

Session 9: John 17

by Joseph Carroll

Joseph Carroll's sermon on John 17 emphasizes the profound love of Jesus for his disciples and the importance of understanding the cost of salvation and the will of God in our lives.

Duration: 37:22

Scripture: John 17:1

Topics: "Christian Life", "The Cost of Discipleship", "Obligation to God"

Description

Joseph Carroll emphasizes the significance of Jesus' humanity in John 17, highlighting the depth of His sacrifice for our redemption. He points out that understanding the cost of salvation should instill a sense of obligation in us to live according to God's will. Carroll stresses that true satisfaction and strength come from doing the will of God, as exemplified by Jesus, who prioritized His mission over personal comfort. He challenges listeners to reflect on their motivations and the tests of love for Christ, urging them to consider what they have done to prove their love for Him. Ultimately, Carroll calls for a life dedicated to fulfilling God's purpose, echoing the prayerful heart of Jesus.

Transcript

John chapter 17, these words speak Jesus. If we study the Word of God we are often amazed, although we shouldn't be, at the precision of the Holy Spirit. The Word of God does not say, these words speak the Lord Jesus Christ.

It does not even say, these words speak Jesus Christ. It says, these words speak Jesus. Why? Because it's referring to the humanity of Jesus, the man Jesus.

You may sometimes hear people say, give the Lord Jesus his full title. Not so, not always. No.

The Holy Spirit always has a purpose. And his purpose here is very clear. That the one offering this prayer is the man, Jesus, my fellow.

In that tremendous passage of scripture, in Philippians chapter 2, who is it that is exalted and honored and worshiped? That at the name of what? Jesus. Jesus. That's a very precious name.

Thou shalt call his name what? Jesus. For he, Jesus, shall save his people from their sin. Now we have seen in our study that our Lord Jesus Christ was a unique personality, God and man.

Very God, very man. Always God, always man. Two personalities in one person.

But tonight we are going to consider something of the price he paid in order that he might redeem us from all sin. I believe one of the grievous deficiencies of our time is that we don't really begin to understand what it cost our Lord to save us. And therefore we do not have a sufficient sense of obligation to him.

If there is anything that will motivate us, it is a realization of what it cost Jesus Christ to save us from the guilt and the penalty of our sins. I was asked the question last Saturday morning here concerning Japan. Somebody said if we keep on going before very long Japan will rule the whole commercial world.

Well I think if the world lasts for 50 years and we don't have a war characterized by hydrogen warfare, then Japan may well rule the commercial world. A few islands up there with, as the Japanese say, the only resources we have are water and air. No oil, very little coal, no minerals, nothing.

Well from whence comes their power? Gross national product, third in the world. United States with an inflated dollar, first. Then Russia, then Japan.

With a yen that should be revalued again. What's the secret? You know what the secret is? Every Japanese is born into this world with what to us would be a fantastic sense of obligation. That's the key.

When he's born into the world he's obligated to his parents, he's obligated to his ancestors, he's obligated to the emperor, he's obligated to Japan which gave him birth, he's almost obligated to the air that he breathes. And these obligations which he has determines his whole way of life. And I think there's no need for me to emphasize the point that today in this and throughout the free world there is a grave sense of lack of obligation on the part of the individual to anybody.

In fact the opposite is true. The world owes me a living. And if we even get a glimpse of what it costs the Lord Jesus to save us from our sins then there will be that sense of obligation which will motivate our actions.

We saw last week that God gave his son something to do and he did it. Now it all begins there. What is life? Life is knowing the will of God and doing it.

That's what life is all about. And in order that we might know the will of God there is a very beautiful statement which I often quote and it's this, life reduced to fellowship with Christ makes the complicated simple. For one must not only know the general plan but the details involved in the fulfilling of the plan.

You will recall on one occasion when a great crowd was waiting for our Lord and Peter finally found him and he said all men seek for thee. He said no I'm going on to the next town for therefore came I forth. And he left this vast crowd of needy people and never even spoke to them.

Why? Because that morning he had risen a great while before day and he was therefore attuned to the will of his father for the day and he wasn't turned aside by what could appear to be a great opportunity. There is something that is far above great opportunity, the will of God. And so he knew the will of his father for him in detail because he walked in unbroken fellowship with his father.

He knew exactly what his father wanted him to do and I believe we can also know what our father wants us to do and know it in detail. Know it in detail. Secondly, preaching is not merely giving truth.

It's much more than that. If a man has a gift and he must have a gift to preach given him by the spirit of God. If he has a gift and a knowledge of the scriptures, well it doesn't take very much to stand up and speak about it for up to an hour or more.

You can just keep waffling if you want to. But there's a vast difference in preaching truth and delivering God's message. It is not always an easy thing to determine what God wants you to say.

