

FUTURE GLORY IS COMING TO ALL BELIEVERS

John 17:24-26

²⁴ *"Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.*

²⁵ *"O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me;*

²⁶ *and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."*

The theme in Jesus' prayer recorded in this chapter is **faith leading to unity**, which leads others to faith. In other words, faith in the promises of God that at this time were brought to them by Jesus would lead to a common **unity** of faith that would bind them together as brothers and sisters sharing the same Father (God) and the same Brother (Jesus). They share this **unity** by each having the Holy Spirit of God dwelling within them for the purpose of bringing glory to God. **Glory** is yet another aspect of the **unity** theme that has been emphasized throughout this high priestly prayer that Jesus is praying to His Father. Jesus prays to the Father that the apostles He has been given by the Father will learn these lessons concerning **faith** and **unity** and **glory**. To be able to see the glory of God in Christ will create the kind of **unity** being discussed here. And that **unity** when shown to the world will make the world aware of the glory of God as well.¹ How do you think the Church is doing in reflecting the glory of God to the world through perfect love and **unity** within the Church?

We have already looked at the passage on love in 1 John 4, but I would like to review it again from the New Living Translation with some additional comments added to the text for clarity. This will therefore be a paraphrase-commentary regarding the text from **1 John 4:9-19 NLT**:

God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love. God loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

Since God loved us that much, He must certainly want us to love each other in the same way because He is the perfect example that we should

¹ Carson, D. A.: *New Bible Commentary*: 21st Century Edition. 4th ed. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994, S. Jn 17:20.

follow. So we should love each other in the same way that God loved Jesus and in the same way that Jesus loved us.

No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other as God loved Jesus and Jesus loved us, we will show the world what it is like to live in harmony with one another, expressing selfless love for each other.

Because God and Christ live in us in the form of the Holy Spirit, we are capable of showing the world what the love of God is like, and when they see the peace and harmony it brings, they too will want to have the Holy Spirit of God living within them so they may enjoy that same peace and harmony. And there is only one way to get that and that is through faith in the work which the Son, Jesus, has done by paying the price for the sin of anyone who is willing to repent of that sin and accept Christ as their personal Savior. That is, they accept Him as the one and only way of having their sins forgiven so they might have eternal life in Heaven. God lives in us, and His love is brought to full expression in us.

Now as has been said, when a person accepts Christ as his/her personal Savior, God then sends His Holy Spirit to live within them. The Spirit is proof of our faith and that we live in God and He lives in us. This concept is impossible for anyone to understand fully because it includes a relationship where the Triune God is involved in a relationship with each believer. It simply means that if you have accepted Christ as Savior you have become one with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and He has become one with you.

That means that you now have all the power and resources of God living within you and available to you to accomplish anything within His will. All you need do is ask for it.

Furthermore the apostles had seen with their own eyes and can now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

They saw Him crucified and then they saw Him come alive again after three days. They have witnessed the miracle of the resurrection with their own eyes and have recorded what they have seen so that future generations may also know this truth.

All who confess that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them and they live in God. Because God sent His Son to die for our sins we know how much God loves us, and we can with confidence put our trust in that love. God is the perfect example of how to love perfectly, and all who have God's Holy Spirit living within them have the potential to love as God loves.

As we allow the Holy Spirit of God within us to direct our lives, our love grows more perfect. Because we know that kind of love we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face God with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world knowing that the perfect love He allows us to experience is a love that has no fear, because the love of God drives away all fear. If we are afraid for any reason, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced God's perfect love that comes through Christ. We can only love each other with that same kind of love because he loved us first and showed us how we could express that love to others. When we do that, others can feel the sincerity and genuineness of that love and will then seek their own forgiveness having witnessed what it has done in the lives of others who have already made that commitment.

Christians may belong to different fellowships, but they all belong to the same God and Savior and to each other.

“When Wycliffe translator Doug Meland and his wife moved into a village of Brazil’s Fulnio Indians, he was referred to simply as ‘*the white man.*’ The term was by no means complimentary, since other white men had exploited them, burned their homes, and robbed them of their lands.

