

# The Spirit of Glory (John 17:1)

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The sermon explores the profound relationship between Christ's glorification, the role of the Holy Spirit, and the pathway to experiencing God's glory through suffering and faith.*

**Scripture:** John 17:1, 1 Corinthians 1:2, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:6, Philippians 2:7, 1 Thessalonians 2:12, 1 Peter 2:24, 1 Peter 4:14, 1 Peter 5:10, 1 John 3:8

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Glorification"

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## Description

T. Austin-Sparks preaches on the work of the ministry, focusing on the glory that comes from Christ's completed work and His glorification. Christ's humility, dependence, and voluntary acceptance of weakness and shame paved the way for His glorification, becoming the source and ground of glory for believers. The Mediator of glory, the Holy Spirit, rests upon believers, leading them on the pathway to glory through suffering and a faith-filled attitude towards trials.

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## Transcript

From "The Work of the Ministry" - Messages given at Honor Oak - Volume 2.

"These things spake Jesus; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee" (John 17:1).

"If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye; because THE SPIRIT OF GLORY and the Spirit of God resteth upon you" (1 Peter 4:14).

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of glory. All the Holy Spirit's interests and concerns and activities have glory as their object and have nothing else in view by which to satisfy Him. Glory is the object and the end of all God's works and ways - numerous, various and largely unsearchable and inexplicable as they are. His object in everything is glory - and moreover that glory has to do with us. The Scripture precisely states that we are 'called into His kingdom and glory' (1 Thess. 2:12); and many other like statements affirm the same thing - that God's concern for us is glory.

### THE SOURCE AND GROUND OF GLORY

Let us look first of all at the source and the ground of glory, the glory, which concerns us and with which, through the grace of God, we are concerned. The source and the ground of the glory can be simply stated as being Christ glorified. Christ glorified is the source of glory for us and the ground of glory for us.

When He was here on the earth He was not here in glory. He was here in humiliation, and humiliation for Him meant voluntary self-emptying. "He emptied himself" (Phil. 2:7). In this very chapter in John's Gospel we have that wonderful utterance of His: "Father, glorify thou me... with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5). Humiliation meant voluntary self-emptying. It meant no self-fullness. "I can of myself do nothing" (John 5:30). It meant voluntarily accepting a life of complete dependence. The fact of the Holy Spirit coming upon Him and taking charge, immediately leading Him into the wilderness, and all the way through to the end, when He "through the eternal Spirit offered himself" (Heb. 9:14), means that He was dependent, He became dependent; there was no self-sufficiency.

It meant voluntary self-weakness. We are told that He was "crucified through weakness" (2 Cor. 13:4). He accepted that weakness - which meant that He drew every bit of strength from another source. There was no self-strength.

And then it meant voluntary acceptance of shame and dishonour - and what shame, what dishonour! They degraded Him according to their own mind. No self-glory, no self-esteem. "He humbled himself" (Phil. 2:8), He was not here then in glory. For one brief moment on the Mount of Transfiguration He was glorified. But it passed. John says: "Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39).

The fact that He lived such a life of prayer is the proof, the inclusive mark, of all this. He had to draw everything from outside Himself. These opening words of John 17 are very remarkable words, far too profound for our fathoming, altogether beyond us; they would take us completely out of our depths. He was God, very God, and He is praying to God. Something has happened, for God does not pray to God, God does not ask God for things. You see the point. It does not mean that He was other than the Divine Son, the Son of God, very God: but He had for the time being taken a place in which all that was suspended.

But when God raised Him and took Him back, He reversed all that. When Jesus was glorified, it was in every respect just the opposite of His humiliation. That is, He is now no longer emptied - He is full. God has filled Him with all things. Paul speaks of God's "riches in glory" which are "in Christ Jesus" for us (Phil. 4:19). He is filled with all the riches of glory for His own people; full, sufficient - yes, self-sufficient; all sufficiency is in Him. Paul says that in the Colossian letter. He, being filled with all things, has all sufficiency, and we are made sufficient in Him. He is made powerful - "the ruler of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5). No longer weak, but mighty with all the might of Heaven and God. And no longer in shame and dishonour and reproach, but in Heaven "crowned with glory and honour", says the Word (Heb. 2:9). God gave Him honour and glory (2 Pet. 1:17). This is the Scripture. He gave Him "the name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:9). Jesus glorified is the source of glory, the basis of glory.

#### GLORY FOR US ON THE BASIS OF HIS COMPLETED WORK

But then what does that mean? What does this circuit from the glory to the shame, and back to the glory, mean for us? It means that glory for us is upon the basis of His completed work. The glory springs spontaneously out of His glorification, and His glorification is because of the completeness of the work which He did. That means that He has put away everything that is not glorious and that cannot be glorified, in order to make glory for us possible and actual. His completed work is embodied in His own glorified person.

