he declared, didn't he, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. And you read there at the end of John chapter 11 and verse 45, that many Jews therefore believed in him. And again here in chapter 12, verse 11, the chief priests wanted to kill Lazarus because on account of him, many Jews were believing in Jesus.

[16:16] The astonishing thing, isn't it, to think that somehow by killing Lazarus, they would stop that belief. I mean, Jesus has only just brought Lazarus back from the dead once already and they think that they can put an end to it by killing him.

It's quite extraordinary, isn't it? As if Jesus couldn't raise him from the dead all over again. But that's the kind of irrationality you get when people oppose the Lord Jesus Christ.

But it wasn't just Jews who were believing in Jesus. Look at verse 19 here, chapter 12. The whole world, they said, was going after him.

And that was what really enraged the Jewish leaders. Look at verse 20 here, we're explicitly told that Greeks, that is Gentiles, non-Jews, were seeking Jesus.

Yes, the whole world, John is telling us, is coming after Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles, seeking the truth, seeking the life that Jesus brings.

[17:16] they sensed, didn't they, what Peter had said back in chapter 6, that you, Jesus, you have the words of eternal life. Now you see what's happening here.

John is telling us, here is the promise of God to Abraham, way back in the beginning in the book of Genesis, that all the nations of the world would be blessed through your seed.

And here is that promise at last coming to pass. And now in this context of Jews and Gentiles following him, verse 23, Jesus says, this at last is the hour of my glory.

The hour has come. But here's the really astonishing thing. He equates the hour of his coming glory with his coming death.

Look at verse 24. It goes right on. Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

[18:22] And he goes on to speak with absolute clarity in this whole passage about the kind of death he was going to die. Isn't that astonishing? Well, it may seem to be, but not really, you see, if you understand the Old Testament properly is what John is telling us.

And the clue here is in the quotations that John gives us from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah. Look at verses 38 to 40. This is very significant. This is the second quotation that John makes in his gospel from the prophet Isaiah.

The first quotation is way back in chapter 1. Don't look it up. You know it. It's in chapter 1, verse 23. John the Baptist quotes Isaiah 40, saying, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

Make straight the way of the Lord, just as Isaiah spoke about. Remember how that quote goes on? If you know who handles Messiah, you will. Every valley shall be exalted.

Every mountain and hill made low. The crooked straight, the rough places plain. And, the chorus, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. And all flesh, all peoples, shall see it together.

[19:35] And John goes on to say, after that in his prologue, and we have seen his glory. John and the apostles.

And as we read on, we're waiting for him to share that glory with us, to show us the glory that at last will be revealed to all flesh, to the whole world. Not just to the Jews of Israel, but to all flesh.

And here now, in John chapter 12, we get John's second crucial quote from the prophet Isaiah. This time, look at verse 37. This time, it's not so obviously about glory, is it?

It's from Isaiah chapter 53. It's from the famous fourth servant song, which is all about the suffering of God's servant. And the one who by his suffering will bring salvation.

Actually, it's worth looking this up. Turn back with me to Isaiah 53, if you would, for a moment, because I want you to see this clearly. There's our quote in chapter 53, verse 1.

[20:41] Who has believed what they heard from us, says Isaiah. Well, what's so unbelievable for John's readers, for the Jews of Jesus' day who couldn't seem to stomach that message, who wanted to kill Jesus?

Why wouldn't they believe? Well, it's exactly this message of the prophet about God's servant who would be glorified. Look at chapter 52, verse 13.

That's the first verse, actually, of this servant song. My servant shall be high and lifted up, he says. Now, that's a phrase that's only used in the prophet Isaiah of the Lord God. It's famously used in chapter 6 when Isaiah the prophet himself has this vision of the Lord of glory high and lifted up on his throne.

And so the servant of the Lord will be high and lifted up, but he'll be glorified in a manner that is truly astonishing to human beings with our views and our understanding of glory.

[21 : 53] Why? We'll read on to chapter 53, verse 3. This servant of the Lord will be despised and rejected of men. He'll be a man of sorrows.

