

A Great Definition: The Road for the True People of God

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[0 : 00] Good, we're going to turn now to our reading this morning, and we are in John's Gospel, chapter 12. And so if you have a Bible with you, please turn to John chapter 12, and we are reading there from verse 20.

John chapter 12, and reading from verse 20 there.

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. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

[1 : 12] 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. Jesus answered, the voice has come for your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world.

[2 : 17] 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.

[3 : 20] So that the words spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled. 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 God bless to us his words. Well, do turn with me, if you would, to the passage that Paul read to us there in John's Gospel, chapter 12.

[4 : 32] As we approach Easter, we're spending some time focusing on the detail of this 12th chapter of John's Gospel because it's a remarkable chapter where we have Jesus himself explaining unequivocally what his coming death on the cross was all about, what its meaning is, what its significance really is.

Look at verse 33 there. He said all this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. But what fills this chapter is not actually a description of the process of crucifixion.

We know, of course, that it was a grim, a humiliating, agonizing form of death. It was designed, of course, to be exactly that. But it's significant, actually, that neither the Gospel writers nor, indeed, the epistles really focus anywhere on the physical brutality of it.

There's no detail of that at all. In fact, when we come to John, chapter 19, in verse 18, we find that the crucifixion is described just by one line.

We're told they came to a place called Golgotha, meaning the place of the skull, and it just says there they crucified him with two others. That's all we get of the physical detail.

[6 : 03] The gory details is definitely not the chief concern of the Gospel writers or the epistles. That's Hollywood's concern, of course. Some years ago, you remember Mel Gibson had that somewhat controversial film, *The Crucifixion*, and that was replete with the horrors, the pain, physical pain of crucifixion.

But the focus of the Bible's account is not on the pain of the cross, but on the purpose of the cross. And that's what this chapter here is entirely focused on, because that is what Jesus himself is determined that we should understand.

What his death on the cross declares to the whole world, and what it did for the whole world. And everything John records for us here, of Jesus' own words, just before he knew he was going to the cross, is all about the significance of that death on the cross.

Not the mere story of the cross, but the glory of the cross, fully explained for us. Last time we focused on verse 23, where Jesus announced very strikingly, the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

And Jesus' death was a great declaration. It was a revelation that declared the glory of God to this world. The climactic revelation, indeed, of God's glory in the world, in Jesus Christ.

[7 : 37] And it comes at the cross, where Jesus died. John says in the prologue of his gospel, remember, in chapter 1, speaking of himself and the apostles, we have seen his glory, as of the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

And what Jesus, you see, is saying here in chapter 12, is this, in the cross, is where that true glory is going to be seen. The glory of the God who created the whole universe will be revealed uniquely, ultimately, to the world in the cross of Jesus.

Not just to Christ's people, Israel, the Jews. Verse 20, that's the point here. We're particularly told the Greeks, the Gentile world also, wanted to see Jesus.

And so he's pointedly drawing our attention there in verse 20, to say that this is a revelation for the whole world, for all nations, for Jews and Gentiles together. That is, to all who seek the truth about God, who made this whole world, that truth is found in one place, in one place only.

And it's not found in some amalgam of truth that we put together from all the different religions of the world, nor is it found in any one of those human religions of this world.

[9 : 05] But it's found in one place alone, in the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, at the cross of Jesus Christ. That alone is where you will see revealed truly, and universally, and uniquely, the one true and living God.

And the glory of the one true and living God. And that means that this is the place where you can come to know truly the one God.

Where you can find the one living God. But you cannot do so without understanding the cross of Jesus Christ.

So if you want to understand the glory of God, the Maker, who made you, who made the whole world, and God the Judge, who will one day judge you, and me, and everyone, then you find the answer here, and only here, in the meaning of the cross of Jesus.

And that's why the Apostles of Christ are so clear, that the only true gospel is the gospel of the cross. We preach Christ crucified, said Paul.

[10 : 19] And yes, he said, it is a stumbling block to Jews, that gospel. And it's foolishness. Incomprehensible to Greeks, to Gentiles. But, it is this gospel of the cross, he says, that is the

power of God for salvation for all who believe.

Every single one. And that's because the cross is the climactic revelation of the glory of God to this world. But this morning, I want to focus on something that flows necessarily from that reality.

And it's Jesus' words here in verses 24 to 26, where he says that the cross is also the road to true glory. The cross is a great definition.

It defines the true road to glory in this world and in eternity for every true disciple of Jesus. What Jesus is saying is that the cross that declares the true glory of God also defines the true people of God.

Look at verse 24. Jesus speaks about his own death, about a death that must happen, he says, in order to deliver his people, to achieve a great salvation, to bear much fruit.