You have probably noted in this rich seventeenth chapter of John how frequently He makes the affirmation - "I have...", "I have...". The 'I have's' of John 17 are the basis of glory. "I glorified thee on the earth" (vs. 4).

There has never been another man on this earth who has glorified God in this way, who has satisfied the requirements of the glory of God as He did. In man-form He has glorified God perfectly. "I glorified thee... having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do" (vs. 4). "I manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me" (vs. 6). "I manifested thy name". Not merely 'I spoke Thy name', 'I mentioned Thy name', 'I gave them a title for God', but "I manifested thy name" - quite a different thing. To manifest the Name, make manifest what God is - that was His life.

"The words which thou gavest me I have given unto them" (vs. 8), and "I have given them thy word" (vs. 14); and they live for ever because He gave them the Word and the words of God, just as we do. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). "I have given them thy word". We live by the Word of God. If we do not lay hold of the Word of God and believe it, if we do not have faith in the promises of God, we die very quickly. It is one thing or the other. Those words are going to be our life or they are not, according to our attitude toward them. He gave them the foundation of life with God in giving His words and His Word. "The glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them" (John 17:22). All these "I have's" - if we got inside of them, opened them up, analysed them, we should find that they are the perfect basis of glory.

But inclusively they mean that the basis of glory is His full mediatorial work - His work as Mediator between God and man. That is inclusive. First of all, His work in relation to SIN. Sin is the thing which makes glory impossible. Sin is the thing which covers the glory. We know it. The glory fades where there is sin. God can never be glorified or give glory where there is sin. But, blessed be God, the Word is full of the affirmation that God intends that there shall be glory, and that He has secured His intention by what His Son has done in relation to the thing that is in the way of the glory. Sin is dealt with - has been dealt with completely and utterly. Then SELF is always in the way of the glory; we know that. What we are in ourselves - that is always hindering the glory, spoiling the glory, driving out or shutting out the glory. Christ has dealt with it. He has taken us, as to what we are in ourselves, and put us out of God's sight. And more, it is the works of the DEVIL that have covered the glory in this world, got in the way of the glory; but He was "manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8), and Satan's works were taken up by Him and destroyed. Blessed be God!

And all human helplessness was compassed by that helplessness which He voluntarily accepted. Yes, I know there are two sides to the whole story. He is laying down His life and no man is taking it from Him (John 10:18). He is perfectly deliberate in what He is doing. He is fulfilling the predetermined counsels of God when He goes to the Cross. Nevertheless, in a certain sense He is in the hands of those men. There is weakness, helplessness. "He was crucified through weakness" (2 Cor. 13:4). They appeal to Him to come down, and they deride Him. "He saved others; himself he cannot save" (Matt. 27:42). How true those words were. He could not save Himself because He was saving the whole world. It is a law. You will never save anybody if you try to save yourself. But that was so in His case in a deeper sense. All human helplessness was compassed in the weakness of that beloved Man. All this human helplessness of ours is in the way of the glory. You know it well enough. If you begin to sink down into your own weakness and helplessness, into what you are, in that way, and say, 'I cannot', where is the glory? It departs. While conscious always of dependence and emptiness and weakness in ourselves, there is another attitude which we may take, which lets in the glory.

'Glory crowns the Mercy-seat' - that is the point; and spell Mercy-seat with a capital M, for it is the Lord Jesus. 'Glory crowns the Mercy-seat'. Go back to the Old Testament again. It was there in the Most Holy Place, at the Mercy-seat, that the glory had its focal point. They were called the "cherubim of glory" (Heb.

9:5) as they overshadowed the Mercy-seat. It is the place of glory. But what is the Mercy-seat? It is the Throne of grace, the blood-sprinkled meeting-place between God and man. Look at what Israel were in themselves: what a story of everything dishonourable, as to all that they were in themselves. But this perfect God meets them in His Mediator at the Mercy-seat - 'and glory', not shame, 'crowns the Mercy-seat'. His work accomplished, in all these respects and much more, is the basis of all glory for us. We need to get a firmer hold on it and keep our hold on it, or else the glory will go out. The measure of our faith-hold on Christ glorified is the measure of the glory in our lives. No matter how much we may believe and hold to the doctrines of our redemption, atonement, justification, and all the rest, unless we have an inward hold on the truth of Christ glorified, the doctrine counts for nothing so far as the glory is concerned.

