

Reading: John 17:1-5; Philippians 2:5-11

Theme: Jesus glorifying the Father.

Last week we did an overview of John 17 which has been called Jesus' high priestly prayer. It is unique, for it is the prayer of the incarnate Son of God to His Father in heaven; this relationship is very noticeable throughout the prayer. Last week we noted the timing of the prayer - at the end of the evening in the upper room, following on from Jesus' teaching, and the institution of the Lord's Supper. It was prayed by Jesus knowing His time, His hour had come - the hour of His suffering and death, of His accomplishing salvation, but we saw in chapters 13-16 He was conscious of the hour of His departing to the Father through the way of the cross, but He was also aware of His resurrection, ascension and coronation.

The prayer can be divided into 3 parts, helpfully shown in the NIV and other modern versions. Here in this first section, the Lord Jesus prays for Himself, but we will only be looking at v1 this morning and will do so using 3 headings to open it up - to touch on something of the amazing truths it contains:

1. The great request made.

Jesus knew what lay ahead for Him, but He does not pray to be saved from that hour, from all the horrors the cross would involve. Jesus makes this amazingly great request "*Glorify your Son*". This does not mean that God had not been glorifying His Son, but the request is made that in a unique and unmistakable way the Father would glorify the Son. It is not even "*Glorify Me*", but "*Glorify your Son*" - as if their relationship is presented as a further incentive for the prayer to be fulfilled. Jesus desired to be glorified as the Son of the Father. This request is repeated and filled out in v5...

Jesus knew who He was— the Son of God— and therefore glory was His by right. He is the One who was at God’s side and face-to-face with Him from all eternity (John 1: 1, 18). Jesus knew that He had come from God and was going back to God, that the Father had given all things into His hands (13: 3). This is not the language of a mere man. Our Lord was intimately familiar with the OT and He knew the Lord had declared “*My glory I will not give to another*” (Isa. 48: 11). Yet here He desires that the Father glorify Him in all that lay ahead of Him and rightly desires that which was His by right as the Son of God and the glory His Father had promised to give Him.

In the Bible, the glory of God is the external demonstration and expression of God’s being and His invisible attributes and perfections. We catch glimpses of such in all the wonders of Creation. The word “glorify” has the meaning to praise, to honour, to cause to think more highly of and this was Jesus’ aim in all He did for His Father. In John 5:23 we learn that the Son should be honoured as the Father is honoured and those who do not honour the Son, do not honour the Father who sent Him. The glorifying Jesus was speaking of was intrinsically connected with His dying in shame, with unspoken horrors coming on Him on the cross. Yet because of that, He would be praised by people from all over the world, throughout all ages as He had taken their sin and its punishment on Himself. Because of this He would be glorified – clothed with splendour, with glory - as shown in v5!

Here the Lord Jesus desires the Father to reverse that self-emptying, self-humbling process that was part and parcel of

the incarnation and to restore to Him the splendour, the glory and majesty He had eternally shared before He came into this world as the Saviour. This hour of His suffering is seen by the Lord Jesus as a most glorious hour, as through it He willingly completes the Father's will of accomplishing salvation, saves His people, defeats the devil openly. The obedience, love and power reflect glory on Him as does a saved peoples' praise and adoration through all time and eternity.

In Romans 1:4, Jesus is declared to be the Son of God with power through His resurrection, how much moreso is He declared to be that by His ascension to the right hand of God and His coronation as King overall. The cross, His resurrection, ascension and exultation are inseparable and linked together. Incredibly, the awful shame and suffering of Calvary is going to mean nothing less than the glorification of the Son.

The Lord Jesus knew all that His suffering and death would involve, but He sees beyond it to the reward of His finished work – His exaltation to the right hand of God and given the name above every other name. Yet at this point we need to pause, for in praying “*Glorify your Son*”, the Lord Jesus is declaring He is determined and willing to go to the cross, to obey the Father, to fulfil the plan of salvation. In this, Jesus declares He is willing to go through the shame, pain and agony to redeem people like us and through such indescribable agony, to be glorified. The cross and the crown went together.

The Lord Jesus was willing to endure such so He could save you and me. Vernon Higham says in a hymn verse about

heaven “*For there are the children of mercy. Who praise Him for Calvary’s pain.*” Can we personally praise Him now for Calvary’s pain? Has it struck us that this glorified One in heaven can be our Saviour? That’s a small glimpse of the great request made.

2. The great purpose behind such.

The great request was made not as an end in and of itself. Yes, to view the Lord Jesus glorified by the Father is amazing; it is desirable as right and proper. To have the Son crowned in glory and given the name above every other name is right. Yet that is not the end or the purpose of His work and suffering. Jesus desires, longs for the Father to be glorified - “*that Your Son may glorify You.*” About this stage in my preparation, I wondered if I could phone in sick or perhaps do something easier - like 1 Chronicles!!

It is easy to say the purpose of this request was that the Son should glorify the Father, but when it comes to grasping that, to explain such, then scholars, commentators and I myself find it so difficult. Here the Lord Jesus wants all His exaltation, all the honour and praise He receives from the Father, from angels, from redeemed, even condemned people to resound to the glory of the Father. Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Jesus’ example shows His desire to be glorified was not self-centred, not selfish, but was to glorify the Father further and to enjoy Him forever.