“But after the Melands learned the Fulnio language and began to help the people with medicine and in other ways, they began calling Doug ‘*the respectable white man.*’

“When the Melands began adapting the customs of the people, the Fulnio gave them greater acceptance and spoke of Doug as ‘*the white Indian.*’

“Then one day, as Doug was washing the dirty, bloodcaked foot of an injured Fulnio boy, he overheard a bystander say to another: ‘*Whoever heard of a white man washing an Indian’s foot before? Certainly this man is from God!*’ From that day on, whenever Doug would go into an Indian home, it would be announced ‘*Here comes the man God sent us.*’”²

This is what God wants the world to see in every individual Christian and in every Christian Church. It is that kind of love shown in **unity** with one another that makes evident to the world what those who believe in God can be like, and therefore their lives bring glory to the God of Heaven.

² Tan, Paul Lee: *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: A Treasury of Illustrations, Anecdotes, Facts and Quotations for Pastors, Teachers and Christian Workers.* Garland TX: Bible Communications, 1996, c1979.

The disciples had often displayed a spirit that would not be considered one of perfect love. It had been more a spirit of selfishness, competition, and disunity; and this must have broken Jesus' heart. We do not doubt that His heart has been broken over and over again when He looks at the condition of the Church today. The Puritan preacher Thomas Brooks wrote: "*Discord and division become no Christian. For wolves to worry the lambs is no wonder, but for one lamb to worry another, this is unnatural and monstrous.*"³ To put that in the language of today, we might say:

"Arguing and bickering among Christians makes them look foolish as well as holding Christ up to ridicule by the world. For a ravenous wolf to frighten a lamb can be expected, but for one lamb to frighten another is simply foolish and self-destructive."

We have seen in John 17:22 that we already have God's glory within us: "*The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one.*" Paul also wrote in Romans 8:29: "*For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters*" (NLT). Then John confirms in John 17:24 that we will behold the glory of Christ in Heaven, that same glory we have been promised we will possess:

"Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world."

As we grow in faith and obedience to God, the glory within us begins to grow and to reveal itself in what we say and do and the way we say and do it. People do not see us and glorify us; they see God and glorify Him.⁴ Remember **unity** comes as the result of the Holy Spirit living within us and our turning over our will to God so that the Holy Spirit might accomplish God's will through us. It is through this **unity** expressed in love for one another that the world comes to see and believe the truth of the Gospel.

Matthew 5:16 NAS:

"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NAS:

¹⁹ *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?*

²⁰ *For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.*

So the Holy Spirit working and living in you shows God's glory to the world. We also see in this passage from 1 Corinthians 6 that our individual bodies are a

³ Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. Jn 17:20.

⁴ Ibid.

temple of God. Yes, that skin and bones you live inside of can also glorify God. You ask, “*how?*” When you live a clean, obedient life in the midst of this self-centered and pleasure-seeking society, that life shines out to other people. If you are one who has not lived a clean life in the past, when people see how the Holy Spirit changes you and your life becomes clean, God is glorified. Note, however, that verse 20 points out that you need to make the decision to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in this matter.

One of the things that most impresses the world is a community of Christians or a church where believers love each other in the way we have discussed and live together in harmony. It is this kind of expression of faith through action that God wants in the world. What a testimony it is to the world when we as believers can disagree on minor matters but still be one in Christ.

John 17:21 NAS:

²¹ *That they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, **so that the world may believe** that You sent Me.*

The lost world cannot see God, but they can see Christians. What they see in those Christians is what they will believe about God. If they see love and unity, they will believe that God is love. If they see hatred and division, they will reject the message of the Gospel. Jesus has assured us that some will believe because of our witness (John 17:20), but we must make sure that our witness is true and loving. Some Christians behave more like prosecuting attorneys and judges instead of faithful witnesses, and this only turns unbelieving sinners away from Christ and His message of salvation.⁵

John 17:24 NAS:

*“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, **be with Me where I am**, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.*

Jesus knew for certain that He would be returning to Heaven so He spoke as if it was in the present tense. For believers to participate in the love of God that is in Christ can only result eventually in sharing the presence of Christ.⁶ All believers will be with Jesus after they die because they are one with Him.

