

Session 2: John 17

by Joseph Carroll

The sermon emphasizes the importance of glorifying God and finishing the work He gives us to do, as exemplified by Jesus' prayer in John 17.

Duration: 37:44

Scripture: John 17:1

Topics: "Christian Life", "Glorifying God", "Fulfilling God's Purpose"

Description

Joseph Carroll reflects on John 17, emphasizing the significance of glorifying God and completing the work He has given us. He highlights Jesus' solemn acknowledgment of His impending crucifixion and His commitment to glorifying the Father through His life and ministry. Carroll challenges listeners to examine their own lives, asking whether they are truly glorifying God in their actions and fulfilling the divine purpose assigned to them. He shares personal anecdotes of individuals who chose to follow God's calling over worldly success, illustrating the cost of true discipleship. Ultimately, he urges the congregation to seek God's will and strive to be able to say, 'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.'

Transcript

...gather again to John 17. I thought we had finished with John 17 last week, but I have been meditating on this Campbell Morgan called the centre of all the sanctities. The centre of all the sanctities, in other words, to him, the most holy place in all the scriptures.

The centre, the holiest of all as far as he was concerned in the scriptures. The centre of all the sanctities. Reading from verse 1. These words spake Jesus and lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour is come.

Glorify thy son, that thy son also may glorify thee. The hour is that hour to which he had referred again and again when he would say, mine hour is not yet come. But here he says, mine hour is come.

The hour of crisis, the hour of supreme testing, but also the hour when his labours are about to end. It's a very solemn thought to realise that one day our labours will end. And our Lord knowing this, that his hour had come, the cross was before him and his earthly labours would be finished.

The resurrection, the brief span with his disciples and then ascension to the Father. And so he's praying. And he sums up his earthly life in two pregnant statements.

I want you to notice them. Verse 4, I have glorified thee on the earth. That's the first one.

I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. I have glorified thee on the earth. No man can glorify God and magnify Jesus Christ unless this is the aim of his life.

I have glorified thee. He did not glorify himself. Again and again he would say, the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

The Son can do nothing of himself. Always he pointed to the Father. He glorified the Father on the earth.

The man who is filled with the Holy Spirit will glorify Jesus Christ. Why? Because this is the passion of the Spirit of God. The passion of the Son to glorify the Father.

The passion of the Spirit to glorify the Son. He shall glorify me. What is one of the infallible tests of a person filled with the Spirit? He glorifies Jesus Christ.

He does not glorify men. He does not glorify movements. He glorifies Christ.

The Apostle Paul said, God forbid that I should glorify in the death of my Lord Jesus Christ. There it is. He refused to glorify in anything but the cross of his Lord Jesus Christ.

I have glorified thee on the earth. Now, where do we strike opposition to this? Well, from the devil. What was the devil's sin? Wanting that which belonged to God, which was what? Glorification.

Glorification. I will be what? Like the Most High. I will be glorified.

And so Satan allies with the world and the fallen nature to get man to desire that which belongs to God alone. And it's all around us. The man who desires to glorify himself, to be seen, to be noticed, to be heard, to be listened to, to be obeyed, to be somebody.

That's the spirit of Satan. The spirit of Satan. The constant counting of numbers in a church or in a movement.

Why? David was punished for that. God was his sole source for all that he needed. And he was punished, and very severely, but justly.

We could spend a message on that. We could spend a whole night on that. But let's get it very clear now.

This is the first thing our Lord said to his Father. I have glorified thee on the earth. It's the first thing we should be able to say.

Lord Jesus, I am in this earth to glorify you. Not to glorify myself. Not to glorify anybody with whom I am identified or associated with.

Even those who are nearest to me. I am here to glorify you. I'm not here to speak of my achievements, my church, my denomination, my business.

I am here to speak of nothing, ultimately, but Jesus Christ. Hallelujah. Who do you glorify? Who do you desire to glorify? I've mentioned before, when I had only been in this country a few months, back in 1951, I met the most famous man and the most famous preacher in a certain very famous denomination.