[11:40] Now we'll focus more on that next time. But notice that Jesus goes right on there in verses 25 and 26 to say that the manner and the nature of his death sets an irrevocable pattern that will define everyone who follows him, everyone who will become part of his true people.

Verse 26, If anyone serves me, he must follow me. Jesus' death sets a defining pattern for his people.

And it does so on two very clear levels as Jesus explains here. First, the pattern of Jesus' death shows us the way of true faith. The cross reveals the pattern and the definition of real saving faith. It shows us the only road to glorious salvation from God. But it also shows us the only road to glorifying service of God.

The pattern of Jesus' death shows us the way of true fruitfulness. The cross reveals the pattern and the definition of real serving fruitfulness.

[12:50] So let's look at these two things in terms. First of all, the cross is the defining pattern of salvation. It's the only road to true faith. Jesus clearly says here that to live with Jesus, we must embrace death with Jesus.

Verse 25, Whoever loves his life loses it. And whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

Notice that's universal. There are no exceptions, are there? whoever. Same in verse 26, if anyone serves me, if anyone serves me, you must follow me.

That's the only way for anyone and for everyone to follow Jesus to glory. What does he mean? Well, notice Jesus is talking about a very stark either-or choice here, a binary choice, to use that very unfashionable word today.

But Jesus isn't concerned, is he, with being fashionable. He's concerned always with being real, with being true. And the truth is, there is a binary reality that is absolutely clear all through this discourse.

[14:06] Verse 25, look, either you love the life of this world or you hate it. it's a stark and absolute reality, isn't it?

It's a stark way of saying that you see your life in this world as utterly insignificant in comparison with eternal life. Look down to verse 35.

Either, says Jesus, you continue to walk in darkness blindly, ignorantly, or verse 36, you believe in the light and you become sons of light.

Darkness or light. Or down in verse 46, either you believe in Jesus so as not to be condemned to remain in darkness or verse 48, you will be judged and condemned on the last day because you've refused to receive Jesus' words.

Either or. You can't get away, can you, from this binary choice all the way through Jesus' teaching. There's an either or that confronts anyone and everyone that confronts whoever would follow Jesus to glory.

[15:24] His death sets the defining pattern of what it means to find salvation, to find the way of light, to find the way of life that is eternal. And it's a pattern, says Jesus, of death to this world.

Giving up completely the life of this world and following Jesus through that death to an eternal life and to the true glory that is life everlasting with him in his presence, knowing him.

So he's saying you must die with Jesus in order to keep your life with him for eternity. whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

And there's no other way to true glory because that glory, according to Jesus, is defined by death to this world.

You see, the death of Jesus declares the meaning and the character of God's eternal glory to our world. And so also his cross defines the true glory of his people in the world.

[16 : 40] And the cross of Jesus, you see, shows us the vast, vast difference that there is between true glory, between the glory that comes from God, as verse 43 puts it, the vast difference between that and the glory that comes from man.

Because the glory of God is the glory of the eternal world. It's the glory of the eternal triune God. It's the glory that's shared between the Father and the Son and the Spirit in eternity and is displayed manifestly by them from eternity to eternity.

And that kind of glory is utterly, utterly different from fallen mankind's conception of glory. The glory that comes from man. That's a grasping glory.

A glory that grasps for gain, that reveres gain, that reveres exaltation in the eyes of human beings. But you see, the glory that comes from God is a giving glory.

A glory that reveres grace, that reveres self-humbling, that gives and gives even again. And that, you see, is the eternal glory of the truly divine, which was manifest supremely in this world in the Son of God, who being in the very form of God, that is, because that is who he truly was, did not count equality with God, something to be grasped hold of and keep grasping hold of, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, humbling himself, even, even to death on a cross, says Paul to the Philippians.

[18 : 38] You see, when Jesus prayed to the Father in the upper room a little later on in John chapter 17 and said, Father, glorify me with the glory that I had with you before the world existed, that was the nature of the true glory he's talking about.

That is the kingdom power, that's the gracious glory of the true God of heaven. That glory is real eternal glory, heavenly glory, divine glory.

The glory of the one who, remember, the apostle John sees later in his great revelation as the glory of the Lamb slain from the very foundation of the world.

The glory from everlasting to everlasting is the glory of the Lamb slain. And that is the very definition of unsurpassable glory.

Which is why in Revelation chapter 5, all of heaven bows down and worships the glory of the Lamb slain. But that glory, you see, in all its divine power, that glory came into this fallen, corrupted world in our Lord Jesus Christ to save us so that we might share in that eternal glory, his glory.

