

A Parting Prayer for Glory

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning and can I add my welcome to Vijay's as well. It's great you can join us online. It'd be also great if you could grab your Bibles and turn back to John chapter 17, if you're not already there.

Today is going to be a bit of a longer one because I don't know if you noticed, but the prayer, as Mark read it out, is a bit wordy. And so it's a bit hard to teach. So we'll need to take a bit of time to get our heads around it.

So you really need a Bible open to help you. But before I start, why don't I quickly pray? Let's pray together. Gracious Father, we do thank you that you continue to speak to us through your word and by your spirit.

Please help us now to put aside the distractions of our week and what's happening in our world to focus on you and in particular on this prayer of our Lord Jesus.

We ask it in his name. Amen. Well, with everything happening, as I mentioned, the distractions of the week and what's happening in our world and even the imminent talk, the talk of an imminent lockdown.

[1 : 07] I wonder whether people are praying more. And if people are praying more, what exactly are they praying for? Are we praying that this thing will just end or are we praying for something else through this time?

And I wonder this because our prayers often reveal our hearts, as that question Vijay gave us before indicated. They reveal what we're concerned about for ourselves and for others.

For example, I like this child's prayer that I think I've shown you before on the next slide. It says, Dear God, thank you for the baby brother, but what I prayed for was a puppy.

You can clearly see that what is on Joyce's heart is a puppy. And I'm pretty sure she'd prefer a puppy. Well, I'm pretty sure she's not alone in that preference.

Here's one I haven't shown you before on the next slide. Dear God, I went to this wedding and they kissed right in church. Is that okay, Neil? Well, given the current situation with the virus, maybe it's a good question to ask.

[2 : 16] In fact, I had a minister ring me last Wednesday. He was conducting a wedding service that Wednesday before the laws changed to five people only on Wednesday night.

And he rang me with that very question. Yes, it is okay. But the point is, for Neil, his prayer showed his heart that he was concerned for right conduct before God, which is an admirable concern to have, isn't it?

But the point is, our prayers reveal our hearts, our concerns. And the same is true of Jesus and his prayer. Today, we come to his parting prayer before he dies.

It's still Thursday night before that very first Good Friday when he is crucified. And he's been teaching his disciples all night ever since chapter 13 in John's Gospel.

But now he's finished teaching them and he's about to go to the Garden of Gethsemane, where he'll pray privately and then be arrested. But before he does, he prays publicly here in chapter 17 before his disciples to hear.

[3 : 22] And as he does so, he reveals his heart, what he is concerned for. And so as we look at this chapter together, the question for us will be, are his concerns our concerns?

Do our hearts reflect Christ's heart? Are they the things that we pray for and strive for? Well, the prayer is broken into three main parts.

So part one is for God's glory. So we've got the points on the slide. But have a look at verse one in your Bibles. After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed, Father, the hour has come.

Glorify your son that your son may glorify you. So he's finished saying these things in the upper room on the Thursday night to his disciples that we've seen over the last few weeks. And then he prays, the hour has come. Father, glorify me, he says, which sounds a bit self-centered until you read the rest of the verse.

[4 : 30] He says, so that he in turn can glorify his father. But what does this mean and how does it work? Well, we need to remember two things. Firstly, we need to remember that the hour refers to the hour of Christ's death.

I've shown you that before in previous weeks. We don't have time to look at it now. You can text me some references if you want to find out more. But the second thing we need to remember is that glory, it refers to three related things.

So firstly, it can be referred to as the greatness of someone's character. And we saw that with our first reading, didn't we? Where Moses asked to see God's glory and God said, I'll show you my goodness.

And then he announced his character, you know, the Lord, the Lord, the gracious and compassionate God. Glory can refer to the greatness of someone's character. And so to glorify someone can mean to reveal that greatness of character.

So that's the first one. The second one, which you can see on the slide there, it refers to splendor or brilliance, radiance, like a glorious sunrise.

[5 : 44] And so to glorify someone in this way can mean to clothe them with that splendor or radiance. And thirdly, glory can refer to someone's worth of honor, their worthiness to be praised.

And so to glorify can also mean to praise or honor them. Now, let me see if I can help you to put those three things together. Last time I spoke on this, I used Usain Bolt.

So here we go again. Remember, he won gold at Rio. And you might remember this next slide where he even smiled for the camera doing it. And that even showed or revealed the greatness of his sporting prowess, if you like.

