

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

To Know God, Know Jesus

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."

As always, it is good to be "home"; among my brothers and sisters in Christ with whom I regularly fellowship and worship our great God. Last weekend was indeed a blessing; not simply because the preachers were fantastic or because the fellowship with dear friends was sweet, but most significantly because of the subject matter covered. As many of you know, the theme of the conference was *Soli Fide*, the Latin phrase which became one of five cries of the Protestant Reformation of the Church in the 1500's. *Soli Fide* – faith alone – namely that sinners are justified by faith alone in the finished work of Jesus Christ upon the cross. Faith alone recognizes that a person's salvation is apart from any personal works. Faith alone sees one's self and one's own works in terms of Isaiah 64:6

For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

Faith alone sees one's own works and one's own heart in such negative terms, but then looks to the work of Jesus; primarily His work upon the cross and recognizes that it is His accomplishment alone that saves and that the sole response of the one who sees this truth is to believe, to have faith that salvation is found only in what Jesus has done.

Interestingly enough, this topic of *Soli Fide*, of faith alone, dovetails perfectly with where we find ourselves this morning in the Lord's Prayer of John 17. We have been slowly and methodically working through the profound truths of these opening verses. I confess that I have been in no rush to consider the profundities of these words of our Lord Jesus Christ. For let me remind you, that before us we find the expressions of our Lord's heart. Beloved, the things stated here are the things that were most important to Jesus. These were the thoughts that He dwelt on just hours before His death. In the waning moments of His life, these were the things that captured His heart and captivated His mind. And oh that such things would become increasing true for each of us.

By way of quick summary then, let us recall just what we have learned thus far as being most important in the heart and mind of Jesus. Remember that in verse one, we saw that the chief concern; the primary goal; the most pressing detail in the life of Jesus was that He, by His character and life, would bring glory to God the Father, ***"glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You."*** This was the chief end of Jesus, and as we noted, this is to be our chief end as well, that in following the example of Christ, we would seek to live every moment, to make every

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.)

thought and every action that which would bring glory to God – that in everything we do, God would be highly esteemed, that He would be given all honor; that He would be recognized as supremely splendid possessing all greatness, authority and power, the result of which is our worship and praise of Him.

And then, beginning in verse three, we saw the first of three ways in which Jesus lived out this purpose of glorifying God; these three ways reflecting what we sometimes refer to as the three offices of Christ; namely that Jesus is prophet, priest and king. In verse three we see Jesus defining eternal life as knowing the Father as the only and true God and knowing Him through the person of Jesus Christ, His Son, whom He sent. We saw in verse two that Jesus, like a prophet, has made God known, has declared His will and His ways to man; but being more than a prophet, Jesus has most gloriously made the Father known to man, by making Himself, God in the flesh, the God-man, known among men. We saw that the only way to intimately know God and to know what God is truly like, one must come to know intimately Jesus Christ; to become increasingly familiar with His ways and His life; seeking to be conformed to the image of the Son and imitate Him.

This morning then, moving on to verse four, I would like to present to you the second way in which Jesus declares He has glorified the Father and from this description or declaration, we see in part the office of Christ as our priest, as our representative before God, being our mediator, our "go between" as well as our sacrifice, paying the price for our sin. By way of application then, we see that God is glorified through service, as Jesus serves the Father by being our great high Priest. So, let us now consider Jesus as our Priest.

II. Jesus Christ – the Priest (John 17:4)

I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.

How did Jesus glorify God through service? Here we see the work of Christ as our priest. These words of Christ are to the point and most precise and offer us a simple outline; that as our priest, Jesus had...

1. The mission to glorify God – ***"I glorified You on the earth..."***
2. The means to glorify God – ***"...having accomplished the work..."***
3. The motivation to glorify God – ***"...the work which You have given Me to do."***

And as we examine the mission, the means and the motivation of Christ to glorify God, I hope to also have you see Christ as your example, to encourage and stimulate you on to a great desire to apply these principles of service in your own life to the glory of God.