And I spent half an hour with this famous man in his hotel room in the city of Columbia, and all he talked about was his denomination. I went away a saddened young man. He never spoke about Jesus Christ.

The denomination, this denomination, that I was sick at heart. I have glorified thee on the earth. Ah, my brother, my sister.

You have been placed here to glorify Jesus Christ on the earth. To give him the preeminent position in your own life, to see that he has the preeminent position in the life of your children, to see that he has the preeminent position in the place where you worship, the glorifying of Jesus Christ. And then the second word, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

That's a tremendous statement. You see, the two go together. I've glorified thee on the earth.

I've finished the work that thou gavest me to do. You cannot finish the work that he gives you to do unless you glorify him. They go together.

Jesus Christ is glorified in the completion of the work that he gives you to do in order that in that work you can glorify him. The father commissioned the son. He had a very clear commission.

And he was empowered to fulfill the commission. What was it? The glorifying of the father. By what? By the giving of eternal life to as many as the father gave him.

That was his commission. That's why he came into the world. He glorified the father by doing and finishing the work which the father gave him to do.

The work that you are doing, did God give it to you? Did he? That's a very important question. The work that you did today, did God tell you to do it? Your pursuit in life, whatever you are, professional man, laboring man, farmer, truck driver, whatever it is, did God tell you to do that? You may be a retired man. Did God tell you to do what you're doing? That's a very important question.

I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. This is the one verse that spurs me more than any other verse in all the scriptures. I would like to be able to say at the end of the race, I have finished the work you gave me to do.

I would like to be able to say that. Why am I here in Greenville? Because God sent me here to do a work for him. I must do it.

And I must be able to say at the finish, I have finished the work that you gave me to do in Greenville. I must be able to say that. I recall many years ago in Japan, I'd been elected president of a large body of missionaries, 400 odd, from 12 different nations.

And I believe all the years in Japan had brought me to the point where I challenged that large group of missionaries to take a very strong stand of separation from anything that tinged of liberalism. No identification whatsoever, in any way. There are two conferences in Japan.

One is primarily for liberal missionaries and one for conservative missionaries. The conservative missionary conference is in Kurozawa. The liberals and a few sprinkling of other missionaries have their conference in another place.

And the president of the liberal group wrote to me and he said, why don't you come to our conference and exchange greetings with us? I will go to your conference and exchange greetings. So I politely declined. And we finally got down to a written statement of a greeting, you see.

So I politely declined. I wanted no identification whatsoever with that which was not consistent with the scriptures. And then I suggested something else to the missionary body, the evangelical missionary body, and they wouldn't take it.

They didn't want to go this far. As to whether or not I exchanged greetings with the liberal leader, that was my business. But now I proposed something that they would have to agree with.

They tore me to pieces. And I recall leaving the big auditorium that afternoon and making my way homeward. We lived on a hill where you could see the auditorium and I had a close friend with me.

And as we got to the hill, we both turned around without any intention of the other person following and we looked down at that auditorium and I looked at my friend and he looked at me. And I said, you know what the Lord is saying to me? He said, I think I do. He's saying your work is finished.

And it was. It's finished. And it was.

It was finished. I had finished the work he gave me to do. Acceptance or rejection, that was not my responsibility.

My responsibility was to do what he told me to do. That's your responsibility, my friend. To know what God is telling you to do and to do it.

And I want to ask that question again because it's been burning in my heart. You can't evade it. If you are not doing what God has told you to do, then before you put your head on your pillow this night, ask the Lord what he wants you to do.

Ask him what he wants you to do. And do it. You may be surprised what he'll tell you to do.

And you cannot glorify him unless you do it. I've glorified thee on the earth. I've finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

Last Saturday I heard of a man in his early thirties here in Greenville, well, mid-thirties, salary of twenty-odd thousand a year, called by the Lord to preach. Well, what did he do? Well, of course, he left his high-salaried position and he is studying now in a seminary in the south, a conservative seminary. He had a call from two pastorates.

