

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

LIFE'S PRAYER —
FOR THE
GLORIFICATION
OF THE
TRIUNE GOD

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Living Stream Ministry

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In this booklet we come to the profound prayer uttered by the Lord in [John 17](#). This prayer is the completing prayer of the Lord's message given in [chapters fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen](#). In order to understand the meaning of His prayer, we must remember the central thought of the message given by the Lord in the previous three chapters. The central thought of that message is rich, deep, and profound. The first aspect of this central thought is that the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, was sent by the Father to be among us. Then He was transfigured from the flesh into the Spirit that He might be able to come into us. In other words, He was transfigured into the Holy Spirit, and He comes into us as the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit comes into us, He comes as the Spirit of reality to make the Lord Jesus real to us in every respect. By doing this, the Lord brings us into the Father and brings the Father into us. This is the mingling of divinity

with humanity. Included in this mingling is the mutual abode. We become the abode to the Triune God, and the Triune God becomes the abode to us. We can abide in the Triune God, and the Triune God can abide in us. This is the central thought of the profound and glorious message given by the Lord in these three chapters. After giving that message, the Lord offered a closing prayer.

What is the subject, the central thought, of this prayer? Although the subject of this prayer depends very much upon the central thought of the preceding message, it is still difficult to discover what this subject is. I spent much time on John 17 without having any idea about the meaning of this prayer. When I was young, I heard that the Lord's prayer in this chapter was for oneness. But oneness, or the unity among the Lord's disciples, is not the subject. Oneness is on the surface. Something deeper and more profound lies beneath the surface, and it is not easy for us to dig it out. John 17 is a deep chapter, and it is difficult to fathom it. How we thank the Lord that gradually, little by little, He has shown us the real meaning, the true significance, the central thought, of His prayer in this chapter.

THE SON TO BE GLORIFIED THAT THE FATHER MAY BE GLORIFIED

The basic concept of the Lord's prayer in John 17 is glorification. In verse 1 the Lord said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You." This is the subject, the central point, of this prayer. If we see the main points of the three previous chapters, we shall be able to understand what it means to have the Son glorified that the Father may be glorified. The Father is to glorify the Son so that the Son may glorify the Father. This is a mutual glorification between the Son and the Father. If the Father will glorify the Son, then the Son will glorify the Father.

As a prayer that follows a message conveys the main point of the message, so the Lord's concluding prayer covers the main point of the message He gave in the preceding three chapters. Keep this in mind, for it will help you to understand this prayer. The main point of the Lord's message in John 14 through 16 was that the Son may be glorified so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. In what way is the Father to be glorified in the Son? Through the organism of the vine tree. As we have seen, the organism of

the vine tree is for the propagating and spreading of life, that is, for the multiplication and reproduction of life, and also for the expression of the Triune God. When the Triune God is propagated, multiplied, and expressed through this organism, the Son is glorified, and in the Son's glorification the Father is glorified also. Thus, the Lord prayed that He, the Son, would be glorified so that the Father also might be glorified.

God's eternal purpose, His ultimate intention, is to manifest, to express, Himself. Glorification simply means manifestation. To be glorified is to be manifested and expressed. For example, electricity that is not manifested is hidden. Before a lamp is switched on, the electricity is hidden within the lamp. But when the lamp is turned on, the electricity is manifested and expressed. Likewise, it is God's intention to manifest and express Himself. As the electricity is glorified when it is manifested, so God is glorified when He is manifested.

In creation, God created man in His own image ([Gen. 1:26](#)). Image denotes some sort of expression. Without a certain kind of image, God could never be expressed. Hence, the image is the very expression of God. God's intention in

creating man in His own image was that He might be expressed. The Lord Jesus is God who became incarnated as a man for the purpose of declaring the invisible God. John 1:18 says that no one has ever seen God but that the Son has declared Him. God is unseen and invisible. No one except the Son of God has ever seen Him. Now, in His incarnation, the Son has declared Him. To declare God means to express God. The Lord Jesus is the very image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15), which means that He is the very expression of the invisible God.

The best illustration of glorification is the blossoming of a flower. A carnation seed, for example, is sown into the earth. After it grows up out of the earth, it blossoms. This blossoming is the glorification of the carnation seed. The carnation seed contains the life element and the life shape of the carnation flower. The style, color, and beauty of the flower are all contained in a little carnation seed, but no one can see this style, color, and beauty until the seed grows out of the earth and blossoms. The blossom is the glory of the seed. The blossoming is the glorification of the seed, for it is by blossoming that the seed is glorified, that is, expressed.

