

GLORIFY YOUR SON, THAT YOUR SON MAY GLORIFY YOU

John 17:1-26

Key Verse: 17:1

“After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: ‘Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.’”

At this point, Jesus has finished his upper room dialogue. Jesus had told his disciples that he was leaving them to go back to the Father. Jesus had commanded them to love one another as he had loved them. Jesus had promised to send the Holy Spirit as their Counselor and Guide. At last, they believed that Jesus came from God and was going back to God. Next, after teaching everything, Jesus turned his eyes toward heaven and prayed to God. Jesus prayed within the hearing of the disciples. Jesus intentionally revealed his intimate relationship with God. It is one of the deepest insights into the mind and heart of Christ in all of Scripture. Jesus prays for himself (1-5), Jesus prays for his disciples (6-19), and Jesus prays for all believers (20-26). May the Lord draw us into prayer fellowship with him, and teach us to pray.

First, Jesus prays to glorify God (1).

Jesus begins his prayer in verse 1b: “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.” Jesus calls God “Father.” It is a confession of Jesus’ love for God, Jesus’ trust in God, and Jesus’ respect for God. Jesus’ love relationship with God was absolute, undiminished by any shred of doubt. Jesus believed his Father loved him and was with him and would be with him to the end. Jesus believed this in the face of the most dreadful and painful reality. Even while Jesus was praying, the devil’s plot was being carried out. The hatred of the world in full measure was coming against Jesus. Jesus knew that Judas Iscariot would soon betray him with a kiss, and that Peter would deny him three times, and that all of his disciples would flee from him, and that mocking, beating, and crucifixion awaited him. Still, Jesus called God “Father” with absolute trust in the Father’s love. The fact that Jesus turned to God in prayer in that awful moment shows that nothing can separate us from the love of God. No matter how difficult the situation is, we can come to God in prayer, knowing that he loves us and he will answer our prayers.

Then what was Jesus’ prayer topic? It was “Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.” When Jesus prayed, “Glorify your Son,” it was his earnest plea that the Father would grant him the power and wisdom to win victory in the trial to come. Jesus wanted to go through his suffering and death in a manner worthy of the Son of God. Jesus was also asking God to raise him from the dead and declare him to be the Son of God with power. Even Jesus depended on God in prayer in his time of tribulation. How much more should we.

The focal point of Jesus’ prayer was that God should be glorified through him. Jesus wanted to vindicate God’s name, honor and glory in the world. This was a spiritual battle with the devil. It was the devil who tempted men to doubt God’s love and led them into sin. Since then the devil has lied about God in every way, shape and form. The devil has poisoned the hearts of people with pride, ingratitude and bitterness until they became enemies of God who joined in his blasphemy. Jesus wanted to solve this problem from the root. Jesus wanted to reveal God’s power over the devil. Jesus wanted to reveal God’s love that sacrificed even his only Son for the salvation of mankind. Humanly speaking, the cross was a symbol of shame. It looked like utter defeat. But Jesus saw the cross as the glory of God. The cross proclaims God’s love throughout history. The cross draws people from every tribe and language to surrender to God in reverent worship.

Here we see Jesus’ burning life purpose to glorify God at any cost, even the cost of his life. When Jesus prayed, he prayed to glorify God. This should be the life purpose of all people. It should be the driving force in our prayers, our labor, and our relationships. This is why Jesus taught us to pray, “Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.” But so often, our prayer is not like Jesus’ prayer. We are more like Jacob in Genesis 32 than we are like Jesus. In that passage, Jacob was about to confront Esau for the first time in 20 years. He was afraid that Esau would seek revenge for taking the blessing. So he organized his tribe and possessions and sent a wave of gifts to Esau to placate him. After doing everything he could think of, he prayed to God. The contents of his prayer were, “Save me!” (Gn 32:11) Well, God answered his prayer by giving him new birth into eternal life. God always hears our crying out prayer in the time of deep distress. Shepherd Chase Akins has been out of work for two years, though he did all his best to get a proper job. A few weeks ago, he was a representative prayer servant at this Sunday worship

service. Though he prayed with many prayer topics, his most distinctive prayer was, "God, give me a job." God answered, and gave him a lab technician position at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. More than that, God made him a missionary to Hawaii. He will be a regular Sunday messenger who struggles with God continually. At this time last year, Danny Sohn was at the end of his rope. For the previous eight years he had lived like the prodigal son trying to find satisfaction in the world without God. But he found the world without God was empty, and life had no meaning at all. When he felt there was no hope and no future, he cried out to God, "Save me." God led him to the MSU Summer Bible Conference where he met Jesus personally through the Father's love for the prodigal son. Surely, God hears our crying out prayers in the time of deep distress.

