

## **HONOR JESUS**

John 17:1-8, 20-26

We live in a world today that is characterized by people who are constantly criticizing others and finding faults with everything. In fact, during the last several years we invented a new word that describes what is happening. Have you heard the word “dissing” used on TV or seen it in print? It’s a new “slang word” that simply means “being disrespectful.” This is the opposite of showing or giving honor to someone. The first commandment of the Ten that deals with relationships with other people is the commandment to honor our parents. Just based on my observations with most children is that in the parent-child relationship, there is a lot of “dissing” going on. We also see this in the political arena and it has been going on there for as long as anyone remembers. It happens in spite of people using terminology such as “the honorable senator from wherever.”

When such dishonor is shown in relationship to various things related to worship practices, it is termed blasphemy. We see a lot of this happening in today’s world with regard to the Lord Jesus. The correct response that the world should show in gratitude for the salvation that He made possible is to honor Him. When that does not happen it is because they do not know Him nor His Father Who sent Him to die for the sin and sins of the world.

### Honor Jesus for Completing God’s Work – 17:1-5

<sup>1</sup>Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, <sup>2</sup>even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. <sup>3</sup>“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. <sup>4</sup>“I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. <sup>5</sup>“Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. John 17:1-5 (NASB95)

Jesus was responsible for our having the concept of God as our Heavenly Father. In the Old Testament period we find mainly the idea of God as king and judge. It took the life of Jesus to show us the Father-side of God.

Once again Jesus spoke of “the hour.” In seven different places in the gospel of John we find such references. All of history pointed to this hour when the Son of God would die for the sin of the world. This was the time predicted in the Garden of Eden, when the serpent would bruise the heel of the Seed of the woman as the Seed of the woman crushed the head of the serpent. This is the hour (time) from which all time and eternity are referenced.

As I read this last sentence, I am struck by the audaciousness of it. I originally wrote that statement in March of 1985. I don’t know if this is something I read or “made up.” However, if that is a true statement, then our calendar should have its “starting date” at the time Jesus was crucified. The actual starting date of the Gregorian Calendar (GC) we are using is thought to be around four BC which would put the time of the crucifixion around AD 30 (since Jesus was about 33 and a half years old). Consider this, if we were following the “new” calendar, then this present year would be 1984 rather than 2014. We are just now seeing the fruition of the kind of “government” intrusion and attempts to control our lives as was “predicted” in George Orwell’s novel titled *1984*. While we did not see this overt and blatant overreach of “those in power” come about in the (GC) year 1984, we are certainly seeing it now in the (GC) year 2014. If the true calendar were actually the “new” calendar referenced from the Crucifixion, then we would all be amazed at the coincidence of the timing of the book title and the times in which we live. This is probably just coincidental that he chose that date or maybe that audacious statement has

some merit.

You may recall the near hysteria that gripped people at the end of the twentieth century (with the approach of the [GC] year 2000) since many believed that something “ominous” was going to happen. Nothing overtly significant happened as a result of the calendar change. However, I would be watchful as we approach the end of the second millennium anniversary of the death of Christ which will be around the (GC) year of 2030. Enough of such speculations.

Jesus first prayed for Himself that He would be “glorified.” That was not a selfishly motivated prayer because His ultimate purpose in being glorified was so that He (Jesus) would be able to bring glory to God the Father. This objective reflects the very conduct of Jesus’ life on earth. All He did was with the intent of bringing glory to His Father. Just as the “Model Prayer” begins with “Hallowed be Thy Name,” so must everything to which we set out to do begin with that intent and end with that outcome.

We have a vague idea of what being glorified means, however, I’m not sure that we can grasp the full meaning of this idea. The root word in the Greek is *doxa* from which we get the word “doxology.” It carries with it the ideas of honor, dignity, being praise worthy, beauty, splendor, majesty and awesomeness.

We understand that Jesus would eventually be restored to the situation that He had before taking on humanity and that would indeed be glorious. Matthew Henry argues that Jesus was asking that He be glorified in this world so that He could glorify (bring glory to) the Father (notice the word “now” at the beginning of verse five).

How would this glorification of the Son happen? Think about all the awesome and marvelous things that happened in conjunction with the events that would follow starting immediately after this prayer was concluded. For example, when they came to arrest Jesus that evening they were so startled when they came upon Him and knew it was Jesus that their immediate reaction was to fall backwards when He spoke to them and said “I am [He].” We also know that eventually Judas confessed that Jesus was innocent and sealed that confession by taking his own life. Other awesome happenings that rendered honor to Who Jesus is was the dream of the wife of the judge, the declaration of Pilate that he found no fault in Jesus, the sun was darkened, the veil in the temple was torn, and there was an earthquake. You can add to all this the crown that He was made to wear, the inscription that Pilate put on the cross that He was the King of the Jews, the testimony of the thief and the forgiveness Jesus requested for those who crucified Him. All this was capped off by the Resurrection.

How would Jesus (being glorified by all that was happening) bring glory to the Father on the earth? Briefly look at verse four and we see that this objective was achieved by Jesus accomplishing all that the Father sent Him to do. Now let’s redirect our attention to verse two where we see how this was accomplished.

The means by which God the Father would be glorified would be that eternal life was made available to all humanity as a result of the death of Christ on the cross. Christ was “bruised” for our iniquity and in this process He crushed the head of the serpent and broke the power that Satan had as the prince of the power of the air and thus redeemed mankind for all who would receive that redemption by faith.

