

For Glorification

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Preacher: Tom Muir

[0 : 0 0] Turn back please to John chapter 17. Now we have been going through some of John's Gospel and this series is called the King's Speech because it's this wonderful time when Jesus sits down with his closest people and he talks to them about the things that they need to know because he's about to go away from them. This is really significant for them and he knows how much they need his words and having spoken to them we read chapter 17 where he prays this absolutely wonderful prayer that we should drink deep from because it shows us Jesus in his love, it shows us the character of God, it shows us the interrelation of God as Jesus prays to the Father and it shows us what God thinks of us. So you ever want to know what God thinks of you? You can read a passage like this. For those people who God calls his children, those who know him and who love him, this is Jesus praying to the Father about those people. So in the prayer he goes on to pray for believers particularly but in this short section that we're going to focus on he prays specifically for himself but in praying for himself he also prays for us. I want you to come to see that as we look at this short section tonight. Now can you ever think of a time when you've overheard a conversation, maybe it was when you were a kid and you were listening to your parents speak or whatever and you were pretty sure that you were supposed to hear that conversation. You know the way it goes? You think hang on a minute, they're not talking about me but they're definitely talking to me and the conversation seems like it's in private but it has a lot to say to you and you know it's for you really. Maybe you do, maybe you don't but this is a prayer of Jesus to the Father but we're meant to hear it. Now you say well of course we're meant to hear it, it's written down in scriptures but it's one thing to acknowledge that and it's another thing to know it, it's another thing to read it and to say this is meant for me. I'm meant to hear these words as Jesus prays to the Father. Don Carson is a man who writes books about the Bible and he said this. He said this prayer is at once a petition so Jesus is asking the Father for something and the proclamation, so in other words he's declaring and even a revelation.

This prayer has huge scope. Jesus speaks to the Father to ask him for something and he reveals so much to us about himself and about what he wants for us. It's deeply pastoral.

If you like we can think of various times where we get like the veil is drawn back and we get a little window into the way of the Trinity. The interrelation between Father, Son and Spirit. There are different times and this is one of these times. This is one of these remarkable times so it should be a real standout, a real treasure. A few different times we think of let us make man in our own image. We think of the times when Jesus came to the earth and we hear these words, this is my Son with whom I am well pleased as the Father speaks about, declares over his love for the Son. Of course that time when Jesus so alone prays and calls out and really in some ways there's no answer, my soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. These different instances where we have the speech or the prayers of God, Jesus in different ways we see this. Here is this extended example of

Jesus communicating with the Father. It's at this point where he's about to, if you like, make the final play in this great eternally planned mission of God to save souls. You know you think of great, I don't know, military or different missions to save that have happened over the years and down through history and all the planning that will have gone into these things and at some point there will have come a final consultation between the main people involved, particularly those who are about to go in and maybe try and rescue or perform this act of saving people. At this point Jesus knows and we've seen this over the last few weeks, Jesus is about to move forward toward the cross. He's preparing his people, his friends and now as he does that he prays with all of that in mind, with all of that, this final section of this plan of salvation that he's about to accomplish, he prays and as I said he goes on to pray so carefully for all those who are his followers, we'll see this in a few weeks to come, but the first thing that we see that Jesus does is he prays for himself, he prays for himself and he prays and this is our great theme tonight, verse 1, when Jesus had spoken these words he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said,

