

# The Heart of Christ ~ the message of the Upper Room Discourse (John 13-17)

“...having loved His own who were in the world, He love them to the end”(John 13:1.)

## **The Praying Savior – John 17**

### **The Lessons from Jesus' Prayer – John 17:1-26**

#### **God Glorified**

#### **John 17:1-5**

**1 Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, 2 even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. 3 This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. 4 I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. 5 Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”**

Over the past couple of weeks, we have looked at the overall greatness of this prayer of Jesus, a prayer that reminds us of the greatness of God, the glory of God and the grace of God as He desires and determines to come to us, indwell us, take up within us a dwelling place whereby we experience regularly, daily His presence, His power and His hand of providence in our lives; all this being made possible by the loving, obedient sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross. Last week we noted Jesus' priority – the most important thing in Jesus life was that He might bring glory to God – that He might point people to highly esteem, give all honor, recognize as supremely splendid, as possessing all greatness, all authority, and all power to God the Father with the end result being gratitude and praise on the part of those who so recognize such things – this my friends is the glory of God – to shine forth; to reflect back such attributes of God the Father. This was Jesus' priority when He said, **“glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You.”**

And in addition to this priority of Jesus, we saw there in verse one as well the plea of Jesus in the words, **“glorify Your Son...”** as Jesus beseeched, begged of the Father that He would be empowered by God's glorious strength and resolve to carry out the work that lay before Him, particularly the bloody horrors of the cross. From these we learned that we can and must imitate the Lord Jesus Christ, making as the governing priority of our lives the glory of God – that whatever we do; wherever we go; whatever we say - be it as mundane as eating, drinking, doing laundry, going to the office, finishing our homework, cleaning our rooms – whatever it is – all is to be done to the glory of God – to the manifesting of the quality and character of God for others to see.

This morning I wish to move us along to verse two and note something remarkable; something astounding, something humbling that we must consider; we must ponder. Here, at the outset of our Lord's prayer, Jesus, speaking audibly before His disciples says in verse two, **“even as You [the Father] gave Him [the Son] authority over all flesh, that to all whom You [the Father] have given Him [the Son], He [the Son] may give eternal life.”** In these words I would have you see the very essence, the very source and substance of what we call the gospel message – that which is truly good news. We find in this verse that the gospel was begun and is offered to us by the will of God – it starts with God the Father here – it is accomplished by God – it is finished by and to God's glory.

Again, in John 17:1, we learned that the plea and priority of Jesus was that Jesus might be granted everything necessary for God the Father to be glorified in His life. In John 17:2 we will

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learn a few specifics as to how exactly God the Father is glorified. And beloved, it stands to reason; it is important, that we who confess to want to live to the glory of God would know what it is that brings the Father glory and then live in light of such things. In the words of Jesus from John 17:2, I offer you three means by which we see God the Father glorified. Let me present these three truths to you to start and then we will consider them one by one. I submit to you that God is glorified in...

- I. Giving man authority to reign
- II. Giving man a Redeemer
- III. Man receiving eternal life

Before moving on, I would have you note that in each of these means by which we are told God the Father is glorified, Jesus Christ is the final answer. Jesus is the Man who has been given authority to reign to the glory of God. Jesus, the Man, has been given to man as the only Redeemer to the glory of God. And Jesus, the Redeemer, is the one who gives eternal life to those He has redeemed, all to the glory of God. And as we noted last week, these words represent to us the gospel of Jesus Christ, this is the good news, that God the Father has taken pity upon sinners, sending His Son Jesus Christ to this earth, that we might come to know the truth of the holiness of God; of the glory of God and our need of the Savior, by whose death we are transformed, passed from lives of death and damnation to life and to blessing, living the rest of lives in holy fear and godly reverence to the glory of the Father.

God is glorified in....