1. The Mission

Let us begin by answering a simple but important question that is answered at the beginning of verse 4, that question being, "what was the mission of Jesus?" In no uncertain terms and as His own personal response to the purpose and plea of verse one where Jesus said, ***"glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You..."***, Jesus now says boldly, ***"I glorified You on the earth..."*** This is a powerful declaration by which we are reminded that Jesus was intentional, Jesus was deliberate; Jesus was determined; Jesus was passionate, Jesus was absolutely ambitious and ultimately unwavering in His resolve to glorify – [to highly esteem, to give all honor; to recognize God as supremely splendid possessing all greatness, authority and power, the result of which is proper praise and worship] – to glorify the Father.

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.)

Jesus says here, in no uncertain terms – not to the disciples, not to Israel, not to us, but to the Father; appealing to the Father; He makes this confession, this testimony, this declaration to the Father that He, because of His life and actions has “glorified” the Father. We see how Paul uses this principle.

1 Thessalonians 2:5

For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed — God is witness —

Paul places his motives and his actions not simply before the examination of men, but before the court of God Almighty – He testifies that God would approve of both his motives and his actions and Paul states it again in verse 10.

1 Thessalonians 2:10

You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers;

Jesus appeals to the Father and says in effect, “All I have said, all that I have done, in all my service, I glorified You.” He does not care what the disciples think, or what the Jews think or what the Romans think...His concern is that God the Father would be glorified. And beloved, if Jesus had made any mistake, if there had been any evil motive or intent, the Father would have let Jesus hang on that cross and stay dead. There would have been no resurrection and therefore no hope of eternal life. The mission of Jesus, the primary mission of Jesus was to glorify the Father and this, Jesus said, He did. The tense of the verb here is one of completed action, that Jesus has fully and finally glorified God and this Jesus did actively, aggressively and completely. The mission of Jesus – to glorify God.

We have so many missions: To make ends meet; to get a good job, or for some it seems just any job or to keep a job; to get into the right school, to meet the right person; to lose some weight; sometimes just to get up in the morning...we have so many missions. Be beloved, these are nothing but secondary missions; these are sub-missions; these and others like them ought not to rule your life, but these ought all to move and drive you to the same overall; same giving true purpose to your life meaning – that mission being to glorify God. In everything Jesus did, even as we will come to see, Jesus glorified God. And we are called to that end, to glorify God, even in our eating and our drinking.

Quickly, the phrase, “**on the earth**” reminds us of the incarnation of Jesus. It did not have to be said that Jesus glorified the Father in heaven, for that was a given; but here we get the sense of the fact that Jesus as the God-man was alien to the earth, for no man, from the fall of Adam up until the life of Jesus, had ever been able to declare that his life on earth was one of complete and utter glory to God.

2. The Means

So, having answered the question, what was the mission of Christ, we can now ask and answer the question, what was the means by which Jesus carried out this mission? Let us look again at our text where Jesus says specifically, “**having accomplished the work.**” When Jesus says, “**having accomplished the work...**” He is testifying once again to the Father He has glorified the Father, by accomplishing, by means of this singular work. Before we examine just

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.)

what this singular work is, let us note the intensity and the thoroughness Jesus intends by using this verb ***"having accomplished..."*** [slide xx] There are two fundamental thoughts here, both of which bring us back to that teaching of Soli Fide, faith alone in the work of Christ.

First, the verb for accomplish here carries the idea of perfecting; of making something perfect, without blemish, without deficiency, without any omissions. The idea here is that in what Jesus did, there was nothing remotely inferior; nothing second-rate or limited. To use today's vernacular, the work of Jesus was not a dud – you know, like when you light a pack of firecrackers on the fourth of July and of the 50 maybe only 49 or 45 of them actually work. Jesus is no dud...His work was accomplished and did accomplish everything He and His Father purposed to do.

