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The Communion of Saints III (the Glory in the Wound)

John 17

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In John 17, Jesus prays for His small group and us—the Church:

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee, since thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him.

“And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. I glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now, Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made. I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them to me, and they have kept thy word. . . .

“Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth. As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth. I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one”

This is our third week preaching from John 17. Three weeks ago, we preached that the Church is God’s dream and God’s creation. Two weeks ago, we preached that the Church is one as God is one: many diverse persons and one substance. Nice idea, huh.

Jean Paul Sartre, the French philosopher, wrote, “Hell is other people.” In his play “No Exit,” Hell is a trinity of persons: three persons locked in one room with no exit. Each person has no eyelids, so none can hide their differences and shame.

Sometimes a church or small group
feels more like Hell than Heaven.

When I was a teenager at the church youth group, I desperately wanted to be funny. But there was this guy named Mark whose funniness was epic. Compared to Mark, I was a bore.

As a kid, I was a klutz. The only basket I ever scored in junior high gym class was for the other team. You know what I want? I want everyone in this church to stink at basketball!

I thought about being a doctor, but I didn't want to work that hard, and I didn't think I could handle the stress. Let me say, you doctors kind of bug me.

Some of my friends became missionaries to third world countries. I've felt shame around them and wanted to hide, not because they shamed me but because I was jealous of their sacrifice.

In college, I was totally intimidated by Campus Crusaders. On a Campus Crusade retreat, my friend and I stole the Advance Crusader notebooks . . . just to be *that spiritual*. It was strange: a lust for them and hatred of them all at once.

While in seminary, I had a friend who was an evangelist. It was weird . . . like a gift . . . he would talk, and people would convert! I wanted to be like him. People would subtly point out, "Hey, Peter, Andy's a better evangelist than you." That cut me, and I hated the wound.

So when my friend failed at evangelism, I had cause to rejoice . . . rejoice at people not hearing the Gospel and trapped in Hell. Oh wretched man that I am!

Sartre wrote, "Hell is other people."

Well, perhaps more than all my dreams of glory: to be funny, a jock, a doctor, a missionary, an evangelist, as spiritual as a top level Campus Crusader . . . more than all the other dreams of glory, I wanted to hear God's voice — not just as *every sheep* hears His voice, but "words of knowledge" and "visions" (like a prophet). I've carried a lot of shame that I haven't had them. And in recent years, my wife *has*, and they're glorious.

Recently I was complaining to God about this. (I call it prayer.) I said in my heart, "God, all my life I've wanted to see visions, and I haven't seen one, lousy vision! And Susan sees visions. God, she hasn't, like, read her Bible for a week, and then boom! She gets a vision. How come *she* gets visions and *I* don't?"

And I believe God answered me (not in words or visions, but in a thought in my mind and heart). "How come Susan has visions and I don't?" I asked. Answer: "Peter, for the same reason she has breasts and a uterus and you don't . . . Would you like them?" "No! . . . I mean yes! I mean . . . no! but yes!"

Now, some of you are freaking out. Please don't. I'm not saying this to be cute or funny or cutting edge. I'm saying it because it's truth and life.

"In the beginning . . . God said, 'Let us make man in our image' [*Us!* Who's He talking to?] So God created man in His own image . . . male and female He created them." From Adam's wounded side, He cuts and fashions Eve, a different person. But "the two shall become one flesh." They were both "naked and not ashamed."

Adam and Eve complete each other in God's image. Whether you're married, divorced, single, or confused about your sexuality, it's all a story about *you*. For in fulfillment or longing (somewhere deep inside), we all desire that communion. *That* communion is about God and you.

Adam and Eve connect at the point of their incompleteness. They are joined as if at the wound where they were cut. They are joined in a covenant of delight, and their communion bears life.

So I said, "How come Susan has visions and I don't?" Answer: "The same reason she has breasts and a uterus and you don't." I don't . . . yet I *do*. We are two persons and one flesh. So I have those feminine things as a gift in a covenant of grace. Therefore, the greatest gift is *not* being gifted, for then I can receive those gifts as gifts of love in ecstasy that bears life. And all that is merely a picture of something greater . . .

