

Return To Glory Part 2

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[0:00] Amen. John chapter 17, verses 1 through 5. If you use the Pew Bible later on, if you don't have a Bible with you, the Pew Bible is on page 903, just so you know.

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour has come. Glorify your son that your son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.

And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that 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. That is the word of the Lord. Please be seated. Thank you. Thanks again, praise team, so much for leading us in wonderful song and worship.

If you've been around our church for a while, or if you have been to any Presbyterian church, you've probably heard the catechism question from the Westminster Shorter Catechism.

[1:24] Number one, what is the chief end or what is the chief purpose of man, humanity? And the answer is very simple. It's actually on the doorposts of Macaulay School.

If you drive by, you'll see it there. To glorify God and to enjoy him forever. That's what we were made for. But the question could also be asked of God.

What is the chief end of God? Answer. To glorify himself and to enjoy himself forever.

God doesn't need us. He was doing quite well without us. But love, the nature of love is to overflow. And so in love, he creates us. That we too may bask in his glory. That's the best thing for us. Is to see the glory of God and enjoy God forever.

[2:28] Because the whole universe exists for the glory and enjoyment of God. And that is also the great purpose of our salvation in Christ.

Glory is at the heart of our Lord's mission. And should be our hearts as well.

Are you seeing and seeking the glory? Keep in mind where we are in John 17. This whole chapter is one big prayer.

We are in the holy of holies. As we listen to the son of God pray to his father. There's nothing like this in all the Bible. Where we hear Jesus praying like this.

For this length of time. It's one of the most awe-inspiring moments the world has ever seen. This is the night before the cross. This is Maundy Thursday.

[3:29] In verses 1 through 5, as he begins his prayer. Remember, he is actually praying for himself. That's mind-boggling all by itself. That the eternal son of God is praying to the eternal father about himself.

Last time we focused on the fact that as we look at this section. That our Lord's mission was, as I said earlier, was a mission of glory.

But what does he mean by glory? One theologian, Pastor John Piper says, glory is the manifestation of God's holiness and greatness.

Keep in mind, holiness doesn't only mean absolute moral purity. It does mean that. But first and foremost, holiness means other. It means God is the one above all who is not like us.

It means he's transcendent. He's a cut apart. He's a cut above us. That's the idea behind holy to begin with. And then, because he's that, he is also absolutely morally pure.

[4:38] The Bible says God is light. In him there is no darkness. Piper goes on to say, in this definition, that that glory is both a quality of God.

You see his glory. But that glory is also a response from creation. In other words, when we see his glory, we respond in giving him glory.

Praise and honor and adoration and obedience, etc. Because the glory of God is the ultimate purpose of all of God's actions and for all of creation.

Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, who took up our flesh for a time, laid aside the visible manifestation of his divine glory.

That was for a time and for a purpose that he might save us. That he might come and deliver a people out of their misery.

[5:51] Deliver us out of our sin and rebellion against God and make us the children of God and give us life. But now in this prayer, Jesus is expressing his longing to return to the glory.

To fully express who he is. So last time again, we began looking at glory and the mission as a mission of glory.

Second point today, now we look at the means of glory in his mission. How does Jesus glorify the Father?

Our Lord, he does this in two ways. He says in our passage, he gives eternal life to those the Father has given him. Let me read it again so you'll hear it.

Since you have given him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. First of all, don't let that go by too fast.

[7:03] He has authority over all flesh, he says. Authority over all flesh. That is over all people or anything that has flesh. As a matter of fact, it's really just a synonym for all of creation.

But let's stick with the people. No matter where people live, what century or what language they speak, Jesus has all authority over them.

Let that sink in. Let that sink in. The Roman Empire, which is the context of the New Testament, which persecuted Christians so severely, was still under the authority of Jesus.

The U.S., Iran, China, the U.K., the entire continent of Africa, and everywhere else, are all under the authority of the sovereign king, the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is called the invisible reign of Christ over his kingdom. Jesus is leaving his disciples.

Understand what's happening.

[8:15] He is leaving his disciples to return to glory in his, what we call the ascension. He's not just going, as it were, up to heaven.

