

Text: John 17:1-5

Title: Knowing Christ

Date: 8/23/2026

Congregation: Center City Church

Question: Share about a costly gift that you gave or received from someone.

Intro:

On my 23rd birthday, I had one gift on my mind and it wasn't the gift that I was going to receive.

The gift that was on my mind was a gift I wanted to give.

I wanted to marry Betsy Jeffrey and I wanted to give her a ring that would show her how much I value her.

So during the fall of 2008, I worked on finishing my college degree during the weekdays and at nights and on the weekends, I was a valet driving.

Parking cars and collecting tips.

My goal... save up enough money to buy a diamond ring.

I wanted to give her the gift on her birthday in December.

So I worked and worked and lived on oatmeal and spaghetti for weeks.

When I finally had enough money for the diamond ring, I sent all of it to the Jeweler to have it made.

The ring showed up the day before her birthday, and it was on her finger the next day.

After giving her the diamond ring, everyone would always want to see it.

The ring was beautiful both because of its physical qualities, but even more so because of what it represented.

It was modest in comparison to some diamond rings.

However, anyone who knew how poor of a college student I was, knew how costly it was for me to give her that gift.

It cost me everything.

Every once and a while, Betsy and I will look at the ring and be reminded of the love we have for each other.

It's those little reminders of what matters most that gives us vision for life.

This morning, maybe you need a reminder of what matters most in life.

Maybe you've lost sight of why you are here?

Maybe you've lost vision of God's love for you?

Usually this happens when our eyes are in the wrong place.

For the next three weeks, we are going to spend time trying looking at John 17 with the hope of gaining a fresh perspective on what matters most.

John 17 is a prayer of Jesus. Oftentimes it's referred to as the high priestly prayer.

It's a prayer that he prayed the night before His death.

This prayer of Jesus is a reminder of all that truly matters.

And this prayer of Jesus starts with Him saying this...

In John 17:1 Jesus prays..."Father, glorify the Son..."

What does it mean for Jesus to ask to be glorified?

Jesus is asking His Father to let the world gaze upon His beauty.

Like a diamond, Jesus was given to the world, so we could gaze upon His beauty.

Why?

Is Jesus being self promoting?

No.

Jesus knows that when people see His beauty, they see the beauty of the Father's love.

John 17:1..."Father, glorify the Son...that the Son may glorify you."

When we see Jesus in all his glory, we see just how much God the Father loves the world.

God so loved the world, that He gave us His Son.

Jesus is the most costly gift God could have given.

Jesus is the most beautiful and glorious diamond.

This is why our mission statement is to center our lives on knowing this beautiful Jesus and make Him known, as a family of God.

These next three weeks we are going to see that mission statement in John 17.

This morning, we are going to be in John 17:1-5, considering what it means to know Christ, the treasure of heaven...the radiant diamond.

PRAY

CONTEXT:

After a diamond is harvested, it is given to a diamond cutter.

The diamond is cut with lasers and small diamond saws until it is a multifaceted jewel.

These cuts or facets allow the light to reflect and refract off the diamond, so when you see it you say "WOW!"

Have you ever taken a diamond ring and turned it in the light.

That's the goal of the diamond cutter, to show off the glory of the diamond through it's multiple facets.

This morning, we going to look at seven facets of the glory of Christ in the first five verses of John 17.

We are going to pretend we are taking a diamond and turning it in the light.

After we look at those seven facets we will turn to our lives and ask the question:
How should we live in light of this great and glorious treasure?

Outline

1 Catching a Vision of Jesus (Seven facets of Jesus' glory)

2 How should we respond?

1 Vision of Jesus

Let's go to the text...Read with me in John 17:1

John 17:1

[1] *When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven*"

QUICK CONTEXT

The words that Jesus had spoken were part of a long goodbye to his 12 disciples.

Jesus knew he was going to die the next day.

So, after they eat together a last meal, Jesus starts to speak.

His message is a vision of how to follow Him when He leaves earth.

The disciples are confused by this. They are very concerned.

They question him. they disagree with him.

And rather than getting frustrated or trying to fix his disciples, Jesus prays for them.

This brings us to the first facet of the glory of Jesus...

1 The Glory of Christ's Humble Dependence

Now, when I go into Home Depot to find something, I struggle to ask for help.

After walking through every aisle a couple of times, i finally will pull an orange vested person aside and ask them where my item is in.

Do you struggle to ask for help?

Jesus is the most competent.

The most powerful.

The most wise man the world has ever known.

If anyone should have struggled to ask for help, it was Jesus.

However, here we see him asking for His Father for help.

