

Session 7: John 17

by Joseph Carroll

To know God and receive eternal life, we must be introduced to Him by the Son and demonstrate our love for Him through loyalty and obedience.

Duration: 32:45

Scripture: John 17:1

Topics: "Christian Life", "Eternal Life", "Knowing God"

Description

Joseph Carroll reflects on John 17, emphasizing that eternal life is knowing God and Jesus Christ personally, not just knowing about them. He stresses the importance of being introduced to the Father through the Son, as no one can come to the Father except through Jesus. Carroll illustrates that true knowledge of God comes from a personal relationship, which is evidenced by love for the Son. He warns that mere knowledge of Scripture or church attendance is insufficient for salvation; one must have a heart devoted to Christ. Ultimately, he concludes that God's love is given to those who love His Son, leading to the gift of eternal life.

Transcript

Shall we turn again to John 17? We're running a little late this evening, but I've been meditating again on this tremendous chapter. I want to share a few thoughts with you again this evening. John 17 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. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

Jesus Christ came into the world in order that we might receive the greatest of all gifts, the gift of eternal life. He was given power over all flesh in order that he might achieve the will of his Father, which was the giving of eternal life to as many as the Father would give him. But I want you to notice here what he says about eternal life.

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. What is eternal life? To know God and to know Jesus Christ. Not to know about them, but to know them.

Do you know the Father? Do you know the Son? If you don't, you do not have eternal life. That's pretty solemn. It's not enough to know about them, you must know them.

Well how do you know a person? There are some who say, well I know God by observing the wonder of his creation. Do you? Nobody knows God by studying his handiwork. The heavens declare what? The glory of God.

They declare his glory. The firmament showeth his handiwork, but they don't reveal him. And that's an important difference.

A person in the United States or in the Western world can study the glory of God as it's revealed in the heavens, and his handiwork in creation. Or a man in the heathen world can see the magnificence and the glory of creation, and he'll erect an idol of wood or of stone. That's what it speaks to him about.

This is the God revealed to him by nature. A man in the Western world can reveal an idol which manifests something that is itself. Maybe an idol of gold, popularity, something else.

Still an idol. And yet he can go out and see the glory of God and the magnificence of his handiwork all around. You do not know God by observing the greatness of his creation.

You simply observe that which he has done. For instance, if you've had the privilege of visiting Rome and the great Sistine Chapel, that masterpiece of Michelangelo, that tremendous painting, fresco. It's unbelievable.

You can spend hours just looking at it. And if you knew nothing about the life of Michelangelo, you would think the man who was able to produce this, what a man. He must have been a saintly man.

Saintly man, he was living with a harlot when he did it. But there it is. How do we know God? How do you get to know him? Well, you must be introduced to him.

Well, who's going to do the introducing? The Son. And he's the only one that can. That's very, very clear in Scripture.

How are you going to get to know the Father? Through the Son. How are you going to get to know the Son? Through the Father. No other way.

In John 6, 65, And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given to him of my father. No man can come. You can never come to Christ, you can never know Christ, unless it's by the Father.

There's no other way. And again, All that the Father giveth me shall come to me. And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.

Why? Because the Father is giving that one to me. Therefore he will come. And when he comes, I'll receive him.

Again in Matthew 11, 27, All things are delivered unto me of my father. And no man knoweth the Son, but the Father. Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son.

And he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Who knows the Father? The one to whom the Son reveals him. Nobody else.

All you know about God through personal acquaintance, is because of Jesus Christ. Now let's underline that. Not because of your knowledge of Scripture, but because of Jesus Christ.

Let's underline that. We read it again. All things are delivered unto me of my father.

And no man knoweth the Son, but the Father. Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son. And he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

Very clear. Recently we have read of the death of the Duke of Windsor, who was formerly King Edward, and formerly Prince of Wales, before he was King. When he was Prince of Wales, he was a very popular man.

