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Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York

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Now the Son of Man is Glorified

John 13:31-32

Prayer: *Father, I just want to thank you for who you are, I thank you for what it is that you have created, what an incredible wonder the stars are, what an incredible -- incredibly wondrous universe this is. And Lord, today is the day that we celebrate as it were the most wonderful thing you've ever done and that is the cross. And so I pray specifically, Lord, today for the grace, the peace, the power and the wisdom that we need to make this day an observance of what you have done that is meaningful. Give us the presence of your Holy Spirit and the power to open up your book and to see it as something of permanent value. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well once again as I've mentioned, this is the first day of the month and this is the day that we remember Jesus and his cross. And Jesus on the night before he died, he met with his disciples for one last Passover meal. Matthew 26:26-29 describes it. It says: *Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take,*

eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he it given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." So Jesus takes bread, he takes wine and he offers them up as symbols of his blood and of his flesh and then he asks the disciples to take up the bread and the cup to symbolically eat his flesh and drink his blood. He then asked them to repeat the remembrance of the sacrifice on a regular basis, and this is what we call "the Lord's table". And so each month we celebrate it and we celebrate it by meditating on what it is the Lord Jesus Christ did on the cross, by examining our consciences, asking God's Holy Spirit to point out those areas in our lives where there is obvious sin, and then by confessing our sins and participating in the elements. John 6:53 says: So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."

Well, we are back in the gospel of John and if you recall, there was a month we spent speaking about the Life Chain, the month before that we were speaking about Judas, and we marveled at Judas's willful ignorance. There are three separate times that Jesus basically shouted out a warning to Judas. The very first one

was a general warning that said that there was a betrayer that would be sitting among them. Well, Judas ignored that warning. The second one was given after Judas had shared a morsel with Jesus and it was that the betrayer would be someone who actually shared the dish with Jesus. Judas ignored that warning as well. And the third warning dropped all pretense of subtlety and simply said to the inquiring Judas when he said, "Is it I, Rabbi?" "It is you, Judas, you have said so." Judas chose to ignore these warnings from God himself that to proceed as he was about to would make him a man who would have been better off never having been born, and yet that warning fell on deaf ears as well.

And so we pick up the story as Judas is about to leave to betray Jesus. This is John 13, verses 30 to 32. It says: *Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night. So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately."* Jesus's comment as Judas is leaving is not at all what you would have expected, given the circumstances. You see, Judas is about to betray Jesus and deliver him into the most degrading, humiliating and inglorious experience a human being could ever undergo. Jesus is about to be mocked, slapped, beaten, scourged, stripped and crucified, a complete horror to an ordinary

man. But Jesus is no ordinary man. He was the very creator of the planet that he was standing on. And as we've seen this morning, that didn't begin to describe his creative powers. We just saw in this film this morning that the very sun that we depend on for life itself was not even close in terms of size and glory to some of the other stars that Jesus spoke into being. After all, he created Arcturus, Alpha Scorpii A and Canis Majoris, a sun 2.9 billion times bigger than ours. *Psalm 33:6* says: *By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.* Now the host of them is literally it's a number beyond counting and we now know that the starry sky that the psalmist looked out on was an infinitesimally small fraction of the Milky Way, which is an infinitely small fraction of all the galaxies that make up the heavenly host, I mean, literally thousands of trillions of stars, and it doesn't even begin to count their number. And the Glorious One who spoke all of them into existence was about to turn himself over to his own creation to be ingloriously slaughtered.

Well, the very idea that raises two very important questions. The first one is: How can anyone believe something as unbelievable as Jesus as creator? And the second one is predicated on the first one: Why would such a creator behave like Jesus behaved? Why would he allow his creative glory to be hidden and shrunken down not to the level of a king or an emperor but to the poor stepson of

a peasant carpenter in Nazareth.