Father the hour has come, now is the moment, this is the time, I'm ready to move, the hour has come, what does he say? Glorify your son, glorify your son. He's heading to the cross and he says glorify your son, that's the thing that he asks for himself. But what I want to say just as if you like the first point here is that Jesus praying as he performs this great act as he goes to the cross and as he then asks that, as he sees that being accomplished in the great purposes of God, this glorification that he asks for isn't like a kind of graduation, it's not like Jesus is moving up one in God's eyes because this glory that he prays for is his, it is his, this is who he is, he's returning to the Father where he will receive this glory that is his right to have. So if we only have an image of Jesus as the man who kind of walked the earth then we don't have a full picture of Jesus because as we're going to come on and see this glory that he prays for is already his. That amazing passage, I'm just going to turn to very briefly Philippians chapter 2, what does it say when it describes what Jesus did and the significance of what he did when he became a man. Philippians chapter 2 verse 6, though he was in the form of God, he didn't count equality with God, a thing to be grasped, but he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant. Jesus emptied himself by taking the form of a servant. That means, amongst other things, that the absolute splendor that he had that was his, that is who he is, he put off for a time. And so that when people saw him walk in the earth, he looked like an ordinary person. But from all eternity he had existed in glory, in complete splendor, clothed in splendor. He was the Son of God. That's who he is. So for Jesus to say glorify me isn't like kind of graduating, oh how he's made it, he'll get bumped up one if you like.

[8 : 14] I remember when around the end of my time in high school people started getting jobs and it was the first time I heard about an appraisal. So I had a pal who worked in home base and he suddenly said to me, oh I've got to go for my appraisal tonight. I said, what on earth is that? I had no idea about the ways of the world. And he explained that he wanted to get more money, he wanted to get more responsibility in his job and he had to go before this little committee of people in his work and explain to them why he should be bumped up one, receive a bit more money, a bit more prestige and all the rest of it.

So he had to kind of justify himself. This isn't this situation here. Jesus isn't kind of trying to say, haven't I done really well? Now give me a bit more respect. Give me something that I didn't have before. This glory that he says glorify me with to the Father is his right as who he is. In Isaiah we get an incredible picture of God. In Isaiah chapter 6, maybe a familiar passage to you. There's an image there where Isaiah is confronted. He's a prophet. Isaiah is somebody who's going to speak for God and God gives him a very clear impression of his splendor. You know what? God had a difficult job for Isaiah to do and he wanted to send Isaiah out to do that job, absolutely convinced of his splendor and his holiness. You know Isaiah would never forget that picture that he saw and it's in Isaiah chapter 6 and in the year that King Isaiah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up and the train of his robe filled the temple and we get this extended picture of the awesomeness of the Lord. Now in John's Gospel, a couple of chapters earlier, John says something really interesting because he quotes from a few verses just after that picture of God. He quotes a few verses. In chapter 12 verse 40 he quotes from Isaiah where it says, he's blinded their eyes and hardened their heart lest they see with their eyes and understood with their heart and turn and I would heal them and then John says this,

Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. See John is there saying that Isaiah saw the glory of the Lord is very likely that he's describing Jesus here. There are other passages in Isaiah later on where he speaks about the suffering servant, these wonderful passages that point forward to the way that Jesus would be his suffering and beautiful savior. But it's also appropriate to look at this astounding picture, the splendor of the Lord that Isaiah was confronted with and say that splendor applies to Jesus also.

You know what happens that episode where a few of Jesus's closest people, again they have if you like the veil pulled back for a short while, where Jesus is transfigured.

What's the point of that? They go up in the mountain with Jesus, a few of them and they're standing around and all of a sudden Jesus appears resplendent before them. He's no longer the ordinary guy who wouldn't have, nobody would have passed remark about in the marketplace.

[11 : 36] He is revealed to them in his glory and in all his splendor and for a time they are blessed with this vision of the splendor and the awesomeness of Jesus the Lord, who for a time had humbled himself and become as a servant that he may serve us. So just to say that this glory that Jesus prays about at the start of our passage here, let's get this correct perspective that this is right for him to have this glory. He is the Son of God from before all time and we need an elevated picture of who Jesus is. It does us good to have an elevated picture of who Jesus is. So this glorification of Jesus is not a kind of graduation if you like.

Also though as Jesus prays for his glorification, it brings glory to the Father. You see that just in the continuation of this verse that we've been reading. He says glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you. How isn't that wonderful? The way that the Godhead is working here that Jesus is acknowledging that as he is glorified, he brings glory to the Father.

