

The Lord's Prayer

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[0 : 00] This morning's reading is taken from John chapter 17 from verses 1 to 5, which can be found on page 1085 of the Church Bibles.

John chapter 17 from verse 1. After Jesus said this, he looked towards heaven and prayed, Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.

For you granted him authority over all people, that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

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.

Amen. Thanks, Bethany, for reading.

[1 : 12] If you could keep your Bibles open at John 17, that would be a great help. It's on page 1085. And you can find an outline inside the notice sheet. If you find that helpful as we look at this portion of John's Gospel together, let's ask for God's help as we turn to his word.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you that you have given us the words of Jesus. We ask that your Spirit will give us ears this morning to hear your voice, heads that can understand you, and hearts that are willing to change and follow you.

For we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, I wonder if you could think of what you might think most naturally displays the glory of God.

What is it that makes you think God is glorious? Some of us might think of something in space. We might think of this kind of thing. This picture is of the pillars of creation, which are these colossal, unimaginably colossal towers of gas and dust where stars are formed in a nebula.

Or maybe you'd think of the picture of Earthrise. Often that's a poster people have on their walls of the picture that the men on the moon took of planet Earth.

[2 : 31] Psalm 19 says that the heavens declare the glory of God. So rightly understood, when we see images like that, it's right for us to be lost in wonder at the glory of God, the grandeur of a creator in what he has made.

Others of us might think we most see the glory of God in the miracle of life, that God created living consciousness, sentient beings, personality from matter.

We might think of the human body, the heart pumping 8,000 liters of blood around our body every day. The human mind far more complex than any human machine.

Sorry, any other machine. Or maybe you could think of human achievements as showing something of the glory of God. That what humanity is capable of doing teaches us about the God who made us.

So the view across the Sydney Harbour, where you see the bridge and the opera house, or the skyline at Manhattan. If you wanted to show someone the sheer brilliance of God, where would you take them?

[3 : 39] Well, in our series in John's Gospel, we're at a crucial few verses here. It's as though the curtain is pulled back for us on the relationship within the Godhead, within the eternal God, the relationship between the God-man, Jesus, and his heavenly Father who sent him into the world.

This prayer takes up John chapter 17. From verse 6, which we'll look at soon, Jesus prays for his disciples. And from verse 20, he turns to pray for believers after them, those who will believe through them.

But in these first five verses that we're looking at this morning, we hear Jesus praying for himself. Why does he pray? Partly it must be because he loves his heavenly Father.

Faced with the culmination of his mission on earth, he chooses to share this moment with his Father in prayer because of the closeness of their relationship. He's also reminding us through this prayer that he is not alone in his mission.

Last time we were in chapter 16, verse 32, where he said this, just across the page there, a time is coming and in fact has come when you, his disciples, will be scattered, each to your own home.

[5 : 00] You will leave me all alone, yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. No matter how things might look in the coming days to the disciples, this will all be part of the Father's plan because Jesus is about to entrust the coming hours to his heavenly Father, a sovereign God.

The prayer is also the natural next step after all the teaching we've had from Jesus in chapters 13 to 16 that we've been looking at since January together as a church.

Jesus is equipping his disciples for life when he's gone. And so he's been talking to his people about God and now he turns to talk to God about his people.

He said in our series that we've looked at, to his people, don't let your hearts be troubled as he goes because by his going, he will prepare a place for them in his Father's house.

He's promised that when he goes, they will grieve, but he will appear to them again alive and after that, their grief will turn to joy and no one can take away that joy. He's promised that after he dies and rises to heaven, he will ask the Father and the Father will send the Spirit into the world.

[6 : 16] He will be another Jesus, another counselor, one who draws alongside the people to teach them and to help them. He's the Spirit of truth. He'll teach the disciples and remind them of Jesus' teaching so that they can give us the gospel in the scriptures and he will be Christ with us, in us, to help us to believe in Jesus.

He's promised opposition from the world. He said, in this world you will have trouble, but take heart, I've overcome the world. And he's also told us about a special ministry of the Spirit in the world that the Spirit will call people out from the world that reject God.

The Spirit will convict the world so that people in the world come to believe in Jesus as we're seeing all around the world today. So now he turns to his heavenly Father and he says, Father, the hour has come.

And we've got three parts to the prayer this morning. We're going to look at the petition of the prayer, what he prays for, the grounds of his prayer, why he seeks what he's seeking, and then thirdly, the outcome of the prayer.

So first of all, the petition, he prays that the Son is glorified through the cross. We're going to look at verse 1 and verse 5 together because the way these first five verses are structured is like a sandwich.

