

John 17:1-5

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[0 : 00] John chapter 17, verses 1 through 5. Please stand for the reading of God's word. When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour has come.

Glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Well, good morning.

It's great to see many of you here today. Just to be able to have the pleasure of being in the presence of some of our congregation is accentuating our praise.

[1 : 22] What it is to be human, in some sense, requires the presence of one another and the stimulation of one another on in our love of Christ.

It has been quite a year. Let me introduce our message today, our time in God's word on that sentiment.

2020 is shaping up to be a rather inglorious year. We've just tipped over the halfway mark, and many of us are ready to declare it done.

Ready, as it were, collectively, not merely individually, to turn the calendar and to see something new emerge.

It's a noteworthy year, yes, but a praiseworthy year, not so much. There are any number of things to occupy us, but there are a scarcity of provisions that are actually satisfying us.

[2 : 31] There is little yield given the labor. A fatigue, a collective fatigue, a citywide, countrywide, global-wide fatigue on the year 2020.

We are wrestling with the loss or the departure of lives who left too early unjustly, and if yesterday is any indication, we are also lamenting the loss of life that labored long courageously.

And where does one go? Where do you go? Where do we go in such a year as this? Interestingly, I love the way our text begins.

Jesus, of course, after he had spoken these words, these words that he was giving to his disciples in light of the fact that he would be departing from this world unjustly very soon, it says here now that he shifts from speaking to them to speaking to God.

He speaks from providing words that will help them in his absence to actually the intimacy of union with his Father.

[4 : 08] Do you see it? After he had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father. This is where we go.

We take our eyes from off of our individual and collective circumstances. We take our minds off of the cultural upheaval in which we find ourselves living, and we lift our eyes with his into heaven that we might hear and perceive the purposes, plans, and the pleasures of God.

That's really all I want to get through this morning. I want you to take your eyes off our world for a moment.

Believe me, it'll be there 25 minutes from now. I want you to take your mind off of our seemingly cascading demise into the latter half of the year.

And I want you to put your eyes with Jesus. Follow his eyes to heaven. Follow his voice before the Father, and discover for yourself both the purposes of God, the plans of God, and the pleasures that can be yours, even in this day.

[5 : 48] The purposes of God are right there, early on, verse 1. He says, Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.

What are the purposes of God? That he would get the glory due his name. Notice Jesus' prayer. Certainly, it's glorify the Son, but it's that he may glorify you. That God, who dwells in the heavens, is to receive a glory, something praiseworthy, the honor that's due his name.

Which leads every indication to the truth that he is not receiving the glory from earth that he deserves. The scriptures say that we don't naturally glorify God, that we don't give thanks to him, that we live our lives shielding ourselves from him, that we don't linger on his beauty, but rather we just live out our own ends.

And as a result, he is cheated. He is lessened in weight, stature, brilliant eminence. And when Jesus comes, he prays in the midst of all of the world's circumstances, Father, glorify me that I might glorify you.

[7 : 28] This is the ultimate, final, complete purposes of God for the world. A proper honoring that's befitting of his person.

That's what Jesus longs for. That is ultimately the very purposes of God. And notice, just as he prays that in verse 1, the text closes with that same sentiment in verses 4 and 5.

Let me just put it to you as clearly as I can today, as you labor your way through this year.

What is God's purpose? His own glory. He would receive from you, from me, and from us, the honor that is rightly due his name.

And that will require us to take our eyes off of ourselves and consider him. Notice, that glory, which is the purposes of God, is only connected to the glory that the Son will receive.

[8 : 51] There is a dynamic connection between the Father receiving glory and the Father bestowing glory upon the Son. That the Father receives glory is connected to the Son's glory.

It's intertwined with one another. That God will not be glorified or receive the honor due his name outside of what Christ accomplishes for the glory of God.

And so, in one sense, you could actually elongate then, what is the purpose of life? The purpose of life is that God is glorified, in this text, in the hour, most supremely, where Christ is crucified.

God is glorified as Christ is crucified. So, whatever is praiseworthy of God, whatever is honorable in God, whatever is to be exalted in your mind concerning God, it will be somehow related to the cross of Christ manifesting the great beauty of God.

Notice the way it's phrased here in verse 1. And he says, Father, the hour has come. Or even down in verse 5. And now, Father, now in this hour.

[10 : 14] In the hour of what? In the hour of my death. This little phrase, hour, has been running through the book like a thread that can be pulled with great import.

Chapter 2, the wedding at Cana. He indicates to his mother, My hour has not yet come. Chapter 7, his brothers want him to go up and make himself manifest in all of his glory to the city.

And he says, It is not yet my hour. Chapter 12, which is probably worth looking back on, you begin to see clearly that the hour of Christ's glory is connected to the hour of Jesus' death.

You can see it clearly in chapter 12, verses 23 and 24. And Jesus answered them, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

Truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone. And if it dies, it bears much fruit. He connects that hour to his death.

[11 : 21] And he even did that in chapter 13, didn't he? When he talked about his departure out of the world. Chapter 13, verse 1. He knew that his hour had come in which he would depart from the world.

What are the purposes of God for the world in which he is created? It was that he would receive all the glory due his person. But that would be connected to the hour of Christ's crucifixion.

And the hour of Christ's crucifixion is necessary because we have so ingloriously honored his name. The purpose of God is the glory of God made manifest in the crucifixion of Christ to make amends for our own dishonorable ways.

