

The Gospel of John

Prayer for Glorification

John 17:1-5

INTRODUCTION:

I would invite you to turn in the Word of God back to the seventeenth chapter of John as we set our hearts on thoughts of the cross. This great prayer marks the end of our Lord's earthly ministry, but it also looks forward to the very reason for which He came, and that is His great work on the cross.

As we learned last week, Jesus prayed this prayer in front of the disciples before they arrived at the Garden of Gethsemane. He could have prayed this prayer silently, but He spoke it aloud so that, not only could the eleven disciples who were with Him could hear, but that all His disciples for all ages could hear. John, through the help of the Holy Spirit, recorded this prayer in this Gospel some thirty years later. Although the Holy Spirit helped John to remember, it shows that the prayer had a great impact in their lives. How many of us can repeat something that we have heard thirty years later, especially with this amount of detail.

This magnificent prayer is an example of the kind of communication that went on between the incarnate Son and the Father. (Incarnate means God in human form.) This is, however, the only lengthy prayer where we actually have the words. However we know from scripture, that Jesus kept an unceasing communion with God.

Luke tells us that Jesus was praying when He was baptized.

Luke 3:21-22 (NASB)

²¹ Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized, and while He was **praying**, heaven was opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came from heaven: "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well pleased."

Mark tells us that Jesus prayed when He began his public ministry.

Mark 1:35 (NASB)

³⁵ And in the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left *the house*, and went away to a secluded place, and prayed there *for a time*.

Luke tells us that He prayed on the eve of selecting the 12 apostles.

Luke 6:12-13 (NASB)

¹² Now it was at this time that He went off to the mountain to **pray**, and **He spent the whole night in prayer with God.** ¹³ And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles:

Luke also tells us that He was in prayer when He was transfigured and Peter, James, and John beheld His glory.

Luke 9:28-31 (NASB)

²⁸ About eight days after these sayings, He took along Peter, John, and James, and went up on the mountain to **pray.** ²⁹ And while He was **praying**, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing *became white and gleaming.* ³⁰ And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, ³¹ who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure, which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

Luke also tells us that He even died with a prayer on His lips.

Luke 23:46 (NASB)

⁴⁶ And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into Your hands I entrust My spirit." And having said this, He died.

But there is no record of such a prayer as this of any length at all, other than just a few brief words. And so, this prayer takes on monumental significance because the whole prayer is here for us to read.

This morning I want us to just look at the first five verses as Jesus speaks to the Father about Himself in anticipation of the cross. His one and only desire in these verses is that He will glorify the Father so the Father can glorify Him.

Stand and Read Scripture

John 17:1-5 (NASB)

¹⁷ Jesus spoke these things; and raising His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, so that the Son may glorify You, ² just as You gave Him authority over all mankind, so that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. ³ And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. ⁴ I glorified You on the earth by accomplishing the work which You have given Me to do. ⁵ And now You, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world existed.

Prayer

It begins with the words, "**Jesus spoke these things**" – referring to what is contained in chapters 14, 15, and 16. They contain a lot of what Jesus said to the eleven disciples in the upper room at that Last Supper and on His way to the Garden of Gethsemane.

After spending all this time with His apostles, and having made profound and far-reaching and rich promises to them, He immediately follows that with this prayer. He knows that all this of which He has spoken, all the truths that He has given, all the promises that He has made will only come to pass in the power and will of the Father.

And so, Jesus calls on the Father to fulfill all that He has promised by lifting up His eyes to heaven which is a common prayer posture. **He identifies God as "Father"**, which also occurs in verse 5, verse 21, and verse 24 which is a typical address. This is the way that

every child to refers to his earthly father. It marks familiarity, a closeness between the Son and the Father, and it is the way that Jesus addressed God every time He prayed to Him in the New Testament gospel records **except one**. That prayer was when He was on the cross and separated from God because of our sins that He had taken on and said, “**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**”

The first thing He says in this opening part of the prayer is critical. “**The hour has come.**”

How many times throughout the gospels, do we hear Him say, “My hour has not yet come”? There were occasions when they would have killed Him in Nazareth or forced Him to be a king in Judea, and in each case He avoided the inevitable from a human viewpoint because His hour was not yet come.