That's the first type of glory. The second type, though, is on the next slide where he was clothed with splendor, the radiance of three gold medals that he's got around his neck there.

And then afterwards, on the next slide, he was glorified in terms of praise and honor, even from other athletes. This wasn't from Rio. This was from some races in 2017.

[6 : 49] He didn't actually win gold then. But such is his worthiness that even athletes still praised him. And so do you see how these three related things can overlap?

And that's what it means. I'm hoping, well, I'm assuming you're all nodding in your homes. Yes, Andrew. Hopefully you've got it. But we'll see all these three types of glory in our passage today. But here in verse one, it's that first type. Jesus is praying that his father would reveal the greatness of his character at the hour, at the cross.

In other words, he's praying that God might reveal his greatness as the savior king of the world who dies on the cross to bring us life.

And for at the cross, Jesus took all of God's judgment for all of our sin so that all who believe can have life eternal. And that's what Jesus goes on to pray about.

[7 : 57] Have a look at verses two to three. He says, For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.

Now, this is eternal life that they know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. You see, God has given Jesus all authority over all people so that he in turn would lay down his life and pay for all our sins and give eternal life to those God has chosen.

And again, this is pretty extraordinary, isn't it? If I had all authority, I'm not sure I would use it then to die for all people. But Jesus does.

And he does this so that people can have eternal life and come to know God. This is how God is then glorified. See, verse three talks about eternal life in terms of a relationship.

It's described in terms of knowing God. Both knowing about God, you know, understanding the greatness of his character, that one first type of glory.

[9 : 14] But also then praising and honoring God, that third type of glory. This is how Jesus being glorified and revealed as the Savior King so that people will believe, then brings glory to the Father.

So to flowchart it, help you to picture it, it's like this on the next slide. Jesus prays that God would glorify him in terms of revealing his greatness at the cross as the Savior King so that in turn people can come to Christ for eternal life, which then leads them to know and glorify God.

Of course, Jesus says it much more succinctly, doesn't he? He just says glorify your son so that your son can glorify you. But that's how it works, you see.

Jesus glorifies his Father. That's ultimately his prayer and therefore ultimately his concern here. Indeed, it's his concern all through his life.

Have a look at verse four. This is what God, Jesus has done on earth. He says, I brought you, Father, glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do.

[10:32] Jesus brought glory to God. He revealed God's character, that first type of glory, by everything Jesus said and did, his words and works. It's why Jesus could say to Philip on the next slide.

He could say, anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. And of course, his work included his death.

He's just about to die. So it says his work is as good as finished. And it's at the cross that Jesus supremely reveals God's glory, his greatness, isn't it?

I mean, can you think of anything else that reveals the depth of God's love for us more than the cross? Can you think of anywhere else where we see both God's justice and mercy meet together more than at the cross?

We can't, can we? The cross is the place where Jesus supremely glorifies his father, reveals his greatness.

[11:41] And having finished his work of revealing God's glory and bringing us to know God so that we can praise and honor him, that third type of glory as well. Well, Jesus prays for the other type of glory, splendor.

Verse five. He says, and now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

Here is that third type of glory that we haven't talked about yet. It's the gold medal one, the splendor one. Where God, where Jesus prays that the Father will clothe him with splendor, the same splendor he had before the creation of the world.

The same brilliance he took off to come to earth and die for us. And again, this is not a self-centered prayer because it's what rightly belongs to Jesus.

And what's more, he only prays this after he's finished the work of glorifying his father. And so you see, this part of Jesus' prayer reveals his heart to bring his father glory.

[12:57] That's what he's concerned about. And so I guess the first application for us this morning on the next slide is, are we concerned for God's glory?

When we pray about the coronavirus, it is right that we pray for a vaccine. It is right that we pray for people's protection.

It is right that we pray for it to end. But do we also pray that God might be glorified through it? How? Well, remember, God is glorified through the Son.

So do we pray that God might use this time as people are anxious and fear death to point them to Jesus who brings life?

That they might trust in him, come to know and glorify the Father. Is that what we're praying for as well? Or are we just praying that when we get to the shops, there'll be enough toilet paper for us to have?

[13:57] By the way, we still have some here at church. So if you need some, let us know. Or do we pray that it'll go back to normal so that we can get on with our comfortable lives? Or do we also pray that God might be glorified through it?

That's Christ's concern here in the first part of his prayer. Is it ours? Well, Jesus now then goes on to pray for the 11, which is part two of the prayer. And as I read verses 6 to 10, have a look at, listen out rather, or have a look for the repetition of give or gave.

