

Exegesis

Vs. 22-23 – “And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”

When Jesus speaks of the "glory" given to him and now given to his disciples, he is *not* referring to the divine preexistent "glory" of vs. 5; this is a glory that no human being can attain. And, at this point, the Lord had not yet fully regained his former glory, so he must be referring to another kind of glory (cf. 17:5).¹ The only thing that makes sense is that when he says "glory," Jesus is referring to the type bestowed upon disciples when they are "kept" in the "name" of the "Holy Father" (see notes vs. 11b-12). Just as the Son remained *unified* with God by staying *faithful* to his Father's "words" (vs. 14), and as the apostles remained in *fellowship* with the Trinity by *abiding* in Christ's word (cf. 15:7), so disciples of every age are "made perfect in one" as they *stay* in the disciples' "word" (vs. 20; cf. Eph. 2:10; Heb. 10:14).² By doing this, believers end up living like the first believers who were, themselves, trying to live as Christ lived (cf. 1 Cor. 11:1). And such believers are characterized by the sort of "glory" that was characteristic of Jesus—e.g., lowly service (cf. 13:12-17), self-sacrificial love (cf. 13:34-35), hated by the world (cf. 15:18-20), "in" the world but not "of the world" (cf. 17:14-15), and so on.

To be clear, this 'glory' is not the sort held by those who are *served* but by those who *serve* (cf. Mar. 10:35-45; Lu. 22:27). It is a glory that comes from selflessness, from putting others before ourselves, just as Christ did. This should humble us and remind us of the true nature of Christ's glory.³ For us to possess Christ's glory is to have the *mindset* of the Son of God, "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a *servant* [emphasis added], and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he *humbled* [emphasis added] himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:6-8). Thus, all Christians should pursue the same glory Christ epitomized on the cross: *advancement through*

¹ Köstenberger (2008), p. 498.

² Carson (1991), p. 569, "*Glory* [author's emphasis] commonly refers to the manifestation of God's character or person in a revelatory context; Jesus has mediated the glory of God, personally to his first followers and through them to those who believe on account of their message."

³ Morris (1995), p. 650, "That is to say, just as his true glory was to follow the path of lowly service culminating in the cross, so for them the true glory lay in the path of lowly service wherever it might lead them.... We have seen often in this Gospel that for Jesus the cross is the true glory. Elsewhere it is recorded that he called on his followers to take up their cross in following him (Luke 9:23). For them, too, the *way* of the cross is the *way* to true glory [emphasis added]."

debasement, dignity through ignominy, and glorification through humiliation (cf. Mat. 23:12; 1 Cor. 1:26-31).

And once again, as in vs. 21, to “be made perfect in one” is *not* an end in itself.⁴ It is so that “the world may know that [the Father] has sent [the Son], and has loved [the world], as [God] has loved [Christ].” The *purpose* of our *unification* is not *isolation* from the world but *evangelization* of the world. As Köstenberger puts it, “Secure in the Father's love, the same love with which he loved his Son, believers will be able to express and proclaim the Father's love to a dark and hostile world.” Just as the Father loves the Son and extends that to believers, God offers his love to the world. And the more the Church is aligned with the Scriptures, the more in sync she will be with the heart of God, which aches for unbelievers. The Lord's words here are “breathtakingly extravagant...[and] it is hard to imagine a more compelling evangelist appeal.”⁵ Being perfected by continued fellowship with the Triune God, the disciples mature in their unity with God, and, as a consequence, the world learns about *true* love (cf. 1 Jn. 4:8). By seeing believers remain in accordance with God's name, unbelievers discover that the Creator so longed for reconciliation with a lost world “that he gave his only begotten Son,” and, should they put their faith in Jesus Christ, they will “not perish, but have everlasting life” (3:16).

