

# THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER



October 17, 2021

## GLORY

*It is like losing the plot*

by Drew Downs

The hallmark of our faith is humility. Jesus teaches us to be humble, serve, and seek *first* the kingdom of God.

So what then do we do with fame, wealth, and glory?

Usually, we take them as opposite. Until we have them. Then we generally call it a "blessing *from* God" and seek to use it to *further* the kingdom.

If this sounds like the humans seeking to use the one ring in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, you're certainly on the right track.

This binary is a handy gauge for where we're at. This gauge doesn't solve the problem *at all*, but it tells us if we're in danger of losing the plot. Are we seeking glory? Do we desire to be remembered? Have we forgotten what it feels like to be overlooked like everyone else? If yes, turn it around.

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## WHAT'S GOING ON

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

-Marvin Gaye

This spring, St. Stephen's was invited to participate in the first cohort of a new initiative: *Church Buildings for Collaborative Partnerships*.



This initiative is a major collaboration between the Diocese of Indianapolis and our neighbors in the Diocese of Northern Indiana. Its purpose is to help prepare and equip every congregation to better understand the potential of our buildings.

When the bishop first described the genesis of the CBCP initiative, I was drawn to a phrase she used about it: she wanted us to stop seeing our buildings as an albatross holding us back.

I'm familiar with the idea in my own life: of not wanting another set of inherited china or a grandfather clock that we'd have to pay a small fortune to move. I also recognize this for the church. When our sense of obligation shifts from loving caretakers to burdened inheritors.

Our team, having now completed our third and final training, has a lot of work ahead of us. Next, I'll complete a one-on-one interview with program leaders and in December they will make a site visit to go over our profile with us and guide us in ways to help others see the potential of our space. Not in some perfect, idyllic glory. But something far more beautiful. A space made sacred by many generations. Each of whom have loved it and made it their own.

Drew+

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## FOR SUNDAY

*Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost*

October 17, 2021

### **Collect**

Almighty and everlasting God, in Christ you have revealed your glory among the nations: Preserve the works of your mercy, that your Church throughout the world may persevere with steadfast faith in the confession of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **Reading**

From Mark 10:35-45

"And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.""

### **Reflection**

James and John make a bold request. They want to be right next to Jesus when he gets to Jerusalem, to realize his "glory."

Do they really know what they are asking? They probably should. And I suspect they do. At least by half.

They know that what they are asking for is to participate in dying. That's the part I'm sure they get right.

But I also suspect they think they are doing something good and noble. Like they are characters in some movie like Braveheart. And here they are, in the midst of the

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rising action, approaching the climax, and they are planning to go into battle like true-believing warriors. This is their *glory*! Honestly, who can blame them for it? There is good reason those moments are so rousing in any story.

But that's not what is actually going to happen. And more importantly, *they should know this*. Jesus has literally told them this *three times*.

This story really has some Peter vibes to it. And I think that speaks volumes.

- They think they are doing the right thing.
- This is what makes sense.
- Jesus wants us to be bold and decisive.

And they *aren't* wrong about any of that. They are wrong about *purpose*. And they aren't listening to the teaching. Jesus isn't trying to win by war. Or conquering. Or any terrestrial means of establishing supremacy.

The kingdom isn't actually a kingdom.

Jesus tries to get us to see things the way he sees them. He's flipped himself upside down and he's trying to get his disciples to join him - to see things as he sees them.

Greatness and glory are not methods for establishing God's dream for us.

Like the disciples, we often treat them as necessary. Or perhaps shortcuts to achieving our goal. But Jesus considers these paths to power as *obstacles* to God's dream.

Instead he offers service and sacrifice. A path *to* love walked *by* loving.

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