In this passage we get some idea of the concept of “eternal life.” We see that eternal life is related to knowing God. Jesus did not say to “know about,” but to “know.” The difference in “knowing about” and “knowing” is very clear when you start thinking about people you know versus those that you just know about. To know a person you have to spend time with that person and find out how he thinks and how he approaches life. It is more than just something

superficial. Another word that closely fits the relationship involved in “knowing” is the word commune. We can commune with God only on a spiritual basis. For this reason one must be born again so that our spiritual nature is alive to God for the purpose of communing with God.

Matthew Henry stated it this way.

*“The great end which the Christian religion sets before us, and that is, eternal life, the happiness of an immortal soul in the vision and fruition of an eternal God. This he was to reveal to all, and secure to all that were given him. By the gospel, life and immortality are brought to light, are brought to hand, a life which transcends this as much in excellency as it does in duration. The sure way of attaining this blessed end, which is, by the right knowledge of God and Jesus Christ.”*

The second part of this prayer of Jesus was involved in praying for the band of disciples He would be leaving behind.

### Honor Jesus Through Obedience – 17:6-8

<sup>6</sup>“I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. <sup>7</sup>“Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; <sup>8</sup> for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received *them* and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me. John 17:6-8 (NASB95)

Jesus showed us the essence of God. He said “I have manifested your name.” He showed them (and us) the “nature” of God. Jesus had a good, complimentary word for His disciples for they had kept the word of God. They received the words of Jesus as from God.

Jesus prayed a very specific prayer on behalf of His followers and not for the world at large. Those who are followers of Jesus have made Him Lord of their lives; consequently, these belong not only to Jesus but also to God. Jesus is the Way to God.

Jesus made an observation that He was no longer “in the world” but His disciples were still in the world. Therefore, they needed help because of the world. The world is the enemy of the cross and the cross is the way that we have been commanded to follow. The world would try to dissuade us from the way of the cross because it does not make sense to “win by losing” to “live by dying.”

In verses 11-16, Jesus continued to pray for His disciples who would be “in the world” that they would be protected. Protection would be needed since the world would hate them and persecute them because they held to and were obedient to the word of God. Jesus did not request that His follower be taken out of the world but that they be set apart or sanctified through the truth of the word of God. In living their lives in accordance with the principles of the Kingdom of God, they would bring glory to God by bearing the fruit of the Spirit, the fruit of grace and the fruit of righteousness. This is the means by which the Holy Spirit continues the work of Christ through the Church. In verses 17-19, He prayed for their purity.

Jesus did not limit His prayer request to the first group of disciples, but He included all that would follow after Him in all ages.

### Honor Jesus Through Unity – 17:20-23

<sup>20</sup>“I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; <sup>21</sup> that they may all be one; even as You, Father, *are* in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. <sup>22</sup>“The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; <sup>23</sup> I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. John 17:20-23 (NASB95)

Jesus had prayed for His followers to have protection and purity. The next petition was for unity. After having been set apart from the world while still in the world, one of the key factors for success in what they were called to do is to have unity among themselves. We also need to be of one accord and one mind. If we are functioning with the mindset of the world and

the old nature, then unity is hardly possible. This objective of unity is made possible by Christ giving to us the glory which God the Father had given to God the Son.

What is that glory? The answer is found in the first seven words of verse 23: "I in them and You in Me." What was it that set Jesus' life apart from the lives of other people? First was that He was born of the Spirit of God and not the seed of Adam. Second was that He was empowered by the Spirit of God for His public ministry that began when the Spirit descended upon Him. Third was that He did only the will of the Father which was accomplished by following the leading of the Holy Spirit in everything. All of these things that brought glory to Jesus' life are available to those who will repent and believe and then trust and obey. This will bring to us a measure of the same glory in this life and will allow us (in the future) to see and participate in the glory that Christ has in heaven.

The work of the Kingdom of God is hindered if everyone is not pulling in the same direction. It is a sad commentary when churches spend more time criticizing each other than criticizing the work of the devil. The only unity that has ever worked or will ever work in the future in that which is based on the person of Jesus. If we start adding other things, then disunity is the likely result.

The Puritan preacher Thomas Brooks wrote: "Discord and division become no Christian. For wolves to worry the lambs is no wonder, but for one lamb to worry another, this is unnatural and monstrous." Unless the church wakes up to the necessity of unity in the body of Christ then our efforts at evangelism will have only modest results because people will not believe that Jesus is the Messiah come from God.

#### Honor Jesus Now and Forever – 17:24-26

<sup>24</sup> "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. <sup>25</sup> "O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; <sup>26</sup> and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." John 17:24-26 (NASB95)

Jesus had already prayed for the disciples (then and now) to be protected, purified, unified, and now He requested that they be participants in His glory. The specific request was that they may **see** His glory. My initial thoughts were that He literally meant to gaze upon with our eyes. Then I thought of a similar (English) word that Jesus used when He was teaching Nicodemus about the Kingdom Heaven in the third chapter of John's gospel. In John 3:3 "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot **see** the kingdom of God." The meaning of the word used in John 3:3 is more along the lines of having a mental perception of a concept, while the word used in verse 24 is used more often in terms of "viewing" but can also mean to perceive something.

Most commentaries lean toward interpreting the idea of "being with Me" in terms of our going to heaven at the end of our lives or at the end of time. There is a definite possibility that what is meant is that when we have the mind of Christ and when we are in agreement with Him and we are walking in His way, that we will be able to more fully perceive His glory that He had prior to that glory being laid aside when He took on the form of humanity in His first advent.

The prayer concluded with an affirmation of His completion of the mission to make the Father known to those who were called and responded by coming to Jesus and accepting His message of salvation. The result would be that the love of God would be in shed abroad in the hearts of those who repent and believe, those who trust and obey.