"God, how come I'm not the very funniest jock doctor missionary evangelist as spiritual as a top level Campus Crusader?" Answer: "Because, Peter, you're part of my Church . . . and so you're *not*, yet you *are*. Look again at your small group . . ."

- Mark and Dee Dee Reinke are in my small group. Mark is the epic funny man from 1979. Dee Dee is a saint because she stays married to him. I'm beginning to learn that the greatest gift is laughing *at* Mark (or with Mark) rather than trying to *be* Mark.
- Bill Rader is in my small group. Bill played basketball in college and is the chaplain for the Broncos and the Rockies. He could be hanging out with Jake Plummer, but he likes being with me. Bill and Mary were both on Campus Crusade staff . . . and didn't *have* to steal the Advanced Crusader notebooks!
- Alan Parsons is my friend from elementary school. He served in the Peace Corp alone in Lesotho, Africa, right out of college. He and his wife Jennifer were then missionaries in Costa Rica. Of course, they're missionaries wherever they go.
- Andrew Trawick is like my brother, and an evangelist. His wife Ann is like my sister, and she's a doctor. When people subtly insinuate, "Hey, Peter, Andrew's a better evangelist than you," I'm learning to answer with my heart: "No, he's not. Andrew's not better than me; he *is* me." We are two persons and one substance. So when he leads thousands in a prayer of salvation, I can rejoice at what we did through the part of our body—*my* body—named Andrew.

You see, I am the ultimate funny jock doctor missionary evangelist as spiritual as a top level Campus Crusader! I am the body of Christ . . . and I have visions.

Three weeks ago, when we began preaching John 17, toward the end of the sermon someone very close to me, who I want to have visions more than me, saw a vision. She saw people getting up in church and coming forward for communion. She said that as they walked forward, there were these "cutter things" that would cut people. She didn't know what they were, but as people came for Christ's body and blood, the cutters would cut off limbs, heads, or appendages.

But as the people hobbled around at communion, they began to bump into each other and then fuse together. For instance, if someone didn't have an arm, they would join with someone who did. They'd fuse together at the point of the wound.

She said, "I wasn't frightened, but it was really cool, for in the end, they'd all formed one, huge body, and nothing could hurt it." Jesus said, "I will build my church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."

But now, that may not sound like your small group. And just because we're different, cut, and wounded doesn't mean we'll join as one. We still might be in Sartre's Hell: many persons and no substance.

Do you remember the very first thing Adam and Eve do, having fallen?

- They cover themselves, that is, they cover the wound—the cut.
- They cover the point at which they are completed in the other.
- They cover the point at which they're bound in communion, bearing life.

They lust for each other, yet they hate each other. They're imprisoned in shame, and they're no longer really in Paradise. They're walking into Hell, and their differences no longer feel like blessings but a *curse*. And there is no exit.

Of course, that's a picture of something else. For when God comes walking and calling to the man, "Adam, where are you?" Adam is hiding in the trees, his new knowledge of good and evil. He's hiding in the law, trying to justify himself: that is, hide the wound . . . hide himself with himself . . . more of self. *No exit*: the curse.

Sometimes church or small group can feel like a curse. And shared strength and weakness is no longer a blessing but a curse: not the ecstasy of surrender, but . . . rape.

Have you ever been in a small group where people share their strength but glory in their strength? So that they use their strength to imprison your strength with shame? In Star Trek lingo, they try to "assimilate you into their Borg" — "Resist-ance is futile. Your strength will be my strength. You will be my satellite, my franchise, my ministry, my project." It's condescending strength . . . arrogant strength.

Perhaps they capture your strength, perhaps they capture your weakness, so they can feel better about their own strength. But they glory in their strength. Sometimes we call these groups accountability groups or discipleship groups. Yet when we glory in our strength, though it looks like church, it feels like Hell.