But now the hour **has** come. Jesus is aware that for every single event predetermined by the will of God, there is an hour. The hour of which Jesus speaks has finally come. And we could ask the question, “**What hour is it?** What time is it on God’s clock? It is the time to die on the cross for the redemption of mankind.

The hour has come in which the Son of Man, the Son of God would end His humiliation and yet be more humble. It is the time in which He would terminate His labors and yet suffer more than ever. It is the time in which He would end forever the sacrificial system and, at the same time, be the final sacrifice. It is the time when all prophecies concerning the Messiah would be fulfilled. It is the hour for which every man of God longed. It is the hour upon which the salvation of every person who will ever enter heaven depends. It is the hour of triumph over sin. It is the hour of triumph over the prince of this world. It is the hour of dismissing the old and ushering in the new. This is the hour for which He came. And He knew exactly when it was.

So let's look at the three ways mentioned here that the cross manifested Christ's glory.

BODY:

I. JESUS WAS GLORIFIED BECAUSE HE PROVIDED ETERNAL LIFE

John 17:2-3 (NASB)

²just as You gave Him authority over all mankind, so that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. ³And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

The first glory of God that comes in the death of Christ is the provision of eternal life.

Here is the first and most obvious glory in the cross for which Christ and the Father is to be honored: They provide eternal life. This is the greatest and most undeserved gift ever given by God. It is given to unworthy sinners. And what is this eternal life? It’s not a duration of life; it’s a kind of life. It is a life, verse 3 says, that is defined as knowing God, knowing Him in the fullest sense, knowing Him - the only true God – and knowing, in the fullest sense, Jesus Christ whom He has sent. It is entering in to full, saving, intimate, complete communion with God. This is the first glory in the cross and eternal life is the greatest glory as far as the sinner is concerned.

II. JESUS WAS GLORIFIED BECAUSE HE LIVED IN PERFECT OBEDIENCE

John 17:4 (NASB)

⁴I glorified You on the earth by accomplishing the work which You have given Me to do.

The second thing that we see here, just looking at them briefly, is not only that the cross shows the glory of God in the gift of eternal life, but secondly, **because He lived in perfect obedience.**

He said He came to do His Father's work. He said He came to do His Father's will. He said, "I only do what the Father shows Me; I only do what the Father tells Me; I only do what the Father desires Me to do. I do nothing unless the Father shows Me to do it."

And so, He is saying, "Not only do I see Myself glorified in the coming cross, because there we are providing **eternal life**, but there I will complete my earthly life of perfect obedience." Looking beyond the cross, for a moment, He says, "**I glorified Thee on the earth**" as if it's all over, as if He's looking back." And He is saying, in essence, "I have been totally obedient, right down to the very end, even there in the garden, agonizing, sweating great drops of blood, agonizing over the anticipation of separation and sin-bearing, yet He says, "**Not My will but Thine be done.**"

The cross comes to an end with the words of Jesus, "**It is finished.**" A life of perfect obedience from birth to death, perfect righteousness, perfect submission, perfect compliance, and perfect obedience. And it had to be that way. If Jesus had obeyed God all the way to the very garden experience and failed to obey to the cross...if He had stopped short of the cross, it would have proven that there are some lengths to which the love of God and the love of Christ will not go. And therefore, the love of God and the love of Christ would be imperfect. It is the glory of the cross that provides everlasting life, and it is the glory of the cross that is the evidence that the love of God, along with the wrath of God, has no limits.

By going to the cross, Jesus showed there was nothing the love of God would not do for His own to redeem them and bring them to glory.

III. JESUS WAS GLORIFIED BECAUSE HE RETURNED TO THE FATHER

There is a third glory in the cross to which Jesus makes reference in verse 5. The cross was a glory to Him because in it He provided eternal life, and in it He demonstrated perfect obedience. And thirdly, when He completed His mission, He will finally be able to return to the Father and regain the glory that He had had from the beginning.

