

John 17:1-5

¹ When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you,

1 Jesus knew the time had come. He was referring to the time of being handed over to the Romans to be beaten and crucified. He was completely aware of what lay ahead of Him (Luke 18:32,33). This was an epoch moment in history upon which the future of mankind hinged. Jesus began His prayer by acknowledging that He understood the importance of the moment. Though we will never be faced with anything remotely as influential as this moment in Jesus' life, we do face moments of great importance for us. How we pray and react to the circumstances we face will affect many lives. We can begin our prayer by acknowledging the importance of the specific issues at hand.

Last week we saw that the issues we face are part of a great cosmic war. We see the lures go by that would drag us to hell, and the great attraction of love that would bring us into eternal communion with God. When you pray, recognize the seriousness of the battle we are in and how it affects that moment in your life.

Do you find it strange that Jesus would ask the Father to glorify Him? If I started off the prayer before the service by praying, "Glorify me!" You would probably think I was an egomaniac. The Old Testament declares that God will not give His glory to another (Isaiah 42:8; 48:11). So why would Jesus begin praying like this? It is partly because they are one (John 10:30). If Jesus is glorified, the Father is glorified (John 1:18). He is not making a selfish request. Jesus is asking for glory in order that He may glorify the Father.

The world's idea of glory and the heavenly view of glory are quite different. The word can have as common a meaning as to honor or magnify. And the word "magnify" has two meanings. When the world honors someone, when they are magnified (exalted) they come under the magnifying glass and that usually brings to light the person's flaws. When a politician is exalted, the opposition will do nothing but hunt for flaws, real or imagined, to discredit the person. But when Jesus is magnified what do we see? We see perfection. We see the heart of God manifest. We see love beyond our comprehension. To glorify can mean to reveal the beautiful attributes hidden within. That is the use in Jesus' prayer.

Jesus set aside His visible glory to become a man (Philippians 2:6,7). Now Jesus is simply asking that the attributes that are within be manifest to mankind. That is about to happen, but not in the way we would think. If we asked to be glorified, man would think of adding titles to our name, of demanding respect wherever we went, or the recognition of others as being someone special. When Jesus asks to be glorified, He is talking about the cross. Does that shock you? How is that glorious? How can that humiliating torture be glorious?

The cross of Jesus is the visible manifestation of God's glory, His heart of love for you. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son (John 3:16). The picture of perfect love, grace, and justice that we see in the cross of Jesus brings glory to the Son and in doing so brings glory to the Father. Jesus loved us so much that He went to that extent to redeem us (Romans 5:8). The Father was willing to have His heart broken to the extent of seeing the One He loves face hell for you. That is glorious!

The path to glory is the same for all of us. I am not speaking of the world's kind of temporal honor, but of a demonstration of God's glorious heart. Taking up your cross, dying daily, and following Jesus is glorious (Luke 9:23). You certainly would not have the world's honor, but you will be demonstrating the heart of God (2 Thessalonians 2:13,14). The Scriptures tell us you share in the glory of Jesus when you do that. When you suffer for the sake of Christ, you, as members of the body of Christ, are showing the world the love of God (Romans 8:17). In that sense, you too can pray, Father glorify me that I may bring glory to You. We are asking for God to help us take up our cross daily and follow Him. That is difficult in our land of luxury. In many nations Christians are dying glorious deaths as martyrs. Will we die daily for the glory of God?

² since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.

² Jesus is recognizing a new era has arrived. The disciples who were listening to the prayer would have understood that Jesus was speaking of two of the important terms in the passage about the Son of Man in Daniel 7:13,14. Did you notice the authority and glory that Jesus just prayed about? By faith He had already received the authority for He was set to fulfill everything the Father called Him to do. He was about to receive the glory. A new age had arrived.

The authority given to Jesus was to give eternal life to all that the Father had given Him. It was authority to claim back from Satan those who would put their trust in Jesus. It was an authority He made possible through taking our place on the cross, dying in our place, receiving the justice that was due us.

After the resurrection He will remind the disciples of the authority given Him when He commands them and us to take the message of the gospel into all the world (Matthew 28:18). He received authority because of His willingness to submit to His Father even to death on the cross (Philippians 2:8,9). With that authority He tells us to submit to God and in doing so we too have an authority that comes from God to lead people to eternal life. It is not that ultimate authority that Jesus has, but it is an authority in the Spirit to speak the words of God, to declare the gospel, to tell people the answer to their need. We call people to repentance and to the cross with the same authority that called us.