That's the important thing. We don't need preachers, we need messengers. We need a man with God's message.

And the word of God very often through the genuine prophet to the false prophet was to accuse them of not giving God's word but speaking out of their own heart. Not having seen anything. What is the will of God? What is the will of God? God gave his son something to do and God gives us something to do.

And that something is the only thing worth doing in this life. The only thing. Because that which he gives us to do will count in eternity.

Nothing else will. Nothing else will. A lady came to me last week and she said what do you think the Lord wants me to do? I said you are a wife and a mother, yes.

I said the word of God has a lot to say about what you're to do. You don't even have to ask him about a great amount that is in this word which tells you what you are to be and what you are to do. And the same goes for fathers and for children.

Very clear. But there is a work that he gives you to do. And we must do it.

There is a work in prayer. We are to pray the Lord of the harvest that he will trust forth laborers into the needy harvest of the world. Are you doing that work which he has given you to do? There is much in the study of the scriptures which will reveal very clearly those ministries or that work which God gives every one of us to do.

But there is also a special work that we must do. And as we said last week the most insignificant thing in the sight of men that God gives you to do is far more important than the most glamorous or greatest thing in the eyes of men that man could give you to do. Because what man gives you to do finishes with man.

What God gives you to do when it's done in the power of the Spirit of God for the glory of Jesus Christ is eternal. There will be eternal fruits from it. We must view the present from eternity.

And this makes life thrilling. This is what life is all about. You will recall when the disciples returned to our Lord and he was speaking to the woman by the well.

They were surprised that he spoke to her and so they came to him and they asked him had he any meat? Had he eaten? And you remember what he said to them? He said I have meat to eat which thee know not of. And then he explained to them what that meat was. He said my meat is to do the will of him that sent me.

Now what do you mean by that? Well why do you eat meat? Well meat strengthens you. Meat sustains you. He says that which strengthens me and that which sustains me is doing the will of my Father.

Is that your meat? Not only does meat strengthen and not only does it sustain but it satisfies. You feel satisfied. Some of us have lived long enough to know that this world offers nothing that gives permanent satisfaction.

God never intended that it should. With everything that God gives in this life there is that which is temporal about it. No sooner is it given than the marks of a perishing world are upon it.

Even when a baby is born into the world it immediately begins to die. But what satisfies, what sustains, what strengthens? The will of God. To be able to wake up each morning and to know I am in the place where God wants me to be and today I can do in the enabling of the Spirit and for the glory of Jesus Christ, not for one moment for personal self-satisfaction, that which is the will of God for my life today.

How can you get beyond that? But you know some of us don't do that. Some of us don't do that. We don't find our satisfaction in that.

Now from whence do you derive your satisfaction? Let's be honest with the Lord tonight. From whence do you derive your satisfaction? There are some businessmen who derive their satisfaction from aiming at the first millionth. What an aim! You know I thought tonight as I was preparing this message I wouldn't want to die and leave a million dollars behind me.

I would not. I wouldn't want to die and leave a tenth of that or a twentieth of that behind me with a lost world that needs the gospel. But that's the aim of and the motivation of the feverish activity of many men.

There are other motivations. Jack Nicklaus, what is his aim this great golf? He wants to win the four major championships and if he wins them with what next? Well there's nothing. But you see that which is motivating him is straining every nerve to achieve that aim.

If the Lord tarries in a few years, Nicklaus will no longer be champion. Somebody else will be champion. You see the whole thing is perishing.

The whole thing's perishing. And so we could go on as to what people aim for. What gives them satisfaction? These words spake Jesus and lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father the hour has come.

Glorify thy son that thy son also may glorify thee. Now if you study the tremendous events of the last day in the life of our Lord, you will conclude, I believe, that this prayer must have been uttered about midnight. His last night on earth before the crucifixion.

And after this those terrible events which took place which finally led to the cross the next day. The cross in other words is only hours away. And he knew that.

The Son of God goes up to Jerusalem to be crucified at the Passover. He knew when he was to die and how he was to die and why he would die. And he utters this prayer.

And I want you to notice a very important matter about it. He never once mentions the cross. That to me is very important.

He never once refers to his suffering. Not once. What dominates this prayer? His own.

He prays for his own. What is his great concern? Those that the Father had given him. His concern is not for himself and the suffering that awaits him.

His concern is for his own. That is his burden. Now they were a miserable lot.

But he loved them. And whether you like it or not, we are at least as miserable lot as those disciples were. More so probably.

But you know he loved them. And you might be the most miserable of all this lot here tonight. But I want to tell you that Jesus loved them.

If you belong to them. That's the answer. If you ask a mother who had four children and two of the children were first class rascals.

