

# The Glory of the Work of Christ

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[0:00] But now we're turning to our Bibles, and Edward Lobb is going to be preaching to us for the next few weeks, focusing on this single chapter of John's Gospel, John chapter 17.

If you don't have a Bible, there are some Bibles at the sides, at the back, the big red Bibles for visitors, and do pick one up, you'll be able to follow what we're reading, and on that, in those Bibles, I think it's page 903.

But John's Gospel, chapter 17, the fourth Gospel, and this comes at the end of what we sometimes call the farewell discourses.

It's Jesus speaking to his closest disciples in the upper room when they share the Last Supper together, and he is teaching those who are going to be the apostles of his New Testament church, speaking to them about their task in the future, how he has specially given to them the privilege of knowing all that he has taught them, and aided and helped by the Holy Spirit, they will be the ones who carry his authority of teaching into the future.

The wonderful task that is still going on today through, first of all, their teaching and preaching, and then what they committed to the Scriptures of what we now call the New Testament, what we have in front of us.

[1:31] And at the end of that discourse, you'll see chapter 17 begins when Jesus had spoken all these words. He says, That they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work 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.

I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. You were as they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

And now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them, and have come to know in truth that I came from you.

And they have believed that you sent me. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.

[3:12] All mine are yours. And yours are mine. And I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world.

And I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given to me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them. And not one of them has been lost, except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

But now I am coming to you. And these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them your word.

And the world has hated them. Because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.

[4:20] They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

And for their sake, I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may

believe that you have sent me.

The glory that you have given me, I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me, and love them, even as you love me.

Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, that you've given me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

Our righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know you, that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me, may be in them, and I in them.

[6:06] Amen. May God bless to us his word. Well, good evening friends.

Let's turn again to John's Gospel, chapter 17. And we have, God willing, three Sunday evenings now, to study this chapter, and my plan is to take the chapter, in three parts.

You'll see that it's set out here, in three paragraphs. So my plan is to take, just the first paragraph this evening, verses 1 to 5, then verses 6 to 19 next week, and then finally, verses 20 to 26.

What then, is this chapter all about? And what is it doing, here in the heart of John's Gospel? Now you'll see, as Willie explained to us a moment ago, that the whole chapter is a prayer, addressed by Jesus, to God the Father.

And verse 1, sets the scene clearly. When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father. Now it's not a dialogue, it's a one-way communication, in which God the Son, is speaking to God the Father.

[7:26] And the subject of the prayer, can be stated very simply, like this. Jesus is praying, that his Father would accomplish, the great plan of salvation, the plan to rescue his people, and bring them to eternal life.

Jesus and his Father are of one mind. It was always the Father's plan, to send his Son into the world, to be the Savior of the world, because the world needed saving.

It was under condemnation. And it was always Jesus' intention, to bring that plan to fruition, by means of his incarnation, his death for our sins, his resurrection, his ascension into heaven, and finally, his return to the world, not only to judge the living and the dead, but to rescue his people, and bring them to enjoy eternal life with him, in his kingdom of peace and glory.

And here, throughout this prayer in John 17, Jesus is saying to his Father, let the great plan roll forward. Let it be fully accomplished. Now, the timing of the prayer is very significant, because Jesus prays this on the eve of Good Friday.

If you look at the very beginning of chapter 18, you'll see that as soon as Jesus has spoken the prayer, he goes out with his disciples, they drop down across the valley of the little river Kidron, and go up the other side to a garden, where very soon afterwards, Jesus is arrested, he's then taken to the high priests, and then on to Pontius Pilate, and shortly afterwards, he is handed over to be crucified.

[9:10] Now, the apostles themselves were clueless about what was happening. They were with Jesus, but they were quite unprepared for what was to happen to him. But he was thoroughly prepared.

He knew what had to be done. He knew that his crucifixion was the essential next step in the accomplishment of the great plan of salvation. And that is why he willingly gave himself up to those who were going to put him to death.

Now, notice what happened before the prayer of chapter 17. Look again at the very beginning, chapter 17, verse 1, when Jesus had spoken these words. Well, that phrase, these words, refers to the long section of teaching, which began back in chapter 13 at the Last Supper, and then covered the whole of chapters 14, 15, and 16.

In chapter 13, the Last Supper took place where Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. Then Judas Iscariot left the table to go out into the night to meet the men with whom he had arranged to betray Jesus.

