

**The High Priestly Prayer of Jesus  
(Part 1)  
John 17:1**

*When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you*

**First: The Setting 1a – When Jesus had spoken these words...**

What words?

John 14-17 is known as the Farewell Discourse –

14:1-31 – Christ's departure and return – *I am the way*

15:1-17 – The Vine, Jesus's love and community – *I am the Vine*

15:18-16:33 – The Comforter, love, and hate – *When the Comforter is come*

17:1-26 – The Farewell Prayer –

In John 17, Jesus has just finished the Last Supper with the disciples. This is the longest recorded prayer of Jesus.

- 17:1–5: Petition for glorification based on the completion of his work
- 17:6–10: Petitions for his disciples
- 17:11–19: Petition for the preservation and sanctification of "his own" in the world
- 17:20–23: Petition for unity of "his own"
- 17:24–26: Petition for the union of "his own" with himself

**Second: Christ's Posture - ...he lifted up his eyes to heaven**

Has he done anything else?

A star caught his attention at his birth. He looked up to see a descending dove at his baptism. He regularly went up to a mountain to pray.

This posture has been Jesus's posture throughout his ministry. He has come from Heaven, is returning to Heaven, and has had Heaven on his mind and heart throughout his ministry.

*John 8:28-29 – So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. <sup>29</sup>And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him."*

There has never been and never will be a relationship like the Trinity – "God in three persons, Blessed Trinity."

Where else did Jesus, 'lift up his eyes?'

Luke 6:20 - *And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.*

John 6:5 - *Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?"*

John 11:41 - *So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me.*

### **Third: "The Hour has come"**

What an hour.

This is the hour that has been on God's calendar since the world began. What the Father, Son and Holy Spirit planned before the world began is about to come to pass.

What have you waited for? How long have you waited? Think about all this time the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have waited...

Ephesians 1:4 - *he chose us in him before the foundation of the world...*

Wait? This means that God planned salvation before the Fall.

Lucifer didn't fall until after the 6 days of creation. Eph 1:4 says that God chose us before the foundation of the world.

This is what is meant when it is said, "Salvation isn't a plan 'B', but. Plan 'A.'"

God knew before the Fall that Lucifer would rebel, and A&E would also. God has always known because God doesn't learn things. He knows all things simultaneously.

He didn't react to the Fall. He acted before it.

How long has God been waiting for this hour? Before time as we know it. It is timeless.

But this truth is also the ground of our assurance in Christ. Your salvation did not begin with your choice to believe in Christ—a choice which was real and necessary. Your salvation began before the creation of the universe when God planned the history of redemption, ordained the death and the resurrection of his Son, and chose you to be his own through Christ.

The glorious, unshakable, objective foundation of your being a Christian is that God chose you to be one. God put you in Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:26-31 - *For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards,<sup>[c]</sup> not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup> But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup> God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. <sup>30</sup> And because of him<sup>[e]</sup> you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, <sup>31</sup> so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”*

Why do I say all of this? The more you know God and of God, the more you will love God. As we get to know God better, we stand in utter awe, genuine amazement at Who he is, what he has done and that “*he has chosen us...*”

But before this hour, it was all a mystery –

1 Peter 1:10-12 - *Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, <sup>11</sup> inquiring what person or time<sup>[a]</sup> the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. <sup>12</sup> It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.*

Romans 16:25-27 - *Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup> but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— <sup>27</sup> to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.*

*Come behold the wondrous mystery  
In the dawning of the King  
He the theme of heaven’s praises  
Robed in frail humanity*

*Come behold the wondrous mystery  
He the perfect Son of Man  
In His living, in His suffering  
Never trace nor stain of sin*

*Come behold the wondrous mystery  
Christ the Lord upon the tree*

*In the stead of ruined sinners  
Hangs the Lamb in victory*

*Come behold the wondrous mystery  
Slain by death the God of life  
But no grave could e'er restrain Him  
Praise the Lord; He is alive!*

**Fourth: The Purpose of the Hour – “glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you.”**

We say often that we were created for God’s glory. But what does that mean?

Westminster Shorter Catechism’s first question and answer is:

Q: What is the chief end of man?

A: Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

But do we wait until Heaven to “enjoy him forever?” No. The 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the answer explains the first part –

A: Man’s chief end is to glorify God **by** enjoying him forever.

There is no difference between God’s glory and our joy. In fact, God’s glory is the source and end of our joy.

1. How is it the source

If God is the source of everything, it means that God is the source of happiness.

Psalm 16:11 - *You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

Psalm 51:12 - *Restore to me the joy of your salvation*

God’s glory is our supreme happiness.

*The most obvious fact about praise — whether of God or any thing — strangely escaped me. I thought of it in terms of compliment, approval, or the giving of honor. I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise unless . . . shyness or the fear of boring others is deliberately brought in to check it. The world rings with praise — lovers praising their mistresses, readers their favorite poet, walkers praising the countryside, players praising their favorite game — praise of weather, wines, dishes, actors, motors, horses, colleges, countries, historical personages, children, flowers, mountains, rare stamps, rare beetles, even sometimes politicians or scholars. I had not noticed how the humblest, and*

*at the same time most balanced and capacious, minds, praised most, while the cranks, misfits and malcontents praised least. . . .*

- C.S. Lewis in Reflections on the Psalms

In other words, glorifying God is not actually the expression of our joy but the consummation of it. We are overwhelmed with him and so we glorify him as the one true source of happiness.

This is why we sing on Sunday mornings. We don't sing to glorify God. We sing because God is already glorified in us and we can't help but express it. We are bursting with God's glory.

The happiest people are those who have found the source of happiness and rejoice in it.

This is the reason that Paul said,

*Philippians 3:8 - I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ*

For many years I wondered what would make a person do this -

*Matthew 13:44-45 - "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. <sup>45</sup> "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, <sup>46</sup> who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.*

The answer is that this person found something worth more than everything else – one, single source of supreme joy.

*In that light, it is no wonder that Paul said,*

*Philippians 1:21 - For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

In that context, the gain is Christ.

Which brings us back to Jesus's prayer –

*"Glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you."*

The only way for everything to be re-righted is for God to be glorified because he is the source and end of all its happiness. Nothing works right, nothing is well, without him at the center.

The primary function of the cross is God's glory – his re-righting of every thing in Jesus.

The cross is not first or foremost about us but God. When we make it about us, we lose its meaning, purpose, and power to transform us and all creation.

When we make it about us, we become the god and God becomes something we use.

**Conclusion:**

And this is why Jesus prays this God-centered prayer in John 17:1

*When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you,*

Following him, being his disciple, loving him most, requires us to maintain the same posture and pray the same prayer –