

Lessons: Psalm 63; John 17; AC 2034

The Visible God

A sermon by the Rev. Thomas L. Kline

“That they may all be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us.”

The disciples were gathered together in the upper room, partaking of the Last Supper with the Lord. The Lord had just washed the disciples' feet. He spoke the words, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.” (John 14:1) Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father...” Then Jesus prayed for Himself: He lifted up His eyes to heaven and said: “Father, glorify Your son, that You Son also may glorify You...” (John 17:1) Doctrinally, these words describe the union of the Lord with the Divine. But then there is a special moment when the Lord prays for disciples. He prays that they may be conjoined with them, as He is conjoined with the Father.

We hear the words, “The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one even as We are one, I in them and You in Me. For I made known to them Your name, and I will make it known, that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them.” (John 17:21-23, 26)

The Lord, in the final moments before He would leave His disciples, prayed that they may be one, even as He and the Father are one, and that He would make known the name of the Father to them, and that the Father's love would be in them. In these last moments, the Lord focused His love on His disciples. We read in the Writings: “When the Lord speaks of the union of Himself with the Father He is at one and the same time speaking about His own conjunction with the human race since this was the reason for the union.” (AC 2034) The passage continues: “These verses show that in the union of Himself with His Father the Lord had conjunction of Himself with the human race in view...” (And this conjunction was through love.) (AC 2034)

Our message this morning: The glorification of His Human was not for Himself, but for the human race. The Lord took on and glorified the Divine Natural, so that He could have a new way of revealing Himself to people on earth, that He could appear immediately before us, visible as our Lord and God.

To say this in very simple terms: the Lord could not have gone off in some isolated place, apart from people on earth and glorified His human, this would have accomplished nothing. Rather, He glorified His human with and in relation to the human race, specifically His disciples. As the Lord glorified His human,

He simultaneously revealed more of the Divine life to His disciples; and this is the story of the Gospels.

Writings ask question, why did the Lord not reveal Himself to His disciples fully in the beginning of His ministry? (AC 2034) Why not just tell His disciples, at the very beginning that He was Jehovah God come on earth? Why the confusion of speaking of the Father as someone separate from Himself?

And we are given two reasons: First, we read, “If when the Lord was in the world they had been told that He was the Jehovah mentioned so many times in the Old Testament, they would not have accepted it because they would not have believed it.” (AC 2921) Had He just told His disciples at the beginning that He was Jehovah God, His disciples would have just left Him.

But a second reason, a very important reason: “There is the further reason: as regards the Human the Lord did not become Jehovah until He had in every respect united the Divine Essence to the Human Essence, and the Human Essence to the Divine Essence.” (AC 2921)

The Lord did not tell His disciples who He was at the beginning, because He, in actually, was not yet fully Divine. Had He told them at the beginning of His ministry that He was Jehovah, come to earth, it would not have been fully true. Only as He glorified His human did He reveal more of His Divine nature to them. The two processes were going on simultaneously: His own glorification and the revelation of who He was. The passage goes on to say this is why, only after the passion on the cross, when the Lord had fully glorified His human, could the disciples for the first time actually know and say the words, “My Lord and my God” (the statement made by the disciple Thomas).

We read, “This shows that in the union of His Human Essence with the Divine Essence the Lord had in view the conjunction of Himself with the human race, and that this was His end in view, and this His love.” (AC 2034) This is the why the Lord spoke the words, “When I have been lifted up I will draw all peoples to Myself.” (John 12:32) The very purpose of His glorification was to draw all people to Himself.

We read: “He taught the way of truth to the effect that everyone who believed in Him, that is, who loved Him, abided in His love.” (2034)

This is the meaning of the words of our text, ““That they may all be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us.”

The Lord did not glorify His human secretly, by Himself, but He did it visibly before the human race. And He did this so that there could be a new relationship between His divine life and the church on earth.

We read, “Once the Human had been made Divine, and the Divine made Human in the Lord, an influx of the Infinite, or the Supreme Divine, took place with man which could not possibly have manifested itself in any other way.” (AC 2034) We can now receive an influx of the Infinite, in a new way.

