

JOHN 17:1-5—THE GLORY OF THE SON

INTRO.: Dictionary defines “glorious” as: “Wonderful; entitled to great renown; brilliantly beautiful or magnificent.” What is the most wonderful, glorious thing you can imagine?

- If you are a Miss America contestant, what is the one thing you long for? (World Peace)
- A little closer to home: many people might say that the height of gloriosity might be the Packers repeating as SB champs.
- Or the most glorious thing would be a gorgeous sunset over the Grand Canyon
- Or, maybe it’s the girl-of-your-dreams saying “Yes.”

What are other “most glorious things” you can think of?

Those are all good—but today’s passage—**JOHN 17:1-5**—talks about the *most glorious thing of all*: and it has nothing to do with sunsets, the Packers, or anything else.

Turn to **John 17:1-5**—I’m reading from NASB—one difference from the translation of ESV which I will mention when we get there: **READ JOHN 17:1-5**.

PROP.: JESUS IS MOST GLORIOUS OF ALL.—Not to be too crass about it, but: *Does that turn you on?*

- When we think of what is “Wonderful; entitled to great renown; brilliantly beautiful or magnificent.”—Do we naturally think of Jesus?
- And when we think of Jesus do we naturally think in terms of such things as: “Wonderful; entitled to great renown; brilliantly beautiful or magnificent?”
- And, if not, why not? Because JESUS IS MOST GLORIOUS OF ALL.

O/S: We will see: (1) The *nature* of the glory of Jesus; (2) The *basis* or *foundation* of Jesus’ glory; and (3) The *result* of that glory *to us*.

BACKGROUND: This is the night before Jesus is to be killed. He knows what is going to happen. He’s had His last meal with His closest friends and disciples. Judas has gone to betray Him. Now Jesus is praying His last great prayer to the Father. You might say it’s His last words.

- When somebody is about to die—and knows it—his last words are always important. In a time like that, people always focus on the most important things of life. Jesus is no different.
- Since the 1500s John 17 has been called Jesus’ “High Priestly Prayer.” It’s His longest prayer recorded in the Bible. Look at where He begins: He begins by praying about *Himself*: Who He is; What He does; His own glory with the Father.

I. The nature of the glory of Jesus (vv. 1, 5).

These verses speak about Christ’s “glory,” and they flow together [**READ vv. 1, 5**]: **v. 1** talks about the glory by which the F & S are abt. to glorify each other as a result of what the Son is abt. to do on earth. **v. 5** points back to the glory that the Son had in eternity past, before the world was even created.

A. In vv. 1 and 5 when it talks about “**glorifying**,” although “to glorify” can mean “to praise or honor,” here it has more of the meaning “*to clothe in splendor*” or “*to manifest the full magnificence*” of something.

- When **v. 5** talks abt. “**the glory that I had with you before the world was**,” that is saying Jesus was pre-existent, uncreated, eternal. When Christ b/c a man, that entailed emptying Himself of all the glory and splendor He had known and enjoyed for all time before His incarnation.
- Now here in **John 17** Jesus is asking the Father to reverse that self-emptying and restore Him to the splendor that He shared with the Father before the world began.

B. Notice that the glorification of the Father & the Son are one: the F. glorifies the S., and the S. glorifies the F.

- Here is where the translation in the ESV comes in. In **v. 5** NASB says “**glorify me together with yourself.**” But the Greek wording here implies *nearness; closeness*—so the ESV says, “**glorify me in your own presence.**”
- Throughout the Bible this “glory” is always associated with the only one, true, living God. All of this is affirming that Jesus is one with the Father. As the Nicene Creed puts it: “**We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God,**

Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made.