Well what two children would you like to give up? She'd say I'm not going to give any up. What about the rascals? Oh I love those rascals. It's a wonderful thing to know that the Lord Jesus loves you.

Not because you are worthy but because of what he is. God is love. And because God is love and the man Christ Jesus is love, there is that total disregard for himself and that intense desire for his own.

And so his prayer centers on his own. Now another point I want you to know is this. It's very important.

Our attitude in the present is always determined by what has happened in our past and what we are anticipating will happen in the future. In other words what you are here tonight and your attitudes tonight toward other individuals is determined and has been conditioned by what you have experienced in the past and what you are anticipating in the future. In other words if a person has a sour face it's because they've had a sour past and have not known how to deal with it.

That's true. If a person sits with a critical attitude and a negative attitude toward others and toward everything it's because something in the past has happened to make them negative. If a person is fearful it is almost certain that they are fearing something that is in the future.

Your experience of the past and what you are anticipating about the future determines what you are in the present. Now what our Lord was anticipating in the future dominates his prayer here. And it strengthened him to go to the cross.

The writer to the Hebrews tells us he who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross despising the shame. Now what is he thinking about here this last night upon earth before the cross? What is he thinking about? What's dominating his thoughts? That day when he will have his own with him in the glory to behold his glory. That dominates.

He who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. And so he's praying. What is he praying for? That his own might be kept that ultimately they might be with him where he is and behold his glory.

He's looking forward to that and so the joy that is set before him conditions his attitude in the present. It should condition our attitude. I spoke to Mrs. Cassidy during the week when her husband was very weak.

I said I understand. I understand. I've been there.

I've been there. When I couldn't lie down but just sat hunched over trusting God for every breath for a week. I know what he's thinking.

With death at any moment. The possibility of death overtaking any breath. It's quite a place to be I can assure you.

And I asked the Lord for a word and he gave me who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. They didn't have any air conditioning in that German hospital and it was the hottest part of the year. Didn't even have a fan.

And so I kept a picture before him and it was sent. My wife and my children and we were making our way to the airport to get on the plane to fly home. In other words what sustained me the joy that was set before me.

I kept on thinking of that great day when we'd be leaving Germany for home and it sustained me. It strengthened me. The joy set before me.

There's a great secret there. And this is quite obviously what is happening here in this prayer. Our Lord is concerned only ultimately about that joy that is set before him when his own would behold him in his glory.

He looked beyond the cross to that. I want you to notice something else here. He said, Father glorify thy son.

He asked the Father to glorify him. Now I want to ask you a question. Could he not have his of his own volition at any time return to heaven and being glorified? And I'm not going to answer it.

But if so why did he ask the glorify him? Why did he ask the Father to glorify him? Do you recall in Matthew 26 on one occasion he said, thinkest thou not that I cannot now pray to my Father and he shall pleasantly give me more than 12 legions of angels? Why didn't he say I can call 12 legions of angels? He didn't say that. He said I can pray to my Father and he can send more than 12 legions of angels. He didn't say he could call them.

He said the Father would have to send them. Now why do I say this? When Jesus Christ came down to this earth he gave up everything. He gave up everything.

He gave up his glory. He didn't give up his divinity. Don't misunderstand.

Jesus Christ was always God, but God and man. But he gave up his glory. He's asking the Father to give him back his glory.

You get the point? You remember what he said to his disciples in the great commission? All power is given unto me in heaven and the earth. But I thought all power was his. He gave it up.

He gave it up. He is the creator. In this first chapter we read, in the beginning was the word.

The word was with God. The word was God. All things were made by him.

Without him was not anything made. It was made. He was the creator.

And yet as the man Christ Jesus, he not only gave up his glory, he gave up his power. He gave up his place. He gave up everything.

He actually gave it up. And he became a man. He became a poor man.

He became a despised man. A rejected man. A crucified man.

He finally became a corpse. Jesus, the Son of God. Did he raise himself from the dead? Of course not.

God raised him from the dead. Jesus Christ died. He was a corpse.

And that's why Wesley is so inspired in this tremendous timidity. The immortal died. Yes, the immortal died.

He died. And out of that grave came a man. In the same body that went into that grave.

And God gave a command, what was it? Let all the angels worship him. Now why do you have to say that? Well, Jesus Christ was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. He became a man.

And that's a lower creation than angels. Angels have never worshipped any man. The angels today worship a man in heaven.

And don't forget that. It's very hard for me to preach this message because it's just too much. It's too much.

It's too much. That the Son of God manifested as God with all the glory which is beyond our imagination. You should not only give that up.

Give his power up. Give everything up. And become a man.

Truly a man. Not a synthetic man. A man.

