

Christ Glorified in Us

A Sermon

by

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And I am glorified in them (John 17:10).

As we consider these words it will be well for us also to bear in mind verse 18 which reads: ‘As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.’

In dividing up this section which runs from verses 6-19, we indicated, you remember, that there are two main divisions. Our Lord is here praying for his own immediate followers. First of all he gives the reasons why he prays for them, and then he brings his specific petitions to his Father’s notice. At the moment we are dealing with the reasons which he adduces for praying for his own, and for a number of studies we have been considering the first reason, which is given in verses 6-8. He prays for these people because they are who and what they are, and we have worked that out in detail.

We come now to our Lord’s second reason for praying for them. He prays for them because of what they are meant to do, because of their calling and their task; and that is stated here in this phrase at the end of verse 10. Having described them, having enumerated the things that characterize them, he now reminds his followers of their function and their business in this world of time, and he puts that in the remarkable phrase which we are now considering. He says that as his Father had sent him into the

world, even so he has sent them into the world (v. 18). God, we have seen, in sending the Son, had a specific object in view, that the Son should do certain things, and the greatest of them all was to glorify his Father. Now here our Lord says that he has sent, and does send, his people into the world, in exactly the same way as God had sent him, and the great task and function of his people is to glorify him.

Now our Lord said many things about those of us who are Christians, but I am sure you will agree that this particular statement is one of the most amazing—indeed staggering—of all, and it is one which is obviously full of real significance for us. Observe, for instance, the sequence in which this statement comes, and the context in which we find it in this chapter. Our Lord himself, he tells us here in this prayer, glorifies his Father. There in the heavens is the Father, God in his ultimate being and essence, and the Son of God has come into the world to glorify him. That is the first step.

Then the next step is that the Holy Spirit has been sent in order that he may glorify the Son. We are shown this abundantly in the chapters leading up to this seventeenth chapter, which you remember starts like this: ‘These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said...’ and then follows the prayer. The phrase ‘these words’ refers to chapters 14, 15 and 16, in which you have that great teaching about the Holy Spirit, his person and his work. It can all be summed up like this: he does not speak of himself or about himself. The peculiar function and purpose of the Holy Spirit is to reveal, to manifest and therefore to glorify the Son.

But you notice that it does not stop at that. The next step is this phrase that we are looking at here. The result of the coming of the Holy Spirit and his entering into the believer, and into the believer’s life, is that the believer also glorifies the Son. ‘I am glorified in them,’ he says, and he sends them to do this specific work. Thus at once we find here that those of us who are Christians are brought into this very sequence—the sequence which contains the blessed Holy Trinity. Everything is for the

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glory of God. The Son has come, he speaks, he lives, he dies, he does everything to that end. The Spirit glorifies the Son and we, as the result of the operation of the Spirit, also glorify him. It is, indeed, a staggering thought and conception.

Again, you can look at it from the standpoint of the Lord Jesus Christ himself being glorified. You remember that at the beginning of the prayer we found that he asked that his Father would glorify him. 'Father,' he says, 'the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.' The teaching is, therefore, that the Father does glorify the Son. The Son is the center, the Father glorifies him from heaven, and, as we have said, the Holy Spirit also glorifies him. He has been sent to do so, and we read in those early chapters of Acts how Peter in his preaching explains clearly that that is the work of the Holy Spirit. We find it put still more specifically in chapter 5, where the apostle says, 'We are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him' (Acts 5:32). So here we see the Son in the center with the light and the radiance of the Father upon him to glorify him; then we see the light of the Holy Spirit, too, focused upon him, revealing him in his glory and in all his splendor. But the remarkable, almost incredible, thing is that you and I also are called to do exactly the same thing: to glorify the Son.