C. All of this begins with the statement: “THE HOUR HAS COME.”

- This is the focal point of Jesus’ life; His mission; His purpose—THE HOUR.
- Up until this point, Jesus had repeatedly said “MY HOUR HAS NOT YET COME”
 - **John 2:4**—To His mother when she said that they had run out of wine at a wedding
 - **John 7:6, 8**—He told His disciples to go to the feast of tabernacles themselves b/c . . .
 - **John 7:30; 8:20**—When His enemies tried to arrest Him (they couldn’t b/c . . .)
- But NOW the hour *has come*.
- And what is “the Hour” referring to?—His death on the cross.

This leads us to the *basis* or *foundation* of Christ’s glory in **vv. 2, 4**.

II. The basis of the glory of Jesus (vv. 2, 4).

A. When Christ asks the Father in **v. 1** to glorify the Son so that the Son may glorify the Father, the *ground* or *basis* for that request is the redemptive plan of God established in eternity past which we see in **vv. 2, 4**. IOW: the Father had a plan, before time began, to give all authority to the Son. We see that in **v. 2**. That plan was based on the Son’s sacrificing Himself on the cross (which is accomplished in **v. 4**). As a result of accomplishing that plan, the Son glorifies the Father and gives eternal life to those whom the Father has given Him.

B. Notice how, in vv.2 & 4, the Father and the Son work together to accomplish the redemption of people.

- The Father gives the Son **authority over all flesh**.
- The Father also gives the Son those who will be saved.
- The Son saves and gives eternal life to every single one whom the Father has given Him, by accomplishing everything the Father has given Him to do.

III. Now, let’s put vv. 1-2, 4-5 together.

A. Notice how vv. 2, 4 form the counterparts of vv. 1, 5. Whereas **v. 1** talks about the glory that was about to occur as a result of what Christ was doing *in space & time*, **v. 5** talks about Christ’s glory *in eternity past*. And whereas **v. 2** talks about the basis or foundation of that glory—namely, God’s great plan of redemption which occurred *in eternity past*, **v. 4** talks about the accomplishment of that great plan of redemption *in space & time*. So, in order it is: **v. 1**—S&T; **v. 2**—EP; **v. 4**—S&T; **v. 5**—EP.

B. See how vv. 1 and 2 work together:

- In ages past God knew that mankind would rebel against Him, fall into sin and corruption, and have no way out. So God had a plan not only to save and rescue people from the mess they had gotten themselves into, but ultimately to turn them into glorious, eternal beings of such magnificence that, as CS Lewis says, **“the dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship.”**
- This plan would be turned into reality by God the Son—Jesus Christ—becoming a human being, perfectly doing the Father’s will here on earth, perfectly revealing who God is and what He is like, and taking peoples’ sins and the punishment for those sins onto Himself while at the same time giving them, in return, His own life and righteousness.
- It is Christ’s death on the cross that shows Him—and the Father—most glorious—and sets Christ and Christianity apart from every other religion or philosophy or way of life in the world.
 - Every other religion or philosophy or way of life basically says: It’s all about what YOU DO; to be better you have to *work harder, do more good deeds, make more sacrifices, meet this or that set of requirements, or obey this or that set of rules.*
 - Only Christianity says: NO. All that is just external and superficial. None of that will change your heart—what you’re really like inside. Only Christ can do that. And He did that on the cross—that’s why *most* Muslims, for example, deny that Jesus was crucified or died on the cross, but they *all* deny that He bore our sins, and was an atoning sacrifice for our sins. You see, Christianity is all about *who Christ IS* and *what Christ DOES*.
- So in **v.1** when Jesus prays to **“glorify Your Son so that the Son may glorify You,”** that prayer is an

expression of Christ's own willingness to obey the Father, even to death. What He is saying is that the horror of what was about to happen to Him on the cross means nothing less than the Son's glorification—and through that the glorification of the Father who would spare no expense to redeem fallen humanity.