When Jesus Christ came in the flesh, He was

like that little carnation seed. In Him, that is, in His human form, His human shell, were all the beauty and shape of the divine life. All the colorful aspects of the divine life were concealed and confined in that little Nazarene. One day, He was sown into the earth. After He died, He grew up and blossomed in His resurrection. In His resurrection, the beauty, form, style, color, and riches of life were released and expressed. That was the glorification of the Son. Since all that God the Father is has been embodied in the Son, when the Son is glorified, the Father is also glorified in the Son's glorification.

After the Lord became flesh, He expressed God to some extent, but the glory of God, the glory of all His attributes, was hidden in His flesh. The glory of all God's fullness was covered, being clothed by His flesh. Thus, the Lord told His disciples that He had to die and be resurrected. The word die is not a pleasant word to us. However, it is not bad for a seed to be put into the earth and die. It is good because the glory and beauty of the flower that are hidden in the seed are released by its death. The colorful beauty and the rich glory are released through death and resurrection. This is glorification. After the Lord told His disciples about His impending

death and resurrection, He offered a prayer to the Father, praying that the Father would glorify the Son that all the glory hidden within Him might be manifested through His death and resurrection. To glorify the Son means to bring forth all the glory hidden within His flesh, to release by means of death and resurrection all the divine glory concealed within the flesh of the Son.

We have seen that the subject of the Lord's prayer in [John 17](#) is glorification. The Lord was God incarnated in the flesh, and His flesh was a tabernacle for God's dwelling on earth ([1:14](#)). His divine element was confined in His humanity, just as God's shekinah glory was concealed within the tabernacle. Once, on the mountain of transfiguration, His divine element was released from within His flesh and expressed in glory, being seen by three of the disciples ([Matt. 17:1-4](#); [John 1:14](#)). But it was concealed again in His flesh. Before He uttered this prayer, He had predicted that He would be glorified and that the Father would be glorified in His glorification ([12:23](#); [13:31-32](#)). Now He had to pass through death that the concealing shell of His humanity might be broken for His divine element, His divine life, to be released. He also had to be resurrected that He might uplift His humanity into

the divine element and that His divine element might be expressed so that His entire being, both divinity and humanity, might be glorified. In this way, the Father would be glorified in Him. In John 17 He prayed for this.

The concluding prayer of the Lord was for the glorification of the Triune God. The fulfillment, the answer, of this prayer for the glorification of the Triune God has three stages. The first stage was the Lord's resurrection. In the Lord's resurrection, all the life beauty, life essence, life color, life shape, and all the aspects of the divine life of the Triune God were released. In His resurrection, the Lord's divine life was released from within His humanity and imparted into His many believers ([12:23-24](#)), and His whole being, including His humanity, was brought into glory ([Luke 24:26](#)), and, in that, the Father's divine element was expressed. God firstly answered and fulfilled this prayer in the Lord's resurrection ([Acts 3:13-15](#)).

Secondly, this prayer has been fulfilled in the church, in that, as His resurrection life has been expressed through His many members, He has been glorified in them and the Father has also been glorified in Him through the church ([Eph. 3:21](#); [1 Tim. 3:15-16](#)). Look at the church in Acts

on the day of Pentecost. There we see the beauty, shape, and riches of the divine life. The Lord's resurrection was not the complete fulfillment of His prayer; it was just the first step in the fulfillment of this prayer. The next step is the church. From the day of resurrection until the second coming of the Lord is the age of the church. In this age, the Lord has been glorifying Himself in the believers. Throughout all generations, the Son of God has been and still is being glorified. What are we doing today? If we say that we are coming together to exhibit Christ, it means that we are glorifying Christ and making Him manifested. If we say that we are testifying for the Lord, it means that we are manifesting Christ through us. The testimony of the Lord is the manifestation and glorification of the Lord through us. When the Lord is manifested and glorified through us, the Father is also glorified in the Lord at the same time. Thus, the Lord's prayer is still being fulfilled today through the church.

In the church we can see the beauty and the riches of the divine life. But, at times, we can also see in the church the ugly human expression. On the one hand, the church is of the divine life; on the other hand, it is still in the natural human life. In the church the divine life is expressed, but

sometimes the natural human life is also expressed. When the divine life is expressed, that is beauty and glory. But when the natural human life is expressed, that is a shame and a disgrace.