He was constantly leaning on the Father.

And the night before the cross, he called upon God to help.

Jesus was the most competent person of all time, and gloriously dependent on His Father.

How much more do we need to be asking God for help?

Now, what was Jesus asking the Father to help Him do?

This brings us to our second facet of His beauty.

2 The Glory of His Weakness

Look at John 17 and turn the diamond with me.

Look at John 17:1 again...

"Father, the hour has come..."

What is "the hour" that has come?

In our modern society, we would say. "It's my time to shine."

I went to the padres game with my boys last night, and we saw guys hit home runs and make amazing catches.

Usually after they showed their strength and power, they would wave to the crowd and bask in the glory of their power.

It was their hour. It was their time to shine.

What is Jesus's hour? What is his time to shine?

Look at John 12:27-28, 32-33

[27] "...But for this purpose I have come to this hour. [28] Father, glorify your name."....
[32] ...when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." [33] He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

Jesus hour, his time to shine, was his death.

We try to glorify ourselves in our power. Jesus was glorified in his weakness.

It was His weakness that showed off His beauty.

For it was in the weakness of the cross that all people would have hope.

What incredible humility.

What incredible obedience to the Father.

Gaze upon the glory of the humility of Jesus.

And notice how His humility expresses itself...

His humility shows a desire for the glory of the Father...

3) The Glory of His Sonship

John 17:1 "...glorify your Son **THAT** the Son may glorify you,"

Jesus is not praying for people to see Him out of pride.

Jesus prays that people would see Him be glorified, so that the Father would be glorified!

One of the greatest compliments someone can give me is when they compliment my children.

I had a little league parent say to me once, "I love how your son encourages the other players, even after he strikes out he's cheering on his team."

My son's humble attitude was a reflection on me...which by the way is completely grace from God for those of you who know how competitive and proud I am.

However, that is a son glorifying a father.

Jesus came to earth to show us who God the Father is.

Jesus wants us to catch a vision of Him, so we can catch a vision of the glorious God!

Just like the diamond on Betsy's finger points to my love for her.

Jesus points to the Father's love for us.

Now, it's easy to hear these first three facets of Jesus and get a wrong picture.

We can think, "Jesus seems like a really nice guy. Lots of love, but not much power."

But look with me at the next facet of His glory...

4) The Glory of His Authority

John 17:2 *"Since you (the Father) have given him (Jesus) authority over all flesh,*

Who has been given authority over flesh? Jesus

This word "flesh" simply means "all people."

Jesus has authority over Trump and Newsom.

He has authority over Bezos and Musk.

He has had authority over all people for all time.

Who is your and my ultimate authority? Jesus.

This humble Jesus is the king of the world.

What does Jesus do with this authority?

John 17:2 *"Since you (the Father) have given him (Jesus) authority over all flesh, **to give eternal life...***

He uses his authority to give eternal life.

That's what He came to do.

He came to give eternal life to those who were spiritually dead.

And yet, even with all His authority.

Jesus doesn't go rogue from the Father.

This authority is shared.

Look what it says...

John 17:2 *"Since you (the Father) have given him (Jesus) authority over all flesh, to give eternal life **to all whom you (The Father) have given him (Jesus).**"*

The Son has authority to give eternal life to whoever the Father has chosen to give Him.

I was studying this scripture with a **skeptic friend** of mine last week.

When we got to this verse, he paused and I could tell it really was bothering him.

I asked him what he was thinking and he said...

"How can Jesus be beautiful, if the only people that He gives eternal life to are the ones the Father has chosen to give him?"

"How do I know if he has chosen me or not?"

This verse was a barrier to belief.

And a legitimate question.

I heard this analogy from a mentor of mine, who I think got it from theologian H.A. Ironside.

Friends, look at the door of the church.

Imagine, if the front of that door on the Glen street side of the door, it says...

"Any of of you come through this door will be saved."

Who is responsible for coming through the door?

Anyone who reads the message!

Now, imagine on the other side of the door. On the sanctuary side of the door it says...

"You came because God chose you."

Friends, this is how it works.

We all are responsible to respond to the invitation of Jesus to come to Him for eternal life.

After you come to Jesus, you look back and you realize...it was God drawing me to Him all along.

The beauty of this is that there is no room for boasting.

None of us can say, I figured it out! I got myself there!

And the beauty of this is, there is no one who the Father can't give to Jesus.

It's His authority, not ours that draws us to Jesus.

So, if you have not yet come to Jesus, don't wait to figure out if you are chosen. Come to Him! Believe in Him! Trust in Him! And you will have eternal life.