## **I. Giving man authority to reign (17:2a)**

*"even as You [the Father] gave Him [the Son] authority over all flesh..."*

God intended for Adam and his children to live in authority and dominion over all things (Genesis 1:29-28)

*27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

This is the authority God gave to Adam, and yet Adam squandered and lost his authority and lost his ability to rightly and righteously reign and rule over all flesh when he chose his own way over God's way by eating that forbidden fruit. And beloved, in this we see how we, all this time later, continue in the pattern of Adam, choosing our own way instead of and sometimes even in spite of knowing God's way, and we do not and cannot rightly or righteously reign over anything or anyone else because we cannot even reign over our own passions and lusts. Beloved, this is called total depravity, or total inability; that even knowing good, we are unable to do it; and knowing evil, we are unable to resist it. We need help; we need deliverance; we need salvation from this condition that the Bible calls sin.

And now, we hear the words of Jesus' prayer. And what does Jesus, this Son of Man, to be sure, fully God, but also flesh and blood like you and me, what does Jesus say, **"even as You**

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**[Father] gave Him [the Son] authority over all flesh..."** Here we see one of our first glimpses into eternity past. That in the holy counsel of the Trinity, before time, before the foundations of the world; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit determined that the Son would become flesh and dwell among man; and that what Adam lost because of his sin; that authority and dominion over all flesh; God the Father would restore to man in Jesus, called the "last Adam" in 1 Corinthians 15:45. We find that God the Father was determined to be glorified in this, that man would reign and rule over all flesh and that this rule and reign would be realized in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This is one of the reasons why I believe that Jesus will, at some point in the future, literally reign on this earth in the Millennial Kingdom as taught in Revelation 20 – because God said man would rule, and reign and have authority and subdue all flesh and because of sin, that has not happened yet. Such a reign will be accomplished by Jesus Christ. We see this taught for us in Hebrews 2:5-10, 14 where we see this very idea of Jesus, the Man becoming ruler and having authority over all things:

*5 For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking. 6 But one has testified somewhere, saying, "WHAT IS MAN, THAT YOU REMEMBER HIM? OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT HIM? 7 YOU HAVE MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS; YOU HAVE CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR, AND HAVE APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS; 8 YOU HAVE PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET." For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. 9 But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. 10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. . . 14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same...*

According to verse 14, Jesus partook, He shared in flesh and blood...he became man in part to fulfill what man lost in Adam. And what is the teaching of the word of God? That those of us who are no longer in Adam, no longer living according to what we desire according to the flesh, but are now in Christ, seeking to live according to the desire and glory of God by means of the Spirit of Christ in us; that we will reign with Jesus; we will have authority with Jesus; that even as Jesus partook of our flesh and blood, we will partake of the divine nature and fulfill the charge of Genesis 1:27-28 and have dominion over all flesh; but only if we are found in Jesus; transformed by Jesus; living according to Jesus. Consider:

*2 Timothy 2:10-12*

*10 For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory. 11 It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; 12 If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us...*

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## *Revelation 20:6*

*Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.*

Beloved, God is glorified in giving man authority to reign righteously and such authority and blessing is found only as one is found in Jesus Christ. Are you, as Paul pleaded for in Philippians 3:9, found in Him, not having a righteousness of your own...but that righteousness that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God the Father on the basis of faith? How can you know if you are in Christ and possessing this principle of reigning righteously? Let me ask you, are you self-controlled? Are you reigning in your passions and lusts by the power of the Spirit within you, seeking to live more and more according to the will of God and less and less according to the flesh? In Christ we are granted the power to reign in such fleshly things and to be prepared to reign with Christ over all things, even as God the Father gave Jesus Christ authority over all flesh. So, God the Father is glorified in giving man authority to reign and this blessing comes only as you are found in a right relationship with Jesus Christ.

## **II. Giving man a Redeemer (17:2b)**

*"...that to all whom You [the Father] have given Him [the Son]..."*

The second means by which God the Father is said to be glorified in our text is by giving man a Redeemer. We read next in verse two, ***"that to all whom You [the Father] have given Him [the Son]..."*** We have here yet another glimpse into eternity past, into that Intertrinitarian counsel, whereby it was determined that out of all the flesh that Jesus would have authority over universally, Jesus would be given by God the Father a very specific people, a particular people, a chosen people whom He would be commissioned to save, to redeem from their lost condition inherited from Adam; a condition that deserved eternal death and damnation.

