

Jesus Prays for Glory

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[0 : 00] And then we'll look back at John chapter 12 in a little while. But I wonder when we hear the word glory, what comes to mind?! Because it's important for us to think about our own relationship to glory! And then to think about the relationship Jesus has with glory as we see it here.

Often, I suppose, glory is something that we seek after or we strive for, that idea of accomplishing something and to be recognized for it. The drive to achieve success and to be celebrated for achieving a particular goal.

You know, we might think about it in the world of sports, or we might think about it in the world of the academy. But it's important for us to understand that for Jesus, He already has all glory.

He is the eternal Son of God. And so, He's not praying for glory because He is lacking glory.

Rather, this prayer is all about His glory being manifested and celebrated.

So, it's important that we have that in our minds. I think there's another important qualification because sometimes, and this is maybe a more negative aspect of glory, sometimes glory and success can bring separation from other people.

[1 : 22] Here's what I mean. In the Easter holidays, we went to Biarritz in France, and the week after we left, there was a big Chanel opening, and lots of celebrities turned up.

We missed them, or they missed us. But one thing that was obvious from looking on the pictures is that there was heaps of security. And anywhere where a celebrity went, there were barriers that were sure to follow.

And so, with the glory of reaching the top and being one of the best, being the elite, can create separation. And in the part of the person who has reached their goal, perhaps they forget their roots or they ignore the little guys.

Now, think about Jesus, and this is important because some people might have that idea. The Bible tells us that Jesus is now fully glorified and exalted in heaven.

Has He forgotten about us? Is He too far above us to be concerned? And the answer is absolutely not. The Jesus that we meet here, the heart of Jesus here is unchanged in heaven.

[2 : 28] He is still our loving and compassionate Savior and High Priest. The one who prays for us then before the cross is the one who still prays for us. For us today. Another thing that we associate with glory, and I think this is something that Jesus wants for us, is that glory is something that we see with a sense of wonder.

Maybe it's a performance, some kind of art or music. Or perhaps it's the panorama of a glorious sunset. Or maybe it's last week seeing the cherry blossoms out in full force in the meadows.

That glory that stops us in our tracks. That makes us gaze with a sense of wonder. That beauty that captures us such that we want to hold on to it.

It's important as Jesus prays for glory for us to understand that He knows us. He knows the weakness of our human frame. He knows our lives.

He knows that we are often faced with pressures and busyness and life and relationships are complicated. And sometimes we are also trapped by the mundane.

[3 : 33] And so Jesus' prayer becomes for us an invitation to lift our eyes to discover and to rediscover His awesome glory.

That this prayer is a drawing out of us towards our chief end, our purpose in life. What are we made for? We're made to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

We're made to find our purpose by enjoying the glory of God forever. And so Jesus prays for navigating life well. Here is a great north star for us to follow.

The glory of God. The glory of Christ Jesus, His Son. So we're going to think about this phrase, glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.

I want to suggest three agreements that Jesus' prayer calls us to. First of all, to agree with the Father in glorifying the Son. To agree with the Son in glorifying the Father.

[4 : 43] And finally, to agree that God's glory is indeed our greatest good. So the first thing to look at, agree with the Father in glorifying the Son.

We need to understand when Jesus prays glorify your Son, that that prayer is rooted in His Father's will. This isn't something that comes from human origin.

You know, when the church proclaims Jesus is Lord, Jesus is worthy of glory, that's not a human invention, but rather that's God's idea and plan for His Son, that His Son receive and be celebrated for having all glory.

And to help us to see that, turn back with me to John chapter 12 from verse 20 onwards that Andreas read for us. This is a turning point in Jesus' ministry.

We've been seeing a rising tide of Jewish opposition and unbelief. And now, there are some Greeks who come, and they come with this request.

[5 : 51] Sir, we want to see Jesus. And as Jesus hears about this, what does He say in verse 23 of chapter 12? He replies, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

So Jesus comes into the moments around the cross with that understanding. That this hour of His glory, it's the time of His suffering and death, before His resurrection and His exaltation.

And He knows and He understands two things. He understands the cross is His Father's will and that the cross is a means of bringing the Son glory. The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

And then He goes on in verse 24 to use that image of the grain of wheat. Some of us have been planting seeds. To plant a seed that appears to be a death that goes down into the ground, and we don't see it.

But later, life springs up. And Jesus speaks of His own death, followed by His resurrection. But in His death, there is new life and eternal life and salvation that will spring up in many hearts.

[7 : 09] So Jesus faces His death, understanding it's God's will. And He's praying that He'll be glorified in this moment because He knows He's come to accomplish salvation.

That in His death, there is life for many. Now, how will the Father give the Son glory? Again, to go further in John chapter 12 and at verse 32, there's a glory that is associated with Jesus being lifted up.