- Think abt. this: Jesus asks in v.1 to **“glorify Your Son so that the Son may glorify You.”** The basis of that request is the great plan of God in v.2 whereby the Son *has been given authority over all flesh*. Yet despite having authority over all flesh, Jesus does not use that authority to stomp, or wipe out, or manipulate, or punish, or control people—even though they hate Him, rebel against Him, and cause themselves and the whole world endless grief—but He *lives for THEM, bears THEIR punishment, dies for THEM, gives THEM new, eternal life, and turns THEM into magnificent, God-like beings just like Himself.* IF THAT ISN'T GLORIOUS, I DON'T KNOW WHAT IS.

C. In the Bible, Jesus' death on the cross is intimately linked with His resurrection from the dead and His ascension back to heaven—it is all seen as a single complex of events—and so it is here.

- We see that in vv. 4-5: **READ vv. 4-5.**
- Commentator D.A. Carson states: **“There is certainly a contrast between v. 4 and v. 5, but it is not between the previous work that Jesus has completed and his cross-work that lies immediately ahead. Rather, a contrast is drawn between the glory that Jesus by his work has brought to the Father on earth, and the glory he asks the Father to give him in heaven. Once that is seen, it makes best sense if v. 4 includes all the work by which Jesus brings glory to his Father, and that includes his own death, resurrection and exaltation.”**
- Why are Jesus' Resurrection & ascension intimately connected with His death on the cross? B/c Jesus' Resurrection & ascension show that His death on the cross was not just a tragedy, or the death of a martyr, or even an example for us—but paradoxically was a great victory: that He HAD accomplished the work the Father gave Him to do; that He HAD borne our sins and paid the penalty for those sins; that He HAD defeated both death and the devil.
- The Resurrection & ascension demonstrate that the Father ACCEPTED Jesus' sacrifice. Jesus' Resurrection & ascension show that the great plan of redemption was, in fact, successfully accomplished. **Phil 2:7-11** talks about this, and shows that Jesus' prayer in **John 17** was, in fact, answered [**READ PHIL 2:7-11**]
- That is why all who call upon Jesus to save them, repent of their sins, and receive Him as the Lord of their lives, have assurance that their sins have been forgiven, they are saved, and they do have eternal life. Nothing else in the world—no other person, religion, or philosophy—can guarantee that except Christ—b/c nothing else is validated by anything approaching the Res. of Jesus from the dead. IF THAT ISN'T GLORIOUS, I DON'T KNOW WHAT IS.

So, the NATURE of Christ's glory is *being clothed in splendor* or having *His full magnificence made manifest*. The BASIS or FOUNDATION of Christ's glory is the great redemptive plan of God which was accomplished in the complex of Jesus' death on the cross, coupled with His Res. & ascension. What is the RESULT of that glory to us?

III. The result of the glory of Christ (v. 3—READ).

A. The result of the glory of Jesus Christ is our being given eternal life.

Notice 2 things about eternal life:

- 1st—as v. 2 tells us, eternal life is a gift—“to all whom You have given Him, He may GIVE eternal life.” We're not entitled to it. We cannot earn it. He didn't have to do it. But He chose to give eternal life—and not to people who were seeking Him and striving after Him—but who were rebelling against Him and were spitting in His face.
- 2nd—as v. 3 tells us, eternal life is based on Christ and our relationship to Him. v. 3 says that eternal life is to *know* the only true God and Jesus Christ. Often in the Bible—including right here—when the word “know” is used, it means far more than just intellectually understanding something. It is NOT “*knowing ABOUT*” God and Jesus. Rather, it involves *affection, intimacy, commitment* as well.
 - For example, in **Genesis** it says **“Adam KNEW his wife”**—That doesn't mean that he just knew things about her, although he certainly did, but was intimate with her.
 - In **2 Tim 2:19** it says, **“the Lord KNOWS those who are His.”** He certainly knows who we are, but it means far more than that: He loves us; is in relationship with us.
 - So here when it says **“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent”**—The Greek word for “KNOW” here is *ginosko*. Let me just read

B. What this means for our lives.

To “know” someone in this intimate, relational sense involves our mind, our affections, and our will.