What's happening in his ascension, and the reason he is leaving is he is going to his coronation.

When he returns into glory, he is crowned king of kings and lord of lords.

If you need help with that, president of presidents. Just in case you didn't get it. Premier of premiers. He is the ultimate ruler and the greatest ruler ever.

R.C. Sproul, late R.C. Sproul, who's one of my heroes, says, in biblical terms, it is unthinkable to have a king without a kingdom. Since Jesus ascends to his coronation as king, with that coronation comes the designation by the father of a realm over which he rules.

And that realm is all of creation. The kingdom of God covers all of creation. He is ruling.

[9:34] That's why I say the role of the church is not to build the kingdom. It's already there. It's already been built. Our job is to make the invisible visible.

Our job is to reveal the kingdom to the nations. By our community, by our love and community, as we follow wholeheartedly and with devotion, the Lord Jesus Christ, we are used by God to reveal the reign of Christ and the kingdom of God.

At least somebody is with me. Thank you, brother. Thank you, Elder. Paul writes in Philipians 2, 8, 3, 11.

You know this verse. And speaking of Jesus, Paul says, and being found in human form. He's talking about the second person of the Trinity, with forever God, with God forever, always.

He has now become one of us and being found in human form. He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

[10:49] He's describing what's about to happen this very night in John 17, that Jesus, the son of God, in our place, obeys God. Because we've disobeyed God.

We've never get it right. But he comes to not only be our example to show us the way, but he does it in our place. That later he might give us his righteousness that he earned, that we might stand before God, not showing God our resume, how good we've been, because your resume stinks. Your resume don't work. God don't care about your resume. He wants to see, are you in the family? Have you surrendered to his son, whose resume is perfect?

I ain't done yet. Becoming obedient to the point of death on a cross. Now, because of that, therefore, therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

All authority belongs to him. And because that is so, his name is above every name.

[12:19] Now, keep in mind what he's saying here. It's not so, see, we get this a little twisted. He's not telling us that the name Jesus is above every name.

It was a common name. There were tons of Jesuses. Or Hebrew, Yeshua, Yahashua. Tons of, that means Joshua. Tons of guys named that.

What he's saying, and this is how the verse ends, and that every tongue confess. What are we to confess? What name are we to confess?

That Jesus Christ is Lord. You see, the word Lord means God. That's what he's saying. And the early Christians ran into a lot of trouble with the Roman Empire.

The Roman Empire had what was called the cult of Caesar. And so they worshiped many gods, you know, Zeus, you know, you know your Roman and Greek mythology, all that stuff.

[13:18] But they also had one more cult, and it was the cult of Caesar. And so the early, and you had to burn incense to Caesar. Simply put, you said Caesar is Lord, and you pinched some incense to Caesar.

Well, the early Christians got into big trouble with the Roman Empire. They got in trouble with the government because they refused to see the government as sovereign.

They refused to see the government as their savior. They refused to see the head of the government, Caesar, as their savior and their God. By the way, Caesar, I preached this a time ago, but Caesar, terms for Caesar were savior and Lord.

And the early Christians say, no, he's not savior and Lord. Jesus is savior and Lord. And when they refused to burn incense, they would say, Jesus is Lord.

And pay for it. Because this world doesn't want this king. Oh, we'll vote for our kings and our presidents and our, and, and people will be installed and they'll take over the countries and when, and rule nations.

[14:38] But no one wants this king until you've been brought into his kingdom, until you see who he is, the one who has authority over all flesh.

Do you remember the great commission? I'm, I'm, I'm having some fun here. So I'm going to stand right here. You remember the great commission? How does it begin? I love you.

Y'all listened. They were there for Good Friday. That's right. The great commission does not begin with go therefore and make disciples. There's a verse before that.

And it says what Jesus just said here. And he's saying it then too. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples.

You see, the idea that Jesus has authority over all flesh is meant to encourage us. It's meant to let us know that what he has called us to do, how he has called us to live, is possible.

[15:51] And nothing can stop it. Listen, our Lord says he, he, he exercises this authority over all humanity by doing what?