Here is something that really does come to us in a most amazing way, that the one who is glorified by the almighty Father in heaven, and by the blessed Holy Spirit, with all his power, should also be glorified by us, and through us. Our Lord says this quite specifically, and it is something which is taught concerning the Christian right through the New Testament. Take, for instance, the way in which the apostle Peter puts it in his first epistle where he makes precisely this same point: 'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people'—why?—'that ye should show forth the praises'—the virtues, the excellencies—'of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light' (1 Peter 2:9). That is Peter's description of the

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Christian, that is what we are here for. Our business is to manifest, to make a display of, the glories and the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And the apostle Paul in Ephesians 3:10 says very much the same thing: 'To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God'—it is by means of, or through, the church, that these principalities and powers are really going to be given a view and an insight into God's wisdom. In a sense it seems ridiculous that these bright angelic spirits who are constantly in God's presence, could be helped in any way by the church, but it is through the church that they come to know this manifold, many-sided wisdom of God. That is the teaching, and therefore it brings us, at once, face to face with one of the most remarkable definitions of the Christian that is to be found even in the realm of Scripture itself.

Now we must pause for a moment at this point, just so that we may consider the privilege of being a Christian. Let us look at the fact that you and I are put into a position in which Christ can be glorified in us—for that is precisely what we are told. But how sadly lacking we are in this realization of our privilege. Everybody is interested in privileges; the newspapers are full of it. People are fighting for them, they will spend fortunes in order to get a certain privilege and position, or to hold on to one. But is there anything that the world has ever known which is in any way comparable to this? All the pomp and greatness and ceremony of the world just vanish into utter insignificance by the side of what is said here about any and every Christian: namely that to us is given this astounding privilege of glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ, that he, the Son of God, the effulgence and brightness of the Father's face, should be glorified in us.

Or think of it for a moment from the standpoint of our responsibility as Christians. Whether we are fully aware of it or not, the fact is that the Lord says here that he is glorified in his people. Anybody, therefore, who professes and claims the name of Christian is in this sense a custodian of the name, the glories and

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the virtues of the Lord Jesus Christ, and through him of God himself. That is the responsibility of a Christian. An ambassador from any country is always conscious of the fact that he has a tremendous responsibility because he is the representative by whom his country is going to be judged. And to us is given the privilege and the responsibility of being the representatives of the Son of God in this world. We stand for him, people judge him by what they see in us, and they are perfectly entitled to do so because we are the ones through whom and in whom he is glorified. Do we, I wonder, always realize this?

But then let us also look at it like this: there is surely nothing, it seems to me, that so helps us to rise to the height of our great calling as the realization of this very thing. As I have said before, our main trouble as Christians is that we do not realize the truth about our position. Our further trouble is that we do not realize who and what we are, what we are meant to be, and what we are meant to do. Now the way in which the New Testament teaches sanctification and holiness is just to hold these things before us constantly, and it seems to me that the ‘holiness’ teaching which concentrates on the experiences which one receives is completely false. The New Testament comes and says, do you realize who you are? Do you realize that Christ is glorified in you? Do you realize that you are his representative here on earth and that all this responsibility and privilege is yours?

Then, having told us that, the Bible puts certain questions to us. It says, in view of this can you possibly continue being slack as a Christian? Can you be negligent in your Christian duties? Can you take these things lightly and loosely, scarcely ever giving them a thought? The man who is representing his family or his nation among other people is very careful to remind himself of that fact; he is always careful to remind himself, daily, of the responsibility that is upon him and of the consequences of his possible failure. I wonder how often we stop and just say to ourselves, ‘Now because I am a Christian I am going to be a representative of Jesus Christ. Christ is going to be glorified in me; that is my business. I cannot afford to be slack, or to take

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these things for granted, nor can I afford to give my time and energy and my spare time to things which I know are of no ultimate value.’ Surely if we realized this it would immediately correct any tendency to indolence or slackness in our Christian lives.

Or look at it in this way. We are told here by the Lord himself, ‘I am glorified in them’—they are the people who are expressing my glories, my excellencies and my virtues. But let us look at them, miserable, uncertain about themselves and their position, afraid, perhaps, that certain of their friends or their superiors should know that they are Christians at all, apologizing almost for it—is that not the picture which we far too often present, without enthusiasm, without zeal? We see other people getting excited even about such things as football matches, shouting for their side, wearing colors so that everybody may know which side they support. We see people boasting about all kinds of things in this life and world. Yet when we come to our Christianity and Christian profession, oh, how often we lack enthusiasm and energy, and pride in being what we are. Instead of proclaiming it to the whole world, we conceal it or are uncertain about it and even present the aspect of being defeated, and so on. If this is true of us, then surely there is only one explanation for it and that is that we do not realize that Christ is glorified in us. We have never realized the truth about ourselves, nor the privilege and the responsibility of our exalted position. We have never realized truly that we are the children of God and joint heirs with Christ—the children of the heavenly King. But the moment we do realize this, it becomes a corrective to us.