Well, the first question is the question that's most often raised by science. You know, science looks on the notion of Christianity as just bizarre, something decidedly unscientific. I mean Adam and Eve are tricked into disobeying God by what, a talking snake? God becomes a person, born of a virgin, Jesus routinely violates the laws of physics by walking on water, walking through walls, raising the dead, I mean are we really supposed to believe all of this? I mean, is faith a complete suspension of reason? Well, the simple answer to that is believe the facts. Believe what best fits the facts. Now the facts according to science is that the Milky Way and Alpha Scorpii A and Canis Majoris were not at all created by Jesus. In fact according to science they were created by nothing. You talk about a suspension of reason. According to science, before the dawn of creation, an infinitesimally small bit of matter exploded in a big bang creating all of the known universe. And we all know that it started with a bang because we can observe the fact that everything is moving outward. That's an observable fact. And what wasn't observable and still remains the most difficult and pernicious question is this: Where did that infinitesimally small bit of matter come from? I mean, Christians believe in the beginning God. Atheists and many scientists believe in the beginning nothing. Both of them take faith. One of them says the

answer is out there somewhere, eventually we will find it even if it takes us thousands and thousands of years and even though it may not appear so, mindless physical processes completely detached from any overarching intelligence are what made all of this happen. And trust me, given enough time we will discover those processes.

Well, when it comes to understanding how this universe came to be, there's no doubt that there is one side that is decidedly crazy, and there's the other side which is Christian. Most atheistic scientists look at the advancement of science as a zero-sum game. It's a zero-sum game in which faith is the loser. In other words they say in their mind for science to advance, faith must retreat. The more fantastic the universe, the more naturalistic mechanistic philosophers insist than no greater power than nothing must be responsible for it. And they say that because they know nothing of the personality and the power that created it. I mean, what kind of a God would create something so fantastic as Alpha Scorpii A and Canis Majoris and then wait 2,000 years for somebody to accidentally stumble on it? I mean that defies logic. The psalmist said in *Psalm 19: The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows his handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge.* Well, what kind of a God would be content with the psalmist's description of the night sky that was actually less than one trillionth of what it actually is.

I mean a rationalistic mindset could not imagine a God who could be that glorious and yet seemingly absolutely unconcerned about revealing that glory. You know, far better to believe in an unthinking, unfeeling, mindless set of undiscovered principles that govern the universe than in a God who would actually actively conceal his glory. But that's exactly who God is. And that is exactly what God has told us about himself. In *Proverbs 25:2* it says: *It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter.* You see, it used to be the glory of kings to search out and learn all about these kind of matters knowing that they ultimately pointed to the glory of God. And there's no one more representative of that than King Solomon. This is what Solomon said in *Proverbs 3*, he said this: *The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens; by his knowledge the deeps broke open, and the clouds drop down the dew.* Solomon's wisdom came out of his awe, out of his respect, his fear of God. And he could say in *Proverbs 1:7*: *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

Solomon seems to have many materialist naturalist scientist's number because it's a fact that fools do despise wisdom and instruction. And if you doubt that, I suggest you read some of what scientists have to say, read some of Neil DeGrasse Tyson. I

don't know if you've ever heard of him; he's pretty famous. He's the host of the series *Cosmos*, a very famous atheist scientist who declared, "God is an ever receding pocket of scientific ignorance." See he's of the school that says science is a zero-sum game, and they believe the more you reduce scientific ignorance by accepting that nothing created everything, well then the less reasonable it is to believe that God is responsible. You see that works for him because he like all the other scientists have decided that mechanism and mechanics is everything. See, when it comes right down to it, science couldn't create a rat-tailed maggot if it had a hundred years to do it. It's way beyond the scope of their ability. And science merely uncovers and discovers what God alone by his power is able to create, and yet somehow they carry on as if merely discovering the means by which God does what he does somehow confers on the discoverer the power, the might and the glory of that discovery. I mean that in itself is irrational. Now it was Watson and Crick who discovered the mechanics of DNA. They discovered how it works. But understand that's a far cry from creating it out of nothing. God did that yet Watson and Crick, they absolutely deny the existence of God. And God says a fool by definition is someone who denies God. *Psalm 14:1* says: *The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."* So the fool declares that today but he does that under the cloak of scientific inquiry, because the greater the discovery, the greater the urge to reason