Jesus then told Peter that he would deny him three times before Cock Crow. And then the long section of teaching begins at chapter 14, verse 1, in which Jesus explains to the 11 apostles that after his death and resurrection, they now have a lifelong mission to commit themselves to.

[10:38] And he assures them that it's going to be a very tough mission. He even says, the world will hate you. He even says, some of you will be

killed. But I'm going to send the Holy Spirit to you and he will enable you to stand firm and bear witness to me.

And he ends chapter 16, you'll see this in the final verse there, 16:33, with some wonderful words. He says, in the world you will have tribulation, but take heart, I have overcome the world.

In other words, bearing witness to me in the world will be very difficult. It may even cost you your life, but be of good cheer because the world will find in the end that I am its conqueror.

So Jesus' prayer here in chapter 17 is being prayed at a very critical moment in his life. It's the crucial moment. He is on the cusp of the three most important days in the history of the world.

He will be dead and buried in less than 24 hours' time and he knows it. But equally, he knows that in three days' time he will be greeting his astonished disciples, demonstrating to them that he really has been raised from the dead and they will be beginning to believe it.

[11:59] Now, as I said a moment ago, the burden of the prayer here in chapter 17 is, Father, let this all happen. Let the plan of salvation be unrolled. I'm ready to do what I must do.

Now, when he prays to the Father, let it all happen, it's not that Jesus doubted his Father's commitment to the plan. It's not as if he's having to persuade his Father to go ahead and do it. Not at all. The Father has planned the crucifixion of Jesus from before the beginning of time. Jesus is the Passover Lamb who has to be slaughtered.

whose shed blood will bring about the atonement of his people's sins. The Father is committed to everything that is about to happen to Jesus. We know that from John chapter 3, verse 16.

It's because the Father loved the world that he gave up his Son to be sacrificed so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

[12:58] Father and Son are equally committed to everything that is about to happen. And we can be sure that it would have all happened without Jesus having to pray this prayer.

So why did he pray like this? And why has God caused this prayer to be recorded for posterity? Well surely the answer is that the prayer has been recorded for us to teach us.

God wants us to understand his mind and his purpose. And in this chapter Jesus is opening up to us the great plan of salvation which has been eternally in God's mind in the Father's mind.

It's the Father's plan and it's Jesus' plan. The plan of which Jesus is to be the executor. But it's recorded for us here so that we can grasp some of its wonderful details.

So let me briefly describe the contents of each of these three paragraphs in chapter 17 and that I hope will help us to navigate the chapter satisfactorily. First of all in paragraph 1 verses 1 to 5 here Jesus prays that the Father will accomplish his plan of salvation through the completion of Jesus' ministry.

[14:12] Through the completion of Jesus' ministry. Secondly verses 6 to 19 here Jesus prays that the Father will accomplish his plan through the completion of the Apostles' ministry.

And then thirdly verses 20 to 26 Jesus prays that the Father will accomplish his plan through the ongoing ministry of all future Christians. So just let me repeat this outline for the sake of clarity.

First paragraph it's about the completion of Jesus' ministry. The second paragraph about the completion of the Apostles' ministry. And the third one about the ongoing future work of believers through all the generations which includes us in Glasgow in 2026.

So friends let's put on our reading glasses and we'll focus on verses 1 to 5. Jesus is praying that the Father will accomplish his plan through the completion of Jesus' ministry.

Now that word ministry simply means service. A minister is a servant. So ministry is work of service. And the great work of service that Jesus is about to complete is the work of being crucified.

[15:25] Now you might want to say but is being crucified a work of service? Surely a work of service is an active thing, something that you do. Whereas being crucified is a passive thing that is done to you.

Well that is not the way Jesus thinks about it. He regarded the dreadful business of laying down his life as something that he did. Something of which he was fully in control.

It was his great work and he regarded it as the great task and the great responsibility. Listen to what he says about it in John chapter 10 verse 17.

He says for this reason the father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me.

Just notice that. No one takes it from me but I lay it down of my own accord. So who is in charge? Who is on the front foot? Jesus is. Not the men who hammered in the nails.

[16:26] He lays down his life by his own volition, by his own will, knowing that it was his father's will that he should do it. Going to the cross was his great active work of service.

He put it like this in Mark 10 45. The son of man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

The giving of his life is his great service, the very thing that he was always destined to do. And this is why he says in the very first verse of our chapter, Father, the hour has come.

The hour of crisis, the hour to which he'd been straining forwards for years, the hour of his death, the hour of the accomplishment of his life and purpose.

