

John 13:31-35

You've probably **heard** and **understand** the phrase, "Allow me to shed a little **light** on the subject." But just in case that is **not** the case, then allow me to shed a little **light** on the subject. What that means is that I would like to provide some additional **information** in order to make a particular situation a little bit easier to **understand**. Perhaps the world's all-time greatest example of "**shedding** a little **light** on a subject" is **Easter**. Three days **before** Easter, on Good **Friday**, Jesus was **crucified** and **buried**. His disciples were **hurt** that their Savior and Friend was no longer going to be **with** them, and they were left wondering, "How will we ever **get over** this loss?" But then came **Easter Sunday**. On that day Jesus **rose** from the dead, and showed Himself **alive** to His disciples. That change shed **new light** on **everything** which had happened in the **past** - **including** Jesus' **crucifixion**.

Easter Sheds New Light On The Cross. It reveals that the events of Good Friday were something **glorious**, rather than **tragic**. Jesus' death on the **cross** was God's greatest act of **love**. Easter also sheds light on a new way of **living** - a way which is **possible** for us because of the cross. The words of our text are words Jesus spoke to His disciples on the night before His death - words which teach that **Easter Sheds New Light On The Cross**.

It was Maundy Thursday evening, just **moments** before Jesus would be arrested and put on trial, and just **hours** before Jesus would be put to death on the **cross**. Jesus had reclined at the table with His disciples for the **Passover meal**, and then announced that one of **them** would **betray** Him. **Judas Iscariot** was the **one**. The disciples felt deeply **hurt** by this news, because in **their** minds, a **betrayal** of Jesus could only lead to **evil** and **tragedy**. However, after Judas had left the building, **Jesus** began to speak of the coming events in a **positive** tone. As our text begins He said, "*Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself and will glorify him at once.*"

Standing at the foot of the cross on Good Friday we would have searched **long** and **hard** to find that glory. Cries of **pain** filled the darkened sky. On the cross Jesus **suffered** the pains of **hell itself**, and when His work was **completed**, He **gave up** His life, and **died**. There doesn't seem to be much **glory** in **any** of those things.

But three days later **Easter** arrived, and the rays of the early-morning sun revealed an **empty** tomb and a **risen** Savior. The resurrection of Jesus puts all of the events of Thursday and Friday, including the **crucifixion**, in a whole **new light**. God was **glorified** at Calvary. It was God's **finest hour**, as He revealed the **full extent** of His **love** for us in sending His Son, **Jesus** - to **die** for us, and to set us free from the **guilt** of our sins.

If it were not for **Jesus**, that heavy burden of guilt would have **crushed** us. We were totally unable to **remove** the guilt that **weighed down** on us, the **condemnation** to eternal death that loomed in **front** of us. But, Jesus laid down **His** life for us, and suffered the **hell** which we **deserved**. And it was all part of God's eternal **plan**. The Bible says that "**God** was reconciling the world to himself *in Christ, not counting our sins against us.*"

Easter puts Christ's **suffering** and **death** in a whole new light. The **peace** of **conscience** we have, giving us the **confidence** to say, "*By grace I'm saved*" - is because of the **cross**. The **knowledge** that death has been **destroyed**, and that we will not **perish**, but will **rise** from the dead to live **eternally** - is because of the **cross**. The **joy** in our hearts, of knowing that God is on **our side**, and that He will make all things turn out for our **good** - is because of the **cross**. **Easter Sheds New Light On The Cross.**

The resurrection of Jesus on Easter makes the **cross** a positive event in **another** sense too. A Lutheran pastor once commented, "Jesus is **beautiful** when He performs **signs** and **wonders**, feeds the **hungry**, heals the **sick**, and comforts the **mourning**. But where is He **more** beautiful than on the **cross**? In love He offers Himself **for us** on the cross as the sacrificial Lamb, and now we poor **sinner**s ever and again **rejoice** to see Him in this picture which bears the title, '*The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin.*'" For the **Christian** the **cross** is a **glorious** sign, and therefore we give it a **prominent** place - in our **churches**, in our **homes**, around our **necks**, and most important of all in our **hearts**. Thank God that He did not let our final view of the cross be on **Friday**, but that He also gave us **Sunday** - **Easter Sunday**. Because of Easter we can look at the cross and say with Jesus, "*Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him.*"

As our text continues, Jesus went on to say, "*My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.*" Jesus was talking about His journey to the **cross**. He told His disciples that they couldn't **join** Him in His **suffering**. Yet

there **was** something which He said they **could** do - something He **wanted** them to do. As Jesus spoke to His disciples of the **positive** blessings that would result from His **death**, He also spoke of a new **love** that would be theirs to **share**. Jesus said, *“A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”*

Actually, that command isn't really **new**. Centuries earlier God had given the Ten Commandments which are summarized **this** way: *“Love God above all ... and love your neighbor as yourself.”* God has **always** wanted us to love one another - that's **old**. But rather, it's the **second part** of that command which is **new**. *“As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”* Jesus had in mind the **kind** of love we would have for one another - a love like **His love** - a totally **selfless** love - **agape** love. This is a love which goes far **beyond** the boundaries of normal human love, because it is totally **selfless** - a love which **gives** everything it has, and expects **nothing** in return.

Jesus says that this kind of love will be the **hallmark** of Christian **discipleship**. *“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”* How well do we stack up? How well do we **love** one another? Are we striving to achieve the totally **selfless** love of Jesus, or do we just **tolerate** one another? Do we love one another with the same **deep** and **sacrificial** love that **Jesus** showed on the **cross**, or are we just **courteous** to others? Let's take a look at the **way** we express our love - husbands and wives - parents and children - fellow members. As we examine the love we have for one another, and hear our **petty arguments**, and feel our **cold shoulders**, and sense our **sinful grudges**; it doesn't take very long to see how far **short** our love comes, when compared to the love of **Jesus**.

But that's where **Easter** comes in. At that very moment when we are looking for a way to **cover up** our sinful selves - at that very moment comes a glorious **light** - the light of **Easter**. **Easter Sheds New Light**. Easter announces a **risen** Savior - a Savior who **lives** to **bless** us with forgiveness each and every day. Jesus **lives** to pour **His love** into our hearts, and to make His love become a **spring** within us, that **overflows** with sincere and selfless love for one another. As the Apostle Paul told the Ephesians, *“Live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”*

Easter Sheds New Light On The Cross. It reveals the tremendous love of **Jesus**, as He gives up His life on the **cross** in order to **save** us. But Easter also reveals that the love of Jesus **lives on** - in all the care and concern for our **earthly**

welfare, which Jesus shows us day after day; as well as in the love He passes on to us in the **Gospel**, so we can **share** it with others for our **eternal** welfare. Without **Easter** the cross would be **depressing**. But **with** Easter the cross becomes **glorious**. **Easter Sheds New Light On The Cross**. It clearly reveals God's glorious and selfless **love** - a love that **obtained** our eternal salvation, and a love that is to be **passed on** as we love one another. Amen.