What is the third stage of the fulfillment of the Lord's prayer in [John 17](#)? It is the New Jerusalem. This prayer in [John 17](#) will be ultimately fulfilled in the New Jerusalem. Through the holy city the Son will be fully expressed in glory, and God will also be glorified in Him for eternity ([Rev. 21:11, 23-24](#)). Look at the picture of the New Jerusalem: it is a vessel to express Christ, to make God expressed through Christ. The New Jerusalem is the glorification of the Son so that the Father might be glorified through the Son.

Perhaps you are not clear about the picture of the New Jerusalem. [Revelation 21 and 22](#) reveal clearly that God is the light and that Christ, the Lamb, is the lamp. The light is in the lamp, and the lamp is the center of the city, around which is a transparent wall. God is pictured as the light shining through the lamp, the Son of God. The Son of God will be glorified through the transparent wall of the city. The city, composed of all the redeemed ones, has the names of the twelve tribes of Israel and the names of the twelve Apostles. The twelve tribes represent all the saints of

the Old Testament, and the twelve Apostles represent all the saints of the New Testament. The New Jerusalem is the composition of all the redeemed ones who are very transparent and are built together. They have Christ, the center, as the lamp in which God, the light, shines. When the lamp is manifested and glorified through the wall of the city, the light in the lamp is also glorified.

The New Jerusalem is a complete picture showing how the Son is glorified in that city and how the Father is glorified in the Son's glorification. Many times some dear saints have said to me, "Brother, you don't know how poor the church is where I am." I do not like to hear that. It is a lie. The church may be poor today, but after a period of time it will no longer be poor. Perhaps you do not have the faith to say this of your local church. You may say, "No, the church in my locality could never be better." Do not use the word never, for, at the least, your church will be good in the New Jerusalem. Every part of the city of the New Jerusalem will be radiant and glorious.

We have seen that this prayer has a threefold fulfillment. The first stage of the fulfillment was the resurrection of Jesus. By His resurrection, the

Lord Jesus has been manifested and glorified, and by this glorification the Father has also been glorified. The second step of its fulfillment is in the church. From the day of Pentecost to the day of the Lord's second coming, the Holy Spirit has manifested and will continue to manifest Christ through the saints. In other words, the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ through the church. When Christ is glorified, the Father also is glorified in the Son. The last stage of the fulfillment of this prayer will occur when the fullness of time comes. At that time, all the redeemed ones of both the Old and New Testament will be composed together as the complete expression of the Triune God. In this complete expression, Christ will be the lamp and God will be the light. Christ will be manifested and glorified through the New Jerusalem, and God the Father will be manifested and glorified in the Son as well as through the New Jerusalem. That will be the complete fulfillment of the Lord's word, "Glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You."

THE SON TO BE GLORIFIED

The Son is to be glorified along with the Father (vv. 1, 5). In [verse 5](#) the Lord said, "And now, glorify Me with Yourself, Father, with the glory

which I had with You before the world was.” The word “with” is used three times in this verse. In the phrases “with Yourself” and “with You,” the same Greek word is used for “with.” The sense of this word is “along with.” This means that the Son is exactly the same as the Father in glorification. The Son is glorified along with the Father and with the same glory that the Father has. This word strengthens the indication in [verse 1](#) concerning the deity of the Lord’s Person, that He had the divine glory along with the Father before the world was, that is, in eternity past, so that He should be glorified along with the Father with that glory now. The Lord participates in the divine glory, not separately by Himself, but along with the Father, for He and the Father are one ([10:30](#)). The Lord, by praying this way, indicates His Person, His deity, showing that He is the same as the Father in the divine glory.

THE FATHER’S GLORIFICATION

The Father is glorified in the Son’s glorification. The Father could never be glorified apart from the Son, because the Father has entrusted all that He is and has to the Son. The Father is embodied in the Son. Therefore, the Father cannot be glorified apart from the Son but only in

the Son's glorification. We have seen that the Lord was glorified in His resurrection. As long as the Lord is expressed and glorified, the Father is also expressed and glorified. Because the Lord is one with the Father and the Father is in the Lord, the release of the glory and beauty of the Lord manifests the glory and beauty of God the Father. Because They both are one, the Father is glorified in the glorification of the Son. Since the Father is in the Son, the Lord said, "Glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You."

The Father's glorification is also through the Son's believers. The Father is the source, essence, origin, and everything to the vine tree. But the vine tree can never be expressed, glorified, without the branches. The Father is glorified in the Son's glorification, and the Son's glorification is through all His branches.