He did some quite wonderful things that endeared him to the people. But the story is told of a small boy, a rather urchin boy, who was outside Buckingham Palace, and he tried to speak to one of the Grenadier guards guarding the palace, and of course to try to speak to one of those big fellows. If you ever pay a visit to Buckingham Palace grounds, you can see these fellows marching up and down.

If everybody goes to speak to them, they simply shoulder arms and snap their hobnail boots and march off. And this poor little boy was just trying to get a word with the guard. All he wanted to do was go in and see the King.

And a young man came toward the palace gates, and he stopped, and he noticed a little boy trying to speak to the guard. And he said, what do you want? He said, well, I'm just trying to speak to this man. He said, I want to see the King.

He said, do you really want to see the King? He said, yes, what's your name? He told him his name. He said, all right, I'll take you in. So he took the boy by the hand, right past the first row of guards, second row of guards, through the palace doors, right up to the King's room.

And he said, Father, I want to introduce you to so-and-so. Perfect illustration. He would never have gotten past those guards.

Impossible. But somebody took him by the hand and just took him straight into the presence of the King. No man, no movement, nobody can take you into the presence of the King of Kings except the Son.

He's the only one that can bring you to the Father. He's the only one that can reveal the Father to you. Nobody else can do it.

Now, you may know all about the King. You may have read a lot about the King. You may have studied a lot about the King, but you've never really been introduced to him by the Son.

When you do, you will know it. And listen, everybody else will know it. Everybody else will know it.

Why? Because there will be in your heart a love for the Son and a love for the Father. Now, one of the questions we cannot quite answer is, what determines God's choice? That's the ultimate issue, of course. What determines God's choice? We say, of course, the foreknowledge of God.

What do we mean by foreknowledge? Nobody can really answer that. We say it's predestination. Nobody can really answer that either.

They may try, but they can't. But what has helped me to understand it is this, that we are creatures of time, past, present, and future. We look back into the past, and we consider the present, and we don't know the future.

God is not a creature of time. He lives in an eternal present. He sees the past, the present, and the future before the future happens.

And perhaps this gives us a little understanding of what is meant by foreknowledge or predestination. But here is a verse of Scripture which may help. Or, before we come to that, let's turn across to Jeremiah.

Jeremiah chapter 1. Jeremiah chapter 1, verse 4, Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I form thee in the belly, I knew thee. And before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee. And I ordained, or appointed thee a prophet unto the nation.

What are you going to say about that? Let me read it again. Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee. And before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee.

And I ordained thee a prophet unto the nation. That's foreknowledge. But here's a verse that helps.

John 16, 17. For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me. That's an important verse.

For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me. I believe the Father gives to the Son the one in whom he knows there will be a love for the Son. That person the Father loves, because that person loves the Son.

And in his foreknowledge he knows the one who will love the Son. And that one is given to the Son. At least that satisfies me.

If you don't love the Son, I want to tell you tonight, you are lost. You are lost. You are lost.

You may know about Jesus Christ, and you may know about God, and you may be a very diligent student of the Scriptures, but you are lost. We have a pseudo-everything today, and we certainly have a pseudo-Christianity. The foreknowledge of God.

For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me. I recall in Japan many years ago being with a number of missionaries in a small village in Japan. I didn't know why they sent us to this small village.

Must have been six or seven missionaries. We had a tent, pitched the tent outside a Buddhist temple. We didn't know the ground on which we pitched the tent belonged to the Buddhist temple, so they requested that we remove it.

It was the worst thing they could have done, because it was a very un-Japanese thing to do, and when the people saw them forcing us to move the tent, they immediately became sympathetic and attended the meetings. But I did wonder why would the Lord send so many missionaries to such a small village? And I found the answer after the first evening meeting. Only one person responded, and that was a girl about 13 or 14 years old.

When she was about seven or eight years old, she came to the conclusion that her father's gods were false, and she would not worship them, and she would not worship her ancestors. She also came to the conclusion that there must be one true and living God, and she began to worship him. She was a secret worshipper of the one true and living God, and she'd been worshipping him in secret these many years, six or seven years.

