

**Reading:** John 17:1-5

**Theme:** Completion and restoration.

The theme of the first part of Jesus' high priestly prayer is that of glorification - for Himself, yet by His glorification, He desires the Father is glorified. The glorification of the Father by the Son and the Son by the Father is the greatest thing God could do for this world as by this completed mutual glorification, the world has a secure hope. In this glorification our salvation is accomplished and Jesus can, with authority, give eternal life to all the Father has given Him and we can know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.

Yet the Lord Jesus does not end this section on praying for Himself on that great note, but He further prays and takes us to an even higher sphere of consideration as He points us to His already having glorified the Father and moves on to the prospect of future glory for Himself with the Father. He asks very awesome things - which one commentator says reaches beyond man's understanding. As part of our studies in the upper room discourse, we will try to get some idea of what vs 4-5 speak of. Let's look at 2 things:

### **1. Glorifying by completion.** (v4)

The Jews claimed to do God's work, but even as Jesus spoke, they'd plotted, planned and were on the way to capture Him to have Him executed. In contrast to this, the Lord Jesus says emphatically "*I, myself have brought You glory, glorified You on earth*". While Jesus was on earth He brought honour, respect, glory to the Father and all He is. If we look back on the life of Jesus, then we see a remarkable God glorifying life - by all He is, says and does.

Jesus is God the Son, with humanity upon Himself, and He always glorified the Father. There was glory to God in the highest from angels at His birth; shepherds came, saw and went away “*glorifying and praising God for all the things they’d heard and seen*” (Luke 2:20). Even the Jewish rulers acknowledge this - in private at least e.g. Nicodemus’ words in John 3:2. Go through the Gospels and see how many times it is recorded the people praised, thanked, glorified God concerning the Lord Jesus and the things He did or said. Jesus made known the glory of the Father (John 1:14).

The miracles of the Lord Jesus reveal the glory of God over creation, disease, death and demons. The way Jesus perfectly kept the law of God brought glory to God. He spoke only that which would please God, did only that which would please His Father. This was the aim of His life and work. It doesn’t stop there. For all Jesus did glorified the Father and Jesus says here, on the threshold of His betrayal, crucifixion, death and resurrection, that He was glorifying God on earth by completing, finishing the work God had given Him to do - which would include His death and resurrection; the full accomplishment of that plan of salvation which was in place since eternity past. Here Jesus spoke in past tense - as if it had been already finished, completed, as He knew He would most definitely finish it. His death on our behalf, taking our sins’ punishment upon Him, to become our substitute, taking our punishment from God on our behalf was all to be accomplished, yet it was so certain that He could speak of it as completed, finished.

Only He could say that - for as God, He knew all that lay before Him, yet knew He would succeed in this work given Him by the Father. No one else from Adam to any of us, could ever say such and it be true. Yet it is our duty, honour even, to do as God wants and do the work He has for us. We are to remember that God has a work for us all to do in this world. It is a work only we can do and we are to do it for God's glory. We are to know our work and do it. Our roles may change over the years - learners, leaders, pioneers, teachers, supporters, helpers - all are roles we may or may not be involved in at different times of our life's service. Some may be called to prepare the way for others, to remove obstacles, or sow seed, to make preparation for various works, but the important thing is to do what we can do for God's glory and to realise we are to do our part truly and rightly in all we do.

We may not seem to have a great role, but every part of the church body is important and necessary and we all have our part to play. The same is true with every believer in a local church. I want to encourage you to use your gifts and abilities as you are able, even to develop new skills; maybe to take the risk and be involved in something in which you may feel you are out of your depth in and for, but do it asking God to equip you as you serve Him.

Do the work that God has given us to do. Yet even if we do all we can, we are still unprofitable servants - but still greatly loved. Only the Lord Jesus can say He had completed, finished His work. In saying this, Jesus uses the same root word which He cried out hours later when He was on the cross

*“It is finished”* which emphasises it is finished, completed and nothing more to do.

All of Jesus’ life and work was to honour and glorify the Father - especially so in His sufferings and agonies of the cross. These especially magnify the Father’s glory because the glory of the Father is so precious. The Father’s glory, the worth of the Father, that which sinful mankind would set as nothing, would hold in contempt, is held up before all Creation and Jesus says in effect *“It is worth suffering for, worth dying for, worth bearing the agonies of eternal wrath for, because it brings glory to God the Father”* Jesus’ glorifying the Father in the accomplishment of our salvation is the foundation, the sure foundation of our salvation - it’s not our worth or deserving, not a shallow sentimentality in God, but the worth of God’s own glory, to promote the praise of His name the glory of the gospel - for the glory of God is revealed in the way of salvation. The Lord Jesus glorified the Father by completing the work He had been given to do. Now in v5 we see:

## **2. Glorifying by restoration.** (v5)

Once more Jesus returns to the theme of this section - for Him to be glorified (v2). This is not a selfish request, not even an unexpected one; for, as we have seen, His own glory would glorify the Father; but here in v5 we move away from the earthly realm, in which Jesus had already glorified the Father; in which He would go on to glorify the Father in accomplishing salvation for us, and here we are pointed upward to the heavenly, eternal realm.