that no God would ever do something that grandiose and conceal it. But God has no problem whatsoever playing hide and seek with DNA or quantum mechanics or astrophysics because, as Proverbs says: *It is the glory of God to conceal a matter.* And those disciplines are simply tools that allow us to kind of peel back and examine and look at the layers that God is hiding to see what he did in creation. And God knows that there is profound glory in creation. And we know that he knows because he said so. This is what he said in *Psalm 104*, it says: *O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.* *Revelation 4:11* says: *"Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."* *Colossians 1:16* says: *For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities -- all things were created through him and for him.*

But now we come back to earth. Now we come back to a last supper that is about to turn deadly. All of the glories that we've been discussing are about to be surpassed by what the Father and the Son both agree is a far, far greater glory, and that glory is the cross. Consider what Jesus said as Judas departed. Again this is *John 13:31*: *So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified*

in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately." What Jesus is saying here is the ultimate glory is not the stars in the heaven. The ultimate glory is the cross.

As the elders begin distributing the bread, I would also ask that as this takes place we would begin to consider the warning that God gives about communion itself. This is from 1 Corinthians 11 starting at verse 38. God says: *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.* You know, I repeat this warning every month, I say, communion is extremely serious business and to receive it in an unworthy manner is to court disaster. I say if you are not absolutely confident that you are a child of the King or if you first need to be reconciled to your brother or sister before you bring your sacrifice to the altar, then just pass the elements on. Again, no one's going to think you strange, no one's going to think there's something wrong with you, oh, he's a sinner, look at him. Instead they may just think you wise. On the other hand, we can make the mistake of thinking that unless perhaps we are spotlessly perfect

we are unworthy to receive communion. That, too, is a mistake. See, being a child of the King doesn't mean that we never sin and that we never fail, what it means is that we recognize that the salvation that we have received we've received as a gift and that no one is ever capable of being worthy of God by -- quote -- "being good." As Dane Ortlund puts it: "In the kingdom of God, the one thing that qualifies you is knowing that you don't qualify, and the one thing that disqualifies you is thinking that you do." That also means that when we do fail, we are aware that we have sinned because God, his Holy Spirit is inside us, his Holy Spirit is convicting us, and so we grieve because that Spirit causes us to grieve, and we grieve as children who know that we have a Father who longs to forgive and cleanse us, a Father who says in *1 John 1:9*: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" So once again I remind you that being a child of the King doesn't mean that we are without sin. It means that when we sin, we understand we have an advocate with the Father, someone who is speaking out on our behalf. *1 John 2:1* says: *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father -- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.*" And so because we have Jesus's righteousness and not our own, we are now free to eat from his table. So if you love your Lord, don't deny yourself the privilege that Christ purchased for you. We say

it all the time, he lived the life we were supposed to live and then he died the death we all deserve to die in our place so that we could be made worthy of heaven.

As the elements are being passed out, take a few moments to meditate on the enormity and the wonder of the universe. Just think about Canis Majoris, 2.9 billion times the size of our sun. Jesus Christ spoke it into existence. And as you're meditating on the glory of the heavens, meditate also on the ultimate glory and that is the cross. 1 Corinthians the 11th chapter, 23rd verse says: *For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."* So take, and eat.

