

Jesus prays for himself

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[0 : 00] for the last few chapters of John. So we're reading the whole of chapter 17, although we'll be concentrating on the first verses in the sermon.

Starting at verse 1, chapter 17. 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, since you've given him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you've given him.

And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you've 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.

[1 : 16] I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

Now they know everything that you've given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them, and have come to know in truth that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me.

I am praying for them. I'm not praying for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.

All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you.

Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you've given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

[2 : 29] While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you've given me. I've guarded them, and not one of them has been lost, except the son of destruction, that the scripture might be fulfilled.

But now, I'm coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I've given them your word, and the world has hated them, because they're not of the world, just as I'm not of the world.

I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I'm not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth.

Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake, I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you've sent me.

[3 : 49] The glory that you have given me, I've given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me, and loved them, even as you loved me.

Father, I desire that they also, whom you've given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, that you have given me, because you loved me, before the foundation of the world.

O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I've made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me, may be in them, and I in them.

Amen. All right, good morning.

If I haven't met you before, my name is Rob, and I'll be speaking for the next three weeks, on the prayer, on Jesus' prayer. So it's going to be split up into three parts, just so you're aware. If you are new, we have actually been going through the book of John as well, and we've picked it up again this term, and have been going through the last few chapters, and we're up to this point now.

[5 : 25] So if you have a Bible, then please open it to John chapter 17, and we will be focusing on verses 1 to 5. I think it's been really helpful, how the service was introduced by Matt, and how Alex has prepared us for this passage with the kids talk.

Isn't it great how the kids talk really kind of opens things up for us, even our adult minds? And I think one of the things you might have noticed is that there's something unexpected going on in this section of the Bible.

There's kind of a missing in communication between two different groups. Now, I've been married for 24 years, nine months, and 23 days, and I can tell you, I can have a whole conversation with my wife, and come away with very different expectations of what was decided in that conversation.

I don't know about you. Yes? No? But the expectations that you carry into a conversation very strongly shape what you expect as the outcome, or what you think the outcome is.

There's all kinds of different ways this plays out. I read some research recently that said that when people test new flavours for potato chips, what they discovered is that the suggested flavour that they give you when you taste the chip strongly influences how you perceive that taste, so much so that your perception is actually much closer to the taste that they tell you at times than it is to the taste that it actually is.

[6 : 58] We are so strongly wired to kind of expect and look for the outcome that we desire, or the outcome that we're fed, that we actually anticipate that's going to happen.

And that's what we find here in this section of John. Let me just recap by saying that this has been a big week for the disciples. A big week in the sense that they were hoping and anticipating for. It's festival week.

That's where they've arrived in Jerusalem. At the beginning of festival week and it began with a triumphal entry. And you can read about that in John 12, 12. The whole city gathered outside to welcome Jesus and threw their cloaks on the road.

And Jesus came in from a particular entry point that meant that he came down from a hill that overlooked Jerusalem. So not only could he see Jerusalem laid out before him, but the whole of Jerusalem could look back up and see this procession.

This noise, this cacophony of noise as people celebrated Jesus come in. And as they did, that crowd declared Jesus to be king. Jesus agreed with the crowd that it was time for him to be glorified, but not in the way that they expected.

[8 : 08] There seemed to be a disconnect between what the people expected on the one hand and what Jesus meant on the other. And so we have this festival week playing itself out and then we actually have the culmination of that in festival night.

And this actually began with a role reversal. We all need to be washed by Jesus. Do you remember that scene? If you're not familiar with the Gospel of John, Jesus got down on his feet and did something that the slave, the house slave would do.

He washed the feet of his disciples. And in doing that, he taught them that we all need to be washed by Jesus. He then taught them that all his disciples will suffer like Jesus.

He promised that all his disciples would receive the Holy Spirit. But then he also said something that was really contrasting with what their expectations were. You see, Jesus, who was supposed to be the forever king, told them that he must die.

So this conversation keeps playing out and it's frustrating, isn't it? Because we know the ending. We've had the spoilers. We know what happens. And we're listening and reading what these disciples are thinking and saying and just thinking, wow, there's still this disconnect between what the disciples expect and what Jesus is actually saying.

