

**Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.**

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In our reading from Acts, a small band of Jesus-followers gathers on a mountain. Jesus has died. Jesus has risen. Now 40 days later, the apostles ask **when** will God restore; **when** will the world rejoice in God's eternal kingdom?

### **When will God show up?**

Like the apostles, we want God to take charge. **God should** overthrow the forces that bring so much misery to the world. **God should** create a kind world, where justice is normal, where we live in balance with nature, where all are included.

**God should** build a world where Jesus lives among us; all are well and the forces of good are in the lead. We want that world of Palm Sunday; Jesus riding in on a donkey, triumphant. Joy is everywhere when Jesus arrives in Jerusalem. Some friends of mine have 2 donkeys; when they are excited, the whole neighborhood knows. I bet that donkey our Savior rode was even louder than the crowds.

God will work in God's time, Jesus answers the apostles. Instead of focusing on God's power, Jesus turns the table. A power is coming, and it will be upon the apostles.

God's power will come without cheers from crowds or donkeys. God's power will arrive suddenly - out of thin air with a force like a violent wind. We'll celebrate the power of Pentecost next week, wearing red again just like Palm Sunday.

The color might be the same, but God's power shifts. Palm Sunday has a focus on Jesus, but now, after the cross, power will come upon the apostles and, through them, every follower of Jesus. **God's power** living within the apostles will not stay within them. Working through the apostles, the Holy Spirit carrying the message of Christ *will* travel throughout all time. Right up to this morning. Working through the apostles, the Holy Spirit carrying the message of Christ *will* travel to the ends of the earth, even to a remote outpost of Jesus followers in Pinole, California.

The people in today's gospel changed the course of human history. St. John gives us a total gathered around the table after the Last Supper. Judas has left; if I count correctly, that's 11 apostles and one Savior.

Jesus entrusts God's world changing message of universal love to 11 pretty ordinary, stumbling, faithful followers. Here's the truth; a tiny group of people, through the name of Jesus, began a movement that changed human history.

There are 5 chapters in St. John's gospel dedicated to the Last Supper. Only the first chapter, 13, is about the meal. Chapters 14, 15 and 16 are called the Farewell Discourses; Jesus instructs his followers about the glorious, rocky path ahead. Today's gospel is from chapter 17; the whole chapter is a prayer.

Jesus prays to God; for Jesus, for the apostles gathered around him, for all the followers of Jesus. Even the ones today in Pinole.

**The** word “glorify” is used often in John. In biblical terms, glory is behavior, either divine or human, that shows the individual as present, important or significant. When God is glorified by someone, they show God manifest in their actions and words. When God is glorified in John’s gospel, The Creator is revealed through miracles, the crucifixion and resurrection. Our passage today begins with Jesus acknowledging that his hour of glorification has come.

Jesus has no fear. By his overcoming death, Jesus reveals God.

The apostles on Mt. Olivet want glory; **where** will we see God restoring the world?

Instead of words, Jesus might have answered by leading the apostles to a quiet pool of water. There, on the water’s surface, they probably could see their reflections. We followers in Pinole have it easy; we can look in the mirror.

Jesus says “You - you are the glory”.

As followers of Jesus, we are woven into the world wide net of believers branching out from this small band of apostles. History documents how the world has been changed by those who glorified God with their lives. Justice, though slow by human lifespans, continues to spread. Voices from the margins were not heard when Jesus gathers the disciples around him after supper. Today, we almost take for granted that our leaders are not exclusively men of the same skin color.

We live, and often struggle, in a country that holds individual liberty, individual freedom, as the nation's highest goal. The powerful diversity that now is being recognized, slowly, began with one simple action.

Belief in Jesus.

For when we accept Jesus living, teaching and dying with humanity, we accept eternal life. We accept that we have the power to show God manifest in our actions and words.

Without fear of the challenges life brings us, and especially without fear of our death.

Our acceptance of Jesus is a shift of power. When will God show up?

Before his death, Jesus prays for God to live within the apostles just like God lives within Jesus. After the resurrection, Jesus tells the apostles, and the world, that God has answered his prayer!

By the power of the Holy Spirit, we know Jesus, we know God. Through our Savior's life, death and resurrection, we know God. Through each of the apostles, we know God. And now, today, this band of Jesus-followers in Pinole knows God.

We have eternal life.

We are glorious.

Amen

by Father Dave Rickert, on May 21, 2023 at Christ the Lord Church