

The Glory of God the Father

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[0 : 00] We read in John's Gospel, John chapter 17, and we read at the beginning of the chapter, John 17, at the beginning, 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. Now, as we know, we're looking at verse 17 not long ago on Wednesday night, and I think one of the things we said that this is really such a unique part of Scripture because in it we find not just Jesus in prayer, because we're often told about that in Scripture, and sometimes we're told a little bit about what he prayed for.

But on this occasion, we're, as it were, taken, as somebody described it as being taken into the Holy of Holies, where we find and meet Jesus in prayer.

in a wonderful way, and we are brought to see something of what he is praying for. And one of the things that strikes you is the tremendous communion that the Father and the Son enjoyed.

You can see this as you read through it. There's this, you become so incredibly aware of the power of the communion that Father and Son enjoy.

[1 : 23] It really is quite remarkable, quite wonderful, but that, of course, is how it is. And this prayer also highlights for us the intense love that the Lord Jesus Christ has for his church, that he has for you, the individual.

Although Christ prays about his immediate disciples, he also prays about the church at large. And this prayer, in fact, reaches right down to this very night.

And the wonderful thing, as we know about this prayer, that it will go on being answered and being answered and is being answered, has been answered and is being answered just now and will continue to be answered.

And that is part of the wonderful thing. And when you stop and think about it, it's actually quite wonderful to think that as Jesus prayed this prayer around about 2,000 years ago, that it was encompassing even our very gathering here tonight.

That it's all tied in and tied up. That the Lord Jesus, because we often tend to confine these things, although at one level we know that's not how it is, but we tend to confine these things to history.

[2 : 40] But it is history in a present form, because part of it is being enacted and worked out even here, even tonight. So it's all really quite remarkable.

And so the Lord Jesus is praying. And he's praying for his people. And in a sense, when you think about Christ's situation, where he is, it's really quite remarkable, because Jesus is just about to enter into that awful period.

His betrayal, his arrest, his trial, his crucifixion, all these things. Things which are in some ways too awful for us to understand. And Jesus is not here asking that things would be made easier for him.

Not asking for some way of escape. But he's asking that the glory of God would be displayed. That God would be glorified through all this.

And that his church would be built up and strengthened and kept safe. And of course, the end of it all is the glory of God the Father. That's where everything ends.

[3 : 50] So here we have the Lord Jesus Christ in prayer. And he begins his prayer. And it says, when Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven.

Now, as we know, I have no idea. It's not something that I've particularly taken note of. But I would imagine that our present queen, when she is on the throne, I think so, pictures that I've seen, that the throne is elevated.

Certainly, historically, it was true that the throne, when a king or a queen sat on the throne, it was always elevated. It was always lifted up.

So that whoever approached the throne, they were going to have to look up, giving this idea of supremacy, this idea of authority and rule. And when a person approached the throne, there was a sense that you were approaching somebody wonderful, somebody regal, somebody authority, and so there was reverence.

And I think in Jesus' action here, as he lifts up his eyes to heaven, that even here, there is a sense of Jesus displaying what we ought to take on board, that as we approach, we mentioned this on Wednesday, talking about the fear of God, that as we approach God, there ought to be within our own hearts this reverence, this sense of awe, that we are in the presence of majesty, in the presence of one who is regal, of not just of a human ruler, but of the one who is beyond and above all.

[5 : 27] And that is why we must guard against flippancy when we come before the Lord. That we don't just, as it were, come in and have this kind of palsy, walsy attitude.

While there are times, and that's one of the wonderful things in the intimate dialogue that believers have with the Lord, where we are able to speak to the Lord, to whisper to the Lord, to be honest and blunt with the Lord, and where we're able to pour out our heart to the Lord, sometimes in a language and in a way where we wouldn't want anybody else to hear.

But yet, even when we do speak like that, is there not a sense of awe in our heart? And that's why we must always be careful when we approach the Lord, that we must always remember that it is before one who is altogether other than we are.

And so Jesus begins by addressing God here as Father. He says, Father, the hour has come. And we see here the uniqueness of that relationship that Jesus Christ has.

