

Father, Glorify Your Son

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[0 : 0 0] Well, it's good to see everyone who's here this afternoon. Thank you for coming to what is the first lunchtime service of the year. It's good to see everyone.

My name is Richard Gamble. For anyone who doesn't know, I'm one of the students at Cornhill, and I'll be taking the three lunchtime services in January.

And you maybe see from the title here of our series, over these three sessions, that we're going to be looking at the Lord's Prayer. But that's not the Lord's Prayer that is found in Matthew or Luke. We're not turning there, but we're going to be looking at John 17, which truly is the Lord's Prayer.

If we think about the other prayers that are recorded in Matthew and Luke, a little bit of thought might lead us towards thinking that they are really prayers for the disciples.

But what we have here in this unique and great chapter of the Bible is Jesus at prayer in the shadow of the cross.

[1 : 1 0] And firstly, in the first section, he prays for himself, verses 1 to 5. Then 6 to 19, he prays for his immediate disciples.

And then 20 to 26, he prays for all who will believe, all who will come to believe through their words. So we look this afternoon at the Lord's first request in verses 1 to 5 of John 17.

It's on page 903 in the Church Bible. Please do have these Bibles open. And we read the first five verses of John 17.

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that the Son may glorify you.

Since you have given him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

[2 : 2 4] I glorified you on the earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

This is the word of the Lord. Let me take you back to perhaps a childhood memory for you. I want you to imagine yourself beside a pool in a river.

And the sun is shining. And you've picked yourself a nice smooth stone. And you take that stone. And you throw it out into the middle of the pool.

And picture in your mind's eye, what happens? What happens? There's the splash. And then what do you have? You have ripples that are moving out from that first point of contact.

There's the initial impact. And then the ripples, the circles that are sharing the same center, are gradually moving out from that point. And why do we mention that?

[3 : 3 5] Well, the structure of John 17 is a little like that. Because the Lord's first request, that first initial contact, Father, glorify your Son.

And then the rest of what is contained in John 17 flows from that. Because the Lord is firstly praying for himself. Then he's praying for the disciples.

And in ever-widening circles, he then prays for all who will believe. In the last four chapters preceding John 17 in the upper room, the focus has very much been on the disciples.

The Lord has been teaching them and speaking to them. And at different times, there's been different voices in the room. Perhaps there's been a question or something that needed to be clarified.

But now all other voices fall silent. And there's only one voice that is heard. And the Lord turns from speaking to the disciples about his Father to speak to his Father about the disciples.

[4 : 45] And as we approach this chapter, as we come to the Lord's Prayer in John 17, we surely come with reverence. We come with a sense of wonder and privilege that we are able to overhear prayer between the Father and the Son.

You know, just this morning, I was just a little bit late for Cornhill this morning. And each day at Cornhill begins with prayer.

And what did I do? I just thought it best to hang back outside. And not just to storm in and come in and set everything up, but just to wait and give people time.

Because you realize that prayer in any context is a precious thing. So as we come to read the Lord's Prayer and look at it here, then surely we come with a sense of reverence as we do so.

Let's think of two things this afternoon. We're going to think about the Lord's request and the result that flows from that. So the Lord's request and then the result that flows from it.

[5 : 58] And briefly, the Lord being glorified, as he asks, as is his request, is not only glory for the Lord, but it is the source of blessing to his people.

The Lord being glorified is the source of blessing to his people. Let's notice in verse 1 the timing of this request. Jesus has spoken these words.

He lifts his eyes to heaven and says, Father, the hour has come. If you're familiar with John's Gospel in any way, you'll know that the Lord has mentioned his hour previously, but it's always been attached that the hour is not yet.

The hour is not yet. But here the hour has come. And what hour is that? Well, it's the hour of his glorification.

And the Lord is so aware, he is so acutely aware of his identity and the importance of this moment. It's the hour that is planned from before the foundation of the world.

[7 : 10] It's the hour that the full weight and the promise of Scripture rests upon. And it is against the dark background as men plot against the Lord Jesus.

It is against this very dark background, the hour of darkness, that the Lord prays that he would be glorified. And we can ask the question, how is it that Christ is glorified?

How is the Lord glorified through this hour and through these events? And in turn, if you look, Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you.

How is the Lord glorified in this hour? Well, he is on the very threshold of an inseparable movement that will take him back to the exalted position and with the glory that he had with the Father before the world existed.

He is on the verge of the inseparable movement that will take him back there. And he is glorified through his death, through his burial, through his resurrection, through his ascension, and through his exaltation to the Father.

[8 : 27] And the Lord, there is a sense of longing that he is going to return to that relationship with the Father that he always knew. And so he prays to be glorified in that manner.

But also at the cross, you see how the Son glorifies the Father. How can we make sense of that? Well, the Son is glorified through his perfect obedience and through his love for the sinner.

And the Father is glorified in the Son as Satan is defeated at the cross. The cross is a great victory. It's a great triumph. And it is the Lord's greatest moment of glory.

But there is also a movement positionally as the Son is returning as he sees in verse 5. Glorify me in your own presence with the glory I had with you before the world existed.

That's really the gospel, isn't it? We sing at Christmas time that he came down to earth from heaven. And there is a movement in coming down and then returning and being exalted at the right hand of the Father.

[9 : 47] But this journey, this journey home is a road that is marked with suffering. The journey home to glory is a journey that must, of necessity, go through the cross.

I wonder if you can imagine a similar experience to me. Often I'm heading home and maybe I'm getting a late train and it's dark and it's wet and it's cold.

It usually is in Scotland, isn't it? And there's just a very pale imitation we can maybe think that we have a longing to get home.