In the same way, that is surely how to conquer sin, and to overcome temptation and evil. If only we would remind ourselves in the moment of temptation that we are the representatives of Christ, and that it is through us that his glories are to be manifested. Is there anything that is so likely to make us withstand and avoid temptation as the realization of this wonderful thing? *That* is how the New Testament calls us to behave, that is what we are to be, worthy of our calling—‘Be ye holy; for I am holy,’ says

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God himself (1 Peter 1:16). This therefore is the thing to which we are called. Christ sends us into the world in order that we may glorify him. Again I ask my question -- are we doing that? Is he being glorified in us? Do people think well and highly of him because they know us and because of the way in which we represent him? I am not surprised that he prayed for his disciples—God knows we need his prayers. He knows the task to which he is sending his people and he knows his people. So he prays to his Father for us, and I thank God that he is interceding on my behalf at the right hand of God's glory at this moment.

How does the Christian glorify Christ? How is it possible for us, evil creatures as we are, to add in any way a kind of glory or luster to his name? The answer is given very freely here in this chapter and indeed everywhere in the New Testament. Our Lord has already been dealing with one way in which we glorify him: we do so by believing in him. He says here about these people that they have glorified him already because they recognized who he was. The world in general did not, nor did the Pharisees, who called him 'this fellow', 'the carpenter', and 'the son of Joseph and Mary'. The apostle Paul tells us that the princes of this world did not recognize the Lord of glory, for if they had, they would not have crucified him (1 Cor 2:8). Because he was born in humiliation, because he came in a particular way, the great and noble and the mighty of the world did not recognize him.

Therefore they did not glorify him, or worship him, nor did they praise him. It was his own people who recognized that he was the Son of God. And you and I, by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, glorify him. To recognize him as the incarnate Son of God, to believe that he has come into this world in the flesh and has lived amongst us in the likeness of sinful flesh—that, in and of itself, is to glorify him.

But we go beyond that. It means that we recognize also why he came and what he has done in this world. To glorify Christ, says the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians, is to recognize in him the wisdom and the power of God. To the Jews, he says, he is a stumbling block, and to the Greeks he is foolishness, but 'unto

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them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God' (1 Cor. 1:24). This means that the Lord Jesus Christ is God's way of salvation. And the way in which he desires to be glorified by men is that they should recognize that he is the way in which God is bringing men to a knowledge of himself, reconciling them unto himself, and preparing for himself this special people. So anybody who recognizes that is glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ, and this includes, too, recognizing the love that made him do it all, the love that brought him into this world and made him suffer the contradiction of sinners against himself, and, above all, the love that took him freely and readily to the cross that he might die for us and purchase our pardon and forgiveness and make us one with God.

All that, but especially our recognition of the meaning of the cross, is a part of the way in which we glorify the Lord. This is why so many of our hymns deal with it: 'In the cross of Christ I glory'. 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,' says Paul in Galatians 6:14, and the hymn echoes it. Or, again,

When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Isaac Watts

And I pour contempt on everything else that I have ever gloried in. The cross is the only thing in which we should glory; I recognize what is happening there and I know that the Son of God has come down to earth and has come down to that cross, in order that I might be forgiven and that I might be made a child of God. In believing in him in this way I glorify him, and it is my desire that I should do so.

Or, again, we glorify him by asserting that he is everything to us. He has chosen to save mankind, says Paul again, in

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1 Corinthians 1, and our only response to that must be ‘He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord’ (1 Cor 1:31). The Christian, by definition, is a man who says, ‘I am nothing, I am what I am entirely by the grace of God.’ He is a man who is always flying to Christ, and one who disclaims anything in and of himself. He has come to an end of his self-reliance, the world has been crucified to him and he has been crucified to the world; he glories in the cross and in Christ alone.