One, he would have a large manse, five hundred dollars a month, amenities, privileges, and so on. Another call, a little group of people, seven families. Not even any record of what their financial position was.

So he could choose this quite attractive position over here, very secure, or the seven families. The Lord told him to take the seven families, so he went to the seven families. He's a man, I think, with three children.

What is he doing? He is doing the work that his Lord is giving him to do. That's what he's doing. I mentioned to the young people last Tuesday evening the story of Arthur Glasser, who was formerly the

director for North America of the China Inland Mission.

He was the top student in his graduating class at Cornell University, a very famous school for engineering. He was the top boy in his class. He went on to graduate engineering, brilliant engineer, brilliant man, gifted.

And he received a position with a bridge-building firm. And when he was only 27, he was commissioned by this large bridge-building company to assess the cost of a bridge over the Hudson River. And he's 27.

And before he was 30, he was given what I suppose all bridge builders want. He was given his own bridge. He was to span a river with a bridge, and it was his bridge.

He had the engineers and all the rest of the people to help him, but it was his bridge. The bridge was prefabricated in the giant workshop, and Arthur was very proud of his bridge. And he went down early one morning, about 7, 7.30 in the morning, before the workmen arrived to look at his bridge.

All these girders all over the place. And he was almost stroking one of the girders and proud of his bridge when he saw a little piece of rust on it. And the Lord spoke to him.

He said, there you are. There's your wonderful bridge. It isn't even erected, and it's perishing already.

I want you to do a work for me that will last for eternity. I want you to go to the mission field. There he was, all alone with the Lord.

It was an hour of crisis for him. He loved his engineering. What did he do? That morning he was home in New York.

His father came to the door. What are you here for? I've resigned. Do you have another position? No.

Why did you resign? I'm going to a Bible school. I'm going to become a missionary. His father said, all right, son.

The next time you walk in this house, I'll walk out. I don't want to see you again. After all the money I've spent training you to be an engineer.

And the president of your firm told me that one day you would be one of the great engineers of this nation. And now you throw it all away. What was he doing? He was doing the work which God was giving him to do.

And that's always costly. It's never easy. And so he worked his way through Bible Institute, washing dishes, and then through a seminary and out to China.

He finished the work in China that God gave him to do. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. He glorified the sun, whereas before AlphaGlass had quite a bit of glory.

And he would have received more. I've mentioned from time to time John Soong from this platform. John Soong was probably the greatest evangelist that God gave to his church in China.

Tremendous man of God. Another brilliant man. He came to this country to study.

He was a doctor of science. And he went to Union Seminary, the liberal seminary, not knowing any better because he wasn't saved. But whilst he was at Union Seminary, he was converted.

And so not knowing what to do with this strange person, they committed him to a mental institution. That is a fact of history. When John Soong got converted and started to sing the praises of the Lord, they threw him out of the seminary and he finished up in the mental institution on their recommendation.

But he finally boarded ship to return to China. He had won many medals. Brilliant man.

And his original intention in coming to America was to return home as a great scholar. To be a great man with a big faith in China. The Lord spoke to him on the ship.

I want you to be my servant, my preacher, my evangelist. And so John Soong, the same hour of the night, took his medals, took his diplomas, took everything that could make anything of John Soong, went up to the side of the ship, threw them into the ocean. You cannot glorify yourself and your Lord also.

John Soong paid one visit only to Indonesia. When I was in Indonesia in Surabaya, they showed me a number of churches for Chinese. When John Soong came to Indonesia, those churches were brought into being under his ministry.

And today they were still vital centers of worship of Jesus Christ. Just one visit. And yet all over that island, wherever he went, the churches sprang up and they remained.