[9 : 29] And even as we have this, the development of this, this triumphal entry, this festival period, at the beginning of chapter 17, we get a transition point, a major transition point in Jesus' life.

And John signals this transition in verse 1. So if you've got your Bible open or your app open, here it is, verse 1 of chapter 17. When Jesus had spoken these words, and that's the words that, the teaching that Catherine said that he'd just been finished doing before he prayed.

So even when Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour has come. This is a major transition point in Jesus' ministry.

Up until this point, he's been saying, my hour has not yet come. It's a repeated refrain throughout the gospel. In fact, if you read in chapter 2, verse 4, 4, verse 21, 4, verse 23, 5, verse 25, and 28, 7, verse 30, and 8, verse 20, then you'll see that that's what Jesus says.

It's not my time. My hour has not come. And what that does is it builds anticipation for this hour. When John says in verse, chapter 12, verse 23, as he enters, you know, as he's entered Jerusalem, he says, the hour has come.

[10 : 53] Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is the transition. The focal point of Jesus' ministry is now. But there's this disconnect between what the disciples expect that to mean and what Jesus means as he says it.

So we have this transition point in Jesus' ministry, this pivotal point that come, that distills right down to this transition point in the evening. Remember Simon said as he led us last week, he introduced this as the longest night in the Bible in terms of how many chapters are applied to it.

It is the longest night in that sense. Bear in mind that the Jews actually determined the days by sunset, not sunrise.

So for the Jews, this was actually the longest, this would have been the longest day. It would have been a part of the next day, which we'll discover what happened on that day, on that whole day, shortly. But there's this disconnect between, still, between what the disciples expect and what Jesus is saying.

And as we've watched that conversation unfold, we've seen in that confusion that the disciples barely cling to the bare bones truth that Jesus is from God.

[12 : 14] They don't understand what he's going to be doing, but they can barely hang on to that. And even that belief, if you know how the story unfolds, even that belief will be tested to breaking point within the next few hours.

So Jesus prays. Now, I don't know about you, but I know that if I was to consider the things that I pray for as Matt urged us to do at the beginning of the service, and I was to consider how I would like to see my life unfold into the future, I've got to say that there's a whole bunch of stuff in my life that I wouldn't have written in.

There's a whole bunch of stuff that challenges my understanding of the goodness of God, his loving care, his fatherly concern for me as an individual, my expectation of what it means to be a beloved children of the all-powerful one true God.

Friends, if you have any of those kind of disconnects in your life, then this prayer is for you because this prayer helps us to understand who God is, what he's about, and why his way is so much richer than ours.

So Jesus prays, and that prayer has three parts. First, Jesus prays for himself in verses 1 to 5, and that's the bit we'll be looking at today. Second, he prays for his disciples, and that's in verses 6 to 19.

[13 : 38] And then thirdly, he prays for the believers to come, and that's in verses 20 to 26. But for himself, just in a nutshell, Jesus prays that the surprising glory of God would be revealed in him.

Jesus prays that the surprising glory of God would be revealed in him. Prayer means petition or request. And Jesus only asks for one thing, one request, to receive glory.

glory. He says in verse, the second part of verse 1. So turn back to chapter 17, verse 1. He says, Father, the hour has come. Glorify your son that the son may glorify you.

That one request? Glorify your son. Now glory, that means to clothe in splendor, to make great, to exalt, to raise up high.

You could even say glory, to glorify someone means to worship them. Now I think, as we think about that, I think we take it a little bit too literally.

[14 : 50] So when we read to clothe in splendor, we start, you know, some of us really spend a lot of time on our appearance. You know who you are. Some of us actually seek glory or greatness for ourselves and pursue pathways that we believe will actually fulfil that, will deliver on that.

And some of us, when we're thinking about raising up, if it's not ourselves we're wanting to see exalted, we're raising up the wrong things in life, making central and vital to our happiness and satisfaction things that just can't deliver.

