

It is as if, here, God is standing outside himself. The Son gives notice of his intention to return to the Father as if the Father would not know this, or he himself could have intended otherwise. And in this 'dialogue' we see the inner life of God made manifest: the mutual love of Father and Son. This love describes itself as a 'glorification': a light which shines in darkness, or at least in a realm of lesser lights. It is a light which is indicative of the presence of God in creation, particularly among his adopted people, the Israelites. This light which finds its final home in the Temple, has now found its final home in Christ and, through his death and resurrection, is a light for all nations through its presence in the disciples gathered here in Jerusalem. John presents this priestly prayer of Christ as a Last Supper event but it's really giving a post-resurrectional take on his coming departure; it's the eternal love of God, re-presented as that between Father and Son, that reveals itself in this pre- and post- resurrectional way. Jesus may go from the disciples in the life of the flesh but, as the image of God's love for us, he can never 'go away'. This is the life of the Spirit now made available to us – an invitation into the inner life of God, that is, into the life of love between Father and Son. If this all sounds overly complicated, its manifestation in us is decidedly not: it manifests itself in a deep shared joy. This is the work of true discipleship: not a command, not a burden, but a gift – a glorification:

*I am not praying for the world
but for those you have given me,
because they belong to you;
all I have is yours
and all you have is mine,
and in them I am glorified.*

In the pre-resurrectional take of this table-talk, the disciples would have been puzzled and fearful; all they knew was that they were losing the physical presence of their loved one. In the post-resurrectional take, they joyfully returned to Jerusalem buzzing with excitement at what has taken place and in anticipation of what is yet to come:

*Did not our hearts burn within us
while he talked to us on the road?*
(Lk. 24:32)

In praying continuously, as they now do, they enter into, or better realise their entry into, this on-going and indeed never-ended relationship of God 's love. When the Spirit comes, this love will, in a sense, spill over into all sorts of gifts and charisms but none more so than that of joy: a joy that will live at the core of our being no matter what suffering might come. We may lose sight of it for a time but we can no more let it go than we can fall out of God's love. This is eternal life.

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and
to the Holy Spirit,*

- and to us.

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