I would have you notice that this action of giving Jesus a people to redeem is initiated, it begins with God the Father. ***"Salvation,"*** according to Jonah 2:9, ***"is from the LORD."*** Salvation is not God and man in cooperation. Salvation is not, as so many present it today, simply some kind of self-help tool. Come to Jesus and you will be a better spouse, have a better marriage, have more obedient children, be a better employee, and have more and more earthly blessings. Yes, such things may be true, but the essence of salvation is about God the Father beginning and finishing something for man that man cannot do for himself. Psalm 3:8 declares that ***"Salvation belongs [is the domain; the possession] to the LORD."*** And so we see God the Father, appointing, giving to fallen man a Redeemer. And this Redeemer comes to save a particular people; not all people, those chosen by God the Father to give to the Son (17:6, 9). Now some get concerned about this teaching, of God's choosing a people out of all people to save. How is it that man can be held responsible for his choice to either receive Jesus Christ or reject Jesus Christ if it is God who has chosen those who will receive Jesus Christ. Beloved, the word of God is a book about God's choice. He chose to create man as the pinnacle of His creation; He chose to make man the loving head over the woman; He chose Abraham out of all the people on the earth; He chose Jacob over Esau; He chose the nation of Israel of all the nations on the earth; and we are told that He chose a people to redeem, to show His special love and salvation to. Let us never forget that the Bible teaches election, but it also teaches us that every person is responsible to respond to the good news. God does not do violence to any

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person's heart or mind, making them not believe; all in sin choose not to believe. God has no responsibility to save any and so the wonder is that He has chosen to do so. And we see here that God selected out of all of fallen humanity a group of people to give to Jesus to redeem and to make fit for heaven and that this glorifies God. We see this truth expounded in Titus 2:11-14 where we read:

***11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men [every tribe and tongue], 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.***

Jesus is our Redeemer and His death on the cross to purchase men from sin to God the Father greatly glorifies Him. According to Matthew 1:21, this is why He is given the name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins – He will be their Redeemer (see also Galatians 4:4).

### **III. Man receiving eternal life (17:2c)**

*"...He [the Son] may give eternal life."*

The final truth we see by which God the Father is glorified is in man receiving eternal life. Jesus was given authority over all flesh as King of kings and Lord of Lords, and has been appointed as Redeemer for a particular people whom God has given Him, and now to this particular people is given the gift of eternal life. If you have noticed, the verb "to give" is used three times in this verse. The first two show us something that God the Father gave to God the Son. This final use of "to give" shows us something that God the Son gives to those whom the Father gave Him. This is the purpose for which Jesus came, not simply to be called the Redeemer, but in dying for the sins of His people, He might give to them the gift of eternal life; the gift of being made fit to live in God's presence forever and ever; the gift of being made perfectly righteous, perfectly suited for eternity, never again to be bothered by sickness, sorrow or sin. All to whom Jesus received from God the Father, Jesus would give eternal life. Not one, according to John 17:12 would perish, except that one, Judas, of whom it was said he would fall. This is the teaching of the gospel of John. Consider John 1:11-13;

***11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.***

Have you received eternal life? Have you received the knowledge and assurance that Jesus Christ is your Redeemer and is working in you to fit you for eternity in heaven? How can you know? How do you know? Beloved, do you believe? Do you, by your life, demonstrate you know yourself to be a sinner, unable to save yourself, in need of work of Jesus? Do you pray, showing your humility and great need for God's impact and influence in your life? Do you read the Word and delight in learning more about your God and Savior? Do you truly fellowship, long to be with God's people in order to both be encouraged by others in the things of the Lord as well

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as encourage others in such things? These are some evidences of eternal life and such things are always to the glory of God. God is glorified in your receiving eternal life, in your living in light of salvation – living in light of the redeeming power of Jesus.

