

THE GOSPEL OF

JOHN

Jesus' High
Priestly
Prayer

INTRODUCTION

John 17:1-5

Scottish minister John Brown (cited by A. W. Pink, Exposition of John) wrote: "The seventeenth chapter of the Gospel by John, is, without doubt, the most remarkable portion of the most remarkable book in the world." We often read in the Gospels that Jesus prayed. Sometimes we can read short snippets of His prayers (e.g., John 11:41-42; 12:27-28). But here, just hours before Jesus was arrested, we get to eavesdrop on His prayer, the longest recorded prayer in the New Testament. Jesus prays for Himself, that He would be glorified (17:1-5); for His disciples, that they would be sanctified (17:6-19); and for the church, that it would be unified (17:20-26).

This prayer teaches us about prayer, about God's sovereign purpose and our place in it, and about the relationship between the Father and the Son. The Lord Jesus views Himself equal to the Father in terms of glory (John 17:5), and yet distinct from the Father and subject to Him in their relationship. John G. Mitchell (An Everlasting Love [Multnomah Press], p. 321) wrote, "If there is any chapter in the Bible that would reveal the deity of the Son of God and His equality with the Father, it would be this chapter."

This prayer, along with His subsequent prayer in the garden, steeled Christ to endure the hostility of sinners against Himself (Heb. 12:3). To be faithful witnesses in a world that is hostile to the gospel, we learn from our Lord that ...

To do God's will in this hostile world, understand and submit in prayer to God's sovereign plan to glorify Himself through the cross.¹

OPEN IT

1. If they were going to make a movie about your life, who would you want to be cast to play you?

¹ Cole, Steven. Sermon titled: "Doing God's Will in a Hostile World". Found at: <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-88-doing-god-s-will-hostile-world-john-171-5>

READ IT

John 17:1-5

EXPLORE IT

2. **What does Jesus ask the Father to do?**
3. **What authority did the Father give to Jesus?**
4. **How does Jesus define eternal life?**
5. **What does Jesus tell the Father He has accomplished?**

APPLY IT

That God's appointed hour has arrived does not strike Jesus as an excuse for resigned fatalism, but for prayer: precisely because the hour has come for the Son to be glorified, he prays that the glorification might take place. This is God's appointed hour; let God's will be done—indeed, Jesus prays that his Father will accomplish the purpose of this appointed hour. As so often in Scripture, emphasis on God's sovereignty functions as an incentive to prayer, not a disincentive.²

6. **What do you think of D.A. Carson's statement above: "As so often in Scripture, emphasis on God's sovereignty functions as an incentive to prayer, not a disincentive."?**

² Carson, D. A.. The Gospel according to John (The Pillar New Testament Commentary (PNTC)) (p. 553-554). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.. Kindle Edition.

7. How does your understanding of the sovereignty of God influence how you pray personally?

When we talk about God's being glorified (the verb), we mean the appropriate response to his goodness displayed. So the glory of God (noun) is his goodness displayed, and glorifying God (verb) is his goodness celebrated. God is glorious regardless of whether anyone understands who he is, but we glorify God by seeing his goodness and worshiping him for it.

Here when Jesus prays to be glorified, it means his goodness must be seen and celebrated. For God to answer this request means the greatness of Jesus will need to be understood and acknowledged.³

8. How do we see the glory of God on display today?

9. What should it look like to glorify God? In other words, what is "the appropriate response to his goodness displayed"?

³ Carter, Matt; Wredberg, Josh. Exalting Jesus in John (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) (p. 360). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

The moment Jesus most reveals the goodness of God is on the cross. Hanging there, suspended between earth and sky, Jesus glorifies God in a way the world has never seen. Never has the holy justice of God and the holy love of God been displayed so powerfully together. We cannot adequately understand how glorious God is without the cross. There we see his holiness and condescension, his wrath and love, and his justice and mercy. All are perfectly displayed through the death of his Son. And in that hour the request of Jesus is answered. In the cross the glorious wrath and love of God are revealed. The Father glorifies the Son, and the Son reveals the unparalleled goodness of the Father to us.⁴

10. How did God glorify the Son at the cross?

Eternal life turns on nothing more and nothing less than knowledge of the true God. Eternal life is not so much everlasting life as personal knowledge of the Everlasting One. This is not knowledge of 'the divine' in some pantheistic or merely utilitarian sense. This is knowledge of the only true God. But because this one true God has supremely revealed himself in the person of his Son, knowledge of God cannot be divorced from knowledge of Jesus Christ. Indeed, knowledge of Jesus Christ, whom God has sent, is the ultimate access to knowledge of God.⁵

11. How would you describe what John 17:3 means? What does it mean to know God?

12. John tells us that Jesus has made God known to us by revealing His glory to us. As you look at Jesus' life and ministry, what things stand out to you about the heart, mind, character, and will of God?

⁴ Carter, Matt; Wredberg, Josh. Exalting Jesus in John (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) (p. 361). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.
⁵ Carson, D. A.. The Gospel according to John (The Pillar New Testament Commentary (PNTC)) (p. 556). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.. Kindle Edition.

But eternal life is not just everlasting life. Eternal life is a relationship with the everlasting God. Eternal life is forever delighting in the manifold glories of God. Eternal life is seeing God and rejoicing forever in his presence. Eternal life is living how we're created to live—in fellowship with our Creator.⁶

13. How does this understanding of eternal life change how you might share the gospel with other people?

14. How have you experienced and enjoyed the glories of God in the past week? Month? Year?

15. Do you feel that “fellowship with our Creator” is something that is emphasized in the ministry of Village?

16. How would you describe your personal fellowship with God?

⁶ Carter, Matt; Wredberg, Josh. Exalting Jesus in John (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) (p. 361). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition. This study was compiled and questions were written by Jeremy Anderson (Indian Creek Campus) - www.villagebible.church/smallgroup