This girl had within her a great capacity for devotion. That's what God wants. He doesn't want your gifts, he doesn't need them.

He doesn't want your little intellect, he doesn't need that either. He wants your heart, and if he doesn't have that, you don't have him, my friend. Let's be clear about that.

Jesus Christ seeks for those who have a great capacity for devotion, and after all, isn't that what we seek for ourselves? There is a word that's a little bit old-fashioned, but it's loyalty. Very rare today. You find people as fickle in their loyalties as Agnes, the storm that swept across this land.

Why? Because the true loyalty that is loyalty, is born in the heart of a person who truly loves Jesus Christ. And when I see a person who is disloyal, and they say I'm a Christian, I put a big question mark against that. I believe the true Christian is the most loyal person on the face of this earth.

And the missionary who preached that night, he spoke fluent Japanese. Can you imagine the text? Acts 17 23, the unknown God whom you ignorantly worship him declare I unto you. What a beautiful verse, for a beautiful little girl.

There she was, seated toward the front, and the first words out of that missionary's mouth were, the unknown God whom you ignorantly worship, I'm going to tell you about him. And that night she came to Christ. The next morning, she was folding up tracts and giving them out in her village.

You don't know what that means to Japanese. I tell you, when you're introduced to Jesus Christ by the Father, you're changed. You are changed.

And you are changed on the spot. If you've never been changed, you've never been converted. Never.

If any man be in Christ, he's a new creation. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things have become new.

Do you remember the time when heaven above was soft, the blue earth around was sweet and green? Something lived in every hue. Christless eyes had never seen. Do you remember that? If you don't, my friend, you're lost.

You're lost. I remember another Japanese. I was living with a German family at one of our conferences.

The Japanese woman was who they'd brought with her, their maid, had a beautiful face. She had the light of heaven on her face. You just look at her, you can see the glory of another land on her face.

It shone, the glory of the Lord. Until I couldn't help but say to my German friend, this dear Japanese lady, she really loves the Lord. He said, yes, she does.

I said, how was she converted? He said, her husband was killed in the war. She had two little girls. And following the war, Japan suffered.

Food was scarce, everything was scarce. But this woman had a great capacity for devotion. And she loved her little girls very dearly.

And rather than see them suffer, she sold her body as a woman of the street to care for her little children. And then one night, when she was walking the street in Yokohama, she heard the gospel for the first time. She came to Christ, and she was changed.

Now, why would the Father look down on the city of Yokohama, with its millions of people, and choose a harlot? You know why? A great capacity for devotion. That's why. He knew this woman would love his son, and he gave the woman to his son.

And she belongs to him today. She belongs to him forever. Ah, my friends.

Some of us don't have very much to say for our profession, do we? You know what I think? I think it's only a profession, it's not a possession. You see, you can't argue with these scriptures. You can't argue with them.

The Gospel of John is one of the most wonderful books in the Bible, perhaps the most wonderful, but it's one of the most terrible. What have you got to show to prove that you love Jesus Christ? That's the issue. Not your baptism, not your church members, what have you got to show in a concrete form that you love Jesus Christ? And if you love Jesus Christ, you don't love yourself, you love him.

In other words, he comes first. For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me. The doctrine of the foreknowledge of God, yes.

Predestination, yes. But in the very heart of it all is a love for Jesus Christ, a love for him. If ye love me, keep my commandments.

And you know that as I've been studying, a little more time for study in Florida, as you go through the scriptures, you come to the inescapable conclusion that from Genesis through to Revelation, it's all about Jesus Christ. There's a great book, and it's in a barrel in Charleston, and I'm going to pick it up Wednesday. It's in my library in Japan.

Christ in all the Scriptures, by Hodgkin. And he shows you from Genesis to Revelation how the great soul message ultimately of the scriptures is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ.