But obviously this implies that we glorify the Lord Jesus Christ by telling other people about him, by pointing them to his glory and by trying to bring them also to glorify him and to glory in his cross. Now that is where verse 18 is so important: ‘As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.’ And he has sent us into the world, that we might tell the world about him. Acts chapter 4 brings this out very clearly, and it is equally striking in chapter 3. We read the story of Peter and John going up to the Temple, and there seated at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple is the lame beggar. Then we are told that Peter and John fastened their eyes upon him and said: ‘Look on us,’ and when he looked at them Peter said, ‘Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.’ And the man, we are told, went with them into the Temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. Here the crowd gathered, full of curiosity, and were on the point of worshipping the apostles, but Peter turned to them and said, ‘Why marvel ye at this? Or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we have made this man to walk?’ Why look on us? It is not us, but, ‘The God of our fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus...And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all’ (vv 12-13, 16). Peter pointed them to Christ and preached Christ to them.

And the apostle did exactly the same thing when they were brought before the Council—you will find the record in the fourth chapter of Acts. They just looked at those religious leaders and

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said it was nothing that they had done, ‘for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved’ (v. 12). They pointed to him, they preached the name of Jesus, and then they continued and said, ‘We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.’ They were always proclaiming Christ, telling people that he is the Son of God, the anointed of God, the Savior of the world, the one to whom everyone must go if they desire salvation. And thus, of course, the whole time, they were glorifying him, they were holding him up as it were, they were flashing this light on to him, and saying, There he is, look at him, believe in him. They were pointing the whole world to Jesus Christ.

Now that is what we are called upon to do; we are meant to talk to people about the Lord Jesus Christ and to tell them he is the Son of God and that he has come into this world in order to save men and women. We are meant to tell them in the midst of all these exciting discussions about politics and these various other things, that ultimately there is no hope for the individual, or for society, apart from this blessed person. We are meant to tell men exactly why the world is as it is; we are meant to tell them about sin in the human heart and that nobody and nothing can deal with it save the Son of God. That is how we glorify him, by talking about him. We are very ready to talk about our doctors, and to praise the man who cured us when so many failed; we talk about some business which is better than others, or about films and plays and actors and actresses, and a thousand and one other things. We are always glorifying people, the world is full of it, and the Christian is meant to be praising and glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ. Speaking to his Father here in John 17, he says, ‘I have glorified thee’ but the world laughs at me, the world ridicules me, especially my dying upon the cross. My whole reputation is in the hands of these people. Father, he says, look upon them, keep them, I am glorified in them, they are my representatives in the world. If they do not speak about me there, who will? If they do not praise me, who can? I am glorified only in them.

And that obviously leads to the next point, which is that we

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glorify him by being what we are. Or, to put it another way, we glorify him in that we are living proofs and examples of the truth of what he has said about us. I think that this is tremendously important. I rather like to think of the Christian in this way, and I apply this test to myself. Unless I am giving the impression that I am what I am only because of the Lord Jesus Christ, to that extent I am failing as a Christian. I mean that as a Christian, I am to be the kind of person of whom people say, 'What is it about this man? We cannot explain him.' And they will never be able to explain him until they discover that the secret of this man is that Christ is in him.

I wonder whether this is how people think of us. I wonder whether we can be adequately explained in terms of temperament—that we are undoubtedly the sort of people who would always be interested in religion. If so, we are not glorifying Christ because you can be religious without being a Christian at all; you can be interested in religion and in God and still not be a Christian. Religion can be explained quite easily apart from Christ, and, by definition, the Christian is the man who can only be explained in terms of Christ.

Or can we be explained in terms of our training? People say, 'Oh yes, it is their tradition, they have a sense of loyalty to it, and to the Christian church. There is no difficulty about explaining what they do, they have been brought up to it.' Well, if they can explain us like that, we are not Christian, in this sense because Christ is not being glorified in us.

Or can they explain us in terms of self-government? 'He is rather striking,' they say. 'He has his own moral code, and we expect him to do the things he does, and to refrain from doing others.' Now, if I can be explained like that or in any one of those ways, I say that to that extent I am not glorifying Christ.