Have you ever been in a small group where people share their weakness but *glory* in their weakness? So that they use their weakness to imprison you with shame? One person like that can enslave a whole group. And when a whole group is like that, well . . . when you go around the circle sharing or praying, each person competes for having the *worst week* and the *worst life* . . .

complain most so they can get the most sympathy and capture the most strength. They glory in their weakness . . . they “glory in their shame” (in Paul’s words).

It’s like they sin on purpose that grace would abound, but they haven’t even *seen* their sin or believed in grace. Sometimes we call those groups support groups or affirmation groups. Yet when we glory in our weakness, though it looks like church, it feels like Hell.

We share, use, and manipulate, but don’t surrender. We try to get glory from people rather than surrender to glory that is God’s. We use our differences like weapons in a war—weapons that bear death—rather than like gifts in a marriage—ecstasy that bears life.

Our differences are no longer blessing but curse.

So Adam and Eve hide their differences, their wound, their weakness, their incompleteness, in shame. They hide the place where they’ve been cut.

This person who had the vision didn’t know what the cutters were. Well . . .

1. First, we’re cut by creation at the Father’s hand (different by design): Adam, Eve, Peter, Susan, Andrew, Alan, Bill . . .
2. But then, secondly, we’re cut at the Fall and cut by the curse. We’re cut by sin and evil spirits. God “subjected the world to futility,” yet God bears the curse in Jesus.
3. Well, the day He spoke the curse, God drove Adam and Eve from the Garden and placed a flaming sword at the entrance to guard the way to the tree of life. If we are to ever live, perhaps we must be *cut* by that flaming sword. Third, we’re cut by the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

We’re cut . . . creation, fall, redemption . . . Father, Son, Spirit . . . but how are we made one?

Jesus prayed, “Father, glorify your son, that your son also may glorify you . . . I have manifested your name to the men whom you have given me . . . The glory which you gave me I have given them that they may be one just as we are one.”

He says that in order to make them one, He’s given them glory. We sing, “Open the eyes of my heart, Lord . . . to see you high and lifted up, shining in the light of your glory . . .” When we sing that, what do you picture? A shiny, floating Jesus hovering in space?

What is this glory? Because none of the disciples are shining and floating. In fact, they’ll all abandon Him. But they have His glory. There is a glory Jesus had before the world began (vs. 5), yet there is a glory the Father gave Him that He’s given His disciples.

What is the glory?

In Exodus 33 (which is after the world began), Moses asks God to show him His glory. And God says, “I will make my goodness pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name. But you may only see my backside and not my face.”

So God hides Moses in the cleft of the rock, His glory passes, and He proclaims His name saying, “Yahweh, Yahweh, I Am, I Am, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished.”

How confusing is that? It’s like the glory is full of grace . . . but also truth.

Well, this is only the backside of glory, not the face of glory. So when the pillar and cloud moved through the Red Sea, when the “sekina kabod” (“indwelling glory”) filled the temple, all of that was only the backside of glory.

So God proclaimed His name — the Backside of Glory. Jesus said He manifested God’s name. John writes, “The word became flesh and dwelt [“shekina” in Hebrew] among us full of grace and truth: we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only son from the Father.” Glory that is grace and truth, glory that is thorough forgiveness, yet truth that pays for sin — atonement.

In John 12, Jesus says, “The hour has come for the son to be glorified,” and He talks about death. Then He prays, “Father, glorify thy name.” A voice booms from Heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” Jesus says, “Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”

The Jews believed that the glory would be manifest in the last days, saving Israel and drawing the nations to Himself. Jesus said, “When I am lifted up from the earth . . .” And John adds, “He said this to show by what death He was to die” (lifted on a cross).

[Singing] “To see you high and lifted up, shining in the light of your glory, pour out your power and love, as we sing holy, holy, holy.”

- The cross of Christ is “the power of God unto salvation.”
- “In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us, and gave His own Son as the atoning sacrifice for our sins.”
- “Holy, holy, holy” . . . Look who dwells on the throne and the Mercy Seat in the temple! A lamb, as if He had been slain: Jesus, “Shekina Glory,” holy, holy, holy.
- “God has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (II Corinthians 4:6).