[7 : 38] Verses 1 and 5 go together and then verses 2 and 4 and then verse 3. So look with me at verse 1 as Jesus asks for glory. Father, the hour has come glorify your Son that your Son may glorify you.

That's the big idea. So it's worth asking, what is glory? What does glorify mean? At its simplest, the way I understand it is the glory of God is the brilliance of God.

But it's a word that originally meant weightiness or heaviness. It was used of somebody. If they were rich, people would say they were heavy. as though they're heavy with their gold or heavy with their jewels.

And then it came to be used more broadly as a word about honor, about distinction. And today, in other places, we use the word glory in two different ways.

Something can be glorious just for what it is in itself. So, if I'm thinking of glory, I think of being on the Isle of Mull on Calgary Bay, looking out over the ocean.

[8 : 52] A glorious view. Maybe you think of a mountain range that you've seen. The highlands. Things that are glorious in and of themselves. They're beautiful.

Another way we use the word glory is about achievement, about what somebody does. So, when Doohan Van der Merwe, good Scottish name, scored his amazing try against England for Scotland a few weeks ago, the headlines in my newspaper said, a try for the ages.

Van der Merwe scores a try for the ages. And we know what that means, don't we? We have this idea that it's the kind of, it was the kind of score that we picture people growing old and sitting their grandchildren on their knees and telling them they were there when Van der Merwe was scored that try.

So, we understand that idea of a glorious achievement that will echo through history. Well, when Jesus asks for glory from his father, both of those ideas are in play.

Glory for who he is and glory for what he will achieve. So, in verse 5, he's talking about glory for who he is, the eternal glory of the son.

[10:02] Look at verse 5. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. The son has always existed in eternity.

God has always been a father and a son. And Jesus has come into the world from the father so that we can see God, the God who has always been there in the love and unity of the spirit.

And the son's eternal glory has in a sense been laid aside or at least veiled in his status as just coming into the world as a man. The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

So, that glory, that brilliance has been veiled and now, the father can bring Jesus back to heaven and exalt him to the father's right hand.

So, the son is recovering. He's been restored to his eternal glory. glory. But there's more to this glory than was there in eternity before the mission.

[11:04] And that's what we get in verse 1. We get glory in Jesus' achievement, a glorious victory. Father, the hour has come. Glorify your son that your son may glorify you.

Jesus is seeking glory from what he achieves as he finishes his work in the world. I don't know what you think about that. This idea that Jesus is acting supremely for his glory and he's praying for God to glorify him.

I think it's a humbling thought for me, maybe for us. You and I might pick up our Bibles and want it to be a great story about us, about me, about humanity, about how special we are and how God sees us as special.

God just couldn't bear to be without us because we're so great. But the Bible says it's not about us. The Bible tells the story of God acting in the world for his glory.

God created people for his glory, Isaiah 43. He rescued a people, Israel, his people, from Egypt, from slavery, for his glory, Psalm 106.

[12:16] He raised up Pharaoh, the leader of Egypt, as an opponent of God so that he could display his glory in defeating Pharaoh. When Israel, his people, sinned in the wilderness, God forgave them because of his name, his reputation, his glory.

And when he brought them back from exile, in Ezekiel chapter 36, the prophet Ezekiel makes clear for the people, it's not for your sake or house of Israel that I'm about to act, says the Lord, but for the sake of my holy name.

And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name and the nations will know that I am the Lord.

When God saves people from the nations and from Israel through Jesus, it's for his glory, Romans 11.

And when God brings judgment on people he has made who continue in rebellion against him, it will be for his glory, Romans chapter 9. And now we hear in these verses that Jesus, on this mission in the world, is acting for the glory of God.

Glorify me that I may glorify you. But it's not because God is vain that he's acting for glory. It's not that he lacks anything in himself without being glorified by us.

[13:37] There's nothing lacking in God that means that he needs praise from us. Rather, he wants his glory to be known, to be revealed, to be recognized so that others can share the joy of beholding his glory.

It's good news for us that God is acting in the world for his glory, to reveal his glory, because he made us with hearts that hunger for glory. We long in our hearts for beauty, for majesty, for grandeur, and our hearts can be satisfied when God pulls the curtain back and shows us the infinite glory of himself.

That's what we were made for. It's what Moses rightly longed for in Exodus 33 when he asked the Lord, show me your glory. So now Jesus prays that we in all of creation, even the angels in the throne room of heaven, that we will, through what he achieves, behold his glory.