When we read the gospel stories, we see two things going on there: First, the glorification of the Lord’s human, the Lord Jesus gradually taking on the Divine and casting away the human from Mary. And second, at the same time, the revelation of that glorification to His disciples, a revelation that would effect the salvation of the human race. “As You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us.”

In the beginning of the Gospels, the disciples were allowed to see Jesus as an ordinary man, a rabbi, a master, a great teacher. They had no idea that He was God with them, the Word made flesh. Had they been told this, they would have left him. On another level, they could not yet know this because it was not yet true: He was not yet one with the Father. It was only in the second year that Jesus finally asked His disciples, “Who is it that men say I, the Son of Man, am?” (Matt. 16:13) The answer from the disciples: John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. And Jesus asked them further, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And the Lord allowed Peter’s statement to stand. He didn’t go on to say that He and the Father were one, for He had not yet come to that point in His own glorification.

Immediately following this He took Peter, James and John up on a high mountain and transfigured Himself before them. But He gave them the caution, “Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.” On that mountain, He showed them a glimpse of the Divine life that dwelt within, but they were not to speak of this vision until that time when it actually came to pass, when He had fully united His human to the Divine.

And so we come to the last supper, hours before the passion on the cross. Here, Jesus is alone with His disciples in the upper room. It here the Lord can finally speak openly to His disciples, not only because they are ready to hear and believe, but because the final parts of the glorification are actually taking place.

Jesus said to His disciples: “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also, and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.” (John 14) He said to them: “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.” And these are now words, not words of prophecy, not foretelling future events, but words of

reality: “I and My Father are one.” And so Thomas was able to say when He saw the Lord in His resurrection, “My Lord and My God.” (John 20:28)

The Lord glorified His human, not by Himself, but in the presence of His disciples. “As You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us.”

And there is a parallel in our lives today. As we read and study the Word, as we are taught by the Lord in the revelation of His second coming, we will realize His presence, growing with us. As we shun evils as sins against Him, we will realize His presence, growing and visible before us. As we work with Him in the process of our regeneration, we will find the Lord more and more closely conjoined to our lives, as the passage said, an influx of the Supreme Divine flowing in. The Lord came on earth to redeem and save the Human race. His prayer to the Father was, “That they may all be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us.” That we may now say, with a fullness of heart - “My Lord and my God.”

Readings:

AC 2034.

[2] When the Lord speaks of the union of Himself with the Father He is at one and the same time speaking about His own conjunction with the human race since this was the reason for the union, as is clear in John,

That they may all be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us.

These verses show that in the union of Himself with His Father the Lord had conjunction of Himself with the human race in view, and had this conjunction at heart because it constituted His love. Indeed all conjunction comes about through love, love being conjunction itself.

['Glorification' is used to mean union, as stated already. And the fact that in the union of Himself with the Father He had the conjunction of Himself with the human race in view is stated openly in the words, 'When I have been lifted up I will draw all men to Myself'.

[6] This being so let the matter be explained a little further. After everything celestial with people perished, that is, all love to God, so that as a result the will for what is good existed no longer, the human race was separated from the Divine. For nothing other than love effects conjunction, and when love has been reduced to nothing, disjunction has taken place. And when the latter has taken place destruction and annihilation

follow. At that point therefore a promise was given concerning the Lord's Coming into the world, who was to unite the Human to the Divine, and by means of this union was to join [to the Divine] the human race that was abiding in Himself through faith grounded in love and charity.

[7] From the time of that first promise given in Gen. 3:15, this kind of faith in the Lord who was to come was conjunctive. But once faith springing from love did not remain any more in the world the Lord came and united the Human Essence to the Divine Essence so that these were completely one, as He Himself states explicitly. At the same time He taught the way of truth to the effect that everyone who believed in Him, that is, who loved Him and what was His, and who abided in His love, which is a love directed towards the entire human race and so towards the neighbor, would be conjoined and thus saved.

[8] Once the Human had been made Divine, and the Divine made Human in the Lord, an influx of the Infinite, or the Supreme Divine, took place with man which could not possibly have manifested itself in any other way.