[20 : 11] Paul says in 2nd Timothy 1, verse 9, that he saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works, but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before ages began, before the foundation of the world, and which has now been manifested through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought light and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and teacher, says Paul, which is why I suffer as I do.

You see, the purpose and grace, the glory of God in Christ, in eternity, is now manifested in time and in history, in the cross of Christ. And that glory, that self-giving, that suffering glory of Jesus is shared with all of those who are truly his.

That's why I suffer as I do, says Paul, as will everyone who desires to live a godly life in Christ Jesus. If anyone serves me, says Jesus, they must follow me and share in my true glory, which is the glory of the lamb slain.

And that's the purpose of our calling in Jesus Christ. Paul says to Ephesians 1 also is an eternal calling which is now manifest in time and history through what Christ has done.

God chose us in Christ, he says, before the foundation of the world, that we should be blameless and holy before him. That's God's eternal plan.

[22 : 01] That's his plan, says Paul, for the fullness of time. That is, it's fulfilled through the death of Christ for us, so that all who follow Christ might be to the praise of his glory, just as the Lord Jesus is to the praise of the Father's glory.

See, the eternal purpose of God is that he might have a people forever who are defined also by the glory of his Son, by the glory of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

God. And so it's a pattern of his cross, his death, that defines the road for us to that true glory, which is what it means to find real salvation, to share in the glory of the lamb of God.

Whoever would follow Christ must seek that same glory as he. verse 26, you see, where I am, there will my servant be.

And Jesus says repeatedly, doesn't he, through his ministry, where he is, is the place of self-denial. And you must deny yourself and take up your cross and follow me where I am.

[23 : 20] Well, what does that really mean? Well, surely it means this. you can either love your own life in this world or you can love Jesus truly in this world.

But not both. It's either or. You may think that's far too black and white, that's far too extremist. But look at verse 25, you just can't get more extreme, can you, than love and hate, than life and death. And that's how Jesus puts it. And in reality, we know that that is the nub of the issue. And that's the very reason why so many people who are drawn to Jesus, who warm to the message of Jesus, why they end up holding back from Jesus.

And from real discipleship and from real commitment to following Jesus wholeheartedly. That might be true for some who are listening to me right now today.

Because we do love our life in this world. Why not? We say. I've got abilities, I've got ambitions. Why shouldn't I achieve what I want to achieve?

[24 : 34] Or I've got the wealth, I've got the time, I've earned it. I've got the right now, surely to indulge my interests, my hobbies. And I want to, and I jolly well will do. There's nothing wrong with that.

or I've got family and friends I want to live for and invest my life fully in. Nothing wrong with that. I want to put them first in my life.

That's all right. Plenty room for Jesus, plenty room for the church to fit in around all of that in my life. There's a place for it. Or we might say to ourselves, well, I've got a place in lots of friendships, a place in society, a place in my profession.

I've earned it. I don't want to jeopardize that by, well, by being seen as some sort of extremist or some sort of crank on the wrong side of history, outside polite society.

See, there's a thousand things, aren't there, in life and in this world that we love and that we cherish and we don't want to have to hate and maybe lose. Isn't that right?

[25 : 43] And so deep down we find ourselves saying to ourselves, well, look, I'm not a criminal, I'm not a violent person, not a bad person. What's wrong with doing what I want in life?

Why are you getting at me? I've got a life, you know. And Jesus says, well, yes, you have. You've got a life. But whoever loves his life loses it.

And if you really want life, true life, eternal life, the only life that counts, then all of that, your life has got to be handed over to me for safekeeping.

And there's no guarantees that I will give you all of it or indeed any of it back the way you want it. You've got to be prepared to bury it. You've got to be able to fill in the grave and leave it there.

Or you just can't have the life that I can give you and that only I can give you. That's why Jesus calls it faith, you see.

[26 : 54] Trust. Because you don't give away everything that you have unless you really trust the one who asks for it and says in return he'll give you something much more valuable and something infinitely more valuable unless you really trust him to be good to his word, do you?

Sometimes people have given over their life savings or their pension fund or whatever to someone or to some institution that's promised huge returns. And not only do they not get what's promised, they don't even get what they've invested back.

Sometimes they've lost a lot, haven't they, been scammed? So it's very understandable that none of us wants to give over our whole life and give it up in that sort of way.

But Jesus is no scammer. But he does ask exactly that of every single one who would follow him.

To give everything over to him. To hate your life. That is to turn your back totally on your way, your life, your ambitions and your goals and follow his way and his direction and his rule and his goal for your life.