So verse 6, Jesus says, I pray for them.

I'm not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them.

Did you notice the repetition of gave and given? The Father has given everything, even to Jesus, including the 11 disciples.

[15:25] This is why the Father deserves to be glorified, you see. Because everything we have has been given by him to us.

It's right that we glorify him. But also, this means that these disciples, these 11 disciples who wrote the New Testament, along with the Apostle Paul, they're the real deal.

We can trust the New Testament because these are the very ones that God chose and gave to Jesus. And they are also the very ones that kept God's word about God's son.

Not perfectly, I might add. In about an hour's time, Jesus will be arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane and all the disciples will desert him. But they certainly believe Jesus was the Saviour King sent from God.

And they did glorify or honour Jesus while he was with them on earth. But how do we know then that once God gave these apostles, that they didn't then go off track?

[16:34] And what we have in our New Testament has been changed. Well, because God would keep them on track in answer to Jesus' prayer. Do you see what Jesus continues to pray?

Verse 11. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction, which is Judas who betrayed Jesus.

So that scripture would be fulfilled. I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have full measure of my joy in them.

I have given them your word, and the world has hated them. For they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one.

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Do you notice, again, it's pretty wordy, isn't it? But did you notice his prayer? Jesus prays that the eleven might be protected, because they're not of the world, and the world is not going to treat them nicely.

[18:00] Now, this prayer of protection is not from physical harm that the world might inflict on them. Rather, verse 15, it is protection from spiritual harm, from the evil one, that they might stay on track, keep faithful to the word they've been given, because Jesus is returning to the Father.

And so they need protection to stay faithful in proclaiming his word. And many of them did. In fact, many, we know, died for their faith.

This prayer was answered. They'd rather keep the truth of the word they received than change it and live. This prayer was answered. And so, I guess the second application for us this morning is similar to the one last week.

It's on the next slide. It says, Have confidence that we have the word of truth. God has chosen these eleven.

He has given those eleven to Jesus. Jesus kept them while they were in the world. And in answer to their prayer, God kept them even unto death without changing the word.

[19:18] And so, as I said last week, we're not wasting our time tuning into this stream here this morning. To read God's word. To try and understand it. Even though this morning is going to take longer to get our heads around it.

Nor are we wasting our time putting it into practice. Because what we have in our hands, the Bible, is the word of truth. And for those God chose, the eleven, well, they were now to proclaim that truth into all the world.

Have a look at verse 17 where Jesus prays the last bit for the eleven. He says, Now the word sanctified can again mean two things.

It can either mean to make someone holy, godly, or to set them apart for a particular purpose. And here it's that second one.

Being set apart for a particular purpose. And here Jesus prays that they might be set apart to go into all the world with this truth.

[20:34] And the truth is the word. The gospel about Jesus. They are set apart to preach the gospel about Jesus. And so Jesus prays that that might happen.

Because now he's no longer going to be there. Do you see before Jesus prayed that God would glorify him at the cross. Reveal Christ's greatness. So that Christ in turn might give eternal life. And then glorify God. But now there's an extra step at the start. And so the flow chart in the next slide adds at the beginning the apostles. They are now set apart to speak the word about Jesus. Which then leads to God being able to reveal the greatness of Jesus at the cross. As people read the Bible. And then that means people can come to Jesus for eternal life.

And then know and glorify God the Father. That's how it works now. You see Jesus prays for the eleven. Not just because he is concerned for them personally.

[21 : 35] And he is. But also because he's concerned that the word. The good news about Jesus goes out into all the world. And so the third application for us then.

Is again on the next slide. Are we concerned to see the word about Christ. The gospel. Go out into all the world. That's what Jesus is praying about here.

You know is this something we pray about. Next week is our monthly kingdom growth prayer night. And obviously we can't gather physically together. But the prayer points will come up on the website.

And if you can't get that from the website. The church office will be open on Thursday mornings. And Sunday afternoons. So you can pick up a hard copy. But why not download these prayer points.

So that you can keep praying for our mission partners. To take the apostles word about Jesus into all the world. Even if it's harder at the moment with the virus.

[22 : 36] I mean is that not a good thing to pray for? In fact if we are concerned for the father's glory like Jesus is. And if we know the word is truth.

And if we know the word is truth. Then we must pray and must want to see the word. Go out into all the world. Because as people hear the word about Jesus.