Oh, we clamor and moan and complain and try to bring down the glory . . . signs and wonders to part the sea . . . glory glowing in the temple . . . and all we’re doing is clamoring for the backside of Jesus . . . while Jesus Himself stares us naked in the face. But we don’t see Him, because the god of this age has blinded our eyes. And if we do see Him, we die.

We die . . . strength dies, weakness dies, self dies . . . and then we live.

Jean Paul Sartre, Jesus is the door: the exit door from Hell to Heaven. If Hell is other people, Heaven is other people and one substance.

Jesus prays, “And the glory which you gave me I have given them.” What had He just given them? He’d just given them His body broken and His blood shed. He surrendered to them His strength, the sacrifice of love. It’s the *opposite* of this world, and only God can do it, because God *is it*. God is love.

A. — In worship last week in North Carolina, the worship leader said, “Minister to Jesus in your worship.” I thought, “How? What does Jesus need?” Then I thought of Jesus as He was in a dream my friend had. She had been horribly beaten, molested, and abused, but in her dream, she saw Jesus come and wrap her in His robes and then take her place. As she watched, the abusers did everything to Him they had done to her.

So while I was worshipping, I thought of that Jesus: beaten, molested, and abused. I pictured Him lying in my arms weeping, just like my friend had done as she confessed her pain and shame. Then I realized that when I loved her with my strength, I loved Him. But that’s not condescending strength. How could I glory in my strength as I held the weak, suffering body of my Lord in my arms? I surrender my strength as a sacrifice of praise. And it wasn’t really my strength. Who made my arms? The Father gives me strength.

In that moment, holding my friend, the Father was glorifying the Son through me. The Father was ministering to the Son through me.

So Jesus surrendered His strength, and . . .

B. — At the ninth hour of the following day, as He hung naked, nailed to the tree, Jesus surrendered His weakness. (I should say *my* weakness.) He cried, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” I believe Jesus was in Hell — our Hell.

Have you ever surrendered weakness . . . *real* weakness . . . *sin*? Not just shared it, used it, or tried to cover it with words, religion, or law? Have you ever surrendered that wound, naked to the eyes of God? I think I’ve tasted it two or three times in my life. Once I was pinned to the floor by a supernatural power. You see, I don’t think *I* can do it on my own.

When it has happened, I see my sin—my self—a bit. And I can’t kill self with self, I can’t exit self with self; I can only surrender self, and that, not by myself, as I say, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” But my self isn’t saying it. I’m already dead.

“Adam, in the day you eat of it, you will die.” So God walks in the Garden in the cool of the day calling, “Adam, where are you?” God knows Adam is hiding. He’s dead with no exit. Paul writes that Jesus is the last Adam, the uttermost Adam, the “Eschatos” Adam. So 2000 years ago God went walking. I believe He heard the ultimate Adam calling from Hell, “My God, why have you forsaken me?” The Father called back, “Adam, where are you?” And from the depths of Hell, not having sinned but becoming sin for us, becoming a curse for us, feeling and bearing all your sin, self, and shame, He did not hide in the tree, but was nailed naked to the tree. The ultimate Adam,

only begotten Son, answers the Father's question, crying in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." It's what the good Father most longs to hear. It's called *faith*.

Jesus surrenders weakness and begins to bear life as a Roman centurion says, "Surely this was the Son of God!"

I believe the greatest gift you can give to your small group is really given through you by Jesus to His Father. It's confession, and it happens by the power of the very Spirit Jesus surrendered on the cross. It happens when you're cut by the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, on your way to the tree of life.

- A. God surrenders our strength, and
- B. God surrenders our weakness.

- B. We confess by His power, and
- A. We give grace by His power.

So you confess your sin and die a public death. Then someone in your group sees the glory, sees the body of Christ. If you are that person, then you are a priest—a conduit—for another. What you see and hear is the Son calling to the Father from Hell. You hear the Son glorifying the Father. You hear it or someone in you hears it as you say, "In the name of Jesus, you're forgiven" . . . which is the Father saying, "I give you my body and my blood, my son, my sacrifice, my deepest wound, Jesus from the bosom of the Father. Now rise from the dead in the power of my Spirit. You are the body of my Son, and the Father glorifies the Son."