And we see the intimacy of this relationship. Now Jesus does not say our Father. There were times when Jesus said our Father. but when he said that, he was talking to the disciples, giving them a model for prayer.

[6 : 56] That they were to pray that way. But we often, we always find that when Jesus is talking about his Father, he says, my Father. Sometimes he would say, my Father and your Father.

I ascend to my Father and to your Father. Your heavenly Father knoweth. He never uses it and says, our Father. So that there is this distinction, although we have this wonderful privilege of being able to address our Father in heaven.

And we must always wonder and be amazed at it. We are sons by adoption. Christ is eternally begotten. He is co-equal with the Father.

And we must never forget that there is a distinction in the relationship that Christ has as Son and that we have as sons. We are sons of God by way of adoption.

But it's a tremendous privilege that we have where we are able to go into the presence of God and we're able to call him Father. The God of justice.

[8 : 08] The God of wrath. The God of grace and mercy and faithfulness. all these things that God is but we are able to go and we're able to address him as Father.

Now I don't believe that everybody in Stornoway tonight is able to call God Father. There is of course a level at which God acts as Father to all in the way that he provides and he cares and he does so much for people.

Everybody. And that is why Jesus remember how he gives that prayer our Father which art in heaven. But again we've got to remember that when Jesus gave that particular prayer it was his disciples when we read about it in Luke the disciples said Lord teach us to pray.

And again when we read about it in Matthew's gospel Jesus was talking to his followers. But we've got to remember that God the Father that he deals with people with all people in the sense of providing and caring because God gives and he causes the sun to shine and the rain to shine on the unjust as well as on the just.

And we've got to remember that every good thing that comes to us comes to us from God. But as we said there is here this unique relationship that the believer has and that is a relationship that comes about in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

[9 : 45] And one of the great benefits and privileges that is ours when we do come to accept Jesus Christ as Savior is that we call him Abba Father.

And the Holy Spirit enables us to do that. The Holy Spirit assures us of that relationship of the uniqueness of the relationship so that we are no longer running away from God but as it were running to him.

We want to go to him. There is this sense of drawing this sense of belonging. Before there was the barrier there was bondage there was fear but there is no fear in love because perfect love casts out fear and so there is now this drawing this desire to go this freedom to go this liberty to go and so he is now the one and we are able to say Abba Father it is family that is why it says in Hebrews he that sanctifieth and those who are sanctified are all of one for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.

Now when you think of where Jesus is at this particular point and as we said just about what he is to embark upon where he is to be made the sin offering it is really quite remarkable here because when Jesus speaks to the Father at this particular time I think it is something which is so encouraging because God the Father at this particular or very soon he is going to pour out his righteous indignation his displeasure his wrath upon the Son that is what he is going to do and yet Jesus still comes to him and calls him Father you see the Son still not only delights in the Father but trusts in him and I think that is something that we have got to take hold of here is Jesus and yes he is just going into the garden

Jesus is going to go through very very difficult times and he knows it and he knows although at one level he will cannot fully anticipate or appreciate the agony and the awfulness of what it is to be made a curse for sin although as it has been said the Gethsemane was a window into that suffering yet the intensity of it could never be fully even imagined until he experienced it and yet knowing that he is to be made a sin offering knowing that the Father is to pour out his wrath and anger upon him yet there is still this lovely trust and belief and acceptance and this unique wonderful relationship and there isn't at any moment any doubt or any flicker of hesitation and that is important for us because there are times when we can question

[12 : 58] God's dealings with us times when we can question God's care God's concern God's dealings with us but here is Christ and he is just about to enter in through this window or through this door into the most unimaginable suffering possible and rather than questioning his Father's love to him he is here as it were reaffirming it and Jesus says the hour is come now this was the hour of course that was fixed from all eternity and we've got to remember that everything is fixed there is a divine decree that governs everything are you and I aware of that tonight that the Lord is in absolute control of everything sometimes I think we forget that but the hour had come we of course are not aware as time goes on what is happening here and what is happening there but God is in control