Now look at what he says immediately afterwards. He prays, glorify your son, that the son may glorify you. Now isn't that remarkable?

[17:29] This great hour, the hour of his death, is understood by Jesus to be the revelation of his glory and the glory of his father. At first sight, does that not seem baffling?

We don't naturally think of death as being glorious. And as for death by crucifixion, that seems utterly inglorious to us. Just think of the ferocious reality of it for a moment, horrible though it is. You have a naked man, totally naked, nailed up to a wooden pole, blood and sweat and filth pouring down his body, gasping for breath, every bone and muscle and sinew in his body experiencing the extremes of human agony.

Is that glorious? Is that a revelation of the glory of God? It seems like a revelation of nothing but barbarity. But if we pause to look beyond the viciousness and the degradation of the cross, we begin to see what it really means and its true meaning is glorious because it is a revelation of incomparable love.

Jesus said, greater love has no man than this that a man should lay down his life for his friends. it's his life laid down to save ours. He died so that we might live and live eternally.

[18:52] He was prepared to endure that dreadful cross so that you and I might not have to endure the everlasting pains and agonies of hell. Is that not a glorious revelation?

Think again of John 3 16. God loved the world. He hated the world's rebellion against him but he loved us rebels and he expressed his love for the world by giving up his beloved son to death on a cross.

Why? So that whoever is willing to turn to Jesus and put their trust in him will not perish eternally but will have eternal life. It is a glorious revelation.

It's quite unlike the glories of this world. Just think of this world's glories. The world glories in its achievements. Its triumphs for example in the sporting arena.

The triumphs of film stars and musicians and billionaires and technological revolutions. But the glories of human achievement simply fade away.

[20:00] The most beautiful houses will finally crumble into dust. The most astonishing technological advances will soon be superseded. the great footballers and tennis players and rugby players that we admire shine for a moment and then dip below the surface.

And if you happen to see them on television 30 years later you hardly recognize them. They look so old. Everything in this world says Paul in Romans chapter 8 is in bondage to decay.

But the glory of the cross is a glory that can never fade. The fruits of the death of Jesus are everlasting. The power of his death to save us never diminishes.

If you're not a Christian and you're here this evening take hold of the cross of Jesus and thank him for dying. Not just for the world but for you. For you in your weakness and sinfulness and sadness.

And the moment you put your trust in him you can be assured that in the world to come you will share his glory. glory. Now the line of thought that we're following is that Jesus is praying to his father about the completion of his own work his ministry.

[21:15] And in verse one he asks that the hour that has come upon him now the hour of his death should cause the shining out of his own glory and the glory of his father.

So that people like us should look at the cross and then say how glorious it is that the father and the son in their love for sinners should have provided a way to bring sinners to glory.

Ransomed, healed, restored and forgiven as the old hymn puts it. But Jesus moves straight on now to verse two and you'll see that verse two begins with the word since.

And the word since indicates that verse two is explaining verse one. Let me give a simple parallel. I might say to you I am giving you a box of Thorntons chocolates for your Christmas present since a little bird has told me that of all chocolates you like Thorntons the most.

So the first part of the sentence I'm giving you the box of chocolates is explained by the second part. Now that's what Jesus is doing here. Verse two is giving the reason behind the request of verse one.

[22:25] Let's look at the two verses together. Jesus wants and asks that he and the father be glorified since here's the reason since the father has placed Jesus in a position of great authority and that needs to be seen.

And what kind of authority has the father given to Jesus? Well it is nothing less than authority over all flesh meaning over all human beings. Jesus is the king.

He is the ruler. You remember we saw this in Isaiah chapter nine when Willie was preaching through that just before Christmas. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end.

The father has given to Jesus authority over all flesh but this authority has a very specific goal in verse two. It is the authority to give eternal life.

To whom? To everyone in the world? No. To all whom you have given him. So a very interesting picture emerges in verse two.

[23:36] God the father and Jesus both have authorities to give gifts. Jesus gives the gift of eternal life but God the father gives the gift of people to Jesus, men and women.

Let's work away at this verse two. The authority that Jesus has over all flesh is not inherent in Jesus. It has been given to him by the father.

Jesus says you have given him authority over all flesh. Throughout John's gospel the authority of Jesus is a derived authority. It's an authority derived from the father given by the father.

For example Jesus says in John five verse twenty seven the father has given the son authority to execute judgment. Earlier in the same chapter, chapter five verse nineteen, Jesus says the son can do nothing of his own accord but only what he sees the father doing.