John 17:5 (NASB)

⁵And now You, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world existed.

This is the desire on our Lord's part for acceptance. His desire was for the Father's verification, for the Father to say, "**Yes**, You have done the work that provides eternal life. **Yes**, You have offered the perfect obedience and **Yes**, now You may come home to the glory that You had with Me before this all began."

The cross is the way home for Him. He yearns to go home to the Father. He yearns to be restored to the full, blazing glory that He knew before He humbled Himself. This is the joy of a return. This is a joy of a mission accomplished. This is the joy of restored fellowship

with the Father, salvation provided, Satan defeated, sin destroyed, death killed, and now home to the Father.

Is the glory that He is asking for something He did not already possess? NO! He isn't going back to any greater glory; He could have no greater glory. He is fully glorious as God. Being God there are no degrees of glory. He is asking for no more glory than He had eternally and will have eternally because there isn't any more glory. It is just a wonderful completion of His redemptive work, and the restoration to the glory that He had at the very beginning.

He had accomplished His mission. He died; He rose; He ascended. Paul described the scene when He went back to heaven.

Philippians 2:9-11 (NASB)

⁹ For this reason also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and *that* every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus was sent by God from heaven to earth to accomplish a mission. When it was finished He returned to God. For Him, the cross was the gateway to glory. Glory for the Father who sent Him, glory for the sinners He came to redeem, and glory for Himself.

As we think about Good Friday, think about it in these terms – not the agony, not the scourging, not the execution that was so painful, and not even the hatred of His own and of the Romans. Think of the cross as a time for **glory**, because that is how our Lord Jesus and God the Father saw it.

CONCLUSION:

Jesus was not caught unaware of what was coming. He knew of his mission that His Father had sent Him to do.

Allow me to read a passage from John where the Greeks came to Philip and Andrew and wanted to see Jesus and Jesus foretold of His death.

John 12:23-30 (NASB)

²³ But Jesus *answered them by saying, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ The one who loves his life loses it, and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it to eternal life. ²⁶ If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

²⁷ “Now My soul has become troubled; and what am I to say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came out of heaven: “I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again.” ²⁹ So the crowd who stood by and heard *it* were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, “An angel has spoken to Him!” ³⁰ Jesus responded and said, “This voice has not come for My sake, but for yours.

The glory of God is not a material beauty, but it is the beauty that flows from His character. We were created to glorify God. Even the heavens and the earth exhibit God's glory. Everything that we do and say should be done for the glory of God. We are the vessels which “contain” His glory. All the things we are able **to do** and **to be** find their source in Him.

God interacts with nature in the same way. Nature exhibits His glory. His glory is revealed to man's mind through the material world in many ways, and often in different ways to different people. One person may be thrilled by the sight of the mountains, and another person may love the beauty of the sea. But it is God's glory that is behind them both.

Since God is the one from whom glory comes, He will not leave unnoticed those who claim that the glory comes from our accomplishments, from mankind, from idols, or from nature.

Romans 1:21-25 (NASB)

²¹ For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their reasonings, and their senseless hearts were darkened.

²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible mankind, of birds, four-footed animals, and crawling creatures.

²⁴ Therefore God gave them up to vile impurity in the lusts of their hearts, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. ²⁵ For they exchanged the truth of God for falsehood, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

In other words, they looked at the object through which God's glory was coming, and, instead of giving God the credit for it, they worshiped that animal or tree or man as if the beauty it possessed originated from within itself. This is the very heart of idolatry and is a very common occurrence. Everyone who has ever lived has committed this error at one time or another. We have all “exchanged” the glory of God in favor of the “glory of man.”

This is the mistake many people continue to make: trusting in earthly things, earthly relationships, their own powers or talents or beauty, or the goodness they see in others. But these things will eventually fade and fail. What we all need to realize is that God's glory is constant, and as we journey through life we will see it manifested here and there, in this person or that forest, or in a story of love or heroism, or our own personal lives. But we must realize that all of those glories originate from God.

Colossians 3:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ Whatever you do in word or deed, *do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.*

Family of God.