Remember the flow chart. That God's son is. His greatness is revealed. So that people can have eternal life. And glorify God the father. The first concern.

One of the encouraging things I've found over the last. It's only really been a week and a half. Since we've had to change everything. And announce that we couldn't meet. One of the things I've found encouraging.

Is the emails, messages. And in some cases a couple of letters. From church people. Concerned about church finances. For two reasons.

[23 : 33] Partly they're concerned that we are looked after personally. Which is very kind of them. But more importantly. They're concerned that we can still have money. To send the word out into the world.

Whether it's by doing this live streaming here. Buying the equipment we need and so on. Or whether it's paying our mission partners. Helping support them. So that they can keep sending the word into the world.

And it's been very encouraging. Because their concern reflects Christ's concern here. In John chapter 17. Well Jesus now prays finally for us.

Which is point 3. Verse 20. So have a look at verse 20. My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me.

Through the apostles message. That all of them may be one. Father. Just as you are in me. And I am in you. May they also be in us.

[24 : 37] Here Jesus prays for us who believe the word of the apostles. The message about Jesus. And notice he prays that we might be united as one.

Growing up my younger brother Matthew and I looked very similar. On the next slide is a photo of us. And you can see us two next to each other with the blonde hair there.

In fact we even started. We even sounded alike on the phone. Particularly growing up. I remember one time my brother's girlfriend rang the house.

And I said hello. And she thought she was talking to Matt. And so she pretended. She started to proceed to pour out her heart. About all these things happening in her life. And all that sort of thing. And I was just kind of there nodding away on the phone. I was tempted to say to her. Oh look. I don't think this relationship is working. But I thought I'd better not. I just said. It's Andrew.

[25 : 33] I assume you want to talk to Matt. And the next time she came to the house. She was so embarrassed. She avoided me. In fact. We shared not only similar. One kind of appearance. And similar voice.

We even shared a room. The point is. It was like we were twins. You know. One. One. Yeah. You know. She had one appearance. One voice.

One room. Well Jesus prays that we might be one. Not in looks. Or voice. Or accommodation. But one like the Father. And he are one.

How are they one? Well they're one in truth. And love. One in mind. And mission. Which by the way. Means when people say. We should just forget our.

Different beliefs. And just come together. To be united. That's not how the Father. And the Son. Are one. They are one. In the truth. Revealed in the Bible.

[26 : 28] And so we are to be united. In that truth. We are to be united. As one. In love. And godliness. And mind. And mission. Just as the Father. And the Son.

Are united. As one. Why? Well the rest of verse 21. Tells us. That they may be one. So that. The world. May believe. That you. Have sent me. We are to be united. As one. So that the world. Might see. And believe. That Jesus.

Has been sent. By God. As our Savior King. And so important. Is this. That Jesus repeats it. In verse 22. And 23. Verse 22. I have given them. The glory. That your. You gave me.

That they may be one. As we are one. I in them. And you in me. So that they may be brought. To complete unity. Then the world. Will know.

[27 : 24] That you sent me. And have loved them. Even. As you have loved. Me. Here. Glory. Again. Refers to the greatness. Of Christ. As our Savior King.

Whose death. Brings life. And this is the glory. That the Father. Gave the Son. The job. He gave the Son. To do. To die for us. And this is the glory. That Jesus.

Has now revealed. To us. Through the Apostles. Word. But it's so. That we might. Believe. And be united. As one. Family. At one level.

This is who we are. Already. Because that's what happens. When we believe in Jesus. Isn't it? We. Aren't left by ourselves. Out there. We're brought together. Into one family.

Into God's family. United as one. But now Jesus prays. That we might live out. This unity. And even grow. To complete. Unity.

[28 : 18] So that the world. Might see. And believe. In him. And it does work. A friend of mine. Called Mike. Was 17 years old. When he was invited.

To a church. And when he came along. What struck him. Was the way. They all loved one another. And the way. They were all. United. They all believed. The same thing.

They even stood up. And said the same. This thing. Called the creed. Together. Such was their. Unity. In belief. And they were also. United. In their care.

For him. And in their desire. To share with him. The good news. About Jesus. And it was this. Oneness. This unity. That caused Mike. To ask questions.

To find out more. About Jesus. And actually. To believe. In him. Himself. Mike's now. A minister. In Sydney. Helping a church. Live out their oneness. Too.