Look at verse 32. And I, when I am lifted up, can also mean exalted, when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw people to myself.

There's a play on words there. Jesus will be lifted up physically on a Roman cross. And of course, that's normally a place of shame and pain and suffering and death.

But at the same time, it's also a lifting up and exalting to display the glory of God in salvation. To help to see the connection, actually, we can turn to the book of Isaiah.

[8 : 11] That famous chapter, chapter 52 and into chapter 53, the most famous of what are known as the servant songs.

And it's introduced in this way. Isaiah 52, verse 13. This is anticipating the future ministry of this one known as the servant of the Lord.

And as that passage goes on, we are told more of what it looks like for this servant to be lifted up and to be exalted.

And it involves, in part, the servant of the Lord being despised and being rejected. Taking up our pain, our suffering, our sin.

Suffering as the sin bearer. It looks like this servant of the Lord experiencing the curse of God, the wrath of God in the place of His people.

[9 : 16] He will die in the place of sinners. So, there will be the humiliation of the servant. But then there is also the lifting up and the exalting.

Verse 12. Having accomplished God's great plan of salvation. Isaiah 53, verse 12. Therefore, I will give Him a portion among the great, and He will divide the spoils with the strong.

There is reward, there is glory, because He poured out His life unto death and was numbered with the transgressors. For He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.

So, we're told in the book of Isaiah that God's coming servant will be lifted up and exalted because of His God-glorifying obedience.

And Jesus knows He's come to fulfill that role. Now, how else will the Father give the Son glory? Back to chapter 12 of John's Gospel, verse 32.

[10:19] And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. Now, that's striking, especially in the context of the Greeks coming wanting to see Jesus.

Our social media age has a way of calculating glory, I think. How many subscribers does a person have? How many followers? How many views? How much cultural influence and cachet does that person have?

Now, compare that with the glory God the Father gives to His Son, Jesus. And we begin to see just how shallow and temporary and tiny earthly glory is compared to the glory that belongs to Jesus. Compared to the glory of Jesus. Compared to the glory of Jesus. To the fact that Jesus has such an influence on lives that it shapes us for time and into eternity.

Jesus will have glory as He draws all people to Himself. Again, to think about the significance of here's some Greeks coming.

[11:32] Remember that the Bible has always said that Jesus' kingdom mission will be a broad one. It will always involve the nations coming to Him. It was there in that promise given to Abraham that one of your descendants will be a source of blessing to all people.

It's there in Psalms like Psalm 67, Psalm 87. The missionary impact of the church, of the servant of God, in expanding the kingdom through the nations.

It's there in another word from Isaiah, Isaiah 42. That this servant of the Lord, He will be a light to the nations. It would be too small a thing just for Him to be for Israel.

He must be a light leading people to God from every nation. And so, as Jesus prays approaching the cross, He knows that this lifting up and drawing people is going to be worked out in Him.

In His life, death, resurrection, then return to glory. Jesus understands that in His death, He will give life.

[12:48] In verse 31 of John chapter 12, Jesus says, Jesus looks at the cross and He understands this is the moment where the forces of darkness will be judged, where victory will be gained over them, over the world, that whole system opposed to Jesus.

Jesus, a decisive victory over the devil himself. And in that victory, there is then the possibility for drawing all people to Himself.

Because those great enemies, that great opposition, those great barriers have now been removed. And here is the good news that Jesus prays for. He prays the gospel, doesn't He?

He prays knowing that God had created mankind to live in perfect friendship with Him. Jesus, of course, understands that people have rebelled and have offended God's justice.

That God in love and mercy has made an eternal covenant of peace. That the Father would send the Son. And that Jesus comes in history to be the mediator between a holy God and sinful people.

[14:01] That Jesus Himself, the Son of God, will take our guilt and sin and pay the penalty on the cross before His resurrection. Showing that the Father is fully satisfied with Jesus' work of salvation.

And so now Jesus can grant forgiveness of sin. He can grant to us the status of being declared righteous before God to all who will trust in Jesus.

To all who will have faith. And Jesus knows that faith is a gift. As Jesus draws all people to Himself. As He calls people powerfully into His kingdom to receive and to enjoy eternal life.

So when we hear Jesus praying, Father glorify me. This is not pride. This is God the Son praying completely in alignment with the Father's will.

And because that is so, this prayer is answered. And we see it answered whenever a person turns from sin to trust in Jesus. Whenever anyone is transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.

[15:15] If you're a Christian here today, your faith is evidence that Jesus' prayer is answered. The global church today is proof that the Father continues to put the glory of Jesus on display.

Not just in a tiny corner, but among the nations of the earth. One more way the Father gives the Son glory.

