

# Glory

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Preacher: John Angus Macleod

[ 0 : 00 ] Let's turn together now to John Gospel in chapter 17, the same chapter we read. And let's read from verse 24, the last part of this amazing prayer.

John 17 and verse 24. Father, I desire that they also whom you have 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 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.

Jesus prayed many, many prayers throughout his life on earth. Very, very few of them are recorded for us, and we may only have snippets here and there.

In some ways, you are more likely to find more about the prayer life of Christ in the book of Psalms than in the Gospels themselves.

[ 1 : 35 ] But here in the Gospel of John in chapter 17, it's as if God himself allowed this prayer to be heard, syllable by syllable by syllable, phrase by phrase, sentence by sentence, so that it was heard in its entirety.

And this was the prayer, a very important prayer that he prayed on the evening before his own crucifixion. He knew exactly what was going to happen to him.

And he spoke of it as a glorification that would begin on the cross, continue through the resurrection, the ascension, and the seating at God's right hand, the outpouring of the Spirit, the gathering of all the people whom God the Father had given to him to glory.

That whole expanse of purpose was in Christ's mind when he said, Father, glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.

In this amazing prayer, he asked for several things that we're not looking at tonight. He asked for preservation, that God's people would be kept.

[ 3 : 05 ] I wonder how often this prayer has been answered in your lives as Christians. He also prayed for sanctification, that you would be sanctified by the truth.

Again, I wonder how often this prayer has been answered. He also prayed for unification, that this group of people who would be kept and set apart, that they would become aware that they are one. And that happens in each local body of Christians. There is a sense of one. There are no churches without difficulties.

Every one of the letters that Paul wrote were to churches or people, groups that had difficulties. Nevertheless, there's a oneness in each of these churches.

Jesus prayed that there would be a oneness around the truth, around the glory of God. So he prays for preservation, sanctification, unification.

[ 4 : 24 ] And then he prays for their glorification. And that, I think, may in some ways sum up the last three verses of the prayer.

When he says, Father, I desire that the awesome you have given me may be with me where I am to see my glory, and so on. So I want us to explore these last three verses as simply as possible.

But notice the way he prays. Father, I desire. I mean, the word there can mean I desire.

It can also mean I will. In other words, this isn't just an expression of desire within the heart of Jesus as he prays to his Father.

He's not saying, Father, this is what I would like. It may not happen or it may. It's more like, Father, this is what I will for all the people that you have given me.

[ 5 : 38 ] I will this for them. He has authority to will things. But he does it in unison with the Father.

That's why it's expressed in prayer. Father, I desire. I will. And that's the beauty of the Gospel of John.

And it shows this amazing union between the will of God the Father and the will of God the Son. In John chapter 5, the enemies were trying to tear these two things apart.

Jesus says, no. You cannot put anything between my will and my Father's will. Even in Gethsemane, where Jesus' human will recoiled against the very thought of the suffering that was to come.

He said, not my will, but thine be done. He always brings his will to be in unison with that of the Father.

[ 6 : 53 ] So what is it that he wills? What is it that he desires? Three things. First of all, he desires that his people, all Christians, will be in the company of Jesus unendingly forever.

The second thing he prays is that that group of people would be able to see his glory.

The glory that God the Father had given him because he loved him. And the third thing he prays, he wills, that they would come to experience God's love for them to the same degree as he experiences the Father's love to him.

So three simple points. Let's look at the first of these. Father, I desire, I will, that they also whom you have given me may be with me where I am.

It's a beautiful thing, you see. When you become a Christian, a relationship is formed between you and Christ. And nothing will ever break that relationship.

[ 8 : 34 ] Once that knot has been tied, it cannot be untied. And of course, as a believer, you would never wish to untie it.

Although sometimes as believers even, we may go through times when we live and look like to others, as if we are not following our Lord very closely.

That's to our shame. And it's to God's great glory that he actually draws us back to himself. Just like he did with Peter.

Weeping many tears brings us back to himself. And have you not often wondered how times of suffering are times when the Lord does use his own amazing love to draw us back to himself.

But that's where we are. We're meant to be, in a sense, with him. As the book of the Revelation puts it, we are the lamb's wife.

[ 9 : 40 ] We're going to the marriage supper of the lamb. At the moment, you and I have read of him. We've heard of him.