Giving eternal life to all those the Father has given him. That's how he exercises this all authority over people.

Have, have given is in what's called the perfect tense. And I'm telling you that because it means something. It means the Father gave people to Jesus in the past, that is in eternity, before the world was created.

The Father, knowing all things, had a people in mind already to give to his son. Past tense.

But the perfect says it happened in the past, but it, but it also means it's still happening now. The results of that are still present now. So the fact that God gave a people to Jesus before you were

even created, before you even knew anything, before the world knew anything, before your grandmama and grandpapa knew anything, were even born, were even here.

[17:02] The Father said his love. And then the son comes, John 17. He's here. He's present. He's ready to go to the cross that he might bring those people, that the Father said his love, into his kingdom.

Past and present collide in Jesus. And he gives them eternal life. It's like, I love football.

I do. And you know, the greatest, the most profitable NFL franchise in history is the Dallas Cowboys. Thank you very much.

And we ain't won nothing in years. And we're still the most profitable. Okay, I'm out of there. But, I used to, I used to, I used to quarterback sometimes. I like to play wide receiver, but I'm a quarterback sometimes.

And it was so cool. You get the, the ball's given to you. You hike, boom, you got the ball. You roll out. And then you pitch it or you hand it off to the running back.

[18:06] And he takes off with it. That's what's happening at the cross. The Father is handing off a people to the Son and saying, save them.

Bring them. We, listen, Christians, those who believe in Jesus, I'm talking about the, not, I'm talking about the true church. Those who follow Christ, you are a love gift from the Father to the Son.

Amen. He gifts you, your names were in the Father's heart before all eternity. And he gifts you to the Son that the Son may die and give you eternal life.

Oh my goodness. And God never fumbles. You see, no one earns eternal life.

No one earns it. No one earns eternal life. No one takes eternal life for themselves. It must be given to them. It must be granted to them by Jesus.

[19:14] And he does it purely out of loving grace. Meaning there's nothing you could ever do to earn it or pay him back. Listen, if you're trying to pay God back for blessing you, stop.

You're gonna hurt yourself. All he wants from you is faith. Trust him. Faith that is revealed in how you live. That's all he wants from you.

Without faith it's impossible to please God. That's what he wants from you. Trust him. Seek his glory. Be amazed. Delight yourself in him.

Jesus has said something like this even way back in John chapter 5. We looked at some time ago. John 5, 21 and 24. He says this, For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life so also the Son gives life to whom he will.

You hear that? For the Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father.

[20:18] Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Truly, truly, amen, amen, I say to you whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.

He does not come into judgment but has passed from death to life. Do you believe the word of the Lord? Do you believe Jesus is who he says he is?

Do you believe that he was sent by the Father to be your Savior? Do you believe? Listen, and belief is not just mental assent. Belief is trust.

Trust. It's like the old illustration that I haven't used in a long time so let's do it again. It's like I demonstrated my faith in that chair to hold me up by plopping in it.

If I tell you I believe that chair can hold me up oh I believe it that chair is great I can see it looks like it's well made oh yeah I believe and you say sit in it and I say well no I don't have time right now or I don't feel like okay maybe when I'm older and tired I'll sit in it.

[21:39] Maybe when I've gotten done all the stuff I want to do today I'll come sit in that chair maybe. That's not faith. See I'm shining you I'm stalling I'm saying I'm an agnostic I don't really know if that chair will hold me up but the one with faith is the one who sits in it.

When we believe in the Lord Jesus we throw ourselves our whole future our whole present our whole destiny we throw ourselves all of our weight onto him and guess what he's never broken down once and he won't he will carry you he will hold you he will keep you but don't play games I'll get around to that when I'm tired and done my thing you may never get there.

what is eternal life that the son gives he tells us what is eternal life that they may know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent that's how the Lord defines eternal life now we know it's certainly life that lasts forever after this body dies a new body will be provided when Christ comes and wraps up history Jesus is coming history is his story he is the focal point of all history everything in history is coming to a head at some point and ahead will be Christ God the Father is moving the pieces as it were of time and space to bring everything everything to completion in Christ Jesus and when that day comes and it will you will get an upgrade to your mortal body in the new heavens and new earth where all evil and all that causes harm shall be no more so yes eternal life is forever but hold it now it also begins right now it's present when the spirit of God causes you to be born again that is you you are we're all born spiritually dead meaning unresponsive to God blind can't see