If we dig into this concept of glory a little bit deeper, as we think about how we're misapplying it and how we should apply it, what I want to say to you is this, glory is a state that can be seen and glory is a status that can be given.

There's two different aspects in terms of how the word works. If someone is glorious then we can see it when we look at them. If someone is glorious, has glory, then they can actually give glory to others.

So let's think about the state perspective, seeing it in someone. And I want to point you back to an illustration the Bible uses because I think that's one of the best ways of seeing this. In Exodus chapter 33 verses 18 and following, Moses actually asks God if he can see his glory.

[16 : 20] Let me read out these verses for you. They're up on the screen so you don't have to flick back and look at it. Moses said, please show me your glory. This is on top of Mount Sinai as he's having the conversation about receiving the Ten Commandments.

And God says to him, I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name, the Lord. And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

But he said, you cannot see my face for man shall not see me and live. And the Lord said, behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock and when my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft of the rock and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by.

Then I will take away my hand and you shall see my back but my face shall not be seen. What we discover here is that God is glorious by nature.

So glorious that we cannot look at him and live unless he places himself in the way as we do see him.

[17 : 36] So glory is a state that we can see and it's a status that can be given. It can be shared with others.

God only allowed Moses, if we go on to that and read that story further on when that event actually does happen so that's God telling him what he's going to do and then shortly afterwards God actually does it.

God only allowed Moses to get that filtered glimpse but it had an effect. When Moses came down off the mountain where he saw this glimpse of God he glowed and not just a little bit so much so and we can read about this in Exodus 34 verse 29 and following if you'd like to but so much so that when the people saw Moses they ran from him in terror.

He had to call them back say no it's just me and even that wasn't enough then you know him speaking Moses voice and saying yeah it's me don't worry calm down they actually had to introduce a rule to cope with his glowing his glowiness for want of a better word.

after Moses had been up on the mountain in God's presence and when he came back down again from the mountain he had to wear a veil. God's glory can be seen and in the presence of God's glory it actually pervades the things around him it pushes back darkness.

[18 : 58] I can only imagine what it must have been like for Adam and Eve actually walking in the unfiltered presence of God what they must have what life must have been like for them.

What we read here is that God's glory can be seen and it can be shared with others. But if Jesus is God why is he praying for glory?

Surely he has a right to it. He could have taken it if he wanted. And if we think back again this is what Satan tempted Adam and Eve to in the Garden of Eden. Not accepting the glory that God gave them as his image bearers in the world as his vice regents to rule over the world under him.

Not accepting that but desiring and taking more. And this is what Satan tried to tempt Jesus to in the wilderness as well. Not accepting the Father's will for him but establishing a kingdom of his own under Satan instead.

And friends this is what Satan is tempting you to every day. Not accepting the Father's will for you but thinking that your plan is better. The source of glory if glory can be given the source of glory is vitally important.

[20 : 20] And John makes this point in a little narrator's insert in John chapter 12 verses 36 to 43. So he observes that many people believed in Jesus but kept it secret. why?

Because they love the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God. We read in chapter 12 verse 43. They love the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

Where do you get your glory from? Jesus had a right to glory. He could have taken it if he wanted. But by praying for glory Jesus chose to be dependent on the Father for glory rather than seeking his own.

To be guided by the Father toward true glory rather than finding his own. One request Jesus had in that prayer in that first part of the prayer for himself that God would glorify him.

But even as he asks to be glorified Jesus had his eyes on something beyond that. His ultimate goal wasn't receiving glory. He was all about giving it.

[21 : 38] As surely as he had one request he had one goal and that was to give glory. And we read about it in that verse we just read earlier the second half of verse 1. Father the hour has come glorify your son that the son may glorify you.

Even in receiving glory Jesus' goal was to give glory. Receiving was his means of giving. So in this request what we get is more than a glimpse into the relationships within the Trinity.

Father glorifying the son son glorifying the father neither seeking what was rightfully theirs both seeking to give to share. father son and holy spirit raising each other up exalting each other devoted to glorifying each other.