- **Mind.** Yes, we all need to know *about* Jesus: Who He is; what He’s like; what His values are; what He wants—nay—*demands* of us. That is where Bible study and church are so important. But that is not sufficient.
- **Affections.** In **John 21** Jesus asked Peter 3X “Do you love me?” **DO WE LOVE JESUS???** That’s the crucial Q. In the Bible a true, intimate, saving “knowing” of God and Christ is compared to a marriage. My marriage with Nancy does not just involve my mind, although it certainly includes that. It also involves my affections. I love her and she loves me. Jesus loves you. Do you love Him? Can you really say in a sense that you are married to Him? Is He really the person of 1st importance to you? That is what Jesus is saying to us here.
- **Will.** When Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love me?” how would He know if Peter loved Him? Well, in **John 21** Jesus then said to Peter, “If you love me, then feed my sheep.” IOW, if you really love someone you don’t merely *think* it, you don’t merely *feel* it, you don’t merely *say* it, but you show that love by what you *do*. And just as Jesus told Peter “feed my sheep,” so He says to us in **John 14:21**: **“He who has my commandments and keeps them, is the one who loves Me.”**
 - **This is not just keeping a set of rules—but it should primarily be inner-directed—just like in a marriage or a human love relationship.** IOW, you naturally do the things you know your partner likes, simply b/c you love him or her. So with Christ we should naturally do the things that Christ likes simply b/c we love Him.
 - **The Bible makes very clear how we are to live:** Forgive those who have wronged and hurt us; give generously of our money and time to help the poor and build the kingdom; be morally upright in public and in private; put others first ahead of ourselves; etc. Do we find these things burdensome or a joy? If it is not a joy, then we need to find out why not.
 - **It may be b/c we simply do not “KNOW” Him in an intimate, relational way.** IOW, we are not really saved. If that is the case, then we need to know Him. You can do that right now. If God has been tugging on you then stop being so prideful. Take the step. You can say to Him right now: “Lord, I know I have been going my own way for all my life. It’s not working. I’m sorry. Please forgive me. From right now, I’m going to live for You. Please come into my life as my Lord. I give you control over all aspects of my life: my money, my time, my actions, my relationships. I have faith in You that, by the blood of Jesus that He shed on the cross, You have changed my heart and will change my life. For it is by Jesus that I pray, and believe, and thank you for giving me new life. Amen” If you do that, then you tell someone. Tell me. Get connected with this fellowship of believers or some other church where Christ is proclaimed and His Word is taught, b/c **Rom 10:9** tells us: **“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”**
 - **If you already know Jesus in an intimate, relational way, then we need to find out why that relationship is not the way it should be.** If that is the case, I can guarantee you one thing: the problem lies NOT with Christ, but with us. So, whatever the problem is, change it—and change it NOW. Again, it’s like a marriage: sometimes the 2 of you don’t communicate, you’re angry, etc., etc. In my marriage, any times like that have usually been my fault. So what do we do? We go to our spouse and apologize, talk it out, and do whatever we have to do to get the relationship back the way it should be. So it is with Christ. As it says in **1 John 1:9**: **“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”**
 - **But remember something else:** If there is a problem in your relationship with Christ, it is usually b/c of a problem you are having with another human being. Why is that? (**READ 1 John 4:20-21**) You see, how we treat people shows what we really think of God. Why? B/c all people are made in the IOG. And how we treat God’s image shows what we really think of Him. So fix those relationships. Make the call. Write the letter. Do what you have to do. And do it today. It will take a great weight off your heart, and will restore your relationship—not only with the other person, but also with Jesus. And the great thing is, Jesus—through the HS—will give you the power and ability and courage to do what you need to do. So do it.

CONCL.: Jesus is glorious. He is the most glorious of all. He was glorious before the world was made, and He demonstrated His glory by taking our sin upon Himself, dying for us, and giving us His life, His Spirit, and knowledge of Himself. There’s no one like Jesus. Know Him. And if you do, and b/c transformed by Him, all will see that there’s no one like you either. Let’s pray.