

John 17:1-5 Sermon Discussion Guide

Passage Summary

John 17 marks the beginning of what is often called Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. After spending several chapters preparing His disciples for His departure, Jesus now turns His attention to prayer. The cross is only hours away. The betrayal, arrest, trials, and crucifixion are about to unfold. And yet before entering His suffering, Jesus lifts His eyes to heaven and speaks to His Father.

This prayer is remarkable because it allows us to overhear the intimate relationship between the Father and the Son. Throughout John's Gospel, Jesus has repeatedly spoken about being sent by the Father, doing the Father's will, and revealing the Father's glory. Here, as His earthly ministry reaches its climax, those themes come together.

Jesus begins by declaring that "the hour has come." Throughout John's Gospel, this "hour" has been anticipated but delayed. Now the appointed moment has arrived. The cross is not a tragic interruption to God's plan; it is the very center of it. Jesus understands that through His death and resurrection, the glory of God will be revealed in a way the world has never seen before.

When Jesus prays, "*Father, glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you,*" He is not asking for personal recognition. In Scripture, God's glory is the display of His character, beauty, holiness, power, and love. The Son seeks the Father's glory, and the Father is glorified through the Son. Their purposes are perfectly united.

Finally, Jesus speaks of the glory He shared with the Father before the world existed. These words remind us that Jesus is not merely a teacher, prophet, or moral example. He is the eternal Son of God who existed before creation and who willingly entered the world to accomplish our redemption.

In these opening verses, we see a Savior fully committed to the Father's purposes, fully aware of the suffering before Him, and fully devoted to securing eternal life for His people.

Theological Highlights

1. The Cross Reveals the Glory of God

The world often associates glory with power, success, and achievement. Yet Jesus speaks of His coming crucifixion as the moment of His glorification. At the cross we see God's holiness, justice, mercy, love, and grace displayed together. The greatest revelation of God's glory comes through Christ's sacrificial love.

2. Salvation Is Rooted in God's Initiative

Jesus came because the Father sent Him. Redemption is not humanity finding its way to God but God moving toward humanity in grace. The entire prayer highlights God's sovereign initiative in salvation.

3. The Father and Son Are Perfectly United

There is no tension between the will of the Father and the will of the Son. Jesus joyfully pursues the Father's glory and the salvation of His people. What Christ accomplishes on the cross perfectly reflects the heart of God.

4. Jesus Is the Eternal Son of God

Verse 5 points us to Christ's preexistence. Before Bethlehem, before creation, before time itself, the Son shared glory with the Father. The One who goes to the cross is none other than the eternal God who took on flesh for our salvation.

Discussion Questions

The Glory of God

1. Jesus' greatest concern in this prayer is the glory of the Father. What are you most concerned about in this season of life?
2. How might your prayers change if God's glory became a greater focus of your prayer life?
3. Why do you think God chose to reveal His glory most fully through a crucified Savior rather than through displays of earthly power?

The Person of Christ

4. Jesus knew exactly what awaited Him, yet He moved toward the cross willingly. What does that reveal about His love for His people?
5. How does Jesus' preexistence and divinity deepen your understanding of what He accomplished for you?

Living in Light of Eternal Life

9. If eternal life begins now through knowing God, how should that shape the way we think about daily spiritual disciplines (Scripture, Prayer, Worship)?
10. What would it look like this week to pursue knowing God rather than simply knowing more about God?

Closing Prayer Points

1. A Deeper Knowledge of God

- Thank God that eternal life is found in knowing Him through Christ.
- Ask for a deeper love for God's presence rather than merely His gifts.
- Pray for greater delight in prayer, Scripture, and communion with Him.

2. A Greater Desire for God's Glory

- Confess ways you have lived primarily for your own comfort, reputation, or success.
- Ask God to align your desires with His purposes.
- Pray that your life would increasingly reflect and display His glory.

3. Gratitude for Christ's Saving Work

- Thank Jesus for willingly going to the cross to secure your salvation.
- Reflect on the love demonstrated through His obedience to the Father.
- Praise Him for accomplishing what you could never accomplish for yourself.

4. Confidence in Eternal Life

- Thank God that eternal life is not merely a future hope but a present reality.

- Ask for confidence in your identity as His child.
- Pray for hope that remains steadfast in the midst of uncertainty and suffering.

Closing Reflection

John 17 opens a window into the heart of Christ just before the cross. What occupies His mind is not self-preservation, but the glory of the Father and the salvation of His people. As we listen to His prayer, we are reminded that eternal life is not ultimately about a place we are going, but a Person we are coming to know. And because of Christ's work, we are welcomed into the very relationship that has existed between the Father and the Son from all eternity.