He'll be acquainted with grief. Look at verse 5. He'll be wounded for our transgressions. He'll be crushed for our iniquities. His chastisement will bring our peace.

Verse 7. He will be led like a lamb to the slaughter. And it's that. Look at the end of verse 10. That's how God's will is going to prosper in his hand.

When his soul makes an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring. He shall prolong his days. Out of the anguish of his soul, verse 11, he shall see and be satisfied.

By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous. For he shall bear their iniquities. You see, when the seed falls into the ground and dies, says Jesus, it will bear much fruit.

[23 : 11] Turn back now to John chapter 12. You see what John is telling us. You see what Jesus is saying. He's saying that the glory of the Lord that will be revealed to all flesh, Jew and Gentile alike, and the suffering and death of the Son of God on the cross is one and the same event.

And the glory of God is revealed, that it's declared to the world in God the Son himself being put to death on the cross, on a bloodstained gibbet, in the heat of a rubbish dump outside the city gate. I mean, the stench, the stink of refuse. This is your God, he's saying, high and lifted up in glory, but as the servant king on a cross.

And you see, he's saying it to the whole world, not just to the Jews, but to the Gentile nations also. That's the significance here of verse 20 that opens this whole section.

Greeks, Gentiles are coming and saying, we want to see Jesus. We want to see this true glory of God being revealed that he's promised, that we've heard about.

[24 : 35] That's the question, isn't it, that the seekers of the world are asking? They're looking for the glory of God. They're saying, well, show me, where is it? Where can it be found? Where can true divinity be found?

The extraordinary thing is that the religious establishment of Jesus, they dreaded the world finding Jesus and believing in him. In fact, they say it quite openly in the verses just before this, in chapter 11, verse 48.

They say, if we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him and the Romans will come and take away our place, that is our temple and our nation. If everyone follows Jesus, we will lose control of our institution and our religion because we'll be irrelevant.

And that's why they're furious. That's why they say in verse 19 here, look, the whole world has gone after him. Well, yes, says Jesus, because that is exactly what God promised.

Isaiah saw it. The glory of the Lord will be revealed to all flesh. And now, when the Gentiles representing all flesh, when they say, show us, Jesus says, yes, I will because the hour for revealing my glory to the world at last has come.

[25 : 56] And this is it. You'll see it in my death on the cross. And verse 41 says, plainly, Isaiah saw all these things.

He saw Jesus' true glory. He spoke about him and he spoke about that glory. And that's why he also foresaw that to many it would be a message they simply could not grasp, they could not stomach.

the glory of God the Son himself, God himself on a cross. Verse 39 says, they could not believe it because it was unacceptable to them that idea.

It's been unacceptable to many ever since. Paul found exactly the same when he was preaching in Corinth, 1 Corinthians chapter 1. Jews, he said, demand miraculous signs.

Greeks look for wisdom but we preach Christ crucified which is a stumbling block to Jews and its foolishness to Gentiles. But to those whom God has called both Jews and Gentiles, Christ the

power of God and the wisdom of God.

[27 : 18] Well, it's still exactly the same issue today, isn't it? Many, many look to the message of the cross with great embarrassment, with scorn. The cross of Jesus is the declaration of God's glory.

That's still a great, great stumbling block to many people, many religious people of all different kinds, to Jewish people themselves still. Cannot conceive of a Messiah who suffers, of a God who suffers.

Muslim people find that equally abhorrent. They can't even accept that a great prophet could be humiliated.

Far less God himself. It's unthinkable. And many of all sorts of other religions simply can't believe what they hear from us, just as Isaiah said about God's supreme glory being seen in the death of Jesus on the cross.

In shame, that's incomprehensible. It's still great foolishness, isn't it, to many people today, to many Greeks, many people of learning, people of culture, people of refinement.

[28 : 34] They can't stomach this talk, this crude, evangelical talk of a cross, of blood, of atonement, of God punishing sin on the cross of Christ.

No, no, no, no. There are many people who have been churchgoers all their lives, sung lots of hymns, said lots of prayers, been dutiful and faithful, believing, yes, they say, in God, believing in Jesus, but still who recoil at this whole idea of God punishing sin, being at the very heart of the gospel.