We've believed him. We've even come to love him. And the reality is, and it's a strange thing, you and I have never seen the Lord, Jesus Christ, face to face.

We've never looked into his eyes. We've never touched his body. We've never been there in the same room as he.

No. And yet, we believe him. We love him. We hear him. But we are walking by faith, not by sight. And isn't it remarkable that we can do that month after month, year after year, trial after trial, decade after decade.

[ 10 : 43 ] We keep on walking by faith, not by sight. We've never seen Christ, and yet he is so, so real to us.

It's also true that Jesus himself says, I will be with you. Isn't that what he said at the time when he gave the so-called great commission to the church?

Go out, make disciples of all nations, he says. Teach them. Baptize them. And this great promise, I will be with you until the end of the age.

So, as you and I, in our own ways, seek to fulfill that commission, we experience the presence of Christ, the power of Christ with us.

I will be with you. Jesus never makes promises that he cannot keep. He will always keep his promise, and he is with his people in that situation.

[ 11 : 50 ] But that's not what this is talking about. It's not what that's talking about at all. When Jesus was on the cross, and remember he had two thieves, one on either side of him.

And one of them, amazingly, at the very eleventh hour of his life, he cried out to this person crucified next to him, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

I mean, the theology that that man has come to be aware of is fascinating to explore. But you notice what Jesus says to him, probably without the slightest break in the conversation.

Today, he says, you will be with me in paradise. And again, isn't that wonderful? That by the end of that day, the thief and the Lord would be in the garden.

They would be in the paradise. Because that's what paradise means. They would be in the garden together. The thief would be with Christ.

[13:06] You will be with me, he says. So the Lord didn't just remember him. He gave him this extra promise. Not only will I remember you, he says.

You will be with me. But that's not what this is talking about. You can go to the book of Hebrews in chapter 12.

And there's a beautiful picture of the church in chapter 12. About this group of people centered on Mount Zion. And they are spoken of as when you're journeying into this church, you're coming to the spirits of just men made perfect.

So when you become a Christian, you are joining a group of people. Some of whom are spirit only. Their bodies are dead in the ground.

But they are made perfect. And they are with Christ. And isn't it wonderful to know that some of the loved ones who mean you on earth here, that they are spirits made perfect.

[14:19] And they are with Christ now and will be forever. But that's not what Jesus is praying about here. What he's praying about here when he says, Father, I decided they also whom you have given me, be with me where I am.

He's praying for nothing less than the resurrection of every believer so that they will be with him.

So that they will be with him wherever he is located. So for example, my mother has gone home to glory. She is with Christ.

But this prayer is not yet answered for her. Because that day when the Lord returns and he will bring us to be with him as he raises our bodies out of the ground, we will not only be spirits of just people made perfect.

We will be raised together, body and soul, and we will be with him. Put it this way. What's your conception of Jesus at this moment?

[15:41] Is he only spirit or is he body and soul? Is he not the resurrected one? Is he not there raised from the dead?

Jesus knew that that would happen to him. He wasn't long in the grave, three days, and then he was raised out of it by the power of the Father.

And he wants us and he prays for us to be with him. I mean, can you imagine just how beautiful that is?

To be with Christ. I mean, I know at the moment heaven is a place of bliss for all those who have lived in this life, came to know Christ in this life, trusted him as they went through the valley, and they're with him.

They're safe. They're secure. But even those people, even those people are longing for the resurrection. They're longing for the day when the tombs will break open.

[16:56] They're longing for the day when they will rise and together they will meet the Lord in the air and they will be together forever forever with the Lord.

You see, when Jesus was here on earth, he was with people. He was with his people. In fact, he loved being with people.

He was no monk. He wasn't somebody who lived apart. He was somebody who looked for people, loved to be among them, loved to be with his disciples.

And now that he is on the verge of leaving them through the cross and his death, he prays that they might be with him.

Yes, he's going to return to them in the resurrection. But this is talking about something beyond his resurrection, something beyond their resurrection, when they will be able to be with him perfect, righteous, holy.

[18:11] Psalm 15 in complete fulfillment. Jesus says, I will come back, he says, and I will take you to myself.

If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and I will take you to myself that where I am, you may also be.