Now how is that possible? Well it's because as we've touched on, Jesus is about to go to the cross. This is what brings him glory, which of course is what was so astounding to so many people and what they found so ridiculous that this Savior hanging on a tree would be in any way glorious. It's not even respectable to talk about that. And yet Jesus knows that as this final piece, if you like, as he moves towards the cross, is fulfilled as he fulfills this work, this is the fulfillment of this awesome, ultimately wise purpose of God.

The only way by which we may be saved is this way of the cross. And this is what Jesus is determined to do. And as he does it, it brings glory to God because it displays the wisdom of God. It displays the power of God. It displays the perfect coming together of God's justice and his mercy and his love. So Jesus, as he prays for this, he seeks to bring glory to the Father also because the Trinity has purposed and is at work to effect this plan of salvation. This isn't Jesus just off doing his own thing. I watched a program recently. It was on holiday, had a bit of time. So a few of us in the family were sitting around and we watched this program called Alone. And it's like, it's one of these programs where a bunch of extraordinary people get dropped off in the middle of nowhere and they have to survive for as long as they can. And they're alone. And so we're up in the middle of Canada or somewhere. And they get dropped off and they have nowhere, they have nobody else around about them. They have to survive with a few things that they get to bring and by their wits. And it's terribly hard and they have an awful time and eventually somebody wins. That's pretty much it. And well done to them. They've survived bears and all kinds of horrible things. But the point is this, that their big thing that they deal with all the time is, when do I get to go home? How much can I put up with before I go home? Or if you think it like this, how much can I prove myself before I go home? So a lot of them, that was really what was intriguing about the program was watching them wrestle with themselves. Some of them were trying to do it for family members back home. Some of them were trying to do it for themselves just to give themselves a sense of self-worth.

I've survived 40 days on shellfish. So well done to them. Jesus is going home to the Father is absolutely nothing like that. You know, the people in this program talked about tapping out. They would eventually get to the point where they would say, okay, I've proved it myself. Now I get to tap out. And all the time it was weird. They kept talking about what they look forward to at home and it was usually something like Burger King or something ridiculous that they just had this fixation for going home and getting Burger King, this really ordinary food. But Jesus, it's not like Jesus has just been kind of surviving for as long as he can and now he gets to go home. It's not like Jesus is trying to prove himself anything like that. There's kind of no comparison with that. Jesus is at exactly the right point in the purposes of God prepared to go through this awful experience of being alone, alone like nobody else will ever be alone because he doesn't hear the response of the Father while he is on the cross. As he receives the punishment for all of the sin of you and I and all of the people throughout the world, that aloneness that he is prepared to go for, he does this at exactly the right point in God's purposes. And he does it not for some sort of trivial thing that he gets when he goes back, but he does it because it brings him glory in his salvation and it brings the Father glory and it brings salvation.

[17 : 42] We're going to come on to see that in just a minute. There's a couple of things that we see in terms of God and his glory here that he anticipates. One is at Calvary. They anticipate that as he goes to the cross, the true wisdom of God is revealed as we've seen, as he goes to the cross, there is this perfect coming together of the purposes of God as he acts in submission to the will of the Father. And yet he acts willingly. You will hear from time to time people saying, oh well this was just, this was a terrible thing that Jesus had to do. It wasn't fair, it wasn't right. God must have imposed his will on the Son and this thing that Jesus had to do wasn't fair, it was abusive in some way. Jesus willingly, gladly, remember that verse for the joy that was set before him, goes to the cross and endures its shame. And the final thing just to say about this anticipation of Calvary is that it's because he goes willingly because he delights to bring glory to the