And if you have come to Jesus. If you have passed through the door of faith. Boast in what He did to draw you to himself to give you eternal life.

And what is this Eternal Life?

That is what Jesus goes on to show us in the next verse of his prayer...

Facet #5...

5) The Glory of His Eternal Life

What do you think of when you hear eternal life?

Is it never dying?

Is it heaven?

What is it?

Look at John 17:3

John 17:3

[3] And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Eternal life is fundamentally this....

Knowing God

That is eternal life.

Knowing God

Do you know God?

How would you know if you knew God?

Look what the verse says...

1 If you know God, you know that He is the only true God.

Someone who knows God, knows that there are no other Gods besides him.

You can't know God and say "He's my God, but other people have their gods too. Whatever god works for you works for you."

There is no room for pluralistic theology in knowing this God.

We need love and tolerate people who worship other gods.

However, to know the true God, is to believe He is the only true God.

2 To know God, is to know that you can only come to Him through knowing Jesus.

Jesus said in John 14, during his goodbye talk with the disciples...

"I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me."

There is only one path to God and His name is Jesus.

How can this be?

If Jesus was only a man, how could he claim that he was the exclusive way to God?

What about Moses, Muhammad, Buddha and Joseph Smith?

Why trust Jesus alone for access to God?

Because, Jesus is one with God.

Buckle up friends, we're going to get deep for a minute.

In this verse we actually get a glimpse of the **Trinity**.

You might say, "James, I thought there are three persons in the Trinity, and I only see two in this verse."

Great observation...but look closely at who Jesus calls himself...

"Jesus Christ."

What does the word Christ mean?

It means "Anointed One."

To be anointed, means to be chosen for a special purpose.

When someone is anointed, something is poured out onto them.

What was poured out onto Jesus when He was anointed?

Luke 4:18

[18] “**The Spirit** of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news.

The Holy Spirit anointed Jesus.

Jesus is the Christ because the Spirit of God was upon Him.

Friends, this is how the Trinity works...

God the Father pours the Holy Spirit onto God the Son
The Holy Spirit points people to the Glory of God the Son.
God the Son points to the Glory of God the Father.

God the Son is not God the Father.

God the Father is not God the Son.

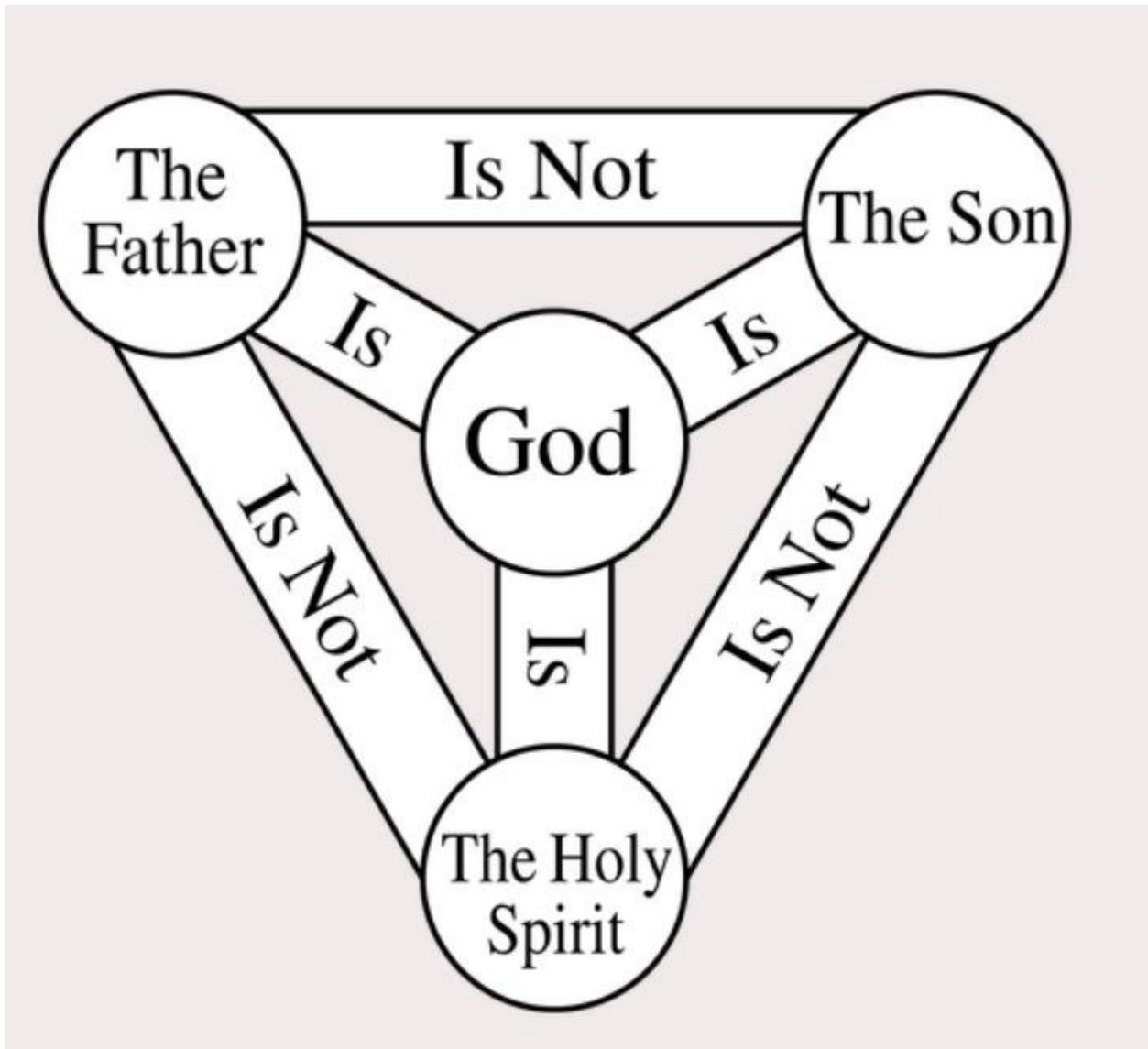
And the Spirit is not either of them.