Just as much as I am a man. Or you are a man if you are a man here tonight. Just as much.

A man. And as a man to suffer rejection and the spitting and the suffering of the cross. And to become a corpse.

Finished. For my sins, that's too much to me. If I don't have any sense of obligation after that, I'll never have.

And God raised him from the dead. And he has given him a name which is above every name. And that's the name of Jesus every knee will bow.

All that that man Christ Jesus has in heaven tonight was given back to him by the Father. He gave it all up. And God has given it back to him.

You think for a minute. Some of the familiar passages of scripture. Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Sit on my right hand. Take the position of power. But wasn't he always there? Before he was there, now he's back there.

But he's back there you see as a man. He's been exalted to be a prince and a savior and to give repentance. But everything that Jesus Christ has now, God the Father has given back to him.

In that tremendous prayer of the Apostle Paul. In the first chapter of Ephesians. If you turn to that.

Ephesians chapter one. Verse 15. Wherefore also after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints.

Seek not to give thanks for you. Making mention of you in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. The eyes of the understanding being enlightened that you may know what is the hope of his calling.

And what is it what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us what he believes. According to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.

But I thought that was always his place. No it was given back to him. Given back to him as a man.

And that man Christ Jesus the Lamb of God is worshipped tonight in heaven. At this moment whilst I'm speaking to you there is a man in heaven in a human body. Verse 22 and hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be head over all things to the church which is his body.

The fullness of him filleth all in all. Self-abnegation of the Son of God. His total submission to the Father even to the death of the cross is the ultimate expression of his love for the Father and his love for us.

Do you love Jesus Christ? Have you ever said that you love Jesus Christ? What have you done in your life to prove it? What have you done to prove that you love Jesus Christ? That's the test isn't it? Not what you say but what you have done to prove it. I believe that if you are a true child of God there are various tests that you're going to have to pass. One is certainly the family test.

Whether or not you're going to love Jesus Christ more than your mother, your father, your sister, your brother or you're going to love Jesus Christ more than your children is the family test. There is the test of possession. If you love Jesus Christ you're going to give up all for Jesus Christ.

And the word of God says if you do not forsake all, and these are his words, you cannot be his disciple. It does not mean that you give it all away but it means this that you consider nothing if you have to be your own and at any moment you'll distribute it according to the direction of the Spirit of God. In other words what you do with your possessions and your money has nothing whatsoever to do with your desire.

It's a matter of the will of God. And until you get to that place can you say you love Jesus Christ? Can you? I remember certain milestones in my early Christian career where I was challenged at every one of those points, every one of them, and so will you be challenged. This is a test as to whether or not you love Jesus Christ.

When I left home to go to England for 12 months of campaigning in various parts of British Isles I knew that I was looking at my father for the last time. He was a chronic heart patient. A lot of people didn't understand.

Doesn't matter if they don't understand. It was a test you see, did I love Jesus Christ more than my father? There's the family test, there's the money test, there's the possession test, and the greatest test of all is love for the brethren. And not only love for some of the brethren but all of them.

That's the greatest test of all. There are other tests of course but I think this is the greatest. I don't find it difficult to love sinners.

We had some colored men here working on our building today who were intoxicated and I could have wept for them. Poor men, their backgrounds. What do they know? What privileges did they have? What sort of a family were they born into? Have they ever really heard the gospel? How privileged I am, how privileged you are.

Poor men. I find it very easy to love sinners. But when you go mighty close to shedding your own life blood for a saint and they stick in your face, that's when you find out whether or not you love Jesus Christ.

That's the test. Do you love Jesus Christ? If you say you do, what have you done to prove it? Jesus Christ gave up everything. Everything.

Finally physical life itself for us. And we must give up everything for him. If he had not given up everything, he could never have done the will of his father.

And I believe this, that unless you accept the conditions of discipleship laid down by our Lord, and he will test you at every point, you cannot know the will of God for your life and you will never do it. Now shall we pray? Dear Father, we are treading on ground that is holy, for we have been considering the sacrifice of thy son and what he became for us. A curse, for it is written, cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.

O Lord, wherever we all have need tonight, including this one speaker, will thou not reveal it to us, deal with those areas that are not under your control, where there has not been the emptying, there has been the grasping and the desiring of self-gratification. O Lord, be merciful to us and lead us in thy way, so that we can say, my meat is to do the will of him that sent me. This is what I'm living for, not my home, not my family, not my career, not my pleasure, not my joy, even though you, dear Father, may give me all of them, that is not life.

Life is to know your will and to do it, and to be able to say at the end, I have finished the work that you gave me to do, not the work I chose, Father, not the life I decided upon, but the work you gave me to do. O Father, may it be so. In Jesus name, Amen.

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