However, Jesus' prayer was not to save himself. Jesus' prayer was that God's glory might be revealed even through his suffering and death on the cross. We must learn Jesus' prayer. We must pray to glorify God even though we suffer loss to do so. Now many of us are preparing messages for the upcoming summer Bible conferences. We must take all necessary pains to prepare well by practicing repeatedly, receiving correction and praying persistently until Jesus is glorified in our messages. We must pray that Jesus may be glorified through our fishing and one-to-one Bible studies so that many new disciples of Jesus can be raised. We need God's help to have a burning desire to glorify God. May God help us to learn Jesus' life purpose until we, too, can pray, "Father, strengthen me to glorify you, even through much suffering."

Second, Jesus gives eternal life (2-5).

Look at verse 2. "For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him." Jesus stood before God as a Royal Priest, the Crown Prince, in relation to the world. Jesus carried God's authority over all people. Jesus had stated in John 5:26-27, "For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man." Jesus has authority over all people. To those who hear his word and accept it as the word of God, Jesus gives eternal life (Jn 5:24). To those who reject his word, Jesus is the Judge who will sentence them to eternal condemnation. Jesus has absolute authority over all people's lives and future destinies. Having this great authority, Jesus wants to use it to give eternal life to men.

In the rush and bustle of daily living, many things seem to be necessary. When final exam time comes around, getting the right answers on the test questions is important. When the gas tank is empty, five dollars worth of gas seems important. To many high school students being accepted by peers is almost a matter of survival. But in the final analysis, what all people really need most is eternal life. Jesus said, "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mk 8:36-37) To a human being, eternal life is everything. Therefore, when we know we have eternal life we are truly rich. It is like having an unlimited supply of money. No matter how much we spend we still have an infinite amount left. Those who have eternal life can afford to serve others, spending their time and resources lavishly. Those who have eternal life have the peace of God in the midst of any kind of hardships. Those who have eternal life are really happy and the most blessed people.

Look at verse 3. "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." Jesus did not define eternal life merely as perpetual existence. Jesus defined eternal life as a relationship with God; it is to "know God." This word "know" means personal knowledge by means of experience. It is not knowing about, but knowing through an intimate relationship. Jesus came to this world so that we may know God. When we know God we are awed by God. We find him as the one true God. He is the one and only Creator of the universe. He is the one and only Sovereign Ruler of man and the world. He is full of wisdom and perfect in holiness. He is the real, living God who loves us and answers our prayers. When we truly know him, we know he is the one true God and there is no other.

Look at verses 4-5. "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began." Jesus finishes this part of his prayer by reporting: Mission accomplished. Jesus, the Son of God, had an absolute respect and honor toward God. Jesus did the work of God constantly and steadily, event by event, to the end of his life. In doing so, Jesus brought glory to God. One young man was asked to submit a daily report of his fishing and one-to-one Bible studies. In six days, he submitted two reports. He does not have the attitude of Jesus Christ toward his mission.

Jesus' mission culminated in his sacrificial death on the cross. To offer an acceptable sacrifice, Jesus had to live in absolute obedience to God from beginning to end. To offer himself unblemished to God in sinless perfection, Jesus had to live an absolutely pure life from beginning to end. Jesus did this. In John 8:29, Jesus said, "I always do what pleases him." In addition, Jesus had raised his disciples until they could succeed his ministry by the help of the Holy Spirit. Jesus had finished everything that God wanted him to do before his death.

Now Jesus prays to the Father to glorify him with eternal glory. Jesus' bold confidence to pray in this way is enlightening. There is a uniqueness to Jesus' prayer because he is the one and only Son of God. Yet there is also an encouragement to us that those who finish their mission on earth can enter into glory boldly. In verses 1-5, we have seen Jesus pray to the Father for himself. Let's learn Jesus' life purpose to glorify God. We can glorify God when we finish the mission he has given us. After finishing, we must offer everything to God in prayer.