Father. Because here's the thing, Jesus knows perfectly how much God is due glory. You know, we really struggle with that sometimes. Our conception of how much glory God is due wavers so much. You know we get distracted or that's blocked from our understanding. Or maybe at this point in time you just can't see that at all. And you don't, you know, God to you is a mystery at best. But Jesus has a very clear view that it is absolutely right to do this work for the salvation of his people that the wisdom of God and the glory of God may be seen because God is absolutely worth our knowing his glory. That is the most worthwhile thing in the world that we behold his glory. So Christ anticipates Calvary in this way, but he also anticipates, just if we can go down to verse 4, the wonderful return as he returns to glory if you like to the heavens and picture the scene as the Prince returns victorious. Verse 4, I glorified you on earth having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. I think Jesus there is looking, if you like, in the short term ahead to the work that he is about to have finished. And so he talks about having accomplished the work. And now Father, glorify me in your own presence. How sweet that must have been to be able to say that for Jesus. Glorify me in your own presence. He still had the horror of the cross to go through that sense of alienation. And so here he prays with anticipation, Father, glorify me in your presence. And just think for a minute of how that must have unfolded in the heavens, if you like, amongst the angels, amongst those around the throne. One of the saddest things is you hear stories sometimes of maybe where there have been great conflicts in the world and soldiers have returned home. And because they've not been successful or because the war has been very contentious, they're not received home by the public with any form of adulation. They're not welcomed home. It's just a kind of silence because it's been a disappointment because it's been embarrassing. And these people who've been off fighting this war, doing whatever they've done, they've had to come home to silence and just it's all been kept very quiet. But Jesus anticipates returning as the one who is victorious over sin and over death. And as he returns victorious, the one who has made absolutely sure that his people are his and that he has bought them with his own blood and they are assured of being his children. And the rejoicing that there must have been, if we can just kind of go there for a minute, in the heavens as the victorious king returns, having fulfilled the work that has given him to do. So Jesus' glorification is not some kind of graduation and it brings glory to himself and to the Father as he fulfills his work. Finally, and most, well, amazingly for us, as Jesus prays for his glory, we are included.

That's you and me. If you are his, you are included in this prayer. That's why we need to drink deep from it, as I was saying. But understand what Jesus says in these words here. So we get the flow of what Jesus is talking about in the first few verses. Jesus says, glorify me that I may bring glory to you. Why? Well, verse 2, since you have given him, he's speaking about himself, authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. So Jesus takes it further. He says, this glory that will be appropriate to attribute to the Father is because the Father has given the Son authority to call those who are his own. You see, and he speaks about this eternal life that there to be given. But then he goes on to say, and he kind of explains it even more in verse 3, and this is eternal life, not that, this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. You see what he's saying there? He's opening up the whole scope of the salvation that is made possible because of the work that he's doing. And he says that the heart of it is this, not only that those who have been purchased by the blood of Jesus have this kind of heavenly everlasting life in this paradise, but they have everlasting knowledge of God. That's at the core of what Jesus is doing. And that's why God is glorious because in all of his glory, he wants us to be there and to see his glory, to be a part of him where he is, and to know him and to see him, and to recognize him for who he is. Now, it's not appropriate for us to seek glory very often, is it? You know, if you know somebody who's always trying to get people to praise them, there's something wrong there. Well, that's because we know that we're all fallible. We have that sense as humans as we interact with each other, that it doesn't work when somebody's always trying to blow their own trumpet and set themselves up against other people, but it's utterly appropriate for God to want us to be in his presence and to see his glory because it is the most awesome thing that you could ever imagine. What else could you want but to behold the glory of God, which we do now in the face of Jesus? So there is this wonderful flow that Jesus speaks about as he brings us into this prayer. So we have this picture also.

I was thinking that sometimes you maybe have known a friend. They've been a good friend of yours. You've been hanging out together and you have stuff in common. And then maybe that friend does something special. Maybe they get some adulation or some praise. And then all of a sudden they're not quite the same friend anymore. They've maybe got other pals who are a bit cooler. And it feels a bit like they've moved on a little bit. And you're not quite so special to them anymore and you're kind of forgotten about. See, when Jesus goes, he anticipates returning to the splendor of his glory, which is utterly appropriate for him to do. The thing that he wants is to bring his children into that. So it's not like Jesus has been with his disciples and he was sort of saying, it's been fun. It's been nice. We've had a good time. I'm going home now. He's saying, I'm going home and I want you there. I want you there to see my glory and to rejoice with me in my salvation.

