

Jesu Juva
Text: John 12:20-26

The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Jesus' glory is not like the world's glory. Jesus will be glorified on the cross - the death considered the most unglorious of all. Glorious is to die in battle. Glorious is to go out fighting to the end, never giving up, never surrendering. Like the Spartans. Like many today who receive medals of honor.

But that is exactly what the cross of Jesus is! It is Jesus fighting to the end. It is Jesus fighting for you. It is Jesus fighting the powers of sin and hell in a battle only one can win. And when Jesus dies, it is not defeat - it is His glory. He dies to be *the grain of wheat that falls into the ground*, only to sprout forth and grow and bear much fruit. He is the Seed promised to Abraham; the Seed from which has grown the Holy Christian Church, giving to Abraham those descendants *more numerous than the sand on the seashore and the stars in the sky* (Hebrews 11:12).

So the Greeks will see Jesus. Not in the private audience they were looking for. They will see Him on the cross. And that's better.

And it is better for us. If you're like me, you have a great many questions you'd like to sit and ask Jesus, just like those Greeks. But it is not the answer to our questions, but the wisdom and glory of the cross, that makes the difference in our lives. For, as Jesus said, *if anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be as well.* And where Jesus is is on the cross and in the tomb. If you want to save your life, you must lose it.

And that happens for you in Holy Baptism. For there you are joined to Jesus' cross and tomb, joined to Him in His death (Romans 6), that you rise with Him to a new life. A branch grafted onto the vine of Christ (John 15). Living in Him and He in you and bearing the fruits of good works, the fruits of the Spirit, the fruits of love for one another.

If you do not see those fruits in your life, if you are not laying down your life for others, if you are trying to save your life yourself, repent. You can't do it, and that's not where your life is. Your life is in Christ. And life lived in sin forgiven, death defeated, and hell overthrown. A life where you have nothing to fear. For your Saviour has fought for you and won. Your Saviour is glorious in battle. And He lives now to give that glory to you. And glorified in and with Christ, *the Father will honor you*, too.

In the Name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.