And that's because deep down, they believe that if we just do our best, if we try a bit harder, if we follow our religious code, then, well, eventually peace and justice and a better world will come to be. And that's because deep down, they really believe that there's real good in everyone and if we just focus on nurturing that, then everything will be fine.

But friends, that is a catastrophic misunderstanding of the human condition and a catastrophic misunderstanding of the Christian gospel. If you think that, then, as Anselm of Canterbury put it in his great work, *Cur Deus Homo*, *Why God Became Man*, he said, you have not yet considered the greatness of the weight of sin.

[30 : 08] In fact, for someone to profess Christianity and not understand the sheer weight of the problem of human sin, well, that really means that they're just swallowing the same ideological fantasy of liberal seculars today who believe that it's within our own exalted human abilities and technology and so on to triumph at last through progress, through science.

And ultimately, we will bring in utopia, prosperity, peace, all of these things. Well, how is that working out in the 21st century world, do you think?

the fantasy world that so many people in our western world have been inhabiting for the last 30 years or so, since the fall of the Berlin Wall, since the end of history was proclaimed by liberal philosophers like Francis Fukuyama and others.

The triumph of western liberal democracy. Well, it's not looking too rosy at the moment, is it? Well, it's interesting, I think, that the language of evil is now being bandied about quite liberally in society and even in the media.

We're very quick to recognize evil, it seems. But it's always evil out there, isn't it? It's those ones who are the evil ones. And we're very quick to recognize that it's those people who are my enemies, it's people who don't think like me, who don't believe what I believe.

[31 : 43] And so we've become very quick, haven't we, to demonize and to damn others, to cancel others. Those are the evil ones. We live in a world of stark goodies and baddies all the time.

But the evil is always out there when we talk about it. But evil in here, sin that weighs me down, that damns me for eternity.

no, no, no, no, no, no, we're not talking about that. Don't believe in that, don't want to have that. That's offensive, isn't it? To talk like that, to say that you need to repent, that you need to be converted.

These are ugly, wicked, reprehensible words now in our society. And you see, people who think like that, there is no greater foolishness to them than the cross of Jesus Christ.

What kind of God do you call this? What kind of message do you call this? This is infantile. This is primitive. We've outgrown all that kind of primitive religion.

[32 : 54] We can't have people being free to speak like that. That's offensive. That's offensive. And I'm afraid you'll find even those kind of things being said by those who profess to speak officially in the name of the institutional church.

But friends, you can't speak like that if you listen to what Jesus himself says about the kind of death that he was going to die. He says it is a death that declares and reveals the glory of God and does so once and for all for the whole wide world.

And he tells us that God glorifies himself in the cross. And as we'll see in our studies to come, that is because it is not a death that is sad and pointless and a tragedy.

It's not a death that's just a display of love and emotion. It's because, look at verse 24, it is a death that will bear much fruit.

It reveals God's glory to the whole world and it shares God's glorious salvation with the world. And this hour, the hour of the death of the Son of God on the cross is the hour when he is glorified ultimately and completely.

[34 : 20] in chapter 17, later on, Jesus prays with his disciples in the upper room, Now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world existed.

And he is not just speaking there about the resurrection to come after the death, no, he is speaking about the cross itself. In other words, God the Son is now doing in the flesh in history what he had been doing in eternity before all worlds.

Showing forth true glory, a self-giving glory, a self-emptying glory. And that is the true glory that is at the heart of the triune God.

If you read our Tron Daily Bible notes, you might recall a comment from a few days ago on the words in John 5, 19 and 20 where Jesus says, The Son does only what he sees the Father doing. And the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. And this was the comment.

[35 : 34] We must take it that what Christ did on the cross for all when he was crucified under Pontius Pilate was something he saw in the heart of the Father before all worlds.

The self-emptying of the Son expresses the self-emptying of the Father. And so you see the self-emptying, the self-giving, the self-sacrificing shame of the cross of Calvary is the greatest glory of the triune God revealed into our world.