God rules and the moment that we take God off the throne of ruling in dominion and government then we have lost sight of who God really is he is the God who is in total control and really this is at the very center of the universe this is at the very center of how this world functions and it's at the very center of what is happening even here today this hour the hour had come this was the hour for the world's salvation the world the hour that was going to give and bring deliverance for the likes of you and me and because this was the hour and because Christ was keeping to a heavenly timetable nothing could happen to him up until this moment there were times when they tried to take him before you remember how it says on occasions they tried to take him they would hold counsel they would work out and they say right we're going to get him how are we going to get him and sometimes we read he slipped out through them and no man laid hands upon him why because his hour had not yet come this timetable

Jesus his life was there was a heavenly timetable and this he was keeping to it and so here this this particular hour had come and it was a fearful hour it was an hour where the father's presence was going to be removed more and more by the withdrawal of the spirit because remember Jesus had the spirit without measure and the spirit is the comforter and there comes a place and of course the fulfillment of that is on the cross where comforters found aynon all the human comforters forsook but there came the place of the as it were the divine abandonment where Jesus experienced what constitutes hell upon that cross where there was the outpouring of the wrath and the withdrawal of the divine favor or the sense where there was no sense given of the presence of God my God my God why hast thou forsaken me so you see that that here

Jesus is aware that this this hour is approaching and it's it's a I suppose a wonderful for us a wonderful assurance of how the father is in control of absolutely everything everything you see it's an hour now there was nothing around or about Jesus that would in any way indicate that that this particular time had come but we've got to remember that while it talks here of an hour that doesn't mean a literal hour but it means that there was a particular time set and as we said this hour was the hour and the power of darkness Jesus said that it was like the gates of hell were opened and it was like every restraint removed and it was like hell was given this freedom to throw and cast itself upon Christ and to bring as much pain and damage as possible and that's why Jesus said this is your hour and the power of darkness you know you and I cannot even begin to fathom what Jesus was going through even at this particular time the horror the awfulness of it all and yet he never holds back he never hurts he never doubts the love of the father at any stage now as we say although

Jesus knew that this was the hour he doesn't try and hold back he could have Jesus could easily if he had so wished could have dealt differently if Jesus had wanted he could have displayed his power or he could have called on his father to work but that wasn't what he was about remember when they came in the garden and they said to him or he said to them who is it you're looking for and they said Jesus of Nazareth he said it is I I am he remember how it tells us that they fell backward to the ground and when Peter pulled out his sword in order to defend Jesus Jesus said put away your sword he said I could call if I so wished I could call on twelve legions of angels now you think of you think of what would happen had Jesus called on twelve legions of angels when you read about in the old testament how on an occasion an angel came and wiped out an army of over a hundred thousand men just just just not one one angel he said

[19:18] I could call on twelve legions of angels I could but I'm not going to because I am here to do the father's will to do his will I take delight and so Jesus is approaching approaching the cavern of God's wrath and he's approaching it full on fully conscious fully aware of what is to be and so we find that as this hour comes he prays and you know there's an example there for you and for me when we come into our times of trouble and difficulties that we ought to bring all these things to the Lord in prayer we often pray that these things will be removed sometimes they won't this wasn't going to be removed in Jesus Jesus's experience but we certainly need to pray for the grace we need to pray for the upholding strength and you know something we ought always to be praying for as well which sometimes we may forget something that

Jesus was praying for knowing where he was going that God would be glorified in it all how often do we actually pray that when we're going through difficult times when we're going through things that are really hurting us things that are paining us when maybe we're experiencing bereavement and loss and crosses do we do we actually pray Lord while this is breaking my heart please may your name be glorified in my sorrow in my affliction in this trouble and I believe it's only grace and faith that can so pray in that way but we ought to be seeking to do that because at the end of the day as we said that's what it's all about this is where it all terminates in the glory of God the Father and that of course is what Jesus is praying for and he says glorify your son glorify your son now some people wonder how on earth was a glory attached to the death of the Lord