However, they are all God.

And all have a role to point to the beauty of the other.

This is the glory of the Triune Godhead!

I have something on the screen that has helped a lot of people when thinking rightly about the Trinity. I got this from the book *Delighting in the Trinity* by Michael Reeves, but I don't believe it originated with him.



And why does the Trinity matter?

Because the fact that God is three in one and not just one, means that He is a God of relationship.

3 You know that you know God, if you have a relationship with him.

Eternal Life is experiencing the joy of this Triune relationship now and forever

This word for “knowing” is not simply “knowing” facts about someone.

Kids, how many of you know my first name?

How many of you know how many kids I have?

How many of you know how old I am?

How many of you know my favorite sports teams?

Ok...

How many of you have been tucked into bed by me at night?

How many of you what it feels like to have me comfort you after you got hurt?

How many of you know what it feels like to have me give you a gift at Christmas?

There's only a few of you who know this. My children.

This is what it means to know God the Father and His Son.

To be brought into His Family as a son and daughter.

To have an intimate relationship with Him.

If you don't know God like this, you can know Him like this today.

All you have to do is ask the Holy Spirit to come inside you and show you the beauty of the Son.

You may say, that seems too easy, isn't there anything else for me to do...

The answer is in v17:4 where we see the 6th facet of the glory of Jesus...

6 The Glory of His Finished Work

John 17:4 I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work you have given me to do.

Jesus was sent by the Father to earth with a mission.

He had work to do.

The work He had to do was simple: Save humanity from their sin.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

That's Jesus' mission in a nutshell.

And Jesus didn't leave one bit of the work unfinished.

Jesus taught the disciples and crowds with wisdom. That wisdom echos down through the course of history. Most societies today have their roots in the wisdom and teachings of Jesus.

Jesus fulfilled hundreds of the prophecies spoken of Him in the Old Testament.

Jesus performed many miracles and signs to validate that He truly was from God.

Jesus lived a 100% pure life.

Jesus loved people perfectly. Not just the easy ones.

He never failed to speak the truth. He never failed to speak with grace.

As John 1:14 says *"He was full of grace and truth, revealing the glory of God."*

It would take a lifetime to scratch the surface to cover all Jesus did..

John sums it up at the end of this book by saying

"Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written." John 21:25

There is not enough library space in the world to contain the works of Jesus!

However, not one of the amazing works of Jesus is more important than this...

Philippians 2:7 "Jesus became obedient to death, even death on a cross."

John 19:30 Jesus cried out with his last breath "It is finished."

This is the blazing center of the beauty of Jesus's work is the cross.

The one with all authority, full of humility, and the way to the Father.. He dies for you and me.

Why?

So we would never need to ask God...Have I done enough?

So we could just receive the diamond...without any cost to ourselves, because He paid it all.

Jesus finished the work God had given Him, so we could rest fully in Him.

So we could come out of the slavery of working for our own salvation and just receive His love.

This is the culmination of His glory.

Suffering in our place.

Taking our sin.

Giving us his righteousness.

So we could know the embrace of the Father.