[28 : 18] That's what repentance and faith means. Turning your back on your way and turning completely to Christ's way, being led by him to follow him.

And that's what stops many, many people who are attracted by the message of Jesus. Because, well in the end, they don't really trust him.

They don't really trust his promise to give you back a life that really is richer and better and more valuable infinitely, truly glorious. They don't trust him with their life.

That's what stopped the rich young ruler, wasn't it, in Mark chapter 10, the man who spoke to Jesus, a young man with money, with prospects, with position. And Jesus said to him, well what

you need to do is give all that up to me and you'll have far, far greater treasure in heaven. And we read of him that he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions. That is, he loved his life in this world. And he just didn't trust Jesus enough.

[29 : 31] When Jesus said you've got to put all of that to death and you've got to come to me to find real life, lasting life. But you see, Jesus' death sets the defining pattern for the only road there is to true glory.

he trusted his father utterly to lead him through death to the glory of eternal life. And he calls us to trust him in just the same way, to trust and obey.

But there is no other way to be truly happy in the Lord Jesus Christ and with Jesus. No other way and no other road to eternal life. I wonder if we really do trust Jesus with our life in that way.

Enough to hate it. Enough to turn our back on it for him. Willing for the cross to be the defining pattern for our road in life.

Because, friends, Jesus is honest. There will be a narrow road and a hard road. Matthew chapter 7, Jesus says, the gate is wide and the way is easy.

[30 : 40] that leads to destruction. That's the way of being accepted widely in life, isn't it? Able to be popular, to be an insider, not an outsider.

Not one of those narrow minded people. Not one of those people who find themselves on the wrong side of history in this world. But by stark contrast, Jesus says, narrow is the gate and hard is the way that leads to life.

That is a road that takes you firmly outside the camp in this world. Remember the words of the apostle in Hebrews chapter 13?

Listen to this, verse 12. Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. God. Therefore, let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach that he endured.

For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. The only road to salvation and life for the people of God leads outside the camp of popular opinion, polite society, of co-existence easily with this world, with public opinion, and very often with what is thought to be Christian opinion too.

[32 : 11] But that's where the real Jesus Christ is, outside the camp. That's where he was crucified. And his cross reveals the pattern of real saving faith.

We go to him outside the camp and we bear the reproach that he endured. The pattern of Christ's death shows us the way of true faith.

It's the defining pattern of our salvation. But Jesus goes on here to say more than that. He says it shows us the way of true fruitfulness.

And so secondly, you see, the cross is the defining pattern also for our service. It's the only road to true fruitfulness in service. Real faith that brings eternal life costs us everything in this life.

If it means losing our life through death to this world with Jesus, then real fruitfulness in the Christian life also, in the same way, costs us everything. Look at verse 24.

[33 : 19] Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. It's fruitless. But if it dies, says Jesus, then it bears much fruit.

And just so, he says in verse 26, if anyone serves me, he must follow me. because it's my life that defines true service.

It's my life and its pattern which directs all true fruitfulness. And if we would live for Jesus, then our lives of service also must be defined by his life of service.

And his life, his whole life from the very beginning was lived, wasn't it? Under the shadow of the looming cross. Real faithfulness, you see, for Jesus in life comes not from having exciting or dramatic spiritual experiences.

It comes not from having exceptional giftedness or having the latest methodologies or the best methodologies, the most exciting ways of doing church or whatever else it is that we might think.

[34 : 35] Now, real fruitfulness for Jesus comes only one way. It comes from sharing in his true glory of suffering and death unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies.

And death, friend, death can't be other than hard and costly and painful. That's Jesus' whole point, isn't it?

Ask a farmer, how do you get a good yield, a fruitful yield and a good harvest? And he'll tell you, well, a lot of hard slog, a lot of long days, a lot of planting and feeding and weeding and plowing and

spreading a lot of muck, a very slow, patient, costly work.

Ask any gardener, same thing. Not like these shows you watch on the TV where people come along with a lorry and give you a ready-made garden in a couple of days. That's not real life.

There's a lot of digging and manuring and planting, seeds and bulbs and cuttings, all of those things in the cold of winter, and the early spring. Battling against the elements, battling against the weeds, that's what gives you lovely flowers in the summertime.

[35 : 49] You see, in the same way Jesus is saying it's through daily struggling and battling our inward weaknesses and with the outward opposition that we often face in the real Christian life and with the ongoing attacks of our enemy the devil.

It's through that life of living death it often feels. It's through that that we bear fruit for the kingdom of Jesus. Jesus. That's exactly the language the apostle Paul uses so often.

1 Corinthians 15 he says, I die daily. I die daily. And in 2 Corinthians 4 he says, we are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake so that the life of Jesus may be manifest in our mortal flesh.