Friends this has been the goal since the world before the world existed. It's just that all of time all of time itself has actually been moving toward this specific hour when that glory would be revealed.

This moment in Jesus' life this moment in world history and it's here in these verses. Think about Jesus praying this prayer and think about the kind of ministry that they've actually seen him in terms of how his ministry unfolds and what happens when he prays and when he prays prayers prays.

[23 : 15] I don't know about you but we have this tradition where we say grace before meals and there are certain times like Christmas dinner or things like that.

I can remember as a child it was such a trial to sit through grace. Ever since I've been I can remember I think there's a difference between grace and prayer and that is that grace is only like two sentences long or less and anything longer than that is prayer.

Grace is what belongs before a meal and you'd be sitting there waiting for this meal to happen and someone because it was a special occasion would take that moment to launch into this huge prayer and you'd just be wanting to open your eyes and look at the food and perhaps even steal some which I used to do because prayers couldn't get that long that I could actually finish chewing before people even noticed.

There are times when someone is praying and you're looking beyond it to the gloriousness that's to come and you've got to wonder what did these disciples think? Were they expecting something to happen here and were they almost tempted to open their eyes and see Jesus is praying for himself to be glorified?

What in the world is going to happen? The people already wanted Jesus to be king. We want Jesus to be king, they're thinking.

[24 : 37] Let's see what Jesus does as he prays his prayer. I've got to tell you now that it's even better than what they hope for. This is more than a New Year firework show to watch and be wowed by.

This mutual glorification is also an invitation to us. in the Trinitarian relationship we're getting a glimpse at something that we're actually being invited into.

It's not all about Jesus becoming king. It's about what that king does as a ruler of our lives. See we have one request which is to Jesus be glorified and we have one goal for Jesus to actually give that glory to the father as much as the father gives it to him.

And then we have this plan behind that glory which starts to unfold in these next verses. And that's to know this glorious God.

There's a plan behind this display of glory. Yes we should look at this extraordinary God and marvel but there's more to it.

[25 : 52] There's a plan behind Jesus' request that all of history has been moving toward. That we might know this God of glory. Jesus begins to speak about this plan in verse 2 and he says this since you have given him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.

Jesus' request for glory is based on God's eternal plan. He's asking for that plan to be fulfilled in him. So let us look at the requests of verse 1 and the basis, the since or because of verse 2.

I think I've got that in a slide. Have I? Is it going to show up? Nope, it's got boxes on it. That's the one. Yeah, okay. So there you can see, glorify your son that the son may glorify you on one side.

And then you have you've given him authority over all flesh on the other to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. glory on the basis that the plan has always been that God has given him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom the father has given him.

When Jesus asks for glory, he doesn't simply ask for something he wants. He asks in line with what the father has planned. It's a lesson we can learn there, isn't there, about prayer from that example.

[27 : 26] And the plan in verse 2 is to grant eternal life to those the father has given him. If they can understand this, then they'll understand what Jesus does next.

It makes sense of what he's about to do. Where he's about to go. And why that has anything to do with glory. And just in case they're not quite understanding, Jesus takes a moment to clarify things.

And he actually explains what eternal life is in verse 3. He says these words, And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. life. Did you notice how the life Jesus gives is expressed in terms of quantity, eternal life?

But the definition that Jesus gives is expressed in terms of quality. It's a life of knowing God. life. It's the fullness of life that Jesus spoke of back in John chapter 10 verse 10 when he says, I have come that you may have life and have it to the full abundantly.

[28 : 46] It's the thing that Satan stole that Jesus is offering back. Perhaps Jesus speaks in terms of eternity to give his disciples a bigger perspective of his imminent death.

Like this particular day he will die. Perhaps he uses the word eternal this time rather than abundant as he did last time because he wants to help them through the next three days. But the bottom line is this, eternal life is about knowing God, knowing the one true God and Jesus Christ whom he sent.

God is about making himself known and the point at which we see God in all his glory is at the cross.

One request, one goal, one plan and one result that God is glorified at the cross. Jesus fulfills the father's plan when he dies for us.