Now the point is that Jesus is not allowing us to think that he operates in some way independently of God the father. He is not a soloist. He doesn't set his own agenda.

[24:50] He says in John chapter six verse thirty eight, I have come not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. He makes exactly the same point at the end of Matthew's gospel in the little piece that we call the great commission where he says to the apostles all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

His authority is derived from the father. It's given to him by God the father. And in John seventeen verse two, Jesus explains that he has been given authority by God the father to give eternal life.

Not to everybody but to all whom the father has given to Jesus. The language of John's gospel uniquely describes Christian believers as those whom the father has given to the son.

Now just think of what this means because it is very wonderful. It means that if you are a Christian someone who belongs to Christ, the father in eternity has made a gift of you to Jesus.

He has not given Jesus gold or silver or jewels or armies or stocks and shares. He has given him you. Isn't that wonderful? And if the father has given you to Jesus, is there any chance that you might ever slip out of Jesus' care or that he might neglect you or turn his back on you?

[26:19] Listen to his words in John 6 verse 37. All that the father gives me will come to me and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

That means that if you've been given to Jesus you are safe forever. Now that's the first gift the father gives the believer to Jesus. But look at the second gift in verse 2 and that is that Jesus gives you eternal life.

if you are a Christian eternal life is yours and that is a possession which can never be taken from you. There was a popular song in my youth which contained these lines.

Happiness, happiness, the greatest gift that I possess. I thank the Lord that I've been blessed with more than my share of happiness. old timers. Remember that?

Old timers? Yeah, okay. It's a jaunty little song. But the author might have done well to ponder John 17 verse 2 which teaches us that the greatest gift which we possess if we're Christians is not happiness but eternal life.

[27:30] I wonder what earthly possessions you have which you value particularly. Maybe a few old photographs. Maybe a grandfather clock. A dog with soft eyes and a waggy tail.

A little rose garden which you smother with love and farmyard manure every year. Or maybe you're proud of something in your family history. You might say my seven times great-grandfather fought and died at Culloden and he was a Jacobite.

Or you might say my three times great-grandfather worked in the shipyards in Belfast and he helped to build a Titanic. Beat that if you can. We have a strong inclination to take pride in all sorts of human things.

The prowess of our ancestors, the noble deeds of our parents and grandparents, even our own achievements if we've achieved something. But all these things belong to the world that is fading away.

You'll know the names of Gilbert and Sullivan who wrote a string of light operas towards the end of the 19th century. It was Sullivan who wrote the music and Gilbert who wrote the words. Gilbert was known to be a very witty man.

[28:42] Apparently one day he met an American lady, I think in London, whose knowledge of European history was rather vague. She said to him, say Sir William, is your famous Johann Sebastian Bache still composing?

He replied, Madame J.S. Bach has been decomposing now for at least 150 years. One of the hymns that we often sing includes these words, Human pride and earthly glory, sword and crown, betray his trust.

What with care and toil we fashion, tower and temple, fall to dust. Everything in the world comes to dust in the end.

the Lord said to Adam, dust you are and to dust you will return. And this is why the gospel is so magnificent and wonderful and comforting.

On the basis of our verse 2 here, we can know with absolute assurance that eternal life has been given as an everlasting possession to every believing Christian, given by Jesus himself.

[29:54] To Jesus, God the Father has given two things, according to verse 2. First of all, authority, authority over all flesh. And second, you and me, if we're Christians.

The Father has given us to Jesus. We are his therefore. We are his prized possession, the possession that it cost him his life to secure. So we belong to him and eternal life belongs to us. So it doesn't matter in the end that all our earthly possessions will come to dust. Our grandfather clocks, our beloved dogs, and rose gardens, and family memorabilia.

Our own mortal bodies too will come to dust. I know we pamper them and protect them and worry about them, but they have an inbuilt shelf life. They don't go on forever. So when the time comes, we can lay them aside without regret.

Because the Lord promises to give us new bodies if we're Christians, eternal life bodies. Paul writes about it like this in Philippians chapter three, that we who are Christians await a savior from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him to subject all things to himself.

[31:12] This verse two is immensely strong, infinitely strong. The three gifts described in verse two are given permanently, endlessly, and irrevocably.

God has given to Jesus authority, authority over all flesh, and God has given to Jesus countless individuals as his permanent possession, and to those countless believing individuals, Jesus has given eternal life.