We want to get to our front door. We want to be able to open the front door where it's warm and where you'll be welcomed and you'll be yourself at home.

And maybe as I go in, I even was thinking about this the other day, you go in and the cry goes up, Daddy's home. And the fun begins.

[10 : 48] But the Lord has a sense of longing that he wants to return to the position and to the relationship that he always knew with the Father. And he has that sense of longing but it must, of necessity, go through the cross.

For all eternity, we can think that he knew the love and affection and the perfect delight of the Father. And for 30 years, he's been breathing in the air of a sin-infected world.

He's felt the antagonism and hostility of men who now plot to destroy him. And so he prays, Father, will you not restore that position?

Will you not bring me back to the glory that I shared with you from before the world began? You know, I've sat in a few things which, they sound rather unpleasant, but they go by the name of Grilla Christian, where you are faced with questions and you can get any kind of questions, usually from a student audience.

And one or two questions that have come up time and again, it's quite an interesting question. Somebody thinks, well, this whole plan of salvation, this whole idea of the Lord's glory, is that not a bit self-exalting?

[12 : 13] Is that not a bit introverted? If there was a person that sought their own glory, then that wouldn't be a very pleasant characteristic to have.

But we see this request, the result that then flows from it, the result that flows from this request is for the Lord's glory, yes, but it is also as the Lord is glorified that the blessings flow to us and flow to His people.

And let's see, let's see that from verse 2, that what are the, what are the results of the Lord's glorification? Well, He has authority over all flesh to give eternal life, eternal life to all whom you have given Him.

And what is the nature of that eternal life? Verse 3, this is eternal life, that they know you, that we come into relationship, we come into fellowship, we come into belonging to the Father through the Lord Jesus.

Because the Lord is glorified, we are then brought into relationship with the Father. We have eternal life, and what does that eternal life consist of?

[13 : 28] It consists of relationship with the Father through the Son. So we see, remember, that initial illustration of how the initial request, the pool, the stone goes into the pool and the ripples flow from that.

Well, we see how the blessings flow to us as the Lord is glorified. And what then is the result as the Lord is glorified and is in heaven interceding for us.

Well, he pictures that in verse 5, doesn't he, that he's returning home. He could say, verse 4, that he has finished the work. I glorified you on the earth having accomplished or finished the work that you gave me to do.

And then he's looking forward and says, and now, Father, glorify me in your own presence. In your own presence, the Lord is glorified in the presence of the Father and the work is finished.

It's a finished work. And the Lord intercedes on our behalf. And it's reminiscent the structure of this prayer in the nation of Israel, how the high priest would enter in on the day of atonement into the holiest place of all and he would intercede and make atonement for the sin of the people.

[14 : 48] And in doing so, he would prepare himself for that work that he had to undertake by praying in these concentric circles. Circles sharing the same center.

He would pray firstly for himself and the work that he would do. He would then pray for his family and for those who were closest to him. And then he would lift his eyes and broaden his horizon and he would think of the whole nation and he would bear the whole nation up before God in prayer.

And as he did so, he would wear the tunic and the garment that bore the very names of the tribes of Israel close to his heart and on his shoulders.

And the picture is clear that as the Lord comes before the Father in prayer, he is bringing us. He's bringing us before the Father and he is interceding for us on our behalf.

So the message that the people of God are born on the shoulders and close to the very heart of the Lord Jesus, what great security there is in that for the Christian.

[16 : 01] It's a great comfort to know, isn't it, that if somebody says that I'm praying for you, I'm praying for you. Well, we have a great high priest who is interceding for us, who is at the right hand of the Father and is making requests on our behalf.

So what practical help is that as we go back to whatever day-to-day responsibilities we have, as we go back to whether it's the workplace or back to other responsibilities in the course of the day.

And we think at the turn of this year that we don't know what lies ahead and maybe there's a sense of, in a new year, there's always a sense of anticipation and what's going to come our way this year.

Well, what a comfort it is to us that although life may be difficult and the struggles that we face and the Christian life is a struggle, isn't it?

Well, and we can ask the question, how can we ever be considered to be righteous before God? How can we ever be considered righteous before God?

[17 : 11] Well, our righteousness is not dependent on us. That as we go back to whatever we go about today, that our righteousness does not depend on us, but it depends on the finished work of the Lord Jesus.

And as he intercedes for us in the presence of his Father, he is our great high priest. What a comfort that is. That you will never be more righteous before God than you are at this moment if you are a believer.

That you can never do anything that will attain a higher standard of acceptance or righteousness with God. Why? Because, Christian, your righteousness does not depend on you.

Your righteousness depends on the finished work of the Lord Jesus and he intercedes perfectly for us on our behalf. And that's what we're going to sing as Bancroft puts it in her hymn, Behold Him There, the risen lamb, my perfect spotless righteousness, the great unchangeable I am, the king of glory and of grace.

And as we think of the request of the Lord, we've thought about that initial request in this great prayer, to glorify your son. And then what is the result of that?

[18 : 38] Well, it is the blessings flow from that to us, to his people and the ripples move out from that fixed point. So as we consider this and as we look further in the Lord's Prayer here in John 17 in January, well, hopefully that will fill us with great strength and hope and it will draw our hearts in great affection for him and it will make us glad indeed that the Father has granted his request and has given him all the glory.

Father, we do thank you for the finished work of the Lord Jesus. We thank you that he is glorified and is interceding for us on our behalf.

We thank you that he is our perfect, spotless righteousness, the King of glory and of grace. And so we pray that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit would be with us all now and evermore.

Amen.