God the Father and God the Son know that Judas walking out that door is beginning of the end. There would be no going back. The Son would face the wrath of his Father, the Father would face the death of his Son. And both the Father and the Son define these events as the ultimate in glory, a glory so great it could not be hidden. God laid out the glory in *Philippians 2:5*, he said this, he said: *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count*

equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

You see, Alpha Scorpii A and Canis Majoris could not hold a candle to the cross. And here is where there is yet another glory that God has hidden and just waits for us to discover, and it goes to the character of God himself. See, science and all of its atheistic worshipers see the glory of all things in what has been made, and there is great glory in that, I mean, even the scripture acknowledges that. Again, Revelation 4:11: *"Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."* God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit saw a far greater glory not in creation but in rescuing us. Jesus prayed that God would be glorified through the cross because there was nothing more precious to Jesus than the glory of God. Again, John 13:31: *So when he -- this is Judas -- had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him."* You know if

you're blessed to have children, you get a sense of what Jesus is getting at here. Jesus is looking at the cross as the greatest glory God himself could ever, ever produce. Just as I would be incredibly glorified in something wonderful that my son or daughter accomplished, so too God the Father will be glorified in what Jesus accomplishes. Jesus had been tasked and he'd been tasked to in one act, one extraordinarily painful, degrading and isolating act reverse the victory that Satan had claimed over all of humanity through the fall of Adam. All of God's creation had been groaning under the curse of Adam's fall. The perfection that gave us the ability to fellowship with God as the crown of his creation had been snatched from all of us by, of all things, a talking snake. This is what *Genesis 3* says: *Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You can't eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, 'You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die'". "No! You will not die," the serpent said to the woman. "In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Then the woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her*

husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

You know, the world loves to laugh at the notion of a talking snake, but God takes it far more than seriously. And God the Father says the cross goes two ways. In verse 32 he says: "*If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately.*" The Father will be glorified by what the Son accomplishes but the Father will also simultaneously glorify the Son, and he'll do that by witnessing to the entire universe a love for us so deep and so profound that with all the power and all the might that God possessed, he willingly, even joyfully allowed his Son to go through with it. That's how God the Father glorified God the Son. If you had a -- a son, a perfect son who never ever failed and who loved you flawlessly, would you be willing to watch him tortured, butchered and murdered, knowing that in an instant you could utterly stop it and annihilate those who were tormenting your child? We know the Father withheld his hand. In fact *Isaiah 53* says: *Yet the LORD was pleased to crush him severely.* Now did the Father take pleasure in the death of his Son? Well, the scripture says yes. But understand the pleasure that the scripture is speaking of here. You see, for all time the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit had agreed that the only way to find perfect justice and perfect mercy, the only way they could both be served is by God condemning all sin and then becoming one of us to pay the

price of that condemnation. So the triune God planned and ordained all the events in history leading up to this very moment. It was the most exquisitely torturous moment God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit would ever endure. But their love for us was so beyond measure that they were willing to bear that pain for the greater joy and pleasure. And that joy and that pleasure is me sitting here this morning telling you that we've now been freed from death and that we now have the ability to live eternally and to rule and reign with Christ forever, because God is *not wanting that any to perish but all to come to repentance*. See, God's pleasure was not in the death of his Son but in what that death would accomplish. It's in the same way that the Son's joy was in spite of the shame of the cross. I mean *Hebrews 12:2* describes it this way, it says: *Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that lay before Him endured a cross and despised the shame and has sat down at the right hand of God's throne*. See, the bottom line is this, the Father and the Son both despise what the cross entailed while joyfully anticipating what the cross would provide.

As the elders begin to come forward, consider why such shame and such degradation should be a pleasure and a joy to God. There's only one reason for that. It's *John 3:16*: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in*

Him should not perish but have everlasting life." See, the cross was the opportunity to turn the curse of Adam into the triumph of the glory of Christ over sin. *Colossians 2:13* sums it all up. It says: *And when you were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive with Him and forgave us all our trespasses. He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us, and has taken it out of the way by nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and disgraced them publicly; He triumphed over them by Him.*

See, the pleasure and the joy of the Father and the Son was to use the shame of the cross as the ultimate weapon that satisfied God's perfect justice and provided his perfect mercy. And in one perfect sacrifice, Jesus made a public fool of the talking snake. Verse 15: *He disarmed the rulers and authorities and disgraced them publicly; He triumphed over them by Him.* So it's no wonder that Jesus would say as Judas stepped out into the darkness: *"Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately."* See, it turns out that God sees something far more glorious than Alpha Scorpii A and Canis Majoris. It's the love of God for his own. Take some time now to consider that love.