They say only God can forgive sins and only God can raise the dead. Maybe only God can love, for God is love. Only God can love God, and to God be the glory, for "from Him and to Him and through Him are all things." Yet *we* confess, *we* forgive, *we* love, and He's given us glory.

So in us the Son glorifies the Father through the power of His Spirit. And in us the Father glorifies the Son through the power of His Spirit.

In us, God loves God!

You see, Church, we are being caught up within the furious, relentless, sacrificial love affair that is God. So we are becoming one as He is one. We have been cut, and we are joined at the wound. Dare I say, *God* is cut . . . and joined at the wound.

- I believe the Father is cut creating us. It's the wound of Jesus from the bosom of the Father.
- I know the Son was cut as He bore our curse on the cross.
- I believe the Spirit *is* cut as He inhabits dead sinners that they might be cut by the Word—Jesus.

Three persons and one wound.

Last night Susan had a picture of the Godhead, in worship: Father, Son, Spirit, sitting in a row. They were on thrones with their arms on the armrests. She saw that their hands were fused together. From the top hand to the bottom hand, there was *one wound*. I think if we saw that truly

from above, it would be a triangle. They would be holding hands, and the hands would be nailed together — one wound. Inside the triangle would be . . . *us*.

I think God is one at the wound, and the wound is love. Then the only place safe from the wound of love is Hell. The only place safe from the glory of God is Hell. The glory is a Trinity: three persons and one substance. And Heaven is in God.

I'm not sure where Hell is, but if it's three persons, it has no substance, for those in Hell believe no love. Maybe Hell is, like, forever nowhere and nothing. Maybe the glory of God—the fire that is God—consumes them.

Well, all of that can make your head pop. So let me end with this:

Three weeks ago, someone else had a vision. And I think it's the same vision. Toward the end of the sermon, my friend prayed, "God, what's your dream?" And right before everyone did come up for communion, he had a vision of everyone coming up for communion. (Remember, we *are* God's dream—His Church.)

After each person took the bread and the wine, they would congregate in groups in what he said seemed to be a "very structured way." Over time, the groups grew together to form a body . . . actually, Jesus' body. And even more, he said each person was climbing onto the cross and taking their place in the body of Jesus on the cross.

Like . . . Mark and Dee Dee, Andrew and Ann, Alan and Jennifer, Bill and Mary, Susan and Peter . . . Many persons and one substance, one glory. The ultimate funny jock doctor missionary evangelist Campus Crusader. And more than that, the ultimate Adam's ultimate Bride. She not only sees visions; she *is* a vision—God's vision—God's dream—the Church.

So on the night He prayed that prayer, He took bread, and having given thanks He broke it saying, "This is my body which is broken for you. Take and eat. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way after supper, He took the cup and said, "This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood, shed for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you, in remembrance of me."

[Singing] "High and lifted up, shining in the light of your glory, pour out your power and love, as we sing holy, holy, holy . . ."

And now may the eyes of your heart be enlightened.
May He heal you of the evil blindness.
And may you see His glory, believing His name.

If you are beginning to see His glory, to feel like you're climbing up and taking your place on the cross, have courage and hope. For what is sown in weakness is raised in power. And what is

sown in His dishonor is raised in glory. I really believe that that glory may even be the glory He had with the Father before the world was.

John sees the New Jerusalem, the Bride coming down, and she has the glory of God. And what is this whole world about? I think the Lord Jesus may be saying, “Church, I don’t want you to only see my backside. You’re my Bride! I’m showing you my face.” We have seen the glory of God shining in the face of Christ.

Years ago Jimmy Durante was asked to be a part of a show for World War II veterans. He told them his schedule was very busy and he could afford only a few minutes, but if they wouldn’t mind his doing one short monologue and immediately leaving for his next appointment, he would come. Of course, the shows’ director agreed happily.