All Jesus did, was in willing obedience to the Father, so that all will think more highly of the Father i.e. glorify Him. The display of Jesus’ glory was to correspondingly give glory to the Father. The glory of the Son and the Father is a mutual

glory. Any glory, honour and praise given to Christ would not distract or diminish the Father's glory, but would establish and magnify it.

This hour for which Jesus had come to the world, would not only display Jesus' glory, but also the Father's glory. All the divine attributes are here revealed. William Gadsby wrote these words in his hymn "O what matchless condescension" *"In His highest work, redemption, see His glory in a blaze; nor can angels ever mention aught that more of God displays. Grace and justice here unite to endless days."*

The Father is glorified in the Son's consecrating Himself to fulfil the whole vast plan and scheme of redemption – v2 & 3 links into this. Nothing brought such glory to God the Father as the completion of the redeeming work of Christ – by His incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension and exaltation and giving eternal life to His people through the ages.

In Jesus' death we have the attributes of God magnified, brought to fullest expression: **God's righteousness** - His holy, just righteousness is seen in that the Father spared not His only begotten Son who was made sin, but delivered Him up to the burning wrath deserved by us in whose place He was on the cross. We see **God's love** fully expressed - in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. We see **God's wisdom** fully expressed - He made the way to reconcile Himself to sinners and sinners to Himself. **His Justice** is expressed - sin is punished, yet **His forgiveness** extended to those worthy of condemnation; but He is still just as He justifies sinners. There is no miscarriage of justice with God. Even **God's wrath against sin** was fully expressed as the eternal punishment of

our sin fell on the Son He loved, who was made the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. This could only be done by a full and complete punishment being laid on the Lord Jesus instead of us. As Augustus Montague Toplady expressed it (From whence this fear and unbelief?) - *“Complete atonement Thou hast made, and to the utmost Thou hast paid whate’er Thy people owed; how then can wrath on me take place, if sheltered in Thy righteousness, and sprinkled with Thy blood? If Thou hast my discharge procured, and freely in my room endured the whole of wrath divine; payment God cannot twice demand, first at my bleeding Saviour’s hand, and then again at mine.”*

All the glory of the Saviour echoes and magnifies the glory of the Father. The Son desired this, was taken up by this throughout His life’s work and ministry. Now, as He faced the hour of His departing to the Father, He prayed to be glorified to glorify the Father. Jesus was the mediator, the go-between from God to man and from man to God and in this work, He would be glorified and glorify the Father. Everything Jesus went through He did for the sake of God’s glory. All His pain, shame, humiliation and dishonour serve to magnify the Father’s glory because these show how infinitely valuable God’s glory is, such willing suffering would to show the value and worth of God’s glory. When we consider the awful pain and death of the perfectly innocent and infinitely worthy Son of God on the cross, then we hear that He endured it also that the glory of His Father - spoiled and mutilated by sinners, might be restored, then we know that God has not denied the value of His own glory; He has not been untrue to Himself; He has not ceased to uphold His honour and display His glory; He is just and the justifier of the ungodly.

Realise the foundation of our justification, acquittal and forgiveness is not a flimsy sentiment in God, nor shallow claim of human worth. It is the massive rock of God's unchanging commitment to uphold the glory and the worth of His own glory, to promote the praise of His holy name and to vindicate His righteousness. The God centredness of God is the foundation of His grace to the ungodly. If God were not committed 1^{stly} to vindicate the worth of His own glory, there would be no gospel and no hope, for there would be no glorious God. This is the purpose for which Jesus made such a great request.

3. Practical lessons.

There are lessons for us to learn here - the first is it that it must affect our desires, lives and praying. We can have a tendency to spiritualise our selfish desires, but we need to constantly and truly aim at the glory of the Father and the Son as we live and pray. Our aim is to be "*Hallowed be Your Name*" first and foremost in our lives! This will safeguard our praying for our own lives and needs - that all we go through would be for God's glory and honour.

This will enable us to focus on things correctly and see things as they are to be viewed from heaven's perspective. Whatever situation of life we are in, we can ask God to use us to bring glory to Him. As we go through difficult providences, these are to be prayed over in such a God glorifying way, as are our happy providences. We are to make it our aim to glorify God as our chief end and therefore to enjoy Him in all He sends our way. It does not mean it will not hurt or grieve us, consider what glorifying God cost the Lord Jesus!

Will we be serious in glorifying our God and Saviour? Is He worth it? Or isn't He? If we think not, then we belittle the most glorious One of all, whose glories cannot be grasped by even archangels! If anyone watching or listening is not a Christian, then we dishonour Jesus who the Father glorified. Unbelief is not a little or an indifferent thing in the view of heaven. Angels are amazed, glorified believers in heaven are staggered and your unbelief is an offence to God Almighty and we are condemned at this moment in such unbelief!

Consider well the Son and the Father; the mutual glorification in Jesus' death, resurrection, ascension and exhortation. Consider such and take this wonderful Saviour as your own Saviour. When that is done, realise this glorious Saviour has promised to receive you as His child; so, go on to live to glorify and please Him in all you do, say or think. Go on to live lives to make people want what you have. Go on and love Him with all our hearts, souls, minds and beings. For only He is worthy of living for and loving in this way. I pray we would learn from this first verse of this high priestly prayer and bring glory to our Saviour in all we are, do, think and speak.