The second idea behind this verb accomplish is that of completion. The work to which Jesus speaks of is finished, it is fulfilled. There are no additions; nothing lacking; nothing left undone, unfulfilled or incomplete. The intention here is to communicate that the work of Jesus was exhaustive, faultless and meticulously thorough. Jesus is saying that He Himself; not with the aid of any man and not with any future need for such aid, has successfully brought the work to its full conclusion.

And before we consider the specific work, let me say that this verb "accomplished" implies perseverance and skill; meaning that whatever Jesus accomplished, He did so not by somehow just meagerly skimping through; but that with great effort and much skill, He glorified the Father in "the work" that He alone finished.

With these ideas in mind, we might translate this verse to say, *"I glorified You on the earth, by means of perfecting and thoroughly completing Myself the work..."* As we will come to see, since the work Jesus refers to here is the matter of salvation, we must conclude that Jesus is teaching here what the Reformers called "Soli Fide" – faith alone in the work of Christ, namely that Jesus paid it all, did it all, completed it all, fulfilled it all – that my salvation is not a belief that if I cooperate with God, if I labor with God, even by His grace, that I will complete the salvation which Jesus graciously started. No, rather let us believe what Jesus declares here – Jesus did it all; my salvation is complete in Christ, not in Christ and in what I do, but all in Christ. This does not mean that I have no response or obligation to live by or according to faith; but it is not my actions that save, it is Christ's actions. As the Reformers said, "Faith alone saves, but not the faith that is alone." Saving faith sees that Jesus fully saves the incapable sinner, and that that saving faith also transforms and empowers the believer to strive to live in obedience to Jesus as Lord.

But what now of this work, just what is this work that Jesus speaks of? Notice here that our text says "work" and not works. Throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus speaks of the works He was to do, most of which referred to the miracles, the attesting signs which proved He was sent from God and was indeed the God-man.

But Jesus does not say works, but "the work" something specific and here I see the essence of Jesus' work as our high Priest, as the One who has perfectly represented God to us and who has perfectly done everything necessary to present us, His people, before the Father, spotless and blameless. The work of which Jesus speaks of here is the work of salvation; or in the words of Matthew 1:21, the work of saving His people from the sins. The work spoken of by Jesus here in John 17:4 is the work of redemption as He, as our High priest, not only offers the perfect sacrifice to God for our sins, but is also Himself that perfect sacrifice. And by offering Himself as the only sufficient payment for our sins, Jesus buys back, with His blood, at the cost of

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.)

His own perfect life, His people from sin, or in the words of Titus 2:14, ***"to redeem us from every lawless deed and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession..."***

The work Jesus accomplished was on behalf of His people. It is a finished work by means of His once and for all atonement; His sacrifice on the cross. The work of Christ is found in His life of fulfilling the law of God for us when we could not fulfill it ourselves; the work of Christ is one of propitiating, satisfying God's wrath against sin, a wrath that is appeased only by death, for the wages of sin is death, by His laying down His life upon the cross, taking upon Himself all the wrath of God that each of us deserved and by His taking away our sins, nailing them to the cross. I heard a fantastic statement from Steven Lawson. He reminded us, and so I remind you, that every sin; every evil thought, every evil motive, every evil action that every person commits will be completely punished by God – every sin of this world will be judged by the Almighty God and be punished in one of two ways – such sins either have been punished in Jesus Christ on cross; accomplished in full (as in the words of 2 Corinthians 5:21); or such sins will be punished in the sinner, eternally in hell as in the words of Mark 9:47-48 -

47 If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell, 48 where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.

The means by which Jesus glorified God is by fully, finally, and perfectly completing the work of redemption for all those who would believe. Beloved, this work He did as our priest and the author of Hebrews captured this for us in Hebrews 10:11-14

11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; 12 but He [Jesus], having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, [accomplished] . . . 14 For by one offering He has perfected [accomplished] for all time those who are sanctified.