There is no greater glory in the world or in eternity than to give up beauty and honor and position and wealth and worth and even life itself and to do that for another.

Indeed, to do it for the utterly unworthy. God and this is our God, you see, the servant king.

Although it's true, as that song says, that he entered our world his glory veiled, it's even more true, I think, and even more profoundly wonderful that in coming into our world as a man and going to the cross and dying for our sins as man, his glory was at last fully unveiled.

We have seen his glory, says John. The glory that he had with the Father before all worlds.

[37 : 09] Not despite his humiliation, but in his very humiliation, in his death and his suffering for human sins. The cross declares the ultimate revelation, the true glory of the one eternal triune God.

That's why I believe what Paul is saying in that quote from Philippians that Paul began the service with in Philippians chapter 2 is not that it was in spite of being in the form of God, but rather because he was in the form of God, the very embodiment of God himself.

Because he was that God, he made himself nothing, taking on the form of a servant, humbling himself even to death on a cross.

That is the true glory of God. That is what reveals his very essence, his being from eternity to eternity and in our world.

You see, what that tells us, friends, is that self-giving love is the glory that is at the very heart of the universe. that is the glory that is at the very heart of what it means to be divine.

[38 : 27] Not grasping power, but gracious giving glory. That's the glory that is in God.

That's the glory that comes from God. What a contrast. Look at verse 43. What a contrast to the glory that we cherish as human beings, that we seek, the glory that comes from man.

That so-called glory, you see, in our world is what enslaves people, exerts power over people. But God's glory, declared in Christ the beloved Son, serves us in his love for us.

It shows us, doesn't it, how terribly twisted, how terribly warped the human heart has become, our whole human world has become.

Because we have grasped, haven't we? We continually grasp for that kind of glory, that kind of different, tarnished glory. That's what explains our world.

[39 : 36] That's what explains all the wars, all the power struggles, all the strife, all the misery, seeking gain, seeking the glory that comes from man, from inside the heart of fallen, selfish, sinful human man.

That doesn't reap for us, does it, the peaceable fruit of righteousness? It's the world of ruin. Look around. But Jesus declares to us the way to true glory, the servant glory that is at the heart of time and eternity.

and which is the glory that he has redeemed his people for, so that we might once again image the glory of God, the true glory of God in this world, which is what we were created to be, the image of God in this world.

Because Jesus did know the greatness of the true weight of our sin, and in coming down to serve us and to save us from our sins, he revealed forever the weight, the true weight of his own glory, the glory shared in the heart of the Father and the Son before all worlds in eternity, but declared at last in our world once and for all on the cross at Calvary, where he became the propitiation for our sins, the cross in the hour when the Son of Man was glorified.

So friends, what Jesus says to us here, and what verse 28 reminds us is affirmed by the voice of God the Father from heaven itself for our benefit.

[41 : 26] What he is saying to us is this, don't ever minimize the cross of Jesus, and you're thinking about God, and you're telling people about God, and you're worship of God, because the death of Jesus, the cross of Jesus is the great declaration that reveals ultimately the true glory of the one true and eternal God.

Any other thinking about God at all that focuses on power, on celebration, on victory, or whatever it is, but doesn't exalt as absolutely central the cross of Jesus Christ.

That is not how Jesus wants us to understand his glory, true glory, God's glory. No, the glory of God, the greatness of God, the victory of God, is declared supremely in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A great declaration that reveals to us the true glory of the one true God. Well, it's something for us to think about this week, isn't it, as we might ponder what it means to be a truly great Christian, or to be those who show in our lives and share in our lives God's true glory, the glory of heaven seen on earth, not as the glory that comes from man.

Well, let's pray. look upon us, O Lord, and let all the darkness of our souls vanish before the beams of thy brightness.

[43 : 30] Fill us with holy love, and open to us the treasures of thy wisdom. All our desire is known to thee. Therefore perfect what thou hast begun, and what thy spirit has awakened us to ask in prayer.

we seek thy face. Turn thy face unto us, and show us thy glory. Then shall our longing be satisfied, and our peace shall be perfect.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.