And it's there in His prayer in John 17 verse 5. And now, Father, Jesus prays in John 17 verse 5. Glorify me in Your presence with the glory I had with You before the world began.

And so we see and we hear from Jesus. This isn't a new glory. He has eternal glory. And He is looking forward to being welcomed back to that glory. In the ancient world, a victorious king in a great battle.

They would return home. And there'd be a great procession. And there'd be trumpets. And there'd be cheering. And there'd be welcomed with honor to take up the throne again. And defeated enemies would be trailing in their wake in humiliation.

[16:21] And we love to sing Psalm 24. Throwing wide the gates that the King of glory may enter. That King, of course, is Jesus, the glorious King of heaven.

Welcomed back to take that place. Having triumphed over Satan's sin and death. Having gained eternal life for His people. He returns to His place of glory.

And so Jesus' prayer reminds us that He's always had it. He'll always have that glory. And Jesus, now that He sits in heaven, He has been given all authority over His church.

That's part of the glory that He receives from His Father. The glory of being declared King of kings and Lord of lords. Being king and head over the church. We hear that authority that Jesus has given in the Great Commission.

It's why we pray in the name of Jesus. It's why we trust that it's Jesus is the one who's building His church. It's Jesus who gives spiritual gifts to His people. From His place of glory in heaven.

[17:27] And so it's good news for us that God the Father answers Jesus' prayer. It's loud and clear from Scripture what God the Father's verdict on the Son is.

He is glorified. He is exalted. And our great calling is to make sure that our verdict lines up with that of God the Father.

So we're called to agree with the Father in glorifying the Son. Let's now look at the second phrase. Glorify your Son that your Son may glorify you.

So now we're called to agree with the Son in glorifying the Father. Father. There's lots of concern today. Lots of research being done.

Lots of books being written. All around the topic of digital distraction. And we've probably read some of those articles and podcasts even while we have been digitally distracted at the same time.

[18:25] The social media age has us losing our attention. Losing our capacity towards deep focus. It's because there's so many notifications and alerts and different things calling on our time and attention.

The Danish philosopher, Christian philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard. He said, to achieve is to will one thing. This is wonderful.

To will one thing. But how do we do it? With so many voices and so much noise. How can we will one thing?

It's part of the beauty of Christ in the Gospels. What do we see in Jesus? We see a life utterly committed to one thing. To the Father's will.

We see a life utterly dedicated to the kingdom of God. To the commandment to love. To seeking the Father's glory.

[19:25] And we hear it here in John 17. Remember, this is just hours before Jesus' arrest and He knows it's coming. Unjust trial.

Beatings, scourgings, squippings, death. He knows it, yet He still wills one thing. He wants as the Son to glorify His Father.

And as Jesus glorifies His Father through His work on the cross, He does it by achieving our salvation. He said much the same thing in John chapter 12 as He was facing His hour.

Listen in to verse 27. Here's another prayer of Jesus. Now my soul is troubled. And what shall I say?

Father, save me from this hour? No. It was for this very reason. I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.

[20:34] Then a voice came from heaven. I have glorified it. And I will glorify it again. All of Jesus' life. All of His active faith and obedience.

In all His commitment to be our representative by perfectly obeying where we disobey. All His life in His calling to be our Redeemer.

To live and then die in our place to secure our salvation. He is concerned for the Father's glory. In securing our salvation.

And we hear it in these words of Jesus facing death. His instinct is the same. Not preserve my life, but glorify Your name, Father.

Nothing is going to shift Jesus from this great purpose in His life. To exalt the glory of God. What was Jesus' chief end? To glorify God His Father and to enjoy Him forever.

[21 : 40] And Jesus will magnify that glory. Highlight it. Put it in neon sign. By saving sinful people like us.

And so we have Christ, the beloved Son. And we hear Him pray for His Father's glory. And we understand that nothing gives Him greater pleasure than the Father's smile of approval.

And so He prays. So that you and I, we can share that pleasure too. Because in Jesus' salvation, He would change our heart of stone and give us a heart of flesh.

So that we would truly want to love our God and Father. When we hear Jesus pray, we hear Him pray as our great high priest. And He's come to represent us before God.

And He knows that God is glorified when any sinner turns from death to life. From sin to find salvation. And so He prays for His people as He prays for His Father's glory.

[22 : 48] Here is Jesus praying as our mediator. Interceding for us, representing us. And He lives the life we should, but we don't. And He prays the prayer we should, but we don't.

To God, be the glory always. And He prays that in His death and resurrection, in the salvation that He secures, our hearts would be changed.

So we would desire God's glory more and more. As we listen to Jesus praying, we're listening to our King. Bringing glory to the Father in establishing the kingdom of God by His death and resurrection in our hearts and lives.

And this same King will in the end hand the kingdom over to His Father, we're told. 1 Corinthians 15, 20. So that God may be all in all.

