

# THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER

May 17, 2026

## GLORIFIED

*revealing the beauty of others*

by Drew Downs

I'll admit that the word doesn't do much for me. Not like it does for a lot of other people of faith. Perhaps I hear it like jargon, like a churchy word people throw out there to express devotion, and in a secondary sense, defense for their own largesse. But when Jesus speaks of God being glorified in him, and his being glorified in the disciples, I sense Jesus is highlighting a very different dynamic. That the beauty of God is revealed in the beautiful things people do.

And this is further pushed by Jesus's own relational rhetoric. That the work God gives is to be in relationship. So when he speaks of a relationship with God and the disciples, it is both command and description, like action and doctrine. In much the same way doing something good for someone else can feel good for oneself. This is how we can see God glorified in the work of loving them. Because God is in them and in us and shines through when we give it the chance to be seen.

# EASTER

2026

## WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way  
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

### Ascension Day

I try to have a playful relationship with the feast of the Ascension, which is one of the principal feasts of the church. Not irreverent, exactly, but joyful and honest. Because, of all the doctrinally significant aspects of the Jesus Event, this one is the hardest to square with the post-Enlightenment world. Which is to say that it remains essential and yet we also can't really comprehend it *physically*. As in how to make this happen with the laws of physics and our sense of the cosmos.

It persists then, feeling, at times, vestigial, like we know this thing was important to human development for centuries, but like, you can take it out of the body and not worry at all.

So why does it persist? And why is it included in the creeds and in every Eucharistic Prayer? Because it still has a purpose, even if we can't wrap our hands around the physical matters of it.

We believe in a full, bodily resurrection of Jesus who also full-bodied shuffled off this mortal coil. Which makes the *form* of the departure the least significant part of the story. And, in the same breath, we might honor the *figure* of departure, the motion of *ascent* as not only in the same vein as Elijah's departure, but of relation to a God whose presence "above" is just as emotionally important as it is symbolically so.

Perhaps then, we take Jesus's words these last few weeks in the gospel to heart in preparing his followers, not just for his departure, but for his *presence* with God and God's continued presence with them. "Above" and here.

With love,  
Drew+

# EASTER

2026

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## FOR SUNDAY

*Easter 7A*

May 17, 2026

### **Collect**

○ God, the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: Do not leave us comfortless, but send us your Holy Spirit to strengthen us, and exalt us to that place where our Savior Christ has gone before; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting.

**Amen.**

### **Reading**

*John 17:1-11*

Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

"I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one."

# EASTER

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## Reflection

We are nearing the end of the Farewell Discourse, when Jesus is preparing his disciples for his departure. And remember how he has washed their feet and spoken of the work to come and commanded them to love one another: that this is part of loving God. And then, as we heard last week, he spoke of his leaving them, but not leaving them orphaned, because God is on it! Another advocate (another, meaning like him) who is the Holy Spirit.

This isn't observable fact or intellectual pursuit, as if these things are the principle options, but to speak, instead about *relationship*. Much like the question isn't whether you or I exist, as if establishing that fact has any value at all! It is to say that you and I live in community with people who love us and enjoy our presence. This is the rubber hitting the road.

Consider what many hope are said at their funeral: phrases like "he taught me everything I know" and "I am who I am because of her." These aren't just nice things said, but attempts to express the impact of a relationship and just how much separation from them hurts. Relationship is the key to the Trinity.

As Jesus prays to God for the disciples, he is doing so from among them, to be witnessed by them. And his prior promise, to not leave them without parental connection, is built on the concurrent relationship we find in the Godhead and in our presence together.

At the heart of this, then is a dynamic for us, not when we are surrounded by friends, but when we feel lonely; when we look around and think nobody is there. Jesus is assuring us that we aren't. And, with the same sense of relationship, to know that, in reaching out to someone else, we are, in fact, reaching out to God.

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