

John 17.1-5—Glory to God!

- I. Introduction
 - a. When I would write book reviews, I would look through the table of contents and to see how the author divided up the chapters. I wanted to see if more pages were given to any particular topic.
 - b. One of the first observations I noticed was the three sections of the prayer. In 1-5, you can hear Jesus longing for his own glory so that he may glorify the Father. The next section which I think is 6-19 Jesus prays for his disciples. The last part (20-26) is a prayer for those who will believe. The bulk of his prayer is for his disciples. But he begins with what is most important: God's glory. And despite it being only 5 verses, it is the weightiest part of the prayer.
 - c. As we approach this amazing text, I have to admit that I am trembling at the thought of talking about this prayer. To try and explain this conversation between the Father and the Son is daunting. I come with trepidation and faith.
- II. Main Point
 - a. The purpose for which the world was created is and always will be the glory of God and that's what Jesus prays for.
- III. Outline
 - a. Glorify the Son that he may glorify the Father
 - b. The Son's demand to be glorified comes from the authority given to him
 - c. Eternal Life is fellowship with the only, true God and Jesus Christ
 - d. Having fulfilled the work of the Father, the Son's former glory will be restored
- IV. Exposition
 - a. The goodbyes have ended. This whole chapter is Jesus praying to the Father and undoubtedly, the disciples are present as he prays. Jesus begins with the ultimate purpose for which the world was created: God's glory. God's eternal plan has unfolded as had been determined. And in that plan, Jesus Christ, God's Son was sent to fulfill what was planned for the express purpose to bring the Father glory. Glorifying the Son will result in glorifying of the Father.
 - i. Right out of the gate, I feel the need to ask this question: What is the glory of God?
 1. (Isa. 42:8) ⁸ I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.
 2. (Isa. 48:11) ¹¹ For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.
 - ii. Whatever it is, God will not share it with another. In light of this, an important question comes up. If the Father glorifies the Son to which he has said that he will not give to another then what does that say about the Son? It means exactly what John has already stated in 1:1-3. Jesus is fully God!
 - iii. But let me get back to this question of glory. I'm going to give a brief definition of God's glory from (Isa. 6:1-3) In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"
 1. I've mentioned this before but notice: Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. You might have expected him to say the whole earth is full of his holiness.
 2. That means there must be a clear connection with God's holiness and his glory.

- a. So, maybe we need to know what God's holiness is. I would define it as God's otherness...he is totally set apart. He is God and there is no other. In other words, God's holiness is his infinite perfections.
- b. So, if Isaiah writes that God is infinitely perfect what does it mean for that perfection to fill the whole earth with glory?
 - i. I think God's glory is the radiance (majesty, beauty, splendor, magnificence, grandeur) of his infinite perfection. In other words, "the glory of God is the going public of his infinite worth."
 - ii. How did God go public? Well, God does that through His creation (Psalm 19 or Romans 1) but more precisely, he has made himself known by way of revelation: (Heb. 1:1-3) Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature.
 - iii. So, when John says this in (Jn. 1:14) ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
 - iv. Therefore, Jesus Christ is the ultimate means for displaying and revealing God's glory!
- iv. We must understand what God's glory is in order to understand the bible and these five verses. If not, we will miss the very purpose for which Christ was sent.
 1. After preparing his disciples for his departure and promising that they would face tribulations in this world, Jesus prays. In many ways, this prayer is preparing them for suffering which begins in Ch. 18 when the prayer ends.
 2. Jesus turns the attention of the disciples upward as he lifts his eyes to heaven.
 3. Before we make some attempt at looking into the content of this prayer, I'd like to ask this question: Do you think Jesus knows the Father is in sovereign control? Yes, and yet he prays. We should pray BECAUSE God is sovereign!
- v. Jesus prays this: (Jn. 17:1) "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you
 1. The fact that the hour has come is closely connected to the glorifying of the Son.
 - a. How will the Father glorify the Son? The grand stage on which God will display the glory of his Son will be the cross and resurrection.
 - i. Now, that is not how the world would define a successful son. Holiness isn't glorious to the world. A son gladly obeying his father isn't the path to success. It's been said, that you can't be good and a king.
 - b. I think Jesus means the glory he seeks is in the greatest act of love ever displayed in all history. But wasn't Jesus' perfect obedience to the Father also the Son's glory?
 - i. The pattern of the Bible clearly puts forth that humility precedes glory. Jesus is the humble, obedient Son. And the glory of the cross isn't possible without the perfect obedience and in fact, going to the cross was the last act of obedience that brings about his glory!
 - ii. We will talk more about it here in moment, but Jesus commands that the Father glorify him so that he may glorify the Father.
 - iii. Listen to how this ends: (Phil. 2:6-11) though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied

himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ **Therefore** God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- iv. Jesus came to redeem a people for his Father's glory! And the path to that glory is through a cruel bloody cross. Humility preceded exaltation. The Isaiah 53 suffering servant gives way to the glory of the Son!
- b. The basis for Jesus' demand to be glorified comes from the authority given to him by the Father. Jesus doesn't ask; he demands!
 - i. "You have given him authority" is certainly an on-going authority. But also, this authority is the fulfilment of God's plan from the beginning that is unfolded in the pages of Scripture.
 - ii. So, the grounds for Jesus' demand to be glorified comes from the authority give to him by the Father that had been planned from the beginning. Jesus was plan B. Jesus wasn't an "oh no" response to the fall. This is the very design of God happening just as it had been determined.
 - iii. No authority; no demand to be glorified in this way. And guess what? If the Son is not glorified through the cross and resurrection, there is no salvation.
 - iv. But, Jesus has authority which is how he can demand, after the resurrection, to make disciples of all nations.
 1. YHWH is not some tribal deity. He is the Creator and God over all. Jesus' authority isn't limited to Israel. His rule and reign encompass all people or another way to put it, over all flesh.
 2. And in his authority, he gives eternal life to all whom the Father had given him.
 - a. (Jn. 6:37) ³⁷ All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.
 - b. The obvious question here is, how do people come? Jesus answers that in (Jn. 6:44) ⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.
 - c. "There is no embarrassment whatsoever between the assertion that God's sovereign purposes extend to the election of those who will be redeemed, and the twin assumptions that God's love extends to the 'world', and that those who reject God's mercy stand under his wrath" (Carson 555).
 - v. Look, if salvation happens any other way it's not by grace and if it's not by grace then God doesn't get the glory.
 1. "Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to thy cross I cling"
 2. My point in quoting from the great hymn is that if grace doesn't move you to worship then you have missed the purpose of grace. Because all of God's plans and work finds its fulfilment when we praise him for his glorious grace!
 3. You either think of salvation in terms of Ishmael or Isaac. In other words, you may think that you do what you can and trust God for the rest or you see that salvation is an impossible act that only God can do.
 - a. When Ishmael was born, Abraham could say, look what I did.
 - b. When Isaac was born, Abraham could only say, look what God did.
 - c. If salvation is not a gift of grace, then you have something to boast about. And honestly, I think a lot of people think they have some investment in their salvation and therefore get to determine what they will or will not do.
 - i. That's not saving faith.

- vi. In one sense, how you understand verse 2 either glorifies God or glorifies you. The problem is, glory now humiliation later. Heaven on earth and hell later. Those who are first will be last. It works no other way.
- c. This next point defines eternal life. In the outline I said “Eternal Life is fellowship with the only, true God and Jesus Christ” and the text says in (Jn. 17:3) ³ And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ.” Why did I change a word?
 - i. I changed “know” to “fellowship”. I did that because our concept of knowing could go something like this: Do you know so and so? Yeah, I know him. I met him at Bob’s the other day while getting some gas for my lawnmower.
 - 1. What if you invited the person you met at Bob’s over for a cookout and eventually built a relationship? You still might easily say “I know him” but you would mean something very different.
 - 2. This knowing God is far more than mere information. And certainly, it involves knowing historical facts.
 - 3. But “knowing” in this verse means intimate fellowship, trust, and personal relationship. This is the fellowship restored that man once had in the Garden of Eden. There God walked with Adam!
 - a. But as you know, sin separated them. Our greatest problem is sin. Our greatest need is God. The only way God and man can be reconciled is through the bloody sacrifice of God’s only begotten Son.
 - b. There, full payment was made for those who will believe and receive the greatest gift ever achieved.
 - c. You must be born again. Come to Jesus and you will find rest. Come to Jesus and you will be forever satisfied. Come to Jesus and he will forgive and count you righteous by faith. Salvation is for eternal life with God!
 - ii. Habakkuk foresaw this day coming. (Hab. 2:14) ¹⁴ For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.
 - 1. It’s not too hard to discover those who know the Father and Jesus Christ if you can watch and listen to them. Their love for him is obvious. They are passionate about his glory. They speak of their Savior as Lord and friend. They will do anything for the One they love. And no, not perfectly. But they are growing and changing. They desire God. They want more. They give up things. The aim of their lives is different. They live for him! They know life without Christ is hopeless. But they know death is gain! These people are marked by a pursuit of holiness and glad obedience. The world’s idea of glory is very different.
 - iii. God is worthy. He is enough.
- V. What’s next for Jesus? Well, the cross, right? Yes, but Jesus speaks in these last two verses as having completed the work. In other words, he is looking beyond the cross and resurrection in which he is glorified with the glory that he and the Father had before the world existed.
 - a. Throughout the gospels, Jesus has not sought his own glory but the glory of the One who sent him. He was a faithful Son perfectly obeying the Father. All the works the Father had given him to do, he did for the Father’s glory.
 - b. One last act of obedience remains. Jesus is not side-stepping the cross. The path to the Father is through this torturous tree. He will be cursed. He will become sin. He will be forsaken by the Father. But on the other side, glory forevermore!
 - i. Jesus is most certainly the Son of God. However, he lived his life as human being in the power the Holy Spirit. I cannot help but think that looking past the suffering to the glory he had laid aside is part of how one fights through pain.

- c. This glory Jesus speaks of was shared between the Father and the Son.
 - i. We have long understood that God did not create the world because he was lonely and needed fellowship with others. If God were in need of something, he would not be God. The very notion that God is dependent on something outside of himself would open the door for many other possible deficiencies.
 - ii. However, God is completely independent of creation and perfectly happy within the godhead.
 - iii. In other words, the perfect communion of the Father and Son...WITH the Father in his presence...at his right hand...enthroned...where he belongs!
- d. One last thing. When the Son demands this glory that he and Father shared before the world began, that does not mean he will give up the resurrected body.
 - i. He will never lay it aside. Let me give you a couple of texts to prove this.
 - 1. At his ascension, an angel tell the disciples: (Acts 1:11) "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."
 - 2. And this one is more explicit: (Phil. 3:20-21) ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

VI. Response

- a. Are you longing for your Savior? Can you believe what Jesus did to save us for God's glory?
- b. How might the Lamb receive the reward for his sufferings? Let's seek to know him and make him known. John said in (3 Jn. 1:4) ⁴ I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.