

# John 17 “Jesus’ Missional Prayer”

Preached @ Harambee Church by Pastor  
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*“There is no voice which has ever been heard, either in heaven or in earth, more exalted, more holy, more fruitful, more sublime, than the prayer offered up by the Son of God Himself”*

**Reformer Phillip Melanchthon**

*“God’s demand for supreme praise is His demand for our supreme happiness. Deep in our hearts we know that we are not made to be made much of. We are made to make much of something great.”*

**John Piper**

## Intro

Today we see an end of John’s 3 chapter farewell discourse of Jesus’ at His last supper right before He is delivered over to authorities to be executed for inciting the people against the state, and the religion of the people, which is why Jesus publicly died, but John has made a clear point that no one took the life of Jesus; He laid it down (**John 10: 18**). In today’s prayer we see the glory and the mission of God coming together imperfect fashion. This is truly the culmination of what John wants to convey to his hearers, so that they would believe. He wanted to take back the curtain on eternity, and show us a glimpse of His glory in the incredible work of the cross, and the subsequent affects it has had and will continue to have on millions of people that God calls His own. Today there are **three aspects** of Jesus’ missional prayer that inform us of His glory, and our subsequent glory as a result. This is more than a prayer; it is a manifesto of His glory!

## From the Head...

### Jesus Prays for Himself (John 17:1-5)

At the outset, as a human, depraved with sin, we can interpret this piece as arrogant and lacking in humility. After all He is asking to be glorified. In this passage we realize a few things about eternal life, and the glory of God. In John 12:23 we read that, *“The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified.”* What He meant there, as well as in our passage, was His imminent death on the cross. This is the hinge of time. It is why Jesus came, and what God had been promising through the prophets for centuries. This prayer is a missional one. It is a prayer to accomplish His mission, which is dying for the sins of His chosen. God’s glory would be displayed in an act of love to free His people from sin, so that they could gain their joy by worshipping and knowing the one true God for eternity. As pastor John Piper writes, *“His demand for supreme praise is His demand for our supreme happiness.”* Atheist Ayn Rand once said that, *“Admiration is the rarest and best of pleasures.”* If this is true then what we admire is important, and the scriptures tell us that God is worthy of supreme admiration/praise (**Psalms 16:11; 147:1**). Jesus secures this glory as an act of love on the cross for our own sake (**Romans 5:8**). Therefore Jesus’ prayer for glory is ultimately a missional prayer for our joy and pleasure, because without His death, we would not be made worshippers in Spirit and in truth (**John 4:24**).

Not only do we see Jesus’ intention here, but we also see that through His obedience, we are given eternal life, which is defined as an intimate knowing of the only true God (v. 2-3), and we see that this glory is a glory that was with Jesus before time began. This is the culmination of an eternal plan before the universe existed. God knew this plan before creation, and before the fall of humanity. In the planning of God, His glory was so important that the fall was necessary. WOW!

### Jesus Prays for those that Follow Him (John 17:6-19)

Jesus goes on to pray for His disciples, and to explain how they have come to know God through His manifested glory (**John 1:9** cf. **Hebrews 1:1-3**). It is also important to note that His prayer here is not for the world, but for those that have been chosen to realize who He is, and what He came to do. Everyone else is blind in their rejection of God, and only open to their own devices whether they are personal, political or religious. Jesus makes it known that those that are in Him are secure in Him (**John 17:12**). If God chose us, we do not choose out. We are secure in His grace. He prays for three things. **First**, that His disciples would remain unified as He and His Father are unified in purpose<sup>1</sup> (**John 17:11**). **Secondly**, that the disciples would have His joy. This complements His desire for His glory in the above verses. Here is praying that His followers would appropriate the reality of their salvation, and begin to see their lives crafted in Him, so that they would glorify Him, and in so doing, would gain much joy in their lives. **Thirdly**, that they’d have a proper relationship with the world (John 17:15-16), and **Fourthly**, that they would be sanctified (Set apart) in His truth, the word (**John 17:17-19**).

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<sup>1</sup> The unity here is not the same as John 10:30 which is unity in being. Here we have a unity in purpose. We do not gain a oneness with the eternal one (Buddhist Concept).

### Jesus Prays for The World and Future Believers (John 17:20-26)

Jesus didn't stop with His present; He continued to pray for us too! He prays that they'd be one "*Even as we are one*" (**John 17:21-22**). He anticipated that the church would be built, and that we'd be in need of unity, "*To let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me*" (**John 17:23**). It is in this unity that we come to really know God by seeing His glory (Acted out in the body of believers), and realizing His extreme love for the world (**John 17:24**). Jesus ends His prayer by praying that He would continue to illuminate the world with the knowledge of who God is, and of His love, even though they continue not to know Him. He is truly a missional God, with a heart of love for the world that rejects Him.

### **...to the Heart**

Jesus' prayer isn't for us to fondle and not be moved by it to act in concert with His mission here on earth! We are called by God, saved from our sins, empowered to live the life He lived in obedience to the will of His Father, so that the world (Nations) would know God through Christ, and that their joy would be made full through a perfecting knowledge of who God is.

**For Further Reading:** "*The New Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of John*" William Barclay; "*The Gospel of John*," F.F. Bruce; "*The New Testament Commentary: The Gospel of John*," William Hendriksen; "*Preaching the Word; John: That You May Believe*," R. Kent Hughes; "*The NIV Application Commentary: John*," Gary M. Burge; "*The Pillar NT Commentary: The Gospel According to John*," D.A. Carson; "*The Word Biblical Commentary on John*" George R. Beasley-Murray

**Next Weeks Verses: John 18:1-11**