God deaf can't hear God we're all born in this condition we can do nothing to save ourselves in that condition but then John 3 when we are born again when the spirit of God with no permission from you by the way decides to live in you decides to come into your life and open you up make you alive so that now at that point at that point now you're able to John said in John 3 you're able to see the kingdom of God you're able to enter the kingdom of God born again has to come first because you don't even you don't see the kingdom don't want the kingdom don't know anything about the kingdom but now you're born again you can see into the kingdom of God you have eternal life you've been given life that is indestructible that spirit that life that spirit in you will keep you alive forever and ever and see once you're alive you know you're alive how?

you start following Jesus that doesn't say you do it perfectly but you do it because that was the whole point to make you alive not so you can go do your own thing and say I walked the aisle I got baptized I'm no it's so you can follow Jesus said follow me following don't save you following shows you are saved you're alive now you're alive in Jesus but this expression of eternal life is a following which means it's relational if I'm following somebody I hope I have a relationship with them I hope I'm not stalking okay you know if I'm following you it's because I know you we're hanging I mean if I'm following the closer I am following you the better I know you so we're doing life together that's what it means to be a

[26:17] Christian to know God and to do life together with him Jesus gives his disciple an intimate experiential knowledge of the father and himself the word experiential eternal life is not theory it is a relationship with the living God where now you are able to hear his voice as you open his word you hear him you hear it means something now this word you can't read the Bible and ignore it anymore you can't read the Bible and make excuses anymore you can't read the Bible and say I don't know anything no it begins a process it begins to make sense because you're hearing God speak to you is that what happens when you open the Bible let's be honest I'm asking you to raise your hand or anything just think about it when you open the word of God do you hear the voice of God do you see him man have you you open a Bible and you're reading your portion for your devotions that morning and it's exactly what you need to hear

I mean come on I know you have and you weren't you didn't have time to even pray about it God was already working to speak to you about your life to speak to you about your pain to speak to you about a decision or just to reveal himself to you in a way that you need to see him he's already working that's because you have a relationship with him a real fellowship you know him and are growing in your knowledge of him as one writer said this knowing God is forever delighting in the manifold glories of God it is seeing God and rejoicing forever in his presence it is living now how we were created to live in fellowship with our creator it is knowing God as the best thing that ever happened to you to know him as your highest good and greatest treasure oh taste and see that the Lord is good blessed is the man who trusts in him don't you see it when you know God you begin to and Christ the father and son together here when you know the trinity when you know God you find out that there's nothing better I mean listen there are all kinds of great things that can happen to us in this world all kinds of great things but when you know God you realize that nothing is greater than him when you know God no I wouldn't want this for anybody but when you know God if you lost all things and you still had him you would still say I win Paul felt that way Paul experienced that

remember Paul the apostle Paul the guy who was the Pharisee tried jailing and killing Christians he ran into Jesus or I should say Jesus ran into him that was a hit

Paul was on his way to get Christians locked up getting permission to get Christians locked up he was on the way to get another contract see and Jesus rushed him okay that's West Philly lingo when you got rushed a bunch of guys run and beat you up out of the blue he said he got rushed listen Jesus rushed Paul he met him on the road and slapped him off his donkey the Bible says he fell off and blinded him I mean what a punch I mean he blinded him it's all in love though all in love and revealed his glory Paul said he said I saw light shining all around us and I heard a voice and it was the voice of the Lord Jesus speaking to him and making him his servant man that's when you see the glory when your eyes are open in fact

Paul was blind isn't that funny Jesus blinded him so he could see sometimes the Lord has to take something from you in order for you to see him to see his glory and Jesus became Paul's greatest good so Paul could write I think it's in Philippians 3 he's a I mean he talks about I count all things lost that I may gain Christ all things I count them as rubbish that I may know the surpassing worth of knowing Christ everything rubbish that's when you know you know the Lord that's when you know you're knowing the Lord and you've been growing in your knowledge of the Lord you recognize that everything else you think makes you so hot stuff and so wonderful everything in your life that makes life so beautiful and it's all good don't get me wrong you recognize