Jesus lived a life utterly committed to seeking His Father's glory. The life of Jesus from beginning to end was a life that willed one thing, the glory of God.

[23 : 54] And what He achieved because of that was our salvation. Think about that as we face a coming week. In all the things that we could do, in all the things that will pull on our time and attention, many of those things legitimate, some not so much, even in the temptations that we have to seek our own glory, are we willing to lay them down or to place them underneath that one great aim?

To achieve what you and I, in the end, were made for. To glorify and to enjoy our God. Jesus shows us the one thing to will above all.

The glory of God in our lives. So that takes us to our third thing. As we think about the prayer of Jesus, He wants us to agree that God's glory, in the end, is our greatest good.

I came across a story this week by Joel Beeky, the theologian and pastor. He tells the story of a chap by the name of William Montague Dyke. It's a great name. William Montague Dyke.

It suffered an injury, an eye injury, at the age of 10. That at that time rendered him blind for a good number of years. But it didn't stop him going to university.

[25 : 17] And at university, he met the daughter of a British admiral. Admiral? Not admirable. He may have been an admiral. And they fell in love.

They got engaged. And there was going to be a big wedding. And not long before the wedding, there was a new development in the world of medicine and in eye surgery.

A new type of surgery was being developed. And Montague heard about it. And he agreed to have the surgery. He was told it's risky. It might not work.

It was very much early trials. But he had the operation anyway. And he made the decision in his recovery phase that he wanted, if he was going to see again, he wanted his first sight to be of his new bride.

And so he made the decision that while his eyes were recovering, he would keep the bandages on until his wedding day. And so on their wedding day, there was this remarkable scene of the bride coming down the aisle in all her beauty and glory.

[26 : 26] And then at the front of the church, William Montague Dike was having his bandages removed. And for the first time in weeks, the light was penetrating.

And his eyes opened and light flooded in. And he could see. And he saw as he wanted his beautiful bride. And with tears, he said, you are more beautiful than I ever imagined.

In Jesus' prayer, that he be glorified and his father be glorified, we need to understand that Jesus is praying for us.

That he is praying that we might have our spiritual eyes opened. To see in the Lord Jesus and in the gospel a captivating beauty.

To live as people of hope that one day we will see Jesus. And we will be with Jesus. And we will be made like Jesus.

[27 : 31] And we will see him in all his glory. And we too one day will say, you are more glorious and beautiful than I could ever have imagined. Until that day, with this prayer of Jesus in view, let me encourage us to two things.

First of all, with Jesus, to seek God's glory above our own. The context for this prayer reminds us of the pattern of Jesus' life.

He was willing to suffer first. To experience humiliation. To wear the crown of thorns before the crown of glory. As we seek God's glory above our own, will we pray for servant hearts?

To be ready and willing to sacrifice for other people. Because we are waiting for a future glory that goes beyond anything.

So we don't need to fight for our own glory. I mentioned last week the Puritan Anthony Burgess. He had a phrase that stuck with me.

[28 : 43] I like it. He said, we should pray that any comforts or advantages we are given become ways to give God glory. That's how Jesus prayed.

Jesus prayed for His own glory so that the Father would be glorified. If God is good to us in any way, can we join Jesus in praying?

May I use that comfort or advantage so that God, in the end, gets the glory. He gives us the privilege of a job. He gives us family and friends. He gives us a relative measure of wealth and prosperity.

If He does any good in our church, may that be not for our glory but for God's. And as we seek God's glory above our own, can we pray for a heart for God's glory in this world?

To pray for God's local church and global church. I tuned in to a recent funeral. And as the minister was talking about the man who had died, he said, because of illness, he hadn't been able to get out for a long time, hadn't been to church for a long time.

[30 : 01] But he said he soared in prayer across the globe, praying for the church in Africa and Asia and Latin America. Can we pray, give me a passion for the name of Jesus, for our church, for our city, for the nations of the world?

Seek God's glory above our own. And secondly, let's ask that we would see the glory of Christ more clearly. Because that's what we need, to be captivated by that one beauty above all.

To pray for our eyes to be lifted up to the one who is lifted up and exalted for us. To see the King in all His glory and His beauty.

Because that, when we have that captivating vision of Jesus and His glory, that's what helps us to fight against sin in our own lives. And that's what helps us to face trouble and temptation.

As we look to Jesus and we know He faced trouble and temptation too, but He never sinned. And He is with me and He is for me. And from heaven, He has power and love to help me in this moment.

[31 : 11] As we see Jesus in His exalted glory, we understand He is our friend in the highest place. Who has acted for us and who prays for us.

And one day, for those who trust in Him, we will see Him, the King, in all His glory. Let's pray together.

Lord, we thank you.