[29 : 13] So that more. Can believe. Like he did. You see. Jesus's prayer. And concern for us. Is that we might. Live out this unity. We have. By having the same. Love for one another.

As the father. And the son. Have. Having the same. Truth. The same. Godliness. The same. Mind. As Christ. The same. Mission. Desires. And so the fourth.

Application for us. On the screen. Is. Do we. Are we concerned. To be one. In truth. Love. Mind. And mission. So that the world.

May believe. Now of course. It's hard to do. At the moment. Isn't it? We can't gather. Physically. Can we? And if you are. Missing.

The fact. That we cannot. Gather physically. Then can I say. That is a good thing. Because we are actually. Built. To gather together. Physically. To express.

[30 : 06] Who we are. Spiritually. In Christ. But since we can't. Meet together. Physically. I think. Can I encourage you. To keep doing. What you can. To catch up. With one another. To express.

That unity. Whether it's. FaceTime. Or Zoom. Or Microsoft. Teams. Or the. The good old fashioned. Phone. And what's more. Let's see. If we can use.

Our unity. To bear witness. To the world. As Jesus prays here. And so. To that end. On the website. On your live streaming page. Just above. Or sorry. Just below.

Where it says. 1030 live stream. There is a link. Which you said. It says to click. After the sermon. So don't click it now. But when you do click it. On the next slide.

It comes up. With a printable page. That looks like this. There's four cards. On the page. And notice the language. The idea is that you. Offer help.

[30 : 59] With your neighbours. You put your name. And number on it. You slot it under your neighbour's door. Across the street. But notice the language. Of the second paragraph. It says. I'm part of a church. And we.

Help one another. Here's our unity. And we're. Concerned to help others. So let me know. If we. Can help. You see.

Here is a way. That we. Can show our unity. To the world. And again. As the way it works. Is. You write your name on it. Put your phone number on it. Slot it after. Under a neighbour's door.

And they can ring you. And say. Look. I need some flour. Or I need some pasta. Or some toilet paper. Or whatever it is. And if you don't have any. To spare. Then you. Use our website.

To contact us. Because there are others. Around. Who are ready to help. So that together. As one family. We can. Help. Our neighbours. And bear witness.

[31 : 55] To the world. I'll explain more. About the logistics. And how that works. Later in the service. But this is one way. Even with the virus. We can. Be unified.

In our care for others. And bear witness. To the world. And it's not always easy. Though is it. It does require effort. And so Jesus. Ends the prayer. With the assurance.

It will be worth it. Have a look at verses. 24 to 26. That's not coronavirus. By the way. Just saying. Father.

I want those. You have given me. To be with me. Where I am. And to see my glory. The glory. You have given me. Because you love me. Before the creation.

Of the world. Righteous father. Though the world. Does not know you. I know you. And they know. That you have sent me. I have made you known. To them. And will continue.

[32 : 49] To make you known. In order that. The love you have. For me. May be in them. And that I myself. May be in them. Here Jesus.

Prays. That he will continue. To make himself. Known. And indeed. Make the father. Known. To us. That he will continue.

To help us. Grow as Christians. So that we might continue. To know his love. And presence. Why? Well verse 24. Because he wants us.

To see his glory. And not just see it. Because if we are united. With Christ. It means we'll also. Share. In it. And that.

Will be worth it. Won't it? On the next slide. That one kid writes. Dear God. Why is Sunday school. On Sunday. I thought it was supposed to be. Our day of rest.

[33 : 47] Tom. Clearly Tom's concern. Is not to do any more work. Than he has to. And I've. Made you work. Hard today. I realize. But it's so that you can see. The heart of Christ.

Through his parting prayer. For his prayer. Reveals. His concern. For God's glory. He's concerned. To see. The truth of the word.

The gospel. Go out into the world. And he's concerned. To see us. One. That we might bear witness. To the world. And have many more. Share in his glory.

With us. Let's pray. That we might seek. To do those things. Let's pray. Our gracious. Heavenly Father. We thank you. For this prayer.

Of Christ. Christ. That reveals. His heart. And his concerns. And Father. We pray. That you would help us. To share his heart. And his concerns.

[34 : 44] His concerns. To bring you glory. His concern. To have. The word of the gospel. Go into all the world. That people might. See.

Christ. As Savior. King. And come to know. And glorify God. And his concern. For us. That we might be. United as one. Working together. To bear witness.

To the world. Help us. In these things. We pray. In Jesus name. Amen.