**“Drawn To His Glory”**

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from our Crucified king of glory, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen. We may be at Palm Sunday, but another draw of glory is going on in our culture. It catches the eyes of many this month. Also known as “March Madness,” NCAA basketball provides plenty of excitement for people. Strangely enough, the origins of March Madness actually go back to Illinois high school teams during the times of World War II. As the IHSA websites notes, “The drama of March Madness provided a unifying force that brought the entire state together…”[[1]](#footnote-1) So it seems, a little madness in terms of basketball helped to deflect some the more fearful madness coming out of Germany.

Holy Week or the Passion of our Lord serves to be the unifying force for all times, places, and people. As the Church begins her procession, let us consider what St. John records about Jesus after His triumphant entry. He said at the temple, “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. **28** Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” **29** The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” **30** Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. **31** Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. **32** And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (John 12:27-32). Christ truly does draw all during this Holy Week to see the glory of salvation in Him.

This kind of glory we cannot see if it were not for God’s Word drawing us to Christ. The disciples and people saw the rightful picture of Jesus entering Jerusalem. Yet, it changed nothing of what Christ saw fully as God’s Son. His Word always confirmed what was coming, but He was also fully man. It meant no immunity to the reality of what would fall upon Him by the cross. To such sorrow over bearing the sin of the world, Jesus turned from human frailty to pray to His Father. The voice out of heaven was more than for Him. It was for the sake of the people to see that in the madness of His suffering and death. Christ would do what none other could.

God’s Word continues to speak so that we can be drawn to see Jesus. When life is calm and lively, we picture glory unhindered like that on Palm Sunday. Yet, heartache, suffering, disgrace, and other darkness cover up any straightforward answer for us in Christ. Only the Word confirms and gives to sinners what we can never see by our strength. Apart from God still working by His Word. Our thinking will turn to see devices and plans of man as the way for salvation. Our emotions will want to see comfort in idols that cater to the sinful-flesh. Christ by His cross cannot come into focus without God’s Word directing us to Him. “For the Lord will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants, when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free.”

This glory in Christ draws us to see judgment of the world that overcomes Satan. Their vision of victory was too small on Palm Sunday. They were hoping Him to be the king for Israel. A ruler to save only one nation and not all the nations. Jesus denied the temptations of Satan proving to be the New Adam. God was ready to judge the whole world now in His Son. This was more than the greatest moment in history. God was closing the gap created by our first parents long ago. It meant willfully giving the devil what seemed to be an advantage by the cross. Under weakness, suffering, and death God’s Son was secretly picking His fight to be the Passover Lamb for the whole world. The only way to remove Satan’s power is to judge every sinner that he held captive. Thankfully that judgment is what falls fully upon Jesus.

Drawn into the glory of Christ we see judgment able to set us free from the Devil. All the fighting and self-justifying today only stokes the fire. The law cannot save, but neither can we ignore what it says or rewrite it to make ourselves feel better. Only Jesus extinguishes all that stands against us. It is what no body considers sufficient or all that satisfying for life. “…He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” God knows there is no other hope, no other way of escape, and no other option on the table. Good Friday is how we get to Easter. The judgment of God must kill in order to make alive again. We have received this justice against our sin and death by baptism into Jesus. He severs Satan’s hold for all time. The repentant receive forgiveness. The lost He does seek to find. The fearful have Him as a sure foundation.

This glory of Christ forgets none drawing all to confess His cross. The crowd heard the promise that their king would be lifted up from the earth. Out of His death and resurrection, Jesus would draw all people to Himself. By the cross, everyone would face the tragedy of God’s Son at the hands of sinners. By the cross, everyone would see God’s sacrifice able to save. By the cross, everyone would receive God’s love willed for him or her in Christ. Yet, not all would receive this to be good news. Not all desired to see what God hid for them in the crucified king. St. John explains the reason for such reservation or disgust stating, “For they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God” (John 12:43).

Holy week is the heart and center of the Church for salvation rests alone in Jesus. He continues to make His triumphant entry unto the nations. Lifted up as Savior and Lord, He now draws any to Himself by His Word and Sacraments. The great humility and patients of God to save the least. Means we follow in this glory of His cross knowing what hides in our life. This madness is not in the fashion of men with sports, entertainment or other glories trying to deflect sin, death, and the Devil. Instead, Holy Week shows the madness of God finally crucified for us. This glory humbly goes with us all our days so that in suffering we receive a better Savior, in weakness we have a stronger Word, and in service we learn to see the One who serves us by His sacrifice. Christ truly does draw all to see the glory of salvation as He forgives sins, stomps on death, and silences the Devil proving His kingdom will never perish. Amen. Now the peace of God, which passes all understandings, be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

1. http://www.ihsa.org/SportsActivities/MarchMadnessExperience/MarchMadnessHistory.aspx [↑](#footnote-ref-1)