They remained. Why? Because here was a man who accepted the work God gave him to do and lived only for the glorifying of his Lord. God finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

Many years ago I was in Columbia Bible College and I was filling in for a professor there for a class one morning. And I gave a very simple message on five steps to total commitment to Jesus Christ. I can still remember the message.

And in the class that morning was a young man from India, Chanda Pillar. Chanda had come from India. He was going to take a Bible course, but then he was going on to a secular university to obtain a doctorate degree, doctor's degree, and then go back to India as a headmaster in Kerala, his home state.

Again, Chanda was to be a big man. Arrive home, the doctor, the headmaster, and then find fulfillment as a headmaster and as an exalted person amongst his people. But that morning the Lord spoke to him.

And he said, Chanda, you're not going on to any secular university. When you finish here, you're going back to India to be my servant, to preach the gospel. And he wrestled with it for a while, but he gave in.

So instead of returning to India as the exalted doctor, he turned to India as a lowly preacher of the gospel. But when I was in India, I heard a great deal about the tremendous impact that he had made upon the university students in various universities because he was the traveling representative for Indivasi Fellowship. A dear man of God.

And one of the reasons I know he's a man of God is that I met him in the city of Madras. I'd been preaching in a conference and I was waiting in Madras to go up to the Nilgiri Hills to catch the train. My wife had been taken suddenly and seriously ill.

So I was returning back to the hills. Anybody who's ever been in Madras knows it's just a sea of humanity. They just press on you from every side.

And I was driving in a pedicab to the railway station and all around the little pedicab were these cyclists, all robed in white cotton spun. And I noticed one cyclist who kept looking at me and I thought, well, it's just another Indian staring at me. But he kept staring and he said, Brother Carol.

So I looked at him. He said, It's me, Chanda. I said, Chanda, what are you doing here? So I immediately stopped the pedicab and got out and chatted with Chanda.

We had lunch together and he took me to his home which was a one room proposition, a damp, rather dark little room in that city. His wife was there, they had a little baby. And I thought, how different it might have been for Chanda had he been the great doctor.

But here he was doing the work that God gave him to do. And we went to the railway station and I boarded the train. And he shook hands with me and he left something in my hand.

And I thought it was a little tract or some letter that he'd written to cheer me on my way. I just put it in my pocket. But when I settled down for the night, I thought, well, I wonder what that was Chanda gave me.

And I pulled it out, it was a one hundred rupee note. Chanda didn't know, but the Lord knew I had about five rupees to my name, the man of God. Who ever heard of an Indian giving a white man money? I've never heard of it before.

Everywhere you go in India, it's hands out, hands out. Everywhere, everybody's asking for money. A hundred rupee note.

That must have been at least two weeks income for Chanda, at least two weeks. And I'm sure he had to skimp to get through that month. A hundred rupees.

I believe Chanda will be able to say at the end, I finished the work you gave me to do. Will you be able to say it, my friend? Will I be able to say that? You know, let's be honest, we're so very often so terribly busy doing what we want to do. What we want to do.

That we don't do the work that God wants us to do. We are so very busy providing for our own and ourselves that we get out of touch with the Spirit of God concerning what He wants to say for others. What He wants to say to us for others.

Chanda could have argued over giving me a hundred rupees. Why, it doesn't make sense. A lot of things the Lord tells you to do do not make sense.

It's a very challenging statement. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. Verse 5, And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

This is the last of his requests concerning himself. And in the sixth verse we have his prayer for his own. I want you to notice it.

I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. It's a tremendous prayer. The first thing he did was manifest the Father's name to the men which he gave the Son.

They were the Father's, he gave them to the Son, and they kept the Father's word. Why? Because the word the Lord gave to them were the words that his Father gave to him. I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.

What is a Bible teacher? A Bible teacher is a man who receives the word from his Lord that he gives to the people. I've said before you can preach a hundred sermons and never deliver a message. Never deliver a message.

What was the lament of the true prophets? That the false prophets were always saying they'd seen this and seen that, and they hadn't seen anything. It's not enough to preach a word from the Bible, it must be the word from the Bible which your Lord gives you to preach. That's the word he uses.

