

15-May-11

**Title: Glory to God**

**Scripture:** Isaiah 61:10-11 Pages \_\_\_\_\_  
Hebrews 4:14-16  
**John 17:1-10**

**Main Idea: The Church Glorifies Christ on Earth!**

If you are following the news, any news... you know that a man named **Harold Camping** has determined – through his allegorical and numerological study of the Bible, that Judgment day will occur on 21 May, 2011. Now for those in the congregation... that is next Monday. For those listening next week on the radio... that's tomorrow.

Camping's prophecy is on the Internet, the radio, television, the newspapers. There are buses driving through major cities with Camping's billboards on their sides. Billboards on highways.

This past week I have received at the parsonage, and church three letters from Mr. Camping's organization; long explanations of why 21 May will be judgment day... his call to abandon the Church, and to listen to his radio broadcast. By the way, not one word about our Savior Jesus Christ.

Harold Camping graduated from Berkley in 1942, as a civil engineer, but began operating Christian radio in 1958. Since then, Camping's company, "family Radio" has acquired 150 radio stations and is broadcast on many more, including radio around the world. His company has 122 million dollars in assets.

Well... if you're a Christian and Mr. Camping is correct... this is good news. Christians know that Christ is coming:

Acts 17:31

***“Because (God) has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He ordained... by raising Him from the dead.”***

Christians look forward to that day. We read and proclaim from **1 Cor. 16:22, and Revelations 22:20 – “Amen. Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus.”**

But there is much about Camping's message that is not Biblical. First of all, he does not proclaim Christ. Secondly, his allegorical method believes God's Word does not mean what it simply says, but has hidden meanings. That always leads to trouble. And third, Camping has followed his heart to reject the Trinity, the Church, and many other Bible doctrines. That's a salvation problem. Camping proclaims that God has abandoned His Church. And he urges all Christians to leave the Church and just tune into his radio station to hear all the truth they need.

As it happens, in the normal schedule of our Lutheran Church we have these words of Christ about knowing who God is, and the truth about His Church.

### **Read Scripture Text (John 17:1-10)**

Our text... the very words of Christ, reveal to us that **the Church glorifies Christ on earth.** Jesus says in v:10 ***"I am glorified in them."***

First we must remember what the true Church is; something Harold Camping does not seem to know.

Eph. 1:22ff

***"Christ is the head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."***

Christ is the head of the Church, and He fills those who belong to the true Church. From **1Cor. 1:21, 1Cor. 11:23** and elsewhere throughout the New Testament, we find that the marks of the True Church, Christ's Church, the body of believers filled with the Holy Spirit. Based upon Scripture, and as we confess as Lutherans:

***"The Church is not merely an association of outward ties and rites like other civic governments, but it is mainly an association of faith and of the Holy Spirit in men's hearts. It is marked and known by the pure teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments in harmony with the Gospel of Christ." (BoC. 169.5)***

The truth is... Christians cannot leave the true Church, as they are the true Church. And **the Church glorifies Christ on earth.**

In our text today; Jesus' explains that His **Church glorifies God three ways:**

- I. **The Church has received and kept God's Word.**
- II. **The Church knows the only true God.**
- III. **The Church has been given eternal life!**

**I. The Church has received and kept God's Word.**

V:6 ***"I have (revealed) Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your Word.***

V:8 ***For I have given to them the Words which You have given Me; and they have received them."***

The first mark of the true Church, and that mark that glorifies God, is that the Church holds to and proclaims God's Word. God has communicated to mankind, and the people have heard God speak. God spoke to Adam and Eve, God spoke to Abraham and Sarah, and to the patriarchs. God spoke to Moses, and Joshua, and David and Daniel. God Spoke to His prophets. And they shared God's Word, usually with this preface: **"Thus says the LORD". (431 times in the Old Testament)**

So also, Jesus Christ, God in the flesh spoke to men and women throughout His ministry on earth.

Does it seem so strange that God would speak to us about the truth of Creation and the Fall, and the truth about what is right and wrong, what is good and what is evil? **Francis Schaeffer** – one of the greatest 20<sup>th</sup> century theologians states that *"the reasonableness of communication between God and man, turns on this point – that man ... is created in the image of God."*

Yes God is infinite and outside Creation; He is Spirit; but He is also personality. He thinks, He feels, He loves, and He hates. And unlike humans, He does these things perfectly, without error. But God created man in His image. It only makes sense that He would be able to communicate ideas to man. He does not communicate everything,

because in our finite limitations we cannot know everything. But what God does communicate is true. And it is truth we need to know and to live by.