Jesus glorified God by serving the Father and serving His people as priest. This was the means, the service by which Jesus glorified the Father.

3. The Motivation

This brings us to our final consideration. Having asked and answered the question as to what was the mission of Jesus? To glorify the Father. And then asking and answering the question as to what means Jesus used to glorify the Father? It was by serving as our great high priest. We now can ask and answer the final question, "What was Jesus motivation for glorifying the Father. We read John 17:4 again, ***"I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do."***

Did you catch that last phrase, ***"the work which You have given Me to do."*** What was the motivation of Jesus to serve God the Father? Jesus believed that the Father knew what He was doing and that the work that the Father had perfectly suited Jesus to do that very work. Beloved, when we come to realize that we are left here on this earth to accomplish God's work, whatever that is for us individually, and that God has and will perfectly suit us for that task, we have every motivation and every desire to carry out that work whole-heartedly. God the Father had called Jesus to be the Redeemer, to be the Savior, to be the Great High Priest. As one reads through the Scriptures, it is obvious that Jesus lacked nothing in order to fulfill that role. In Psalm 40:8, a passage that the author of Hebrews appeals to as a reference to Jesus, we read

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.)

this statement, ***"I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart."*** How can Jesus delight to be mocked, ridiculed, scorned, beaten, bloodied and crucified? Because, He knew this was the will of God for Him; and because He knew that in obedience to that will, however horrific the temporal sufferings might be, He knew that such sufferings would bring glory to God as well as bring many sons to glory. And so, for the joy set before Him, He endured the cross and despised its shame. The work that Jesus did was given Jesus, it was granted Jesus to do by the Father. The Father said in effect, "Son, I will be glorified as you become the sin sacrifice for these people – this is the work I have for You to do – will you do it for My glory?" To which the Son responds, "Here I am, I delight to do Your will, O My God."

And so we see that God is glorified in the service of Jesus Christ; who served God and us in the office of priest by which He alone and fully accomplished the work of salvation for all who believe. Do you believe this? This is *Soli Fide* – faith alone.

And quickly by way of application, let me ask those of you here who profess to know and love Christ – is your mission the same as Christ's? Is it your goal – not your wish or vague hope, but your deliberate intention to be able to say as Jesus said, "I glorified You on the earth?" What areas of your life need to be confessed as not bringing Him glory?

And do you beloved; know that the Father has given you means by which to glorify Him? We all share some broad and common means – Acts 1:8 calls every believer to be a witness, a testifier, a proclaimer of the person and work of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Every believer is called to the task of living increasingly obedient and holy lives; not seeking to live for self, but to live for and according to God. But would you consider some specific work that God has called you to. I confess that in some ways answering the question of what is the specific work that God has for me is easier for me than for some of you. I am the preacher, this is my work, this is my means of glorifying God. But what is the specific work the Lord has called you to? What ministry or ministries do you know God has called you to as your work of service to Him and for the benefit of His people? I pray you might identify such things, for it is in such service that God is most glorified.

And finally, are you properly motivated to carry out whatever work God has given you; knowing that if God has given it you, you have everything necessary to carry out that task. For God's work, done God's way will never lack God's provision. What a motivation to serve God to His glory. Knowing the truths of Philippians 4:19, ***"And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."*** As well as 2 Peter 1:2-3. ***"Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence."***

Let us follow the example of Christ and glorify God by serving Him.

Soli Deo Gloria

Copyright © 2009 Edward K. Godfrey. This message is the sole property of the copyright holder and may be copied only in its entirety for circulation freely without charge. All copies of this message must contain the above copyright notice. This message may not be copied in part (except for small quotations used with citation of source), edited, revised, copied for resale or incorporated in any commercial publications, recordings, broadcasts, performances, displays or other products offered for sale, without the written permission of the copyright holder. Requests for permission should be made in writing and addressed to Edward K. Godfrey, Pastor, Hope Community Bible Church, and 2300 South 13th Street, Rogers, AR 72758.