

*"For the Glory of God"; 1 Peter 4:12-14 & 5:6-11; John 17:1-11; May 4, 08; AUMC*

Just imagine you came back from a trip to a faraway place; you had a wonderful time there with loved ones and it was just nice refreshing yourself physically and mentally; there is no better experience than spending time with your family members, especially after a long time; now you are back home trying to remember things that happened and things that people said to you while you were with them. Well, out of many things, one thing that can be vividly remembered will be *the last words*.

The last words you heard from someone you dearly loved; the last words you heard from someone you cannot see any longer. These last words are important.

Those last words, good or bad, will never go away; you take them very seriously; you not only cherish them in your heart but also try to do your best in your power in carrying out what those words asked of you. Last words are important words.

Having said that, I remember what my mother did to me when I was leaving Korea last month. She couldn't talk because of the stroke she had; but she came out to the main entrance of the building and she stood there waiving to me. She did not want to go back into the building until I went out of her sight. I was walking toward the bus station and looked back toward her from several blocks away. But she was still there looking toward me.

That image is still with me.

Today we have the last words of Jesus. When we say "the last words of Jesus," we may think of his last words like: "Father, forgive them, they don't know what they are doing" -- or perhaps - "Father, into your hands I commend my Spirit."

Those are the last words that Jesus spoke on the cross. But the words we have from John 17 are the last words Jesus spoke when he was by himself praying to God right before his arrest.

One thing I see in this prayer is how clear he was in this crucial moment of his life; in this last prayer, Jesus knew what he wanted to say to God about himself and the people who were with him.

I did not read this book, but someone wrote about a book written by Lloyd Douglas. I want to share with you: This book is about a man named Robert Merrick. He was young. He was rich. He was drunk. Life was a game for him, a game of using people and tossing them aside. He didn't care what other people went through by what he did to them. Everyone in

town knew he was the worst person in the world.

Then it happens: He was out on his boat; the wind caught the sail and threw him into the water, unconscious. Luckily he was rescued, barely alive.

At the same moment, a world-famous doctor, dedicated, devoted, a savior of lives, drowned in a terrible accident just down the beach.

Young Merrick lied in the hospital. His eyes were closed, and everyone thought he was unconscious. Two nurses stood over him and one shook her head.

"What a tragedy..."she said. "A great doctor who saves lives is dead, and this fellow, who never did anything good for anybody, is saved! What a joke!"

Well, Merrick heard this, of course. He knew it was true. He was alive, but he never really lived a life. He was pulled from the water, but for no good reason.

In that moment, in that instant of judgment, this guy realized something; he made up his mind. He will go to university. He will get a degree in medicine. He will take the doctor's place. He will save lives and begin to truly live a life himself. (Emphasis, May-June, 2008)

This man was determined; he would not let anything keep him from doing what he wanted to do. No one in the world would stop him!

I think this is what I hear from Jesus' prayer. Jesus was clear about his mission; he knew why he came to the world. He knew what would happen to him in a few days but nothing would stop him from going where he was going.

What Jesus wanted was just one thing: the glory of God--Nothing else. He wanted to glorify God; he wanted to give honor and praise to the Father. Those were the last words he left for us.

He knew the time was coming; he knew the Roman soldiers were going to come and take him and even kill him. But he would not waver a bit.

Yesterday afternoon, my seminary class took a special trip to Oakland. We wanted to be a part of this worship service which was basically for the homeless people in downtown Oakland. When we arrived there, there were some homeless people, and some people who were once homeless and now work for other homeless people. After the service, there was a

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time of sharing.

It was just an amazing experience-- how these people were touched by the love of God. Everyone had been on the streets previously but they not only got off the street but they are now helping other people. Everyone said the same words, "Once they were lost; they are now found; and they want to glorify God through their lives."

Ricardo is the minister there: he said that 20 years ago he quit his job to do this; it has been 20 years for him to be paid but God provides. He sometimes spends nights on the street meeting and talking and caring for those who are lost.

Milton has a job at a bus company and he is one of those supporting this ministry. Milton said he gives more than half of his income to this ministry. I don't know how he does this.

We hear gloomy news; we complain about this and that all the time. But I realized again that there is hope.

People are giving their lives to God's glory and because of them many people turn their lives to God. The world is becoming a brighter and better place.

Jesus' last words were to glorify God's name.

He gave his life for that. I know there are people who are working very hard for the glory of God.

As a church we are also a part of this hope-building network in this neighborhood.

May God give us power to continue the work we do in this church.

Amen.