Death, he says, is at work in us so that life is at work in you so that I'm bearing fruit in my ministry in you. Death, bearing fruit in life.

And you need to know that, don't you? If you're a follower of Jesus. As a challenge, yes, it's the only road to real fruitfulness as a real Christian and as a true church.

[37 : 13] It'll be hard, it'll be costly, to be part of a church that's bearing fruit, real fruit for eternity. Costly not just to your pocket, costly also to your reputation, maybe to your job prospects, to your social circle, all sorts of things.

It's a challenge to us, isn't it, to be a Christian like that. But it's also a great encouragement because if you sometimes feel or if you often feel that it's hard it's killing me to follow Jesus at times.

That it's maybe marginalizing you from your friends, perhaps even your family. That you feel awkward, that you feel like an outsider a lot of the time. That you really do feel as though you're always on the wrong side, the wrong side of the culture, the wrong side of what society is approving, the wrong side of what the world is celebrating.

Well, if you feel that, then listen, that is not a sign of failure. That is not a sign that things are going wrong in your Christian life or in your church for that matter.

If we were failing, we wouldn't be struggling, we wouldn't be bothering with that, would we? We'd be acquiescing. But no, Jesus says that means you're on the true road.

[38 : 37] to fruitfulness in service in your life for him. That way of death, it's killing me. That's the defining pattern of all true Christian service.

It's when a seed dies, says Jesus, that it bears much fruit. And if anyone serves me, he says, they must follow me.

in the same pattern as my life, outside the camp, bearing the reproach of the real Jesus Christ, not an imaginary Jesus of our own making.

And that means for us to truly follow him, the pattern of our earthly life is going to mirror his. There just is no other way to fruitfulness for any Christian or for any church, for any mission.

But look, that path is the path, and it's the only path, that leads to the eternal weight of glory, where Jesus is. Verse 26, where I am, there my servant will be also.

[39 : 52] Now, yes, outside the camp with Jesus, but forever inside the Father's house. You see, if anyone serves me, my Father will honor him.

my Father will honor him. Isn't that wonderful to know? Losing everything with Jesus is gaining everything with Jesus.

It's keeping true life. It's keeping it forever and ever. And it's having forever and ever the honor of the Father.

If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. and it's also liberating, isn't it, when so often as we sing, Satan tempts us to despair.

Because, as Jesus says down here in verse 36, he wants us to become sons of light. Sons like Jesus, our elder brother, who is the light of life, who is the light of the world.

[40 : 59] Sons and daughters who pray like Jesus prayed. In verse 28, Father, glorify your name. And who wholeheartedly want God to answer, yes, I have, and I will glorify it again in you, in lives that do, like Jesus, die to this world, that do gladly lose all that matters most to the people of this world, so as to gladly receive the honor of the Father and to bear much fruit for him.

the pattern of Jesus' death shows us that way of true fruitfulness. It's the defining pattern for all true service.

Verse 27, Jesus prays not, Father, save me from this hour, this hour of death, but for this purpose I've come. and that for Jesus was the life that drew the whole world to him, wasn't it?

It was seen in him, that glorified God in his great salvation. And that same defining pattern is there always in the life of every true disciple who lives to glorify the Father, who lives to draw people to Jesus the Son.

It can't be any other way. Because it's the cross of Jesus that declares the true revelation of glory and that defines the true road to glory.

[42 : 36] The pattern of Jesus' death defines real saving faith. Whoever loves his life will lose it, but whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternity.

There's no other road to the glory of eternal life than to walk the way of death to this world with Jesus, serving him, seeking him, his way.

And the pattern of Jesus' death likewise defines real serving fruitfulness. Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone.

But if it dies, it bears much fruit. And if anyone serves me, he must follow me. And where I am, there my servant will be also.

There's no other road to the glory of fruitful service than to walk the road that Jesus walked, serving him his way. The cross, you see, defines the road to glory, to all glory, always.

[43 : 40] So will we walk that road with Jesus together, together, to serve his glory and to share his glory. That's the most important question, isn't it, for every one of us here today, every one of us listening.

And our task is to help one another. Glorify that road, seek that road, walk that road, all the days of our lives. us.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the eternal glory you had with the Son and the Holy Spirit before all worlds has been shown to us in our time, in our history, in the cross of the Lord Jesus, who defines the road to glory for every one of us also.

So help us, Lord, to be those who do not so love our lives in this world that we lose that which is truly life, but that we should be those who follow you, love you, and serve you, and so know the everlasting life and the honor of you, our heavenly Father.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.