## THE MEDIATOR OF THE GLORY

Then come nearer. The Mediator of the glory. "The Spirit of glory... resteth upon you" (1 Pet. 4:14). The Holy Spirit has come as the Spirit of the glorified Christ. "The Spirit was not yet given: because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39). Putting that round the other way, we might say, 'Well, the Holy Spirit could only come on the ground of Jesus being glorified, and Jesus could only be glorified when He had finished His work: so the Spirit comes on the ground of Christ glorified, in virtue of the perfected work of our redemption, of our sanctification, and of our glorification.' He has come as the Spirit of Christ in glory, as the Mediator of all that it means that Christ is in glory; and let us remember that glory is not a place but a state. When we receive the Holy Spirit, as we do when we are born from above, we receive the Spirit of glory. He is called "the Spirit of glory"; that is the capacity in which He has come: so that we receive Him as that, and if we live and abide in the Spirit, the Spirit of glory rests upon us. If we get out of the Spirit, the glory gets out of us. Any of us, at any time, getting out of the Spirit, gets out of the glory. When we are out of the glory, in some way or other, for any reason, we have got out of the Spirit. We know that to be the case all too well. When we are in the Spirit there is glory.

Let us turn to our friend John Bunyan. 'After these things the Interpreter takes them apart again and has them first into a room where was a man that could look no way but downwards with a muck-rake in his hand. There stood one over his head with a celestial crown in his hand and proffered him that crown for his muck-rake, but the man did neither look up nor regard but raked to himself the straws, the small sticks, the dust of the floors.' Oh, our muck-raking amongst the rubbish and filth and pollution of what we are in ourselves, turning it over and sorting it out, looking no way, but downward! Where is the glory? There is no glory in that.

Let us regard the statements of the New Testament seriously and in a practical way. He has 'borne our sins in His own body on the tree' (1 Pet. 2:24). We were "crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20). God has "raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him" (Eph. 2:6), has given us to share His place in heaven. He has "called (us) unto his eternal glory" (1 Pet. 5:10). We are "sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 1:2). It is all there as accomplished fact. It is the way of the glory, the only ground of the glory. No one muck-raking in human depravity, can ever be in the Holy Spirit. That is a solemn and serious thing to say. You are not in the Spirit if you are muck-raking. The Holy Spirit takes away the muck-rake and gives you a crown of glory in its place - not hereafter, but now. He is against all muck-raking.

Let us remember that whatever the Holy Spirit ministers is intended for glory. A ministry by the Holy Spirit is a ministry which ministers glory. We may have to preach Romans 6 and preach Romans 6 forcibly. We were crucified with Christ. But that truth was never intended to bring us under condemnation and depression. It was intended to bring us to glory. The ministry of any one truth, unbalanced and unrelated,

will bring a heavy burden upon us, will weigh us down and make us depressed people. Such is not Holy Ghost ministry. There are times for us to be convicted of wrong, but the Spirit would lead us at once to the place where the wrong is put right in the Cross of the Lord Jesus, to get it out of the way to make room for the glory. Yes, solemn words, serious words, if necessary: the Lord will make real to us what fallen human nature is, but always and only to get it all out of the way and to lead at once to the glory.

## THE PATHWAY TO THE GLORY

There is a final thing to remember. The pathway of glory is the pathway of suffering. Look at Peter's letters, and you have three outstanding things. What are they? The Holy Spirit, suffering and glory. John 17 is just that. The pathway to the glory is suffering. "If ye are reproached for the name of Christ" - then you ought to be as miserable as possible? - no, "blessed are ye; because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you" (1 Peter 4:14).

The Lord give us grace to keep our eyes on the positive side of all His dealings. It is our attitude toward His dealings that makes so much difference. There will be suffering - yes; but the attitude toward the suffering determines whether it is going to be shame or glory, darkness or light. Our attitude of faith toward our sufferings will let in the glory. That is a very practical matter with the Lord and for us. We are so often asking the Lord to change things, to deal with things which stand in the way of glory. If only the Lord would just deal with this and that, change it, move it out of the way, then we could glorify Him. It would be so much more to His glory if He did that.

The Lord says. 'No, not that way.' This glory is something very much more than being cheerful in happy circumstances. This glory is born out of the utmost depths of agony and suffering. This is real glory, which is much more than the glory of this world and the glory of favourable circumstances. The Lord says, 'You get into the place where there is glory in your sufferings and your adversities, and if I think it good, then I will change circumstances. I am waiting for you to climb on top: let the glory in, amidst your adversities, and then perhaps we will see about other things.'

That is very practical. We get down under our troubles and sufferings and begin to get depressed and to complain to the Lord; we want the Lord to do something about it. But we do not get anywhere along that line at all. Sooner or later the Lord comes and says, 'Real glory shows itself against a dark background: when the glory is there, whatever I see fit to do in the situation I will do; but first of all glorify Me in the fires.'

The Lord give us grace!

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