That's it. That's a prayer for fulfillment in its entirety on the resurrection morning. Well, what a future to be in the company of Jesus.

we've followed him by faith, having never seen him. We've loved him, still not seen him. We love him at this very moment, says Peter, though we haven't seen him.

But our future is to be with him. Our future is to experience his closeness, the intimacy, the nearness.

[ 19 : 22 ] I don't care how many of us there are. I don't care how many millions and billions there are.

They will be with him, as with him as it is possible to be because he wills that very thing. the second thing he wills and desires. Father, I desire that the awesome you have given me be with me where I am in a place to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

See, this is the next stage, isn't it? He wants us to be with him because he wants us to see his glory.

He wants us to see his glory. To see it. It's not just to experience it. See, even now we begin to experience the glory of the Lord.

[ 20 : 40 ] that's part of what it means to become a Christian. When you become a Christian, you see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and you're never the same afterwards.

It's as if light has shone. You come to understand God in Christ Christ. And you are thereafter changed from glory to glory as Paul would tell us in 2 Corinthians chapter 3.

Always being transformed. Experiencing the glory. It's written on our hearts. But that's not what Jesus is praying about here.

This is a glory he says that is mine and I want you to see it. It's a glory that was given to me and I want you to see it.

And this glory that I want you to see is one that was given to me before the world was founded. it predates the universe.

[ 21 : 54 ] Predates our existence. Predates all of humanity and all of creation. This is a glory that was given to Christ when there was nothing but Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

And it may seem strange to us that there could be God without a universe. But that's the way it was from all eternity.

And it's only relatively recently that there came to be a universe. So before this universe was founded there was a glory that was given to Jesus.

And the amazing thing about this glory is that it's commensurate with the love that the Father has for him.

Notice the way it's put. God I want them to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me.

[ 23 : 15 ] Just think about that. there's a glory that Jesus has. There's an impressiveness that Jesus has.

And he has it because the Father loves him. That must mean that when you see this glory you will know how lovely the Son is in the Father's eyes.

Imagine being able to see the honour with which the Father honours the Son because he finds him so so lovely.

imagine being able to see the lovable nature of Jesus in the Father's eyes.

I mean how beautiful. I mean you and I we struggle to see the loveliness of Jesus but not the Father. Nobody needs to send him to a school of theology or Christology he knows the Son and he knows him so well he loves him to bits.

[ 24 : 46 ] He honours him. He gives him the honour that he is due. He is so thrilled with his own Son. He absolutely loves him.

And Jesus is saying I know you've known me when I was here on earth I know you'll have known me when we walked together in Galilee and I spoke about my father and I called myself his son but hey I want that these people would have more.

I want them to experience that glory. I want them to see it. I want them to see how much my father loves me.

I want them to see the glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

There's lots and lots I do not understand. The older I grow as a Christian as a teacher there's lots I do not understand.

[ 26 : 01 ] There are oceans that I don't understand about the Trinity about father son and holy spirit but one thing I do understand now and that is that love is the key to the Trinity.

Love is the key to the Trinity Trinity. And here we're given an insight into this in the prayer of Jesus when he says father I will that they might be with me where I am.

I will that they might see my glory the glory that you give me because you love me I want them to see that.

So when we come to be in the company of Jesus beyond the resurrection we have this great thrilling prospect that we will be able to understand the Trinity and the love that is at its center. What glory what love what bliss I mean even now our loved ones who have died in Christ they have begun to taste that they have begun to experience it and yet even for them there is more to come a glory commensurate with the father's love that's a given glory glory that the father gives to him because he loves him so much the third thing that he prays for in verses 25 and 26 is to do with that love amazingly is to do with that love coming round towards us oh righteous father even though the world does not know you

[ 28 : 21 ] I know you and these that's these disciples these know that you have sent me I made known to them your name and I will continue to make it known why so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them and I in them so here Jesus is now addressing the father for this final time in verse 24 it's father in verse 25 oh righteous father he says the world doesn't know you but I know you you ask Jesus what's the most important thing about him it's that he knows the father you see how you're being allowed into the trinity here

I know you but he says it's not just that I know you father these people these Christians what is it that they know they know that you sent me now I want you to ponder that before we move on Jesus says I know you and these Christians these people these disciples they know that you sent me if you were to think of two things for the moment one is the Christ who has come and the second is the father who sent him if you think of the sending father and the coming son who is it that is most honored by the