And let me close with this thought, that God is glorified in our salvation is such good news. Of all the ways God could have determined to glorify Himself, we see here in John 17:2 just a glimpse of something that took place in eternity past – in that counsel of the Holy Trinity wherein God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit planned for and determined the very salvation of men from their fallen condition of sin. And to make it even more personal – if you have come to know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then as you read verse two, realize that you were considered, cared for and chosen as this Intertrinitarian counsel took place. If you ever doubt the love of God; if you ever find yourself with uncertainty as to how intimately God knows you and how intimate He wants to be with you – then read and reread this verse. Before the foundations of the world; before Genesis 1:1; before there was time; in you are in Christ, you must know that God knew you, and determined to love you and determined to set His grace upon you by sending His Son Jesus Christ to be your sin substitute, to die the death you deserved, so that you might receive the indwelling power and presence of His Spirit, sealing you as His and fitting you for an eternity in the delightful, joyful presence of God. Beloved, this is good news – this is the gospel – and this is what brings God the most glory. For Jesus, having just spoken on the priority of bringing glory to God in verse one; and pleading that He Himself would manifest this glory; here in verse two defines for us the very means by which God has determined to be most glorified – in the salvation of sinful men. You, if you have come to know Jesus, have most glorified God by believing that Jesus is the Son of God, the Lamb of God, that He is the only Savior and truly Lord of all.

Let me remind you about the essence of the good news; for if it is not being misrepresented, as it so often is, as being nothing more than a tool for self-help; as being God's recognition of something good in us that need saving (again a misrepresentation); the good news is also often disregarded. When people fail to see God as gloriously as Jesus presents Him; when people fail to regard the striking, the stunning and utter holiness of God – the completely sinless; pure and perfect Being; and when people fail to see the utter sinfulness of themselves; when we fail to take heed to the repeated charges of Scripture that call all people apart from Christ as "helpless" – unable to do anything for themselves (Romans 5:6); as "sinners" – missing the mark of God (Romans 5:8); as "enemies" hostile to the will of God (Romans 5:10); and even as spiritually and otherwise "dead" in their trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1) of which each and every one has participated (Romans 3:23); deserving of nothing but of eternal damnation; not deserving of life; but eternal death; not deserving of God's presence, but of eternal separation from Him who is life, from Him who is peace, from Him in whom is the fullness of joy. Beloved, when a person fails to consider the glory of God, the majesty of God, the holiness of God; the wrath of God against all sin and ungodliness; when we fail to consider these things, there is no good news in this book because we will regard ourselves just a little too good; not quite that bad; not so needful of the fullness of God's grace.

So let me tell you in as many ways as I can this morning, what is the good news that we considered in our text. The good news is that man, that willfully unholy, common, ordinary, imperfect, sinful and death-doomed creature may be reconciled, made one with and be adopted by the distinctively holy, uncommon, extraordinary, perfect, sinless and utterly life-giving God of all creation. The good news is that what you and I have lost because of sin;

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- God has restored to those who are transformed by faith to see and confess their sin and believe that God, in Jesus Christ, has done everything for us to be fit for a relationship with Him;
- that God, in Jesus Christ has, is and will make we who are sinful, sinless in His sight;
- that God has, is and will take us who are imperfect and sick because of sin and make us perfect and spiritually healthy in Jesus Christ;
- that God has, is and will transform us from our helpless condition of rebellion in heart, mind and spirit against Him to the hopeful expectation of heaven, to forever dwell in His presence.

The good news is that we who apart from Christ, having no means, no hope and even no desire to dwell in the perfect presence of God, have been made to bear the image of Christ, by means of what God did for us in Christ as He died on the cross for our sins, as Christ's righteousness, His perfection, His condition for being fit and able to dwell in God's presence has been imputed, charged to our account, given to us – so that we now, in Christ are in a condition, fit and able to dwell in God's presence. Beloved, this is good news – this is the good news and God is glorified by it.

And the question before us is this – how do we come to know and appreciate this good news for what it is – good news? Here in verse two we find that God has determined that He would be most glorified in saving people from their condition of sin by the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ on the cross. I don't claim to understand why this is so, but God is most glorified in saving souls – it is what God has determined – **“even as God the Father gave the Son authority over all flesh, that to all whom God the Father has given the Son, the Son may give eternal life.”** Have you come to know and truly live in light of this good news? If you desire to glorify God, then this is where you begin, rejoicing in so great a salvation, knowing that as you have come to know Jesus and even as you go out and make Jesus known to others, you are glorifying God.

*Soli Deo Gloria*

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