[31:58] Jesus is better he's that great treasure that when you find it Matthew 13 the kingdom parables right he's that great treasure remember the guys he's prospecting he finds the mother load of treasure so what does he do he sells everything he has he sells everything I mean he bankrupts himself so he can buy the field where the treasure is because he recognized in that treasure which is the kingdom of God in Christ Jesus that treasure is worth more than everything he had it's worth everything to him that's when you know Jesus you see he's everything it's what Jeremiah said Jeremiah 9 23 and 24 thus says the Lord this is God speaking the living God the covenant L capital L capital O capital R capital

D that's what the word Lord big Lord let not the wise man boast in his wisdom let not the mighty man boast in his might let not the rich man boast in his riches but let him who boasts boast in this that he understands and knows me that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love justice and righteousness in the earth for in these things I delight declares the Lord hallelujah what are you bragging about what are you talking I can tell you I can tell you bragging that's how you know that's all you talk about when people get around you you talk about your grandchildren that's I'm not saying that's evil but but you are bragging about them you talk about you talk about your dog I don't know you talk about whatever it is that you talk about yourself now that might get a little dicey you talk about all you've been doing and you go online and tell everybody about it

I'm sorry I shouldn't have said that we tend to boast in ourselves and the things that we have and the people we know and what our people are doing now some of that's legitimate but it can get out of hand very very easily and God saying to us don't boast in those things boast more boast abundantly in me tell people about me delight yourself in me that's what it means to know God when you know God you can't help it and you recognize what he's like steadfast love justice and righteousness you you you're like this is my God the God of love who is love love love but also holy holy holy holy right

I can boast about the kindness of the Lord that leads people to repentance I can talk to you about about about the greatness of God the glory of God the holiness of God I can talk to you about what God has done in the world in history through people throughout history how God has been working in our world in our city in our church I want to talk to you about that because I want to boast in him Kevin Smith he's okay but I want to give glory to Jesus anything any good you see in me it's him it's him and here's the beauty of that passage I just read God says he delights in that God delights in people who know him and see him as their great treasure and highest good it blows my mind that he says this he delights in us and the answer is yes is that the

God you know do you know this God the one who delights in his people the one who has written our names on his palms the one who rejoices over us with singing I'm quoting scripture is this the God you delight in do you know God like that you see that's what God is doing I'm going to talk more

about this next week but God is revealing himself in his word so that you can know him like that so you can know him the characteristics he displays look at Jesus focus on Jesus focus on Jesus and what you see in Jesus is what he wants you to know he wants you to experience him and family I want to tell you settle for nothing less we settle we are settling for having right doctrine and you know

[37:31] I love right doctrine because without right doctrine you are in a mess you off in some cult somewhere but it's not good enough the right doctrine is meant to reveal him to us so that we can know him experience him and listen watch this bank on him when God reveals himself as faithful then whatever he's calling you to do you can trust him to be faithful to you to help you even if it goes south he will not leave you prove me now says the Lord prove me now listen to what I promise and bank on it act on it and that's what he wants to do show you who he is our

Lord has all authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all those the father has given him Jesus expresses his power by raiding the kingdom of darkness and giving life to dead people bringing them out of Satan's grasp out of the darkness into the light because not even the devil can stop one who has all power and all authority in heaven and earth so who are you praying for Jesus has authority over them and they don't even know it so keep praying for them they may know Jesus never stop never give up how bad it gets until they're gone there's hope keep praying and keep walking with him following him hearing his voice growing in grace reading his love letters to you and he will transform your life continually usually for his glory and bring you to glory father father there's so much here my

I you have this passage these five verses are just this whole section is so far above my head I can't even see will you help me to make it clear but stay faithful to your word and give us all ears to hear that we may hear and see and follow Jesus help us to know him who is life may we grow in grace and in knowledge of him thank you in Jesus name amen who