1 Corinthians, chapter 11, verse 25 says: In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." Take, and drink.

This is the part that we call heads, heart and feet, and this is where we examine some of the practical aspects of what it means to remember the Lord Jesus Christ and his sacrifice. And this morning I just want to look at two different answers to a particular question and the question is: Why was he given the privilege of being able to grasp the gospel? Why was I chosen to hear the voice of the Shepherd when he spoke? Was I more clever, was I more insightful, was I more spiritual, was I more wise? Well, one of the answers is personal and one of the answers is practical. The personal answer to the question of why you and I were chosen is very simple, and my answer is: I have absolutely no idea. God doesn't say why he chooses whom he chooses. He merely said in *Romans 9:15: I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion. So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.*

Now the other answer to the question of why I was chosen is a lot more simple and it's a lot more practical. You see, there is a

principle that runs through the scripture from Genesis all the way to Revelation, and it has to do with blessing. See, God says over and over again that whenever he blesses you, it's never just to sit and stay at a blessing. He always blesses to bless. Listen to what he said. This goes all the way back to Genesis. This is what he said to Abraham in *Genesis 12*. It says: *Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. And I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great."* See there's the blessing that Abraham receives but what does he say? *"And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."* So why was Abraham blessed? He was blessed to be a blessing. I can say from a practical standpoint every single one of us is blessed with the gospel for the exact same reason. *1 Thessalonians 2:4* says: *But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.* So what God is saying is one of the reasons we need to examine is why we have been entrusted with the gospel is because we have been blessed to be a blessing.

We have missionaries right now in Japan, we have missionaries in Alaska, in the Philippines, we have them in India as well but we

also have missionaries in Port Jervis, in Matamoras, in Sussex, in Greenville, in Ellenville, Glen Spey. Outside that door is a mission field. And what God is basically saying to us from a practical standpoint is if you have been given the incredible privilege of understanding what the gospel is and knowing the incredible glory of the cross, then that should change your life forever. Nothing should go back to routine. Every single thing that you do, whether it's at work or at play or at school or at recreation, whatever it is that you do, you are in a mission field entrusted with the blessing to be a blessing. And so every single one of us should be planning and thinking and plotting, if you will, every single day, how we can share this blessing that God has given to us for reasons we have no idea why, but we do know that he's given it to us to give to others. And so I would challenge every one of us to think of yourself as a missionary wherever you are. You have been given the most glorious privilege the world has ever known, a privilege that God himself says is far more glorious than Canis Majoris.

So what do we do with it? We seek as best we can for the opportunities to give God the glory by giving his gospel. And I know, I know this can be a very scary thought for a lot of people and they think I'm not theologically educated, I don't know how to do this, and all I would ask is that we all pray individually that

wherever we are we would begin to see as a mission field and that we would trust the Holy Spirit to do the hard work for us, to present to us circumstances where we can trust in God's Holy Spirit to just open our mouths and allow God to do the rest. Yeah, you can mess up sometimes. I've messed up many, many times. The worst that's ever happened is I've looked like a fool. I got over it. And so what God is saying, what God is suggesting to us is not that you become theologically astute, although that's a very good thing, but that you by faith trust that you're a missionary and trust that God has given you assignments and ask God's Holy Spirit to give you those assignments and then trust that he will walk you through them. Let's pray.

Father, I just again, I thank you for the privilege that we have, I thank you for the most glorious thing that God himself would ever acknowledge is the cross. The most glorious thing in the universe is not the planets and the solar systems and the galaxies. The most glorious thing in the universe is your rescue of us. Father God, we praise you, we thank you, we bless you for what you've done for us, and we pray you would give us the courage and the willingness to be missionaries for you. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.