

May 24, 2020 (7th Sunday of Easter)

Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35; John 17:1-11

How to Bring Glory to God

INTRODUCTION

1 A Race Against the Disease

A race to develop COVID-19 vaccine is underway at labs across the globe.

- The Chinese company CanSino Biologics, was one of the first coronavirus vaccines to enter early human trials back in March.
- The U.S. firm Moderna announced that its first round of testing of a vaccine were strong enough to move ahead to a second trial.
- The first Canadian clinical trials for a potential COVID-19 vaccine will be led by researchers at Dalhousie University.



Whoever develops a vaccine first will bring glory not only to the institution but to the country.

2 A Race Against the Sin

A final journey to save humans from sin is underway in Jerusalem 2000 years ago. Following the foot washing at Passover, Jesus began to prepare his disciples for his departure.



- He asked them to obey the great love commandment (John 13).
- He promised them the gift of the Holy Spirit (John 14).
- He warned the persecution of the world (John 15).
- Then, he started his farewell prayer (John 17). The main theme of his prayer was to glorify God.

Theme: What does it mean to glorify God? How can we bring glory to our heavenly father?

BODY

1 WE GLORIFY GOD BY ACCOMPLISHING GOD'S WORK

1.1 What are the Works that Jesus Did to Glorify God?

"I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do" (John 17:4, nrsv).

- ① Jesus had glorified the Father through His whole life.
 - He had spent His quiet years of obedience in Nazareth.
 - He had lived life of gratitude and thankfulness to God.
 - He had shown a life of trust in God during trouble.

- ② Now, Jesus glorified God on earth by finishing the works that God gave him to do.
 - That was to offer up His life to pay the debt we could not pay—our sin.
 - Jesus took the sin of the world and allowed Himself to be hung upon the cross.
 - Jesus had willingly gone through suffering of the cross to give us eternal life.

1.2 What are the Works that We Glorify God?

- ① We tend to think God's works as
 - Attending worship services and giving generously from our financial resources
 - Praying regularly and reading Scripture
 - Caring for the needy and loving our neighbors.

- ② We may broaden the meaning of God's work that
 - Researchers work tirelessly to develop a vaccine to treat the novel coronavirus
 - Parents and children manage daily work, home routines, and schoolwork as the COVID-19 pandemic affects their lives
 - Truck drivers are on the road amid a difficult COVID-19 condition.



2 WE GLORIFY GOD BY PRAYING FOR US

2.1 Prayer Reveals Our Nature



- We learn that a person's innermost being is revealed by genuine prayer.
- We are impressed with great prayers in the Bible such as Solomon's prayer (1 Kings 8), Abraham's prayer (Genesis 18), and Moses' prayer (Exodus 32).
- We can see the nature and heart of Jesus in this prayer (John 17).

- Jesus looked upon his suffering as his glory because it was the only way to save people from sin.
- He did not pray, "Sustain your Son," but, "Glorify your Son."
- Jesus asked God to enable him to bear the agony, and to pass through it to the glory.

2.2 Tim Keller on His Rediscovery of Prayer

Tim Keller—the founding pastor of Redeemer's Presbyterian Church, New York—confessed that he re-discovered prayer in the second half of his adult life.

In the fall of 1999, the shadow was intensified as my wife, Kathy, struggled with the effects of Crohn's disease. I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. She asked me to pray with her every night. Every night. She said something like this:

Imagine you were diagnosed with such a lethal condition that the doctor told you that you would die within hours unless you took a particular medicine—a pill every night before going to sleep. Imagine that you were told that you could never miss it or you would die. Would you forget? Would you not get around to it some nights? No—it would be so crucial that you wouldn't forget, you would never miss. Well, if we don't pray together to God, we're not going to make it because of all we are facing. I'm certainly not. We have to pray, we can't let it just slip our minds.



3 WE GLORIFY GOD BY PRAYING FOR OTHER BELIVERS

3.1 Pray for Different Believers

On the eve of their despair, Jesus did not simply pray for himself but for his disciples.

“They were yours, and you gave them to me...” (John 17:6, nrsv)

The disciples of Jesus were quite different from each other.

① On the one hand, there was Simon the Zealot!

- He was a member of a Jewish sect which urged religious freedom in the face of Roman domination.
- Perhaps he was young and a left-wing ideologist.
- He hoped that Jesus would be a political Savior, who would overthrow the unjust rule of Rome.

② On the other hand, there was Matthew (Levi)!

- Matthew was a dishonest tax collector driven by greed.
- He was old and a right-wing realist.
- Perhaps he knew Jesus would not overthrow the unjust rule of Rome.



- It must be difficult for Jesus to pick two opposite persons—young and old, left and right, ideologist and realist—as his closest followers.
- But Jesus chose them because He believed his followers should include opposite characters.
- The believers of Jesus include different ages, political views, and experiences.

3.2 Pray that We May Be One

“Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one” (John 17:11, nrsv).



- The disciples needed the prayer of Jesus and the power of God the Father to protect them from disunity.
- The flesh, the darkness and the evil were so mighty that they could not keep themselves in their own efforts to become one.
- The disciples needed continuing prayer in Jesus each other keeping from division, error, and sin.

“For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places”(Ephesians 6:12, nrsv).

- Christians have spent too much time fighting one another.
- We must pray for unity within denomination, within congregations, and among individual Christians.
- When we think of all the failures and disappointments from other believers, let us remember sweet words for the much-erroring disciples, “Holy Father, protect them!”

CONCLUSION

How can we bring glory to our heavenly father?

- We glorify God by accomplishing God’s work.
- We glorify God by praying for us.
- We glorify God by praying for other believers.

God receives glory not from our own efforts alone but from our reliance upon his protection.

(Psalm 68:34-35, nlt)

34 Tell everyone about God’s power.

*His majesty shines down on Israel;
his strength is mighty in the heavens.*

35 God is awesome in his sanctuary.

The God of Israel gives power and strength to his people.

Praise be to God!