And I was thinking something along this line. You know the story of creation, where God tells us how he created the earth. You know, I don't think God was terribly interested in just letting us know how he created the earth.

He didn't have to tell us that. And he certainly didn't put it there in order that he might satisfy some scientific mind. I well remember a word by Principal Morling, a great scholar and a great Christian, was the chair for Church History at Sydney University.

He said Jesus Christ didn't die for scholars, he died for sinners. And he was a scholar. He is a scholar.

He died for sinners. But when you look at creation, what do you see? You see darkness, you see chaos, and then you see life. I believe that possibly God, when he gave us the story of creation, was only giving us that picture in order that we might understand redemption.

Of course there are other reasons too, I'm sure. But to me, it's a tremendous illustration of redemption. Darkness was upon the face of the deep.

The Spirit of God moved across the face of the waters. God said let there be light, and there was light. What is that? It's a picture of what happens to a person when he's saved.

Redemption. Those tremendous words of Wesley. Long my imprisoned spirit lay, fast bound in sin and nature's night.

Thine eye diffused a quickening ray. I awoke, the dungeon flamed with light. My chains fell off, my heart was free.

I rose, went forth, and followed thee. There's not a greater hymn in the book. His imprisoned spirit, fast bound in sin and nature's night, in utter darkness and in chaos.

And what happened? Thine eye diffused a quickening ray. I awoke, the dungeon flamed with light. That's Genesis 1. That's redemption.

The Spirit of God moves upon a man. And what happens? There's light, and the chains fall off, and he's set free. Then God puts his life in order, as he did in the first of Genesis.

He put order where there was chaos. It's a picture of salvation, redemption. It's right through the scriptures.

You know, I don't think God was terribly interested in telling us about how Adam was created, and Adam and Eve. It's a beautiful picture again of redemption. Why should he tell us about that? Why should he tell us? Because when Eve was taken out of Adam's side, it's a beautiful picture of the church being taken out of the ribbon side of his wonderful son.

And you go right through the scripture, and you've got it right through. What's the great message of the scriptures? The great message of the scriptures is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And why did Jesus Christ come into this world? That he might give eternal life to as many as the Father would give him.

That's why he came. And what is eternal life? It is to know God, the Father, and to know God, the Son. How do you know God, the Son? Not know about him, but how do you know him? You must be introduced to him by the Father.

How do you know God, the Father? You must be introduced to him by the Son. Predestination for knowledge I do not know, neither does any other man. But I do know this, that God loves the person that loves the Son.

I know that. And I think that gives us a little light where we don't have much understanding. God loves the person that loves his Son.

There's a true story told, it is a true story, of a very wealthy man, he was a multi-millionaire. He married, and the Lord favoured him with a baby son. And he was very fond of that little boy, his only child.

And his wife died. He never remarried, but he did hire a housekeeper to raise the boy. And when the boy was a teenager, the boy also died, and the father was heartbroken.

But he kept the housekeeper in his employ just to care for him, until the father died. And of course many people were very interested in who was going to receive the million. But such as they could, and consult his lawyers as they did, they could find no will.

And so the state took over his estate, and everything was sold. Everything was to go to the state. And this dear housekeeper had loved his son very dearly.

And there was a beautiful portrait of the son, which was auctioned by the state. She didn't have much money, but she bought it. She wanted that portrait.

She loved the boy. She took it home, and she put it upside down to protect the glass on her bed. And she noticed the back of the frame was rather thick and padded, so she, she began to touch it, and the paper being old, and a little frayed, it split open.

And there she saw some very important looking documents, which she took to a lawyer. It was the will of the father. And in that will, he said, whoever loves my son enough to purchase this portrait, receives all that I have.

If you love the son, God will give you everything, and he'll give it lavishly. And what is the ultimate gift? He will give you eternal life. Now shall we pray? Dear Lord Jesus, we thank you for that day when we first saw the light, and the burden of our heart rolled away.

We give thee thanks. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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