Christian church in its services is it the coming Christ the one who came and will come again or is it the sending father who sent him into the world it's amazing how often we are drawn to the Christ who came and we do not always honor the father who sent him you may have noticed even in this chapter in this prayer how often Jesus talks of himself as being sent I have been sent these people they know they don't just know me they know that you sent me put it this way if you are a Christian tonight it's because you have come to know

Jesus but why have you come to know Jesus because the father sent him the father sent him he is the reason why you come to know God in Jesus Christ the sending father is as much to be honored as the coming son well he says here even though the world does not know you I know you and these know that you sent me that's what they need to know and that's what they know I made known to them your name see when Jesus taught in this world for these three years he spoke about God he spoke about God's character he spoke about God's name he made known to them your name and he will continue to make it known see that's what

Jesus will always intend to do to explain the father who sent him because after all isn't that what being a Christian is John 17 3 what is eternal life this is eternal life that they know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent we know God the God who sent Jesus that's what eternal life is it's not knowing Jesus Christ it's knowing the God who sent Jesus Christ this is eternal life that they know you the only true God and Jesus Christ the one whom God sent to reveal God's name to his people well see when you become a

[ 33 : 39 ] Christian you come to know God in Jesus your God is shaped in the form of Jesus and God the son will spend all of his eternal existence making God the father more and more known to you see what he says I made known to them your name I will continue to make it known but why why is it that Jesus explains to us so much about the father who sent him it's for this reason that the love with which you have loved me may be in them he wants to explain to us who God the father is so that as we come to understand the father we understand how much the father loves the son and in coming to understand how much the father loves and honors the son we come to actually share in that love ourselves that the love with which you have loved me may be in them

Jesus are you really serious here that you are asking that we be loved in the way that you are loved that we will be loved by God the father in the way God the father loves you yes that's exactly what he's asking for but you feel like saying Jesus don't you want to reserve something to yourself don't

you want to say but these are adopted sons and I am the begotten son and the father loves me because he finds me inherently lovely and he can only love these people because of me yes that's true he says the reason for the love is different but the degree of the love is identical you will never be loved less than the father loves his own son now that's almost hard to take in and I don't think we could take it in were it not for the last four words that the love with which you have loved me may be in them and I in them he will make it possible for you to understand the father's love he will be forever your teacher he will be forever the one who says this is what the father is like and this is what it means to be loved by the father he will always be the one who introduces us advances us brings us to what revelation seven talks about as the fountains of living waters purely a metaphor of satisfaction but this is the reality heaven is love and when we are there we will feel so incredibly loved that we may be one even as they are one that father and son are one we are brought into that oneness yes it makes sense now when you think of the love when Jesus comes to be in us which he can do because he's not only man he is God and man two distinct natures one person forever and as God the son he can be in us as well as with us and it's that combination that makes this heaven of love so amazingly possible for an endless eternity I have no idea what the new universe will look like but I know it will not be less than being with Christ body and soul resurrected I know it will not be less than being able to see the glory the honor the loveliness of

Christ in the eyes of the father and I know it will not be less than experiencing God's love for me as his child equal in degree to the father's love for his own perfect son if that is our future as believers of course you're going to say to others come come can you think of anybody whom you would wish to keep out of this kind of heaven of course not you invite them all to come because that's what you want for every single one of them let's pray our heavenly father we we know that you have given us indications in that prayer of a future that is hard for us to contemplate on earth and were it not the case that these words came from your own lips we would really not accept them from any theology but you have given us this truth help us

[ 40 : 46 ] Lord to feed on it and help us to be ready for that time not only when we pass from this world into the next but help us to be ready when one universe gives way to another and when we will be able to enjoy life eternal knowing the one and only true God and Jesus Christ whom that God sent we love you as the sending father we love you as the coming Christ and we love the spirit for he is the one who leads us into the things of Christ Lord build us up we would pray for we ask it in Jesus Amen let's now close by singing from psalm 23 sing psalm's version of 23 in every stage of life the

Lord is able to be with you as a shepherd when you commit your way to him and even when you come to the dark valley in verse 4 he's with you and then in verse 6 you will dwell in the house of the Lord all your days psalm 23 the Lord is my shepherd no want shall I know an whisper at an ask to share and Slack and to hear the phrase an following o in zuNat y ller