So we could know the fullness of the Spirit.

So we could call Him Savior and friend.

This brings us to our final facet his glory...

7 The Glory of His Eternality

John 17:5 "And now; Father glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed."

Friends, if Jesus was just an amazing man he would not be worthy of ultimate glory.

Even if he died for us, that would not be eternally glorious.

He would be worthy of glory like Gandhi, MLK, or Nelson Mandela.

All did great things. One even died for a great cause.

However, Jesus is on a completely different level.

Look what he says..."*Glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.*"

Here Jesus is making a crazy claim.

He's saying...before the world existed, I was there.

John 1 says this about Jesus...

"In the beginning was the Word (Jesus), and the Word (Jesus) was with God, and the Word (Jesus) was God."

Friends, this was the claim that ultimately got Jesus killed by the Jewish religious leaders.

Jesus was claiming to be God.

He was claiming eternity. No beginning. No end.

This is why CS Lewis said this about Jesus..."You have three options with Jesus...He is either a liar, a lunatic (crazy person) or He is Lord of the universe."

And friends, after Jesus death, it looked like Jesus was a liar or a lunatic.

How could he be anything else? Claiming to be God and then dying.

God can't die!

However, three days after Jesus death, His lifeless lungs began to breath. His still heart began to beat. He opened his eyes. Stood up. And walked out of the tomb!

Then he appeared to 500 people, including all those who heard his prayer from John 17.

When they saw HIM there was no question...HE IS LORD!

Thomas, Jesus doubting disciple, saw the risen Jesus and fell at his feet and said "My Lord and my God!"

Forty days after that, Jesus was taken up to heaven and was back in the presence of the Father.

Over the years, many people have had visions of this Jesus enthroned in glory.

From Paul in Acts, to John in Revelation, and even to this day people are having visions of this glorious radiant God-Man.

And one day, He will peel back the curtains of heaven and everyone everywhere will see the risen and reigning Jesus.

Until then, we see Him through hearts of faith.

Do you see Him now?

2 How should we respond to the beauty of this diamond?

Sadly, many of us will say, there are things in life that are better than Jesus.

Work
Sports
The Beach
Relationships
Parties

To think you will find a glory or beauty better than this diamond is a foolish.

Philippians 3:7

"I count all things but for the sake of Christ."

Jeremiah 9:23-24

[23] *Thus says the 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, [24] but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and **knows me...**"*

Rico Tice "You can be successful in a lot of things, but it's all failure if you are not successful in the most important thing...which is knowing Christ"

Oh church, I don't want to be known as the basketball camp church.

Or the friendly church.

or the Bible church.

We want to be known as the church that knows and treasures Jesus.

Hosea 6:3

[3] *Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD;*

So, how can we pursue knowing Him?

1) Glorify Him in your struggles (image of the black satin)

When I went to look at diamonds for Betsy's engagement ring, I remember the Jeweler taking a black satin pillow and placing the diamond on that pillow.

Then he took the light and shone it on the diamond.

The blackness of the satin made the radiance of the diamond shine.

Friends, our sin and struggles and weakness does not take away from the beauty of Jesus.

Our sin and struggles and weakness show off his grace!

Friends, step one to knowing Jesus is confessing the darkness of your sins and struggles.

When we do this, glory of His God's grace shines brightly off the backdrop of our dark hearts.

Jesus said this to the apostle Paul "2 Corinthians 12:9

[9] "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

If we try to act like we have it all together than the diamond won't shine brightly in our lives.

SLOWLY READ...In your community groups don't be afraid to share your struggles. Boast in your weakness and know his grace.

When you've had a hard weak, don't think you need to clean yourself up before gathering with the church. Come as you are and know his grace.

2) Glorify Him in your successes...(image of the gold ring prongs)

After a diamond is shown off on the satin pillow, where does it get placed?

It gets placed in a ring...

Those gold prongs hold up the beauty of the diamond.

Friends, we are not the diamond. We are the gold prongs that hold up the diamond.

Friends, when you show up and serve. You hold up the diamond.

Friends, when you give generously. You hold up the diamond.

When you invite a new person into your home. You hold up the diamond.

When you pray for a hurting soul. You hold the diamond.

Those works of faith are gold.

That gold is the grace of Jesus transforming the satin sin into the gold of good works.

His grace and glory are shown off by both.

So, friends, when you gather with the church and community groups boast in knowing Him.

Both in your struggles and successes.

All of it is grace.

This is what you were made for.

The Triune God delights in you experiencing His grace.

He delights in you sharing this experience of grace with others.

Let us reflect Him.

It's what we were made for!

PRAY