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## John 17:1-5

### How He Prayed: He Prayed for Glory

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Tonight we're starting a three-week sermon series called *How He Prayed*. We're looking at how Jesus prayed in John chapter 17 as a **model** for how we can pray. John 17 is known as the **High Priestly Prayer** of Jesus. A priest is someone who acts as an **intermediary** between God and people. So as Jesus prays this passage, we can also learn how to go before God on behalf of ourselves and others.

I chose this series because our general **theme** for this year is *Prayer & Discipleship* and because I thought focusing on Jesus would make for a nice **Christmas series**. After thinking about it, since Jesus prayed this prayer after the **last supper** the night before he was **crucified**, it would also make a nice Easter series. Since it's first a prayer series, let's start there.

*Father, show us your glory. Father, show me your glory. Father, would we not hear this sermon series on prayer and walk away prayer-less. Father, would you change us into a church known for praying, for depending, for crying out to you for the sake of knowing you. Father, would your Holy Spirit fill this place so that we encounter your life-giving presence and the life-giving presence of your Son Jesus Christ. In the name of Jesus we pray, amen.*

If you knew you were going to **die** tomorrow, what would you pray for? For a longer life? For more time with those you love? When Jesus prayed this prayer, he knew he was going to die tomorrow.

**John 17:1a** After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the hour has come...

The hour has come. The hour of his passion, his trial, his scourging, his crucifixion, his rejection, his execution. I feel like many Pastor's favorite movie for illustrations is *Braveheart*. *Braveheart* is the story of William Wallace (played by Mel Gibson), who rallies the Scottish against their English oppressors. At the end of the movie, he's been betrayed and is awaiting his execution in an English prison when his love interest comes to him and gives him a **sedative** to drink so that his death will be easier.

She makes him drink it, kisses him goodbye, and when she leaves he spits it out. He wants to face his trial fully aware so that he won't betray Scotland in a moment of weakness. Jesus could pray here for a sedative, "Father, make it hurt less. Father, make it go fast. Father, save me." But instead he prays...

**John 17:1** After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. (NIV®)

Jesus doesn't pray for Tylenol, but for glory. He first prays for glory for himself so that he can glorify his Father. Does this remind you of any other prayer Jesus taught us to pray?

**Matthew 6:9b** ... "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, (NIV®)

To "hallow" something means to "make it holy." So here in Matthew 6 and John 17 we see two examples of Jesus praying. And in both examples he starts his prayer by focusing on honoring and glorifying his Father. So **when we pray**:

### 1. We can begin with glory. (John 17:1)

All Scriptures are quoted from the New International Version (NIV®) unless otherwise noted.

What is glory? What is Jesus praying for? Glory means “to honor or praise.” But it’s not just applause. It’s **recognizing** the worth or character of something. The movie *Glory* is based on the true story of the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry **regiment**, which was a military unit made up mostly of **African-Americans**. It’s the story of their humiliation and disrespect, and ends with their heroic charge on **Fort Wagner**. To glorify something is to reveal its honor. They were pressed down by **racism**, but they broke through as they broke the fort’s wall, **revealing** their inherent courage, bravery, and valor. Likewise...

### **Glory is God’s presence revealed. (Exodus 33:14, 18-19)**

So when Jesus prays, “Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you” he is praying to reveal the honor of the Son so that the Son may reveal the honor of the Father. Do you all know the story of the **golden calf**? When Moses was on Mount Sinai talking to God, the people of Israel got worried and made a golden calf to worship. And because of this, God nearly destroys the whole Israelite people. But Moses **intercedes** for the people just like Jesus intercedes for us, and God relents. He promises to send an **angel** with them to the promised land, but he won’t go with them (Ex 33:2-3). Everyone breaks into mourning and Moses asks once more for God’s presence to go with them, and God relents.

**Exodus 33:14** The Lord replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” (NIV®)

But Moses isn’t satisfied with God’s answer. No, he wants a **sign**. He needs to see God for himself to know that God will not abandon him, so Moses prays this.

**Exodus 33:18** Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.” (NIV®)

Moses asks for God to reveal his glory and this is God’s reply (c.f., Ex 33:22; 1 Kings 19:8, 11).

**Exodus 33:19** And the Lord said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. (NIV®)

God doesn’t just reveal his physical presence, he reveals his **character**. Good. Merciful. Compassionate. *Don’t you want to see God’s glory? Don’t you want to see God’s goodness, his mercy, his compassion?*

Have you ever wanted to **see something** because you knew it was greater in person than in pictures? I never saw the ocean until I was about **12-years old**. My family would drive 3-days from Colorado to Virginia every fall to visit family, but we always stopped 3-hours short of the ocean. Finally, I told my parents I really wanted to see the ocean, and they agreed so we drove down to Virginia Beach. As we drove up onto the **Chesapeake Bay Bridge** it happened, the Atlantic ocean. All at once I was surrounded by the biggest body of water I had ever seen on all sides. The ocean was huge! I couldn’t see the end of it! Isn’t the ocean glorious? Then we drove to the beach, got out of our van, and got attacked by **seagulls**.

Do you think my interest in the ocean was only in **seeing** it or in **experiencing** it? I didn’t just want to look at it and **go home**. I wanted to **touch** the water. I wanted to **smell** the ocean and look for seashells to know if this thing was everything I’d ever heard it to be. When we pray, “God, show me your glory” we’re praying for God to let us dip our toes in the **shoreline waves** of his infinitely good presence.

