

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2026

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

"Gone From Our Sight"

Based on John 17:1-11

And then He was gone.
Gone from their sight.
Gone from their lives.
Gone for good.

Some stared at the moving clouds in disbelief, wondering, if just like other times Christ had appeared and disappeared, He would be home again in time for the evening meal or for Sunday Service. There's gone, and then, there's gone for good!

Others, according to Luke, celebrated with joy, dancing around, excited with the prospect that the task of ministry was now in their hands. Although I do wonder if that was not some creative editing down through history. In those early days of the Christian Church when the Romans were breathing down your neck, looking for a reason to persecute you, it would not do to appear weak or indecisive. Fake it 'till you make it would have been the order of the day.

But John's account of those last moments with Jesus takes a different tone, as John usually does. His account is

very personal, almost as if Jesus was having a conversation with his Father, face to face, one on one.

I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. (v 5, 7)

"Father, You gave me these people, and I've done the best I can. I have taught them. I have lived with them. I have tried to show them. And now that it is time for Me to leave, I pray for them, and I pray that they will take what I have given them, and multiply it, glorify it, and magnify it."

- In some small way, I think Jesus lamented that He must leave, even though He knew His time on earth was finished.

- In another way, I think Jesus worried about those disciples, not of their values, but perhaps their understanding of the task ahead; their willingness to take the ministry to the big wide world.

- Jesus did not doubt them but was fully aware of the courage that would be needed moving forward.

Courage.

"Courage is a tricky thing."
~The Blind Side (2009)

If you notice, John's lesson is full of the words: glory and glorify. They are great 'churchy' words, and we use them a lot in our hymn singing.

*Jesus, we love You we
worship and adore You
Glorify Thy name
in all the Earth
Glorify Thy name,
glorify Thy name
Glorify Thy name
in all the Earth*
~Donna Adkins

But what does 'glorify' really mean? The depth of its meaning is more like another hymn we sing:

*O Lord, our Lord, how
majestic is your name
in all the earth.
O Lord, we praise your name.
O Lord, we magnify
your name:
Prince of Peace, mighty God;
O Lord God Almighty.*
~Michael W. Smith

Praise. Majesty. Magnify.

Jesus wasn't just saying to praise the work that had been done, and those who had

come to know the Lord. Jesus was telling the disciples to **magnify** the work.

- Make it bigger.
- Expand the world of the believers.
- Go out into the world and preach that Good News.

And that was going to take some old fashioned courage.

I used to think that courage was something for people when they were younger; making choices about education, employment, relationships, children, moving. These are all very big steps in a person's life. We've all lived them. And somewhere in those decisions, you and I had to find some courage:

- To strike out on our own...
- To say 'no'...
- To step away from other's expectations...
- To find our own voice and follow it...

But then, somewhere along the way, a rhythm and routine began to take hold in our lives, punctuated here and there by unexpected events. Generally, though, predicable, and in time comfortable. Courage was not really part of the conversation.

"But it should be," says Jesus.

It does not take courage to live. But it does take courage to live fully.

- To be bold,
- To not settle just because age or situation make it easy to do so.
- To continue to look for ways you might influence the world around you in the work of Christ.

You see, in some respects, the disciples were yearning for a return to the 'glory days' of Ministry with Jesus, looking back, rather than forward. It was easier to wait for Jesus to come back yet again, or to recreate the past, then to find the courage to magnify the work of Jesus in their own time and in their own way.

I have come to learn that it takes courage to live every single day.

I have also come to learn that it takes great courage to die.

So, while we live, let us summon our courage once again, as believers, and as a church.

- To live boldly.
- To cultivate an attitude of promise and possibility.
- To be surprised.
- To be willing.
- To find the courage you had and refresh the flame.

So that you may live in a more fulfilling way.

So that our church may come alive again.

So that together, we may magnify the Lord.

So that our every breath glorifies Him.

Amen.