



TOUCH POINT

Glory, Glorify, Glorified – Touchpoint for May 14, 2025

John 13:31-35 – (NRSVUE) The New Commandment

³¹When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³²If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and as I said to the Jews so now, I say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’ I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Grace and peace from the Mystery in whom we live and move and have our being.

Friday, I joined a thousand others to hear Lutheran pastor and cultural icon Nadia Bolz-Weber. Her first book, *Accidental Saints*, was instrumental in my desire to create a community for folks like me.

The Wild Goose Community has been active for nearly 10 years. It became home to many who like Nadia and did not find traditional church welcoming to her style of authenticity. At her Denver gathering called 'Church for All Sinners and Saints', their slogan was “We are anti-excellence and pro-participation.” Many of us in the Wild Goose Community resemble Nadia and many do not, but what we have in common is the freedom to belong, whatever we believe.

All this is to say that she has risen to a place of progressive stardom in Christianity. At the Arizona stop for her “Red State Revival,” Nadia shunned a concert-style introduction and began by teaching all those gathered a song we sang *a capella*. She took the time to personally greet a long line of people seeking selfies and autographs.

True to her desire for unity and purpose at this event, she did not have a book table, and tickets were offered to all by donation or free. You can imagine with this kind of authentic presentation her fame only grew more.

I must admit, because of the impact she has had on my friends in recovery and how her message resonates, I am a fan. I was in awe of her presence. I, too, got a selfie!

In a way you might say I glorified her.

We do that quite often with people who accomplish wonderful things. People whose inner gifts are manifested in spectacular ways. Whether professional athletes, movie and television stars, or even stylish gray-haired bohemian-dressed foul-mouthed female Pastors. They are extolled in such a way as to appear more elevated or special. Which is the definition of glorifying.

I have been around celebrity athletes and high-profile individuals in my life. I can tell the difference between those who milk their fans for more glorification and those who are wrestling humbly to be seen as authentically human, just like their followers. Nadia was the latter.

Her commitment and devotion to deflecting honor to something or someone greater than herself and honoring the dignity and worth of those who are following her every word was evident.

This is what Christ does to followers willing to express their gifts for the good of many. To the one who has no other gods before the God of love for all.

Jesus at the Last Supper said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once." Then he signed autographs.

I've heard the word 'glorify' thrown around quite often in worship service. "Let's glorify God with our worship today," or "We give all the glory to God," someone says. We have semantically bleached the word glorify. It is now used anytime an athlete wins a game or receives an award. I've never heard a loser thank their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the other team's win much less for their loss.

Because of this, I'm not sure I've ever had a clear understanding of the word glory or what it means to glorify. I guess I just thought it meant to shine a big light on God.

In this passage, the word glorify in Greek is *doxazo*. This word can take on multiple descriptions of honor, exalting of rank, or to clothe with splendor.

But the one I find most intriguing is this interpretation: "To cause the dignity and worth of some person or thing to become manifest and acknowledged." I guess this is what was mutually happening with Nadia and her audience. In contrast, I'm sure we can all think of most cultural icons who glorify themselves. This should always be a red flag.

Consider this passage where the same form of *doxazo* is used. **John 8:54**. "Jesus answered, if I honor myself, my honor is nothing; It is my father that honors me."

Jesus knew not to declare himself worthy of exaltation, honor, to be clothed in splendor, or to seize a higher position. In the kingdom, where God is in charge, one does not glorify themselves.

Now this usage of 'glorify' in **John 17:1**: After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you."

It is clear that God is being manifested and honored in the human Jesus. God is manifesting God's self in Jesus. This appears to begin on earth. The author says it began with the disciples at the Last Supper. Perhaps Jesus was being glorified through a gradual transformation from human birth to human death. In his compassion, he is an example of love and compassion, and God was being manifested in him.

John 17:10: "...And all mines are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them." Here Jesus says that he is being manifest in us! We are manifesting Jesus.

Check this out! In **1 John 3:2**, John writes, "Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be, has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is." Perhaps there is an unfolding of who we are. We are being glorified as we love God and love others.

Now to the big ta-da of today's gospel reading. Jesus gives us the way of glorifying others and for us to be glorified by God. "Jesus said, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' I give you a new commandment, that you

love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

How are our unique powerful gifts made manifest? Jesus said you will do greater things than I.

The word glorified is no longer a word reserved for the songs sung at Christmas and Easter. Since the manifestation of Christ, it is in us to be glorified bring life to others and honor their dignity and worth. By this, we glorify Jesus who was glorified by God.

While others are manifesting a house, a job, or a comedy career. Jesus would be manifesting the work of God outside of himself and in himself. In this, Jesus was being transformed from the image of God *into* God. God was manifesting himself in his son with every healing, conversation, act of compassion, and call for justice.

I don't know about you, but I understand the scripture “Christ in me the hope of glory” better now. For me, it means Christ is in me and you, that we may manifest the power and peace of God.

I've been revisiting a question posed by Gail, one of our respite attendees. She pondered, “Why did Jesus breathe the Holy Spirit on the disciples in the Upper Room?” Perhaps he was glorifying them, imbuing them, blessing them, acknowledging them, manifesting himself in them.

Finally, Jesus gives the new commandment to love one another. By loving one another, others will know we are his disciples. Why? Because we are seeing the Jesus we love in others without reservation, and this glorifies God and breathes on them the Holy Spirit. It is life-giving.

By loving others, we cause the dignity and worth of some person or thing to become manifest and acknowledged. The Jesus we love in us; we see in others. By acknowledging them, we give them life.

Glory be to the father and the son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. A world without end.

Amen

Opening Song

Be Still

(London Fox Taize Choir)

Be Still, know that I am God.

Calm Me Lord

(Margaret Rizza)

Calm me Lord as you calmed the storm.
Still me Lord, keep me from harm.
Let all the tumult within me cease.
Enfold me Lord, in your peace.

Bible Passage

(A passage takes us from one place to another)

Touchpoint

(Where God's story touches our life story)

The Meal

The Lord's Prayer

(The London Fox Taize Choir)

Benediction

The Lord Bless You and Keep You

(National Lutheran Choir, Peter C. Lukin)

The Lord blesses you and keeps you.
The Lord lifts his countenance upon you... And give you peace...
The Lord makes his face shine upon you...And be gracious unto you...
The Lord be gracious unto you. Amen