And very often when a man is preaching, the Lord will give him a word in a moment that he never anticipated. That is usually the word he'll use the most. And if you're a preacher, you'd better say it.

I have given them the words which thou gavest me. There was never a word that our Lord uttered to his own but that the Father gave it to him. I tell you, my dear brothers and sisters, we'd do much better at times if we would just put a big zipper across our mouths and keep them closed.

Keep them closed. People come to me and they say, well, the Lord told me, and I know very well when they tell me what he told them that he didn't tell them. The Lord told me.

Do you know that's a rather solemn thing to say that God told you something? Because if somebody opposes you, they're opposing God. If he told you. If.

Big if. The Lord told me. Did he? I hope he did.

But you'll find out sooner or later whether he told you or not. You'll be careful when you say the Lord told me. I've given them the words which you gave me.

I've said again and again, if you have a knowledge of the Scriptures and if you have a gift to teach the Scriptures, it really is not difficult to stand up and speak for half an hour or an hour. It's not difficult. But it's not easy to wait upon the Lord and receive from the Lord the word from the Lord to give to the people of the Lord.

That is not easy. Why had they believed him? Because the Father gave the word to the Son and they received that word which he gave to his Son for them. I pray for them.

I pray not for the world, but for them also, for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine, and all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I want you to notice, he reaches a climax here. We must finish here tonight.

Why is he pleading for them? Because his glory is involved with them. His glory is involved with them. I am glorified in them.

That's important. Why do we plead for the wayward brother? Why do we plead for the backslidden sister? Why do we plead for the rebellious child? Why? Because they are identified with Jesus Christ. They are representing him before the world.

That's a rather serious matter. Jesus Christ manifested the Father to the world. We are to manifest Jesus Christ to the world.

I am glorified in them, in them, not in their words, in them, what they are in the world. What you are in the world will either give glory to your Lord or bring dishonor to his name. I have glorified thee on the earth.

The church is in the world to glorify Jesus Christ. I am in this world to glorify Jesus Christ. My children are given to me to glorify Jesus Christ.

That's what we're here for. If the child goes astray, the burden of the prayer must be not for the child's sake, not for the parent's sake, but for Jesus' sake, because the glory of your Lord is involved in that child. And many of our prayers are just plain selfish prayers for the sake of the child or for our own sake, and not ultimately for the glory of the Lord.

Now listen, my dear friend, mother or father, you start praying for your child in that way, and you see what God will do for you, if you really mean it now. Lord, I don't care if he lives, I don't care if he dies, but one thing he must do, he must glorify you in his body and spirit. Lord, you meet him, you save him, you do what? Needs to be done in him, because if you don't, he won't glorify you, he'll glorify the devil instead.

Better that he die than do that. Better that he die. Do you really believe that? You must start to believe it if you don't.

There's coming a day when we will reach the end of the race, maybe soon. We should be able to say two things. I've finished the work which you gave me to do, I've glorified you on the earth.

You cannot say that unless you know what he wants you to do. And in doing it, you glorify him, nobody else or nothing else but your Lord. To the end we must come.

It may be the coming of the Lord, it may be physical death. And then we must face our Lord, and then we must give account. Shall we pray? Dear Father, we thank Thee for the obvious priorities which are found in this tremendous prayer.

Father, do in us that which is needful to cause us to take hold of these truths. That as the Father sent the Son, that the Son through all that He was and all that He did might glorify the Father. So the Son has reconciled us to Thee that in all that we do and all that we are, we might glorify the Son.

Lord, enable us to rid ourselves of the parasites that take from us that which should belong to Thee. And take from us, because it is our will that they should take, that which belongs to Thee. By our self-centeredness and our self-glorification and our self-will, wanting to do that which we want to do instead of earnestly seeking Thy face to know what You want us to do.

Father, impress upon us that truth which Thou dost know we have need of this night. And this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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