But let's immediately look on to verse three, because in verse three, Jesus describes eternal life. Let me read verse three, and this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Now this verse is not exhaustively defining eternal life. Other parts of the New Testament open up to us wonderful further views of eternal life. I think, for example, of the book of Revelation, with its description of the new Jerusalem, dazzlingly beautiful, adorned by the river of life running through it, and the tree of life on either side.

Verse three here is very short, but what it shows us is the essence of eternal life, and that is to know the true God, and to know Jesus Christ.

[32:34] Knowing God is eternal life. It is not the way to eternal life. It is eternal life. To help us to understand this, just think back to the Garden of Eden.

before Adam and Eve rebelled, they lived in the Garden with God, and their relationship with God there was perfect and blissful. They knew him, and he knew them, and they were delighted to live under his loving authority.

He set the terms of the relationship, and they gladly submitted to those terms. The Garden of Eden, before the rebellion, had all the characteristics of eternal life.

Death was not present. Death only entered the world after Adam and Eve's disobedience. In the Garden of Eden, there was no sin and no death, and the essence of life there was that the man and the woman knew God.

But as soon as Adam and Eve disobeyed God, their relationship with him was shattered. They hid from him guiltily. The knowledge of God, which had been sweet to them, became bitter.

[33:45] They were guilty and they were ashamed. They didn't want to know him now. At a most painful level also, he didn't want to know them either, so he expelled them from his presence.

The relationship was marred and profoundly disrupted. Death entered the world at that point because of their sin. So the eternal life character of the Garden of Eden was destroyed.

The immortality of Adam and Eve became mortality. The peace and joy of their life became pain and drudgery. Their marriage relationship became a battleground.

Wedlock became deadlock. The man and his wife, in losing the knowledge of God, lost the knowledge of each other. And the very ground beneath their feet was cursed because of their rebellion against their creator.

The whole environment was cursed. if your garden grows thorns and thistles more easily than it grows lettuces and radishes, Genesis 3 tells you why it's like that. The whole principle of disorder and decay and death is the inevitable accompaniment of the loss of the knowledge of God.

[34:57] But now look at our verse 3. The sending of Jesus into the world brings the reopening of the knowledge of God to us. When you become a Christian, immediately you are transferred from the realm of death to the kingdom of life.

From a place where you don't know God and are in hiding from him to a place where you begin to know him. You begin to lose your guilty fear of him. You begin to want to look him as it were in the eye.

You begin to listen to him with joy as you read your Bible. In fact, your Bible comes out from the back cupboard where it's been gathering dust for years and it begins to sit on your kitchen table and you begin to read it.

And the more you read it, the more you understand it. And the more you understand it, the more you realize that you are now knowing God and you are wanting to know him.

Now, verse 3 also includes two vital pieces of information which help us in our new life of knowing God once we're Christians. One concerns the Father and the other concerns Jesus and the two are very closely connected.

[36:09] First of all, the Father. You'll see that Jesus addresses him in verse 3 as the only true God. And in using that phrase, Jesus is echoing and endorsing the teaching of the whole Bible, that there is only one God

and that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of Israel, the Father of Jesus.

Now, there are many false gods in the world. There always have been, all of them invented by the imagination of men. But there is only one true God.

Then, secondly, Jesus. Yes, there's only one true God, but knowing him is never separated from knowing his son. And this is why Jesus describes himself in verse 3 as Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

the connection between father and son is inseparable. In John's gospel, the enemies of Jesus regarded him as an imposter and a blasphemer.

They simply refused to recognize his heavenly origin. But many times in John's gospel, Jesus speaks of himself as the one whom God has sent. And what he means is, if God has sent me, God has authenticated me.

[37:25] His sending of me is my dedication. I'm not a maverick self-styled prophet, and my mission is not some mad wild goose chase. I'm the son of God, sent by God to accomplish my mission of saving my people.

So if knowing God cannot be separated from knowing Jesus, we learn a wonderful fact which can be expressed very briefly and simply, and it's this, that Jesus reveals the nature of the true God. God. So as we get to know the character of Jesus from our Bible reading, we are getting to know what the true God is really like. The four Gospels especially show us so much of Jesus' character, his compassion, his love, his hatred of untruth, his anger at false religion, his perseverance right through to the end, his grace, his graciousness, his kindness to those who are downtrodden and despairing.

You could extend the list by many other categories, but all these characteristics are the characteristics of the Father who sent him. As Hebrews chapter 1 describes Jesus, he is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact representation of his nature.