³ And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

³ Here again, Jesus' words indicated to the disciples that a new age was dawning. Jesus' prayer here would have reminded them of a well-known text from Jeremiah. Jeremiah 31:34 Eternal life is not just living forever for life is more than breath. Nor is knowing God merely an intellectual attainment. Eternal life and knowing God go hand in hand. Listen to this quote from the non-canonical book, the Wisdom of Solomon 15:3 "*For to know you is complete righteousness, and to know your power is the root of immortality.*"

The Hebrew culture used the phrase "to know" to describe the intimacy of a married couple (Genesis 4:1). This intimacy of the heart is what Jesus is referring to. An intimate relationship of love with God is eternal life. It is to really live. Jesus was praying for us to have the relationship that He had as a man with God. Jesus knew He possessed

eternal life because He lived in an intimate relationship with God. That is assurance. Do you have that assurance? He wants you to have it; but remember that it involves relationship and relationship is built on spending time together, living life together (Isaiah 30:21).

This declaration of Jesus is under attack today more than ever. Our culture demands that we be politically correct and acknowledge that all gods are equal. We have seen attendees leave because we simply cannot stay faithful to the words of Scripture and do that. We cannot even be consistent with this prayer of Jesus and say that. There is only one true God. He is gracious and invites all in, but He is not the same as Allah or Buddha or Krishna or the Universe. He alone is God! There are surely individuals in those cultures and religions that look to God's mercy, but that mercy is made possible for them through Jesus Christ, God's only provision for sin (John 14:6).

⁴ I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.

⁴ We return to the concept of glory. Jesus prayed to be glorified so He could bring glory to the Father. We saw how that pointed to the cross, the ultimate display of glory. Here He mentions one way He had brought glory to the Father up to that point, by completing the work He was assigned to do. Ultimately that work is the cross, but up to this point it was daily obedience to the Father. He said what the Father told Him to say. He did what the Father instructed Him to do (John 8:28). That showed the heart of God, which brings glory to God. Jesus was faithful in the least (His whole earthly life), and now He was about to be faithful in much (His death) (Luke 16:10).

We also bring glory to God by completing the work He gives us to do. We all have a calling. It is not just missionaries and preachers who are called (Romans 8:29). There is not a believer who does not have a calling from God. Some think their calling is insignificant, but every calling brings glory to God and that is never insignificant (1 Corinthians 12:22-24). In fact, some of the hidden callings that require faithfulness and do not receive any recognition are some of the most glorious.

Remember God's word to those entering the kingdom, "*Well done good and faithful servant*" (Matthew 25:21). God does not say, "Well done servant with the most visibility or notoriety," for God is not impressed by those things. He is looking for faithfulness (Hebrews 3:2). That is what brings Him glory. Could we ask for anything more than to come to the end of our earthly days and be able to say with Jesus, *⁴ I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do?*

⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

⁵ Before the world began, Jesus' glory was manifest (Proverbs 8:23,30). There were no creatures to witness it. There was none but the Holy Trinity who could gaze upon it. Throughout eternity past, Jesus was all glorious. Then the Father called the Son to set aside that resplendent glory and live as a man. He willingly did so, so that He could share His glory with us (Hebrews 2:10). He made His glory manifest again through obedience that led to the cross. Then He invited us to do the same through the power of His Spirit (Luke 9:23). We see His glory manifest on the cross and the resurrection, but we will one day also behold that same glory that the Apostle John saw in the Revelation, the resplendent glory of Jesus at the right hand of God. (1 John 3:2).

Now, Jesus asks us to bring glory to God by finishing the work He gives us to do. He asks us to enter and share His glory (2 Thessalonians 2:14). That is something I cannot really fathom. Knowing the sinful creatures that we are, I can say it is only possible because of Jesus' sacrifice and amazing grace. It is only possible through love that is greater than I can comprehend. Day by day we come to know Him, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, and we taste eternal life. Read 2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV) That is glorious!

- *Why is this passage so important?
- *Why did Jesus want to be glorified?
- *Explain the difference between worldly and spiritual glory.
- *What is eternal life?
- *How can we bring glory to God?
- *What is God looking for in our lives?