Let me say it to you some other ways. God should receive more weightiness than we are putting upon him.

God is worthy of more weight. He is worthy of more honor. He is worthy of being exalted by your mind and in your voice.

[12 : 43] He is to be brilliantly imminent. And he is praiseworthy supremely in Christ's death. Perhaps we think so little of God in our day, never lingering long over the cross.

Perhaps that is the reason for which we don't understand the purposes for which we are made. But take a look. It moves, the text does in verse 2, from the purpose of God to the plan of God.

It's very natural, the logic here. In other words, if this is what God is doing, glorifying himself through the crucifixion of his son, then to what end?

How does he actually accomplish that? Well, it moves from purpose to plans. Chapter 17, and in verse 2, here is the plan of God.

This is how he carries out that glory. Since you have given him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you have given to him.

[13:49] The plan of God is this. God will not be satisfied until he has given eternal life to all those for whom Christ died.

If God is not glorified outside of Christ crucified, God is not satisfied outside of giving life to those for whom Christ died.

So, just as Jesus prays, Father, glorify me as I glorify you, he now says, just as that happens, just as you have given me authority over all the living, give to them the life that would be bestowed upon them in your giving.

The plan of God is to give eternal life to all for whom Christ died. Now, this is an amazing plan carried out in time through this mysterious condescension of the second person of the Trinity, this one who was God of God, light of light, veiled in flesh, now see him on this earth, giving life.

This is what Christ is saying, that you gave him authority over all the living for the purpose of giving life to all whom you have given him.

[15:19] This is God's plan. Let me just roll through some phrases that put his purposes and plan in parallel form.

Glorify me, he prays, so that I would glorify you, just as you have given authority to me, he prays, so that you would give life to them.

God is glorified as Christ is crucified. God is satisfied as eternal life is given to those for whom Christ died. The praiseworthiness of Christ, of God, is related to the death of Christ.

The plan of God is to bring into relationship with himself, you and me, into life. Let me just think on that for a moment because now our minds are far beyond our own individual or collective circumstances.

The plan of God in this year, in this year, is to take a most inglorious year and to steal that inglorious year for his own glory by bringing life to people who do not yet know him.

[16:36] And what is this? What pleasures are there for you in the remainder of this year?

Look at verse 3. This is eternal life that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

It's the center of the text. The text almost feels as though it has been pushing from the outside in this prayer for glorification which unfolds the plan of what he accomplishes in his death and which now leads to this knowledge of God, this knowing of God, this eternal life that is given, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

You and I come to know God through Christ. What is this eternal life? There was a time, and occasionally I still do, indicate that I wouldn't mind being alive at a time when I would be the oldest living person in the world.

I know many people are like, why would you ever want to do that? But for me, if you can make it to like 117 years, you've got a shot. You've got a shot at being, for a moment as it were, perhaps a day, the oldest person on the planet which to me just seems like a certain glory all of its own.

[18:16] That is, of course, if you could hear and see and speak and move. That's not what's going on here. Eternal life is not in an eternal number of days here.

Thank God, right? Thank God. Eternal life is not measured by the number of days here. It's measured by knowing God.

You can know and be in relationship to God through Christ by faith beginning now.

This is something that really encompasses, I guess I would say, pleasure. Wherein is the pleasure of your life? It has to be connected to the purposes of God for which you were created.

That is His glory. How does one come to understand those purposes of God which would give you pleasure? Well, as you unfold His plan in giving Christ for the substitution of your sins.

[19:28] How does one enter into a relationship of actually knowing God, living with God, walking through the remainder of this year not with some dogged step of perseverance but as though this

year would move from the most inglorious year of your existence to the year where you set out and live for His glory.

Where the night of Christ's death would be the day, the dawn of your life. This is what people talk about when they talk about giving your life to Jesus as the most pleasurable act of faith you can do while in the land of the living.

This is eternal life that they would know you. Not merely take a philosophy of religion class and learn about the religions of the world and what they claim to have some bearing of knowledge on God but knowing God knowing God do you know God I think of it today even at the passing of J.I. Packer yesterday with a landmark book that he wrote decades ago called Knowing God and knowing God must be related to coming to the cross of Christ receiving his death as satisfaction for your sin that you might involve!

yourself in the purposes of God and give the rest of your days to the glory that is due his name let me put it this way then in closing 2020 while it is shaping up to be the most inglorious year in our collective memory for some time today in this room in the privacy of your own home on a collective community group couch under a tree in this city you can enter into the most glorious truths known unto man and you do so by taking your eyes off of all the things that have robbed you of joy and lifting your eyes into heaven with Jesus and hearing his words and believing them for in his words you are come to know the purposes of

[22 : 05] God the plans of God and the pleasures that are yours at his right hand forever more this is eternal life that they know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent do you know God do you know him are you in relationship to him do you understand his plans for the universe and therefore how in Christ he has fulfilled a plan for you do you know your purpose in life well how can your purpose in life be distinct from God's purpose for the world are you glorifying God with your life are you honoring God with your life are you giving to him all the praise worthiness that is do his name if you do then the worst of years can be the beginning of the best of life our heavenly father as we consider the first of what will be three weeks in this lord's prayer i ask that you would arrest many who hear the weakness of these words with the truthfulness of their source that we would come to grips in this year with your purposes and plans in ways that through faith give us great pleasure we give ourselves to that in jesus name amen well hopefully you can get