To see Jesus is to see God truly. He says in John's Gospel chapter 10, I and the Father are one, by which he does not mean that he is the Father.

[39:01] I say that because he so frequently distinguishes himself from the Father. What he means is that he and the Father are one in nature, like Father, like Son. The nature of Jesus entirely and without deviation displays the nature of God the Father.

So to get back to the thrust of verse 3, let's rejoice that the knowledge of God which was closed off to Adam and Eve has been opened up to us as we come to Jesus and put our trust in him.

The sending of Jesus by God the Father to the forlorn world has reestablished what Adam and Eve once knew in the Garden of Eden when they walked with God in joy and knew him and knew that they knew him.

Well, we too can know him and that is the nature of eternal life. That's what verse 3 is saying. Well, now the final two verses, verses 4 and 5, Jesus returns, you'll see, to the theme of glory and I want to finish this evening by walking us through those two verses, 4 and 5.

First of all, verse 4, I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. Now, you might want to say, but he hasn't accomplished the work yet at this stage, has he?

[40:23] He's still alive. It's Thursday evening. The terrible death has not yet happened. And the fact is that on the following day, at about three o'clock in the afternoon, he cried, it is accomplished.

And immediately afterwards, he bowed his head and breathed his last. I think the best way to understand our verse four is that Jesus knew with an absolute certainty that he was going to go through with the crucifixion.

Nothing was going to deflect him from it. He wasn't going to run off into the Judean hills and hide at the last moment. In his mind, the thing was sealed and settled.

It was as good as having already happened. So we have here a past tense expressing a future certainty. The deed is not done, but it's as good as done.

But look at the whole of verse four. Jesus is speaking not only of the final great accomplishment of Good Friday, he's looking back over the years of his public ministry, and he's categorizing those years, all of them, as a revelation of his father's glory.

[41:32] I glorified you on earth. Right back to the start, even the virgin birth was a revelation of God's glory. And then later on, in his teaching, in his denouncing of a false Judaism, in his works of healing the sick and raising the dead, creating food for thousands out of a young boy's picnic, in all these things he exhibited the glory of God.

And this surely is why John, in his first chapter, chapter 1, verse 14, writes, we have seen his glory, glory as of the only son from the father, full of grace and truth.

John is saying there in chapter 1, verse 14, what Jesus is saying here in chapter 17, verse 4, that the whole life of Jesus has been a revelation of the father's glory.

So this teaches us how to read the four gospels. Every aspect of the life and work and teaching of Jesus is somehow etched with the fire of God's glory.

Everything in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is illuminated by a kind of divine flame as we read of the incomparable Son of God. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.

[42:50] But then at verse 5, Jesus looks beyond Good Friday and beyond Resurrection Sunday. his gaze in verse 5 is taken beyond this world altogether.

And he says, and now Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. That verse 5 is an expression of great longing.

He's speaking rather like a royal prince who has been sent out by his father the king on an unspeakably difficult mission. His painful task has been carried out in a land far from home, a terrible place, a place of violence and degradation.

And at the end of his ordeal, he has to face a death penalty which he doesn't deserve. And he cries out to be at home again with his father in his native and beautiful land.

In verse 5, he's speaking of the forfeiture of his glory, because he has laid aside his glory for a short time. He's bereft of it. He longs to take it up again, because it's his by right.

[44:02] As we sing in our Christmas carol, he comes from the glory. He comes from the glorious kingdom. And in verse 5, he's remembering his glory, the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

I don't have it now. I've willingly laid it aside, but I long to have it again. I long to be in your own presence again, dear father. His mission to the world put distance between himself and his father. In the end, as he hung on the cross, he cried out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? No wonder he longed to be reunited with the father in glory, in the glorious kingdom, which he had known so well since before the world existed.

Well, that request of verse five was very soon granted to him. The apostles, a few weeks later, they saw it with their own eyes.

They saw him being lifted up from the earth on ascension day and taken up to glory. And the New Testament promises that we too, if we are Christians, will one day be taken to that same glory.

[45:12] The accomplishment of Jesus' work has opened up to us the gates of the kingdom of glory. Amen.

Well, let's pray. We'll bow our heads. I won't pray out loud, but I'd like to read again as Willie did at the beginning of the service, verse 24. And we might just ponder that.

It is a very wonderful verse. So he says in 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 loved me before the foundation of the world.

Let's ponder that for a moment. Amen. Amen. Amen.