The Lord Jesus had said a number of times He was returning to His Father. Here His prayer is very specific - glorify me - not in the realm of earth alone, although that would be involved throughout history and one day completely, but “*in your presence*” (NIV) - literally “*in the presence of Yourself*” a strange thing to say! Surely “*glorify me*” would have been enough.

Yes, it would have been for us mortals - if it were said about the company of angels alone it would be enough, but Jesus is not asking to be lifted up and exalted in the sight of such exalted creatures. Jesus wants to be glorified in the very presence of the Father whose glory, majesty, splendour cannot be viewed by mere creatures. Read of the accounts of God’s glory in OT - on Mount Sinai; in Isaiah 6; in Ezekiel 1; in the poetic descriptions of the Psalms and you realise angels cover themselves when they are in the presence of this holy and glorious God and yet His burning glory at the same time attracts and yet causes fear to all God’s creatures. Look at the view mortal men had “*in the likeness of...*”; In Isaiah 6, Isaiah himself feels useless, weak, dirty and fearful at the vision of God’s glory and yet Isaiah still wanted to serve Him.

In NT, what portraits are given us, especially in the book of Revelation - John is terrified at the vision of the one “*like the son of man*”; all in chapter 6 want to hide from the face of Him sits on the throne! The glorification process of the Lord Jesus is not something little. I’ve seen the crown jewels twice – in Tower of London and on an EMW camp when we went to Margam Park and there were the crown jewels on display - imitation ones with plastic gems and bits of glass etc. made

by a local school! Jesus' true glory is His full glory in His Father's presence - with the glory of the Father rightly His.

This was not something arrogant for Jesus to ask for, but was a restoring, reinvesting of the glory that was His by right, that He had delighted in, had possessed from eternity past as God the Son. It was a glory He had possessed even before the world, before creation began. For the sake of accomplishing our salvation He laid that glory aside, that glory was hidden from view, He emptied Himself of all its brilliance and humbled Himself to become a man. He forfeited that glory for our sakes and God the Son was able to walk this earth with His glory hidden from view. He could live among us and not cause us terror or harm. He did not consume us who are sinners by His awesomely glorious presence, but was able to live and work with this glory veiled.

Now here His work, mission, commission are all about to be fulfilled, completed. Glory had been brought and would be brought to the Father. As a consequence of that, the Son longs to be home in His native and natural place - heaven. Then, as if to encourage Himself on in the final awesome completion of His work, He dwells on and considers that which is set before Him - glory, the restoring of the glory that He had in the Father's presence, with the Father, before time began. We are told that for the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, despising its shame.

We are told very little of the details of this restoration to glory, this investiture of the Son (Psalm 24?). We know that it was not a de- incarnation – for the glorified Son of God retains His

humanity, now glorified, now possessing a glory we cannot even begin to understand. He has glorified human nature and sovereign deity in resplendent, magnificent harmony and glory with no limitations; now, as the God-man He sits enthroned in glory forever more. All the fullness of the godhead dwelt bodily in Christ when He was on earth and now in heaven it still dwells in Him, but is now gloriously revealed.

In Philippians 2:1-11, we are told of the stages of Jesus self-abasement and humiliation. Then we are pointed to His glorification in His Father's presence and He has been exalted to the highest place, hyper exalted. He has been exalted not only as God the Son, but as the Saviour, the One who glorified the Father on earth and completed the way of salvation for us. Now Jesus reigns and rules as the Saviour King. He ever lives to save to the uttermost those who go to Him and He makes intercession for them and is the Mediatorial King.

The Saviour we learn of in the Bible, which we teach, is not of some whim, or some nice, but useless little god, but is the glorified Saviour God! He knows all about our lives - it's hurts, sin, worries, troubles etc. and He can deal with it all. Our sin most certainly; all our personal and family problems; He knows, cares and can help us in whatever situation we are in.

It is this the Saviour we know, love and serve? Do you know Him as your Saviour? Have you seen He is the One the Bible speaks of you needing to believe on? It may seem incredible that He would receive you, but He calls you to Himself if you

are weary and heavy laden, and He will give you rest. The Lord Jesus commands, royally and sovereignly commands you to believe, to trust Him and He will not turn you down or cast you off - ever!

We need to consider well His glory at this moment, to realise He willingly emptied Himself of such glory to be our Saviour, He willingly suffered indescribable horrors to save the likes of us and as such He shows He is a glorious, wonderful Saviour, who well deserves the praise of those who He has already saved, indeed the praise of all mortal creatures.

One day, as we read in Philippians 2, every tongue **will confess** that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father – such will be said either willingly or reluctantly. Yet on that day no one will be able to withhold saying it. Yet for many it will be said with great sorrow that Jesus Christ is Lord, but He is not their Saviour and they are lost; for others it will be said in gratitude, amazement and love for this One is and was their Saviour in their lifetime. I urge you to be in the 2<sup>nd</sup> group and that you'll be able to say now and then “*Jesus is Lord and my Saviour.*” For He really is a glorious and a lovely Saviour to have.