Vs. 24 – “Father, I will that they also, whom thou has given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou has given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” This is the *final* petition in Jesus' parting prayer. And the Lord asks that believers “be with [him] where [he is].” Earlier, the Lord told the Eleven that he was going away “to prepare a place” for them and that, when he returns, he will “receive [them] unto [himself]; that where [he is], there [they] may be also” (13:3-4). But now we learn that the apostles were not the only ones with “a place” prepared for them. The promise of Jesus' second coming and eternal fellowship has been extended to believers of *every* generation. All Christians will get to “behold [the Son's] glory” when he comes back, and when that occurs, “we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 Jn. 3:2). Seeing Christ's return will be so transformative for believers, both living and dead, that though they were born “corruptible,” they will be made incorruptible, never to sin again; and though they were born “mortal,” they will “put on immortality,” never to die again (1 Cor. 15:51-52).

When the Lord said, “that they may behold my glory, which thou has given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world,” he is referencing the preexistent “glory” of vs. 5.⁶ The

⁴ Klink (2016), p. 724, “The point here rather is a unity or “in-one-ness” that is established in the unity controlled by, defined by, and shared by the unity of the Father and the Son.”

⁵ Carson (1991), p. 569.

⁶ Köstenberger (2008), p. 499.

glory the Lord had with God "before the world was" one of *love*. In 14:31, Jesus said he wanted "the world" to "know that [he] love[d] the Father;" and now, in 17:24, he says that he's been loved by the Father "before the foundation of the world." Thus, between the Father's love for the Son and the Son's love for the Father is God's love for the world. The most remarkable love story ever told is not about two people but about a loving God for his creation. Though it defies explanation, it's a tale that has invited close examination for generations. As the famed hymn-writer Frederick Lehman wrote in his poem "The Love of God" (1917),

*The love of God is greater far
than tongue or pen can ever tell;
it goes beyond the highest star,
and reaches to the lowest hell.
The wand'ring child is reconciled
by God's beloved Son.
The aching soul again made whole,
and priceless pardon won.*

*O love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure—
the saints' and angels' song.*

*When ancient time shall pass away,
and human thrones and kingdoms fall;
when those who here refuse to pray
on rocks and hills and mountains call;
God's love, so sure, shall still endure,
all measureless and strong;
grace will resound the whole earth round—
the saints' and angels' song.*

*O love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure—
the saints' and angels' song.*

*Could we, with ink the ocean fill,
and were the skies of parchment made;
were ev'ry stalk on earth a quill,
and ev'ryone a scribe by trade;
to write the love of God above
would drain the ocean dry;
nor could the scroll contain the whole,*

though stretched from sky to sky.

*O love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure—
the saints' and angels' song.*

VIDEO DESCRIPTION

Deep Dive: The Gospel of John | Week 76 | John 17:22-24

SPEAKER: Ben Hyrne, Pastor

Sadly, we're getting close to the end of Jesus' parting prayer. But before the Lord says, "amen," he'll hit on two topics that are staples in this chapter: "glory" and being made "one" with God. Christ's glorification is, of course, his crucifixion, and being unified with God means aligning one's life with God's name. So, should a person seek fellowship with God, they will abide by the Scripture, and as a result, they will pursue the glory of Christ, the sort of fame that those who *serve* possess rather than those who are *served*.

But with striking dexterity, the Lord will turn this duet into a trio by adding a third voice: *love*. All three principles—i.e., glory, unity, and love—produce a complete and compelling melody with but one purpose: *the evangelization of the world*. The more the Church is aligned with the Scriptures, the more in sync she will be with God's heart, which aches for unbelievers.

As disciples mature in unity, being perfected by continued fellowship with the Triune God, the world learns about *true* love (cf. 1 Jn. 4:8). In seeing believers remain in accordance with God's name, unbelievers discover that the Creator so longed for reconciliation with a lost world "that he gave his only begotten Son," and, should they put their faith in Jesus Christ, they will "not perish, but have everlasting life" (3:16).

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