Third, Jesus prays for his disciples (6-19).

Look at verses 6-8. "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me." The point of Jesus' discipleship was to reveal God and to bring his disciples into a personal relationship with God. God gave disciples. Jesus taught them the word. As they believed and obeyed the word, they came to see God and know God.

Now Jesus prayed for his disciples. Look at verse 9. "I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours." The disciples were special to Jesus. They were set apart as God's chosen people (14). To Jesus, they were his glory (10). Jesus prayed especially for them. We can find two clear prayer topics. In the first place, Jesus prayed that God would protect them. Look at verse 11. "I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one." As Jesus prays here, his heart is crying out to God to protect his disciples. Jesus is like a mother shedding tears for her children as they go into the world by themselves. Until this time, Jesus had protected them from the hatred of the world and the devil. But now he was leaving them. Knowing their vulnerability, Jesus prayed fervently for their protection. They would find protection in the name of Jesus and in the name of the Father. God would protect them because they were his. Moreover, they would find protection through unity in the love of God. When God's people unite in Jesus' name, the devil flees from them. But when God's people fight among themselves, they are defeated by the devil. Here we learn that whatever differences we may have, because of Jesus' name we must love one another, humbling ourselves in every way. No matter how right we may be about something, if it results in the division of the devil, we must reconsider. It is always right to humble ourselves and show God's love to our coworkers in Christ.

In the second place, Jesus prayed for his disciples to be sanctified by the truth. Look at verse 17. "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." To be sanctified means to be made holy. It is to be cleansed from sin and worldly desires, and set apart for God. One who is sanctified by the truth can live in the world without being worldly. One of our leaders has been struggling to prepare a message on John 14. At first he was very vague about the contents. But when he recited the Bible passage again and again, the word of God cleansed his heart and he tasted the love of Jesus. He realized that Jesus has given him a room in the Father's house. His soul was satisfied. He could make a new decision to glorify God by living a sanctified life.

Look at verse 13. "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them." Jesus' prayer would remain in God's heart as a perpetual offering on behalf of his disciples. The disciples knew that God answered Jesus' prayers. To know that Jesus had prayed for them and God would answer could be a source of joy for them. Though they were weak and the situation was difficult, they could have full confidence that God would answer Jesus' prayer for them. The Bible says that even now, Jesus is praying for us. Romans 8:34b says, "Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us." The devil does his best to accuse us. And we have enough weaknesses to warrant his accusation. But Christ is interceding for us. Christ says to the Father, "I shed my blood for him. Father, forgive him." God listens to Jesus and declares us right with God. This gives us great joy.

Jesus did not pray for his disciples to be taken out of the world. Rather, Jesus sent his disciples into the world. Look at verse 18. “As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.” Jesus loves his disciples by giving them God’s holy mission that requires their life commitment and devotion. And Jesus loves the world by sending his precious disciples into the world as the Father had sent him into the world. Here we must realize that Jesus does not want us to establish a monastery. Jesus wants to send his disciples out into the world to reveal his love and saving grace. God is concerned about young students who are suffering under the power of sin and death. There is a beautiful young girl who was terribly mistreated when she was growing up. In the agony of her wounded soul, she did not want to live in the world any longer. Then a friend asked her to study the Bible and she agreed. She began to discover hope for herself in Jesus. She needs much healing, but she now has hope in Jesus. Jesus loves the young people of America who are crying in their sins and Jesus wants to save them. So he sends his well-trained disciples out into the world. May God use Dr. Samuel A. Lee’s family and Dr. Nathan Walker’s family to shepherd students at UIUC with the love of Jesus.

Fourth, Jesus prays for all believers (20-25).

Time does not permit us to study this part in detail. But let’s read verses 20-23. “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May the also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” Jesus prayed for us to be one in Jesus. When we are one in Jesus, we reveal the glory of God to the world.

Look at verse 24. “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 loved me before the creation of the world.” Jesus wants us to see him in glory and to share the glory of heaven with him. Jesus prayed for this and God will answer Jesus’ prayer. Praise Jesus!

Look at verses 25-26. “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 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.” Jesus’ prayer unites us with the Father. Thank you, Jesus.