Where will that happen? Well Jesus tells us at the start of verse 1 there when he says, Father, the hour has come. Earlier in the gospel he said the hour had not yet come in John chapter 2, but then in chapter 12 of John's gospel something decisive happened as the religious leaders were steadfastly rejecting Jesus after he'd raised Lazarus from the dead.

some Greeks representing the nations, the world, came to Philip and said, we want to see Jesus. And Philip found Andrew when they found Jesus and when Jesus heard that the Greeks were looking for him in John chapter 12 he says, the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. [15:25] So what is that hour? Well he goes on and says, very truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed.

But if it dies, it produces many seeds. See what he's saying? The hour of Jesus' glory is unmistakably his death on the cross.

When he's lifted up on the cross. And for a first century hero, this is astonishing to hear, for the cross was Roman Empire's creation to be the most shameful way anyone could ever die. And here is Jesus asking for the Father to glorify him so that he can glorify the Father, not in spite of the cross, get me through it and out the other side, but through the cross, through his death. And at this moment, for the disciples overhearing the prayer, they should be asking themselves, why? So that brings us to our second point. We've heard about the petition of the prayer.

[16:28] Now we hear the grounds of the prayer, that the Father gives life through the cross. So look with me at verse 2, where Jesus tells us the Father's goal.

For you granted him, the Son, authority over all people, that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.

Now I think the authority that he's talking about there, that is being granted to the Son, is the authority that God will give to Jesus after he's died and risen again.

In raising Jesus and exalting Jesus, the Father gives Jesus the authority to grant eternal life to all believers. The Father has generously given a people to Jesus, and he gives authority to Jesus so that Jesus can give those people eternal life.

They are the Father's gift to the Son. We had a similar idea in a verse in John chapter 6, verse 37, when Jesus says this, he says, all that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.

[17:42] So if we want life from Jesus, come to him, he won't drive us away, whoever we are. We don't have to worry, am I chosen, am I one of the gift? No, we come to Jesus, and he says, whoever comes to me I will never drive away.

But when we come to Jesus, we learn that the Father has given us to the Son. We were a gift chosen before the foundation of the world, granted life so that we could be with the Son forever. So Jesus is saying to the Father, glorify me because this was your plan. And the same idea is there in verse 4. He says, I have brought you, the Father, glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do.

It's said in the past tense that he's finished the work, but it's speaking about all of Jesus' work, that he's about to, the culmination of that work is about to happen at the cross.

So Jesus is asking the Father to use the cross to glorify him because it was the Father's plan, the Father's rescue mission, that by Jesus' death he could give life to the people the Father has given to him.

[18:58] And through that work, the Father and the Son can be glorified. We're familiar with the idea of a death being glorious because it achieves something. This death will bring people, everyone who believes in Jesus, from spiritual death to spiritual life.

It's a glorious achievement by his death. How? Well, we've known since chapter 1 how when John the Baptist saw Jesus and he said, look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Last week we had a big problem here at St. Silas. Those of you were here and know two-thirds of our toilets were closed. The drains were blocked. It was a significant blockage issue.

On Tuesday, Colin came with a jet to clear the drains. A jet so powerful he had to have a man with him standing by the truck for the jet to protect passers-by as it got working.

And when Colin put the jet down our drains, it worked. Chris Barrett was here. Mercifully, I was not. He said, when the jet went into those drains, it was so powerful, it sent slurry, sludge, whatever we might call it, up from the drains just outside that wall and out onto the grass there.

[20:20] It was something no one should ever have to see. And then it snowed on Tuesday afternoon. And as the snow fell to the ground, it covered everything over in pristine white.

It looked beautiful. I said to Chris, I'm so sorry you were here for that. Chris said, it's okay. It's the gospel, isn't it? He's dead right, isn't he?

The gospel is the story that when you look at my life, especially at my heart, there is muck everywhere. It's something no one should have to see. And Jesus came so that he could head to the cross for me and die to clear up that mess and cover our sins so that we could be washed clean and look whiter than snow forever.

We look at the cross and we see a death of devastating courage that is glorious because it does nothing less than cover our sins so that we can be given life from God.

The Father gladly uses this death, the sacrificial death of his only son to bring spiritually dead people to spiritual life. And he does that for everyone who believes in him.

[21 : 39] Any of us can receive that gift today. And that life that's given from God, it's not the same as life before we receive that gift stretched out.

Eternal life is not life in this world but made to last longer. No, it's a different kind of life. So that's what we see in our third point.

We've heard the petition of the prayer for the son to be glorified at the cross. The grounds of the prayer that the Father gives eternal life through the cross. Thirdly, the outcome of the prayer is that we can know God through the cross.