John Owen is an old Christian writer. And I came across a book that he wrote called The Glory of Christ. It was nice. I read the little inscription on the inside. It was from my old Sunday school teacher. She gave it to me when I left Sunday school. But heavy for just leaving Sunday school. But it's a beautiful book. It was the abridged version. So I gave for that. He has this little phrase, this little sentence. I was just reading it this week. He says this, the greatest desire that Christ expressed in his prayer, this prayer that we're talking about, was that his people might be with him to behold his glory. Just let that sink in. That Jesus wanted his people to be with him to see his glory. And he refers to a verse that comes a few verses later in this prayer, which we'll come to. But I'm going to steal ahead a little bit and read it. Jesus says these words further down in his prayer when he's praying for his people. 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 love me before the foundation of the world. Please take that verse to your heart. Jesus wants you, if you're his child and you trust in him, he wants you to be with him so that you may behold his glory. So just a couple of things in finishing. And one is to say that this can be quite difficult for us sometimes. You know, there are many distractions for us. Life is hard and understanding all of this is hard sometimes. Now we see the glory by faith. So we behold the glory of God in Jesus. He is the representation of

[28 : 36] God. He is the one whom God has given us to see the wonder of his love and his mercy and his sacrifice. We behold his glory by faith now. And that faith is a gift. So we pray for that ability to see the glory of God. But notice also that one day we will see him face to face. This is in part what we've already been talking about. One verse in First John chapter 3 says this, See what kind of love the Father has given to us that we should be called children of God. And so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now. But I was reading an interesting interview with an old surfer who had been doing the rounds for many years. And he was one of the original guys who used to just get in their beat up old vans and drive across, go across the ferry to France, drive across Europe. He goes as far as they could in that really raw way of adventure and searching. They experienced so much of that life on the road and of every part of the hunt for the waves that they were looking for. All of the feelings and the good and bad, everything that was going on. They sensed all that.

Now he was talking about the current situation where many of the really great young surfers are sponsored. They get a plane that's zipped off to Indonesia, whatever it is. And he was just complaining about this and saying, well these guys, they don't see anything.

They get on the plane and they're like looking at their iPhone and whatever. And you know, they're all plugged in and listens to music. And it's like being on a conveyor belt. And they get off the plane onto a boat and it takes them immediately to the wave. They surf, they get loads of money, they go home again. Now his point wasn't as simple as just complaining about iPhones and technology. His point was they do all of this and they never see anything.

What's the point? They're purely using it as a means to an end to get to this wave. Maybe they get some prize money and maybe they go home. They never see anything. Now is it possible for us to walk the Christian walk, to be his children, his disciples, his followers and never see or never take the time to look at the glory of Jesus? Because you know one day when we'll see him face to face and we'll behold his glory. But that starts now. We see by faith the glory of God in the cross and in the wonderful work of Jesus. What an incredible privilege that we have now in the middle of everything that's going on and all our problems. That's why we need this in the middle of all our problems. To make sure that it is our calling which we realize. That's why John Owen was writing his book. His big concern was to help people see the glory of Jesus. That's what he wanted to do. So you know that's our prayer, isn't it? When this isn't very easy to do. You know we pray in anticipation, Lord show me your glory. One day in these renewed heavens and earth we anticipate that with a sense of mystery and awe and delight. And then we pray show me your glory now.

And all that's going on and all my problems and all my troubles and all my confusion and all the questions I have. Show me your glory so that I may walk for you and follow you and trust in you. Amen. Let me pray. Oh Jesus you are our great Savior. You are our wonderful Lord. You are over all the earth. You are the one who will judge the whole earth. You are the one who's been given authority by the Father. And you are the one who has made it possible for us to be secure. You are utterly beautiful, perfect and compassionate knowing your people, praying for them. Help us to see you as we should see you. Help us to respond to you in the way that's right. There's so many good things in this life, Lord. Again we thank you for them. Please help nothing to get in the way though. Good or bad of us being able to see your splendor. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.