When Jesus prays God glorify me, he's praying bring on the cross. cross. And when Jesus dies on that cross, we get God for eternity.

[30 : 04] But more than that, we actually see God more clearly than we ever have done before. Throughout all of history, this is the point when we see God most clearly.

Through this moment in history, we see who God is with absolute clarity. In verse 4, Jesus prays, he goes on to pray, I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.

And just think about this, because though it's past tense, what Jesus is doing is actually speaking of his whole ministry here. It's literally hours away from being completed. So he's speaking about it as if it's all done, as an entire completed work.

And in its entire completed work, it can be summed up as this, a life lived to glorify the Father.

The cross is Christ glorified. At the cross, we come to know the one true God like never before or since. The way God describes himself to Moses comes to life in Jesus.

[31 : 14] If we look back at that moment, Moses did get that glimpse of God back in Exodus chapter 34. We read these words, Exodus 34, 6 and following.

This is who God declares himself to be. He says this, the Lord, the Lord, a merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation.

The way God describes himself to Moses comes to life in the person of Jesus. Merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but who will by no means clear the guilty.

It sounds like a contradiction, doesn't it? But friends, even as we talk about this, when you think about glory, is this where your mind goes?

When you think about being raised up high or exalted, when you think about being clothed in splendour, when you think about the greatness there could possibly be in life, even when you think about the greatness of God, is the crucifixion seeing what you imagine?

[32 : 55] Is the cross there in your thinking? Every day I walk our dog on Redhead Beach. I've got a picture of the last, this is the last walk I went on.

Every day, it's different, it's just a different version of beautiful. Every day that scene tells me something about the character of God.

But the cross, the cross introduces me to him personally. Jesus wanted us to know God personally.

So Jesus wanted the glory of the cross. He prayed for it. He asked for it because it glorified the father and it rescued us. Only in his work at the cross can he say in verse five, and now father, glorify me in your presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. You know, later in John's life, he actually got the privilege of getting a glimpse into the throne room of God.

[34 : 14] It's in Revelation chapter five that it's recorded. A part of that vision is recorded. in it, in that throne room, he saw a lion who looked like a lamb who had been slain.

Friends, Jesus, God the Son, still bears the marks of his glory. And thank God that he does.

Because it's only through the cross that we get to know him for eternity. Jesus prayed for glory. He chose the cross.

We struggle through life enduring things that we, you know, we find almost impossible to bear at times. Jesus chose the worst possible death.

And he chose it to show us God's glorious nature. he chose it as the means of ransoming us. Friends, that glorious cross is an invitation to know God personally.

[35 : 33] And as we reflect on it, when our lives approximate the life that Jesus lived and the glory and the glory and the glory sought, then God is glorified in us too.

Think about this. If this were to shape our lives, to recognize that there is just one way in this life to get back into relationship with God. How much we would treasure Christ and the work that he did on our behalf.

How tightly we would hold to that as a center point of our lives. How much it would shape how we live toward each other. No longer grasping for glory, no longer seeking greatness, desiring to exalt ourselves or putting our worth in things that are just so empty, but delighting in him alone.

no longer grasping, but giving. I've got to tell you that one of the things that I've noticed as a pastor is how difficult it is to walk with someone through a situation where forgiveness is required, where one person is wounded and another person is responsible for it.

it is just so, so difficult. But imagine if we had the mind of Christ in this. Imagine if our lives were shaped by the glory that he sought.

[37 : 04] Imagine if our absolute and utter delight is in being reconciled, our willingness to overlook any hurt or grief or grievance that we have.

not to ignore it, but to deal with it in the context of someone who so wants to get beyond it and back to loving that person, that that is what fills their vision.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we as a church shaped our lives on this kind of glory seeking, as we serve each other, as we eagerly and earnestly desire to see each other raised up?

What a wonderful thing that would be. Friends, the cross, the cross itself is the son glorified. The cross is the father glorified.

And when our lives approximate the life that Jesus lived and the glory that Jesus sought, then God is glorified in us too.

[38 : 14] Christ, let's drink. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.