Ever since Satan began his rebellion in heaven, the devil has been trying to get others to deny the truth of God's Word. **Rev. 12** tells us Satan lost his revolution in heaven and was cast down to earth where he deceives the whole world. And so the world follows after lust and power and selfish interest and denies the Word of God.

But despite the power of Satan, despite the persecution in the world, despite our own weak flesh; the Church is the assembly of those who know God's Word to be true and defy the devil and the world. This year in School Release Time, we have studied the heroes of faith. Those thousands upon thousands of Christians in the True Church who would not deny the truth of God's Word – even to death. We began with the apostles, all but one of whom was martyred for their faith. The true Church has received, and keeps God's Word, in a world that hates and persecutes them... and this glorifies God.

## **II. The Church knows the only true God.**

Nearly all of mankind knows that there must be a God.

Rom. 1:20

*“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that (unbelievers) are without excuse.”*

But ever since the fall, man has been trying to create a false god in man's own image. Man wants God to bend to man's will. **Rob Bell's** emerging church invents a false god that is love only and will save all people. The liberal mainline denominations do not believe what God has spoken about sin and judgment. Instead, they encourage followers to believe whatever works for them. But God has spoken, and revealed Himself, and His nature and His plan for man's rescue from Satan and sin. God has revealed how He must deal with sin. The True Church receives God's Word and knows who He is.

Jesus said three times in today's verses: that He reveals the Father, and Jesus reveals that the Father sent Him, and that all that Jesus worked in ministry was from God. The true

Church knows that Christ is God; one of the three persons of the Holy Trinity that is the one true God.

Rome would not believe (at least not for another 320 years). The leaders of the Jews would not believe. Even today the world may acknowledge Jesus as a good teacher. A noble and compassionate mystic, but the world denies that Jesus is God with us, that He is Sovereign over all creation. They deny Jesus is both Savior and Lord.

The True Church knows Christ is God, He is our Lord and Savior, that He is the ruler of all things – especially His Church. The True Church proclaims Christ – the Son of the Living God, and in the face of the world and apostasy and persecution...the True Church glorifies God.

### **III. The Church has been given eternal life!**

God explains to us in His Word that Satan was the cleverest and greatest of all angels before he fell into pride and rebellion. And War broke out in heaven, and Satan and his angels (about 1/3 of the angelic host) were cast down to the earth.

And all of Satan's greatness and wisdom was corrupted into craft and deceit and evil. Jesus explains to us in **John 8:44** -

*“...the devil was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. He is a liar and the father of all lies.”*

And when Satan deceived mankind to join his rebellion, he thought he had destroyed the most precious of all God's Creation; mankind, created in God's own image. The Bible explains how Adam and Eve's rebellion killed their spiritual life, and death came into the world. Each one born into the world for every generation until the end of time, is born spiritually dead, children of wrath, opposed to God. Oh how Satan laughed. Would God punish all of mankind of every generation as He must finally punish the devil?

God tells us even angels wondered and desired to look into how this would turn out (1Pet. 1:12). So... God came into the world, into time and space, as a living personal man, born of a woman: Jesus Christ. And He lived a perfect life, and then sacrificed Himself as punishment for all sin... for those who will receive Him. Jesus said -

v:3

*“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”*

Jesus asked his disciples... the early Church:

*“Who do you say that I am? Peter answered ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living god.’ Jesus answered ... and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.”*

The true Church knows God the Father, and Jesus whom He sent. And trusting in His redeeming work on the Cross... has been given eternal life. This is the true Church: those who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. And today, the angels know, and they glorify God. And throughout all eternity the Church triumphant in heaven will glorify God, as a testimony of His love and mercy and power and justice.

Christians cannot leave the Church... they are the Church. And Christians look forward to the coming of Christ and His eternal kingdom. I believe we are living in the end times... but **Jesus said:**

Mk 13:32

*“... of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”*

So it is certain that Harold Camping doesn't know. But Christ tells us He is coming and we are to live today as if He were coming tomorrow. And in the meantime, the Church proclaims the word of God, so that those who are lost may find God, and eternal life. And so **the Church glorifies Christ on earth.** Amen.