No, we glorify Christ in this way. People meeting with us say, 'What is it about them? Our explanations and our categories are of no value, there is something else, there is something mysterious, there is another thing.' That is what they should be saying. The Lord Jesus Christ when he was here in this world, by

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being what he was, glorified God. People were baffled by him. They saw his miracles and the effect was almost invariably that they glorified God. They said, 'We have never seen things in this way before.' By doing what he did, he glorified God. And you and I are to be exactly like that. We are to be such people that the moment people meet us they think about Christ. We are told a very significant thing in the fourth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. The Council that was trying the apostles could not understand them. They observed that they were ignorant men and yet the fact was that they had performed a miracle and were speaking in a manner which could not be accounted for. And then we are told that they took note of the fact that they had been with Jesus—it seemed to be the only explanation. And that is the test of a Christian; he cannot be explained apart from Jesus Christ, and thereby he glorifies him.

But we must go beyond this. We glorify him by saying what he has done to us, and by what he has made of us. We are the manifestation of his power. We glorify him by showing that we have been separated from the world. 'I pray for them: I pray not for the world,' says our Lord, and the mere fact that you and I have been separated, set apart from the world, is in and of itself a proof of the power of Christ, the Son of God. There is nothing that can really bring a man out of the world and its mentality but the power of Christ; but he does, he separates us and he makes us different. The man, therefore, who is different is the man who is glorifying Christ. Now I know perfectly well that when I say that, I am saying something that the modern Christian, speaking generally, does not like. The modern Christian has for some time been going out of his way to be as much like the world as he can. His great idea is that he can affect the mannerisms of the particular society to which he belongs, and incidentally be a Christian. But, though he thinks that he is bearing a marvelous testimony, it is a little difficult to find out whether or not he is a Christian.

Now the New Testament always emphasizes the exact opposite. It teaches that the Christian is a man who strikes you at once as being different. He has something about him that nobody

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else has; he has got something of Christ himself about him, with none of this modern self-assertion and confidence and pride which so often pass for personality. No, the Christian belongs to the meek and lowly Jesus; he belongs to one, who, though he was the prince of glory, had no place, on this earth, where he could lay his head. He was the one of whom it is said, 'A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench' (Is 42.3). The Christian has been separated and taken out of the world with its mentality and outlook. He stands by the side of Christ, and there is something of the radiance and glory of his Master and Lord and Savior about him.

But the Father has not only separated us in general, he has made us spiritually alive. Whereas those who are not Christians are not interested in spiritual things, the Christian is. The world is not interested in the affairs of the soul at all and tries to avoid considering them. The world is spiritually dead, dead in trespasses and sins and it regards spiritual things as utterly boring. It wants to enjoy the world, it is out for the glittering prizes that the world has to offer. But the Christian has been made spiritually alive. He is very concerned about the affairs of the soul, they are the things that come first in his life and in all his thinking. How then has this happened? It is the power of Christ that has come upon him: 'You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins' (Eph 2:1). We have been quickened together with Christ and raised up with him and he has given us a new life and a new understanding, a new outlook upon everything. And thus, by manifesting in our lives the power of Christ, we are glorifying him—if I may use such a term—we are adding luster to his name for all who know us and come into contact with us. And we are what we are because the power of Christ has taken hold of us. We are different, we are changed, we have become new men, and the extent to which we give that impression is the extent to which we are glorifying Christ.

You will see that obviously I have not exhausted this subject. The questions with which we need to confront ourselves and by which we must examine and test ourselves are these. Is he being glorified in me? Am I representing my Father? Am I

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testifying in various ways about him? Not that I become a busybody just buttonholing people in a mechanical manner and asking them, 'Are you saved?' No, but testifying for him by singing his praises and by doing it with the wisdom of a serpent and yet being as gentle as a dove, and, yes, always pointing to him. And I glorify him especially by being what I am, an enigma and a problem to all who do not know Christ, because my life can, more and more, be described in this way: 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me' (Gal 2:20), or 'By the grace of God I am what I am' (1 Cor 15:10). Oh the privilege of this position, the responsibility of this position and the high calling to which Christ has called us, that he himself should be glorified in us.

Date I finished reading this sermon: _____

PERSONAL NOTES & APPLICATION