THE SON'S PERSON

In [verses 1 and 5](#) of [John 17](#) we see that the Son's divinity and deity are the same as the Father's. The Son is divine in exactly the same way as the Father is. The Father's deity is the Son's deity. The Son's deity is the same as the Father's. The words, "Glorify Me with Yourself," mean that the glory of the Son is the glory of the Father.

For example, to serve me dinner with my friend means that dinner is served to me and to my friend. My friend has the same rank as I do. Likewise, the Son has the same rank as the Father. The Son is glorified along with the Father with the glory that the Father gave Him before the foundation of the world. Thus, the Son has exactly the same rank as the Father. In other words, the Person of the Lord can be ranked the same as that of the Father. The glorification of the Son will rank equally with that of the Father. Therefore, His Person is equal to the Father's.

THE SON'S WORK

[Verse 2](#) says, “Even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him.” This verse indicates the Lord’s work. The Son has the Father’s authority over all mankind so that He may give eternal life, not to all mankind but only to those whom the Father has given Him, the Father’s chosen ones. The Father has given the Son authority over all flesh, over all mankind. All mankind is under the authority of the Son because the Father has entrusted Him with this authority. The Lord has authority to rule over all humanity. Why does He have this authority?

That He may give eternal life to all whom the Father has given Him. By a careful reading of this verse, we can see that the Lord has authority to rule over all mankind in order to give eternal life to that part of mankind which the Father has chosen and given to the Lord. The Lord created man, exercised His authority over man, and redeemed some of them for the purpose of giving them eternal life. In other words, the Lord must first create, then rule over, redeem, and finally give life to a chosen group of people. The Lord's work, therefore, includes creating, governing, redeeming, and imparting life. The Lord has the same rank as the Father: He is the One who creates, governs, redeems, and gives eternal life. Do not think that you have received eternal life by accident. No, it was not an accident. Among the billions of human beings, God the Father loved you, selected you, and marked you out. There is a divine mark upon us.

The Father not only marked us out but also gave us to the Son. Do not just think of yourself as a poor, pitiful sinner. In a sense, you are, but, in another sense, you are a gift to the Son. You need to say, "Praise the Triune God that I am a precious gift whom the Father gave the Son. I am dear, precious, good, high, and even lovely."

I am a gift, not a trash can. The Father would never give a trash can to His Son. As one who has been given to God's dear Son, I am precious, dear, lovely, and sweet." If you have seen this, your view, attitude, and concept will all be changed, not only concerning yourself but also concerning all the saints. Do you believe that all the dear brothers and sisters are gifts to the Son? Do you believe that the one whom you do not like is such a gift? If you have seen this, you will love every saint, because every dear saint is a gift selected by the Father and given to the Son. The Father has selected us from among the billions of human beings. We are all the selected ones, the top ones, in the universal gift shop. We all have been selected and given to God's dear Son.

The Father has given the Son authority not only to overrule mankind but also to maintain mankind. God the Son exercised His authority in caring for mankind in order that we might come into being. Praise the Lord that we all are the dear gifts whom the Father has given to the Son.

THE ETERNAL LIFE

In verse 3 the Lord said, "And this is eternal

life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Him Whom You have sent, Jesus Christ.” What is eternal life? When I was young, I was told that eternal life was just a blessing in the future. Eternal life is divine life with a special function—to know God (cf. Matt. 11:27) and Christ. Every life has its function. The function of a dog’s life is barking, the function of a bird’s life is flying, the function of a cat’s life is catching mice, and the function of a chicken’s life is laying eggs. The function of the divine life is to know God. God and Christ are divine. To know the divine Person we need the divine life. Since the believers are born with the divine life, they know God and Christ (Heb. 8:11; Phil. 3:10). Hebrews 8:11 says that there is no need to teach any New Testament believers to know God. Why is there no need for this? Because every New Testament believer knows God. New Testament believers have the divine life; and the divine life is the life that knows God. We do not need to teach a dog to bark, because the dog’s life has the barking function. Likewise, since we have the divine life, we do not need to be taught to know God, for the function of the divine life is to know God and Christ. Oh, that I may know Christ! We all may

know Christ because we have the divine life, the life whose function is to know God and Christ.

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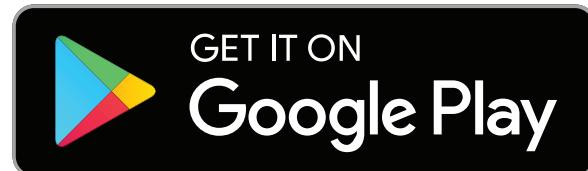
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