*God, show me your glory. Splash me with your ocean. Soak me in your presence. So the Father says, “Have you seen my Son?” Glory is God’s presence revealed and...*

### **God’s presence is revealed in Jesus Christ. (John 1:14)**

Have you ever wanted to see God’s glory? Just look at Jesus!

**John 1:14** The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (NIV®)

Jesus reveals his Father's glory. God's presence is in Jesus. God's goodness, his mercy, and compassion are all in Christ Jesus. Here's where **Christmas** enters into the sermon. There's something glorious about Christmas isn't there? The lights, snow, trees, decorations, gifts, smiles, laughter, food. People give to charity around Christmas when they might not give the rest of the year. Despite the consumerism and the stress, there's still **something special** because on this day we celebrate God's glory breaking into this world in the form of a tiny little babe. *God's presence is revealed in Jesus Christ.*

So when we pray, we can **start** just like Jesus starts his prayer in John 17. We can pray to honor and glorify Jesus and the Father. "Father, would you be glorified. Jesus, would you be glorified. Would my words and thoughts and deeds not only honor you but would they **reveal** your presence to this world? Oh God, show me your glory. Show me your presence through Christ Jesus. Amen." When we start by focusing on glorifying God and experiencing his glory, it turns our prayers from being man-centered to **God-centered**.

When we pray this way, we're asking God to **lead** us into the ocean of his glory. But how do we know we won't drown? How do we know we won't be **crushed** by the waves? Won't we be consumed by God's complete holiness, by his wrath against our sins? For sinful beings to experience an infinitely good God we must ask him for a **life preserver**. *When we pray: 1) We can begin with glory...*

## **2. We can pray for eternal life. (John 17:2-3)**

We come humbly before Jesus Christ, confessing our sins, and asking him to **give** us eternal life.

### **Eternal life is a gift. (John 17:2)**

Eternal life is not something we can **earn** by doing good deeds. It's not a **merit badge**. It's not a **promotion**. It's not an **employee** of the month award. Eternal life is a **Christmas gift**.

**John 17:2** For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. (NIV®)

So to experience God's glory **safely**, we need the gift of eternal life, which we can't have through our own works. In fact, as if just to emphasize that point. Jesus says he only gives this gift to those his Father gave him. So it's like Jesus is **re-gifting** a gift his Father gave him, but this isn't a fruit-cake nobody wants. This is the most valuable gift ever given. What is the gift of eternal life?

### **Eternal life is the gift of knowing the Father and the Son. (John 17:3)**

One commentary said eternal life is not **living forever**. That's the **result** of having eternal life. Eternal life is a **relationship**.

**John 17:3** Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. (NIV®)

Did you hear the **definition**? Eternal life is "**knowing**" the only true God (Jesus is talking about his Father) and knowing Jesus Christ himself. Do you want to experience glory? Then you have to **know** the Father and Jesus. The Greek word for "know" here can mean **intellectual understanding**, but that's not how John is using it. The type of knowing he's using here is **intimate** (John 10:14-15). It's like saying, "I know my **wife**" or "I know my **husband**" or "I know my **children**" or "I know my **parents**." Do you just have an intellectual understanding of them? Or do you know their fears, their joys, what they love, what makes them laugh, what

makes them sad? *Do you know Jesus? Does Jesus know you?* Do you tell the Father your fears, your joys, what you love, do you laugh with him or let him see you cry?

If you want to step into the ocean of God's presence, but never have before, I can tell you the ocean is **dangerous** apart from Christ. If you want to experience **God** apart from Jesus, you will drown in the **abyss**. But in Christ Jesus, **you can swim** forever. We had a **baptism** today. The one we baptized isn't dipping her toes into God's presence. She's diving in. If you're not a Christian, **come on in. The water's fine.** *Eternal life is the gift of knowing the Father and the Son.*

So let's review. When we pray: 1) We can begin with glory (which is God's presence revealed). 2) We can pray for eternal life (which is knowing the Father and the Son); and so how can we close our prayers?

### **3. We can close in praise. (John 17:4-5)**

The **right response** to glory is praise. The right response to God's infinite goodness revealed in Christ is worship. And that's what we want to do when we read the last two verses.

**John 17:4-5** I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. (NIV®)

Jesus says he has finished the **work** his Father gave him to do. What's his work? It's a **life lived in obedience** to the Father—**teaching** the Words of God to his disciples, **healing** the blind and mute, **rebuking** the hard-hearted. Jesus, of course, is including the final work he is about to do, the **cross**. The death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus are his **final work**. He will die, rise again, and ascend into heaven and sit down in glory (Acts 7:55-56; Phil 2:6-11). The final word William Wallace yells in *Braveheart* before he is executed is "**Freedom!**" In *Glory*, the black **regiment** fights for freedom from oppression and slavery. When Jesus died, he finished his **work** to give us freedom. Are you free? Are you experiencing his finished work?

We **can** pray this way because of the **finished work** of Jesus. When we pray: **1) We can begin with glory because** Jesus stepped **down** out of glory to reveal God's glorious presence to us. **2) We can pray for eternal life because** Jesus sacrificed his life for us. We can have a **relationship** with the Heavenly Father, because, for a time, Jesus lost his relationship with the Father at the cross. And **3) we can close in praise because** right now Jesus is sitting with his Father at the **throne** in heaven, completely victorious over sin and death. The best way to end a sermon on prayer is in prayer. Would you join me? *Father, show us your glory!*

*Pastor Jonathan Romig wrote and preached this message for the people of Cornerstone Congregational Church. [Click here to listen to more sermons](#) or [click here to read our story](#).*