But when Jimmy got on stage, something interesting happened. He went through the short monologue and then stayed. The applause grew louder and louder, and he kept staying. Pretty soon, he had been on fifteen, twenty, then thirty minutes. Finally, he took a last bow and left the stage. Backstage someone stopped him and said, “I thought you had to go after a few minutes. What happened?”

Jimmy answered, “I did have to go, but I can show you the reason I stayed. You can see for yourself if you’ll look on the front row.” In the front row were two men, each of whom had lost an arm in the war. One had lost his right arm and the other had lost his left. Together, they were able to clap, and that’s exactly what they were doing, loudly and cheerfully.

That’s *you* . . . glorifying God. You’re not just wounded soldiers; you’re the Bride. You stand at the foot of the cross, and you clap . . . because you realize: “You love me! Yes, you love me!”

In Jesus’ name, believe the Gospel. Amen.

Further Reading

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”

John 17:20-23

Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.” And the LORD said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.” . . . And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.”

Exodus 33:18-20, 34:6-7

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

John 1:14

And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If any one serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also; if any one serves me, the Father will honor him. Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify thy name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The crowd standing by heard it and said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." He said this to show by what death he was to die. . . . When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and in him God is glorified; if God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

John 12:23-33, 13:31-35

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God. For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

II Corinthians 4:3-6

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

II Corinthians 3:18

Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. . . . So we know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. In this is love perfected with us, that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so are we in this world.

I John 4:7-9, 16-17

In self-giving, if anywhere, we touch a rhythm not only of all creation but of all being. For the Eternal Word also gives Himself in sacrifice; and that not only on Calvary. . . . From before the foundation of the world He surrenders begotten Deity back to begetting Deity in obedience. And as the Son glorifies the Father, so also the Father glorifies the Son. . . . From the highest to the lowest, self exists to be abdicated and, by that abdication, becomes the more truly self, to be thereupon yet the more abdicated, and so forever. This is not a heavenly law which we can escape by remaining earthly, nor an earthly law which we can escape by being saved. What is outside the system of self-giving is not earth, nor nature, nor "ordinary life," but simply and solely Hell. . . . But when it [selfhood] flies to and fro among the players too swift for eye to follow, and the great master Himself leads the revelry, giving Himself eternally to His creatures in the generation, and back to Himself in the sacrifice, of the Word, then indeed the eternal dance "makes heaven drowsy with harmony." All pains and pleasures we have known on earth are early initiations in the movements of that dance: but the dance itself is strictly incomparable with the sufferings of this present time. As we draw nearer to its uncreated rhythm, pain and pleasure sink almost out of sight. There is joy in the dance, but it does not exist for the sake of joy. It does not even exist for the sake of good, or of love. It is Love Himself, and Good Himself, and therefore happy.

C. S. Lewis, The Problem of Pain

Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Genesis 3:7-8

Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.

Luke 23:46

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. . . . Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

I Corinthians 15:22, 45

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

II Corinthians 5:21

And I was shown no harder hell than sin, because for a well-natured soul there is no hell but sin.

Julian of Norwich

God also showed that sin shall not be shameful to man, but his glory; for in the same way as God's justice gives every sin a suitable punishment, so God's love gives the same soul a joy for every sin. Just as various sins receive various punishments according to how serious they are, in the same way they will be rewarded with various joys in heaven according to how much pain and grief they caused the soul on earth, for the soul that will come to heaven is precious to God, and the place so full of glory that God's goodness never allows any soul that is to come there to sin unless the sin is rewarded; and the sin is made famous for ever and blissfully restored to grace by surpassing glory; for in this revelation my understanding was lifted up into heaven; and then God brought cheerfully into my mind David and innumerable others of the old Jewish Law, and in the new Christian Law he made me think first of Mary Magdalene, Peter, Paul, Thomas of India and Saint John of Beverley, and also innumerable others: how they are famous in the church on earth with their sins, which are not shameful for them, but are all turned into glory.

Julian of Norwich

And in the Spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God

Revelation 21:10-11a

The glory of God is man fully alive.

Irenaeus

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