So look with me at verse 3. He says, now this is eternal life that they know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

That's the different quality of life that starts the day you start believing in Jesus. He's saying that true life is not just this life lasting longer, it's life knowing God as Jesus reveals him to us.

[22 : 46] Knowing Jesus is life. knowing God as an eternal father with an eternal son in the unity of the spirit who comes into our life as that father and son make their home with us.

This is the biggest problem in our world that we don't know God and the prophets of the Old Testament promised a day would come when people could know God.

Habakkuk chapter 2 promises the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. And this promise could be fulfilled, could only come about through a new covenant, a new deal for God with his people.

And in Jeremiah 31 that covenant is promised, the Lord said through Jeremiah no longer will they teach their neighbor or say to one another know the Lord because they will all know me from the least of them to the greatest declares the Lord for I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.

and wonderfully in this passage I found this wonderful looking at this this week is seeing how the cross achieves this knowledge of God in two distinct ways for us.

[24 : 00] The first way is that it brings our forgiveness and in Jeremiah we saw that the reason we can't know God before the cross is because we're not forgiven and by Jesus dying on the cross he opens the way for us to know God because we're forgiven the barrier of our sin is taken away opening the way for us to know God but where then do we go to know that God now that we can have that access to him?

We go to the cross it's the cross that is the supreme revelation of the God who can now be known by us at the cross we see who God is we see the justice of God that this is a God who doesn't leave sin unpunished who is not unmoved by wickedness evil will be dealt with when we see evil today in our world we know that God sees it too and we know that he will deal with it because we've seen his character that he deals with wickedness he dealt with it at the cross at the cross we see the love of God a love so deep that Jesus would bear the cost for our forgiveness himself such is his love for us at the cross we see the wisdom of God that he would devise a plan that would destroy death through death even the death of his son we see the faithfulness of God that nothing could stop him keeping his promises his promises that he would be a just God but also a God who justifies ungodly people so they can be with him we see the power of God that in the apparent weakness of the cross Satan the prince of the world is defeated because he can't accuse God anymore of injustice he can't accuse God's people anymore of sin because it's being dealt with all our spiritual enemies defeated in the power of God we see the holiness of God that in his moral perfection sin cannot stand in his presence so he couldn't just give us a religious system to make things up to him sin had to be dealt with we see the patience of God with rebellious sinners we see the giving grace of God that at the heart of who God is is not demand is not him saying this is what I need you to do for me rather he says there is nothing you can do for me here is something I will do for you the sacrifice that we need comes from him so that the people he's given to the son can be given to him through the work that he's given the son to do such is the grace of God if we want to know the one true God

the father and Jesus whom he sent through the spirit living in us we go deeper into the cross when you stand on the top of a mountain you get a great view don't you
I was thinking of Ben Ann which I don't even think is a mountain and has this ridiculous view from the top a glorious view Jesus wants us to have a view of the grandeur of God the glory of God in the first ten chapters of John's gospel it's as though Jesus is coming down the mountain from heaven from the glory and he comes so that he can pick us up and carry us to see the glory of God with him and say look at this look at this spectacular view of the glory of God and the place he wants us to look the place where the glory should take our breath away is the cross if we want others to know God we might want them to see God from creation of course we might want them to see God's love in his people of course but our goal must be to get our friends to a point where we're speaking with them about the cross that's where God's glory is revealed in Jesus the Christian reformer John Calvin called the universe the theater for God's glory but then he said this in the cross of Christ as in a splendid theater the incomparable goodness of God is set before the whole world the glory of God shines indeed in all creatures on high and below but never more brightly than in the cross in which there was a wonderful change of things the condemnation of all men was manifested sin blotted out salvation restored to men in short the whole world was renewed and all things restored to order that's what Jesus prays for so as we come to share the Lord's Supper together this morning let's pray that our hearts will be gripped by a deeper sense of the glory of God as we look at the cross let's pray together heavenly father we come before you with praise and ascribe glory to you for your work of giving us life thank you that you gave
[29 : 24] Jesus this work to do that so revealed his glory to us a glory we will praise him for in fullness of joy day by day and year after year in all eternity thank you that you granted him authority so that he could give us life and you have given us to him and given him to us thank you that we see your goodness your righteousness your wisdom your grace your love in the glory of the cross may your spirit move us to build our lives on knowing you the immense privilege of the relationship with you that you have granted us through your son's agonizing but glorious suffering that we would enjoy eternal life day by day life in all its fullness and transformed by that knowledge would we live lives that reflect your glory in the world in your name we pray amen