Jesus Christ but it was all glorious in fact as Judas was leaving the room the upper room on his way to plan for the betrayal of Jesus Jesus said now as the son of man glorified and God is glorified in him you see Jesus through his death is showing himself as a glorious saviour isn't that true isn't that the way you see Jesus don't you see him as a glorious saviour is there anybody that you know in the whole wide world more glorious than Jesus no there isn't and how is he glorious he is glorious because of his death isn't that at the very center isn't that what makes christianity tick is the death of Jesus Christ isn't that the very heartbeat of it that's where it's glorious in what Jesus did on the cross and so we see glory in Jesus giving of himself as we said earlier he needn't have but there would have been no salvation but we see the glory in giving himself up we see glory attached to all that happened around the cross we see the glory of salvation being worked out and with the thief on the cross Jesus in his death is showing giving a picture of what he's all about of the salvation that is in Jesus Christ and then there were all the things surrounding like the veil of the temple being rent and twain into the the earthquake the darkness all these things even the centurion oh he said truly when it was all over he said truly this was the son of God there was an aura a power there was God was manifest God was revealing himself in glory in all that was taking place and there was a glory attached to it even when Jesus was taken down from the cross because there was a uniqueness in his death in that his body didn't decay different to any other body there was glory attached to that and glory of course in the resurrection and glory in the ascension and glory in everything that followed on and Jesus says here glorify glorify your son that the son may glorify you you know nothing glorifies God like the completion creation of Christ's redemptive work nothing this is what brings glory to God like nothing else the creation this is a we're seeing this world and we live in a beautiful part of this world and God is our creator God and it is only right it is right that we think of God as we look upon the creation the very psalm tells us that and if people say to you you shouldn't be looking at nature we shouldn't be focusing upon the beauties of nature and we don't work or think of God as we look at the beauties of nature that's rubbish that's not what the word of God says the word of God tells us that we actually that the study of nature highlights reveals to us God now while it is wonderful and we look at the beauty of nature and look at its wonder and it brings us to focus and to give glory to God because his wisdom in creating this world is wonderful his

power in creating this world is wonderful wonderful and although it is what is even more wonderful is the new creation of a soul and all that was involved and the cost of it and so this work there is as we said nothing that brings glory to god the father like the completion of the redemptive work of christ this is where it all ends and we see in christ's work the justice and the holiness and the wrath and the mercy and the peace of god we see everything coming together in a wonderful way and every soul subsequently that comes that comes to faith in christ's death and the application of that work by the holy spirit brings glory to god every soul that is saved my dear friend the day you were saved the day you were brought to light and to life god received glory of course it was god that's a whole other area it was god it was because of god's love to you a love that god had for you even before christ died but there's a glory brought to the name of god when you were saved there was there was rejoicing in heaven over one sinner that repents and you know every soul that witnesses and testifies that christ is savior brings glory to god and that's what you god willing will be about tomorrow because your coming to the lord's table is a powerful testimony to who god is and what god has done by this that is one of the things that the lord is saying to us as we are to remember him that you do show forth the lord's death that's one of the things that that is when you come to the table tomorrow when you take that bread and that wine you are showing forth the lord's death isn't that amazing that there is in your taking of the bread and the wine which is a means of grace and strengthening your faith is also a witness and testimony to the power of

God's salvation and is bringing glory to God you see it's all tied up and that's why it's such a solemn thing for a believer to not to confess and profess that Jesus Christ is their lord there has to be a really powerful reason why not because God's glory is involved the showing forth of Christ's death is involved so it's an incredibly serious and solemn thing to say I'm not going to do that I'm not going to do that dare we say that well when we think of what Jesus has done for us let us also remember what he has done for when we think of what he has done this is what he has set before us in order that we may remember his death well as we anticipate this

[29 : 23] God willing tomorrow may the Lord grant us the grace to be conscious to be aware to lay hold upon to take it personally into our heart what Jesus did his great love in laying down his life for us let us pray oh lord our god we we give thanks even tonight as we reflect upon that great love a love that held nothing back a love that gave his all the love of god the father in giving the son and the love of god the son in giving his life oh lord our god we pray that we may reflect upon these things that we may indeed enjoy the gospel that we may enjoy our god oh lord may we not trudge our way heavenwards but that we may go forward with joy in our heart may we see above all that this is the most important thing in all the wide world the good portion that will never be taken from us is to have

Christ as savior bless us and we pray and do us good take us all to our home safely and forgive us for Jesus sake we ask it amen