The phrase in verse 24, “***that they may see***” (*hina theôrosin*) might better be translated “***that they may keep on beholding***.” It refers to the endless joy of seeing Jesus “as he is” in Heaven (1 John 3:2).⁷ Imagine arriving in Heaven and seeing Jesus in all His

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Pfeiffer, Charles F.; Harrison, Everett Falconer: *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1962, S. Jn 17:24.

⁷ Robertson, A.T.: *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Oak Harbor: 1997, S. Jn 17:24/.

resurrection glory and knowing that one day you will share with Him in that same kind of glory. We wish we could give you more details about that but we cannot. It must be enough for you to know that here in this high priestly prayer to His Father, Jesus is insuring that if you are a believer, you are guaranteed eternal life in Heaven and you will share in the same kind of resurrection glory that Jesus will have.

Philippians 3:20-21 NLT:

²⁰ *But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior.*

²¹ *He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control.*

The Father always answers Jesus' prayers so you can be assured He will answer this one as well. If you know Jesus as your Savior, you will one day see and experience His glory in Heaven.

1 John 3:1-2 NLT:

¹ *See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know him.*

² *Dear friends, we are already God's children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is.*

In John 14:3 Jesus told why He wanted His disciples to be with Him in Heaven: "*If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.*" In John 12:26 Jesus promised, "*If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also.*" That seems to make it pretty clear that all believers are going to be with Jesus in Heaven for eternity.

John 17:11 NAS:

"I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are."

Jesus also prayed to the Father that His disciples might see the glory which God had given Him. Do you know what the most wonderful thing about Heaven is going to be? Enjoying the perfect love and fellowship of Christ and other saints forever.

Now listen to the glorious future that you have in store for you if you are a believer.

1 Corinthians 15:35-58 NLT:

³⁵ *But someone may ask, "How will the dead be raised? What kind of bodies will they have?"*

³⁶ *What a foolish question! When you put a seed into the ground, it doesn't grow into a plant unless it dies first.*

³⁷ *And what you put in the ground is not the plant that will grow, but only a bare seed of wheat or whatever you are planting.*

³⁸ *Then God gives it the new body he wants it to have. A different plant grows from each kind of seed.*

³⁹ *Similarly there are different kinds of flesh—one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish.*

⁴⁰ *There are also bodies in the heavens and bodies on the earth. The glory of the heavenly bodies is different from the glory of the earthly bodies.*

⁴¹ *The sun has one kind of glory, while the moon and stars each have another kind. And even the stars differ from each other in their glory.*

⁴² *It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever.*

⁴³ *Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength.*

⁴⁴ *They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, there are also spiritual bodies.*

⁴⁵ *The Scriptures tell us, "The first man, Adam, became a living person." But the last Adam—that is, Christ—is a life-giving Spirit.*

⁴⁶ *What comes first is the natural body, then the spiritual body comes later.*

⁴⁷ *Adam, the first man, was made from the dust of the earth, while Christ, the second man, came from heaven.*

⁴⁸ *Earthly people are like the earthly man, and heavenly people are like the heavenly man.*

⁴⁹ *Just as we are now like the earthly man, we will someday be like the heavenly man.*

⁵⁰ *What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever.*

⁵¹ *But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. **We will not all die, but we will all be transformed!***

⁵² ***It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed.***

⁵³ *For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.*

⁵⁴ *Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: "Death is swallowed up in victory.*

⁵⁵ *O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"*

⁵⁶ *For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power.*

⁵⁷ *But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

⁵⁸ *So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.*

Believers also receive Christ's **glory** through His indwelling of them through the Holy Spirit. In that way, they share in His glory because He is one with them, but that is not the kind of glory that is spoken of here. This glory is the kind that will be just like the glory of Christ they will one day see in Heaven.

Now for the concluding two verses of this prayer, John 17:25-26 NAS:

²⁵ *"O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me;*

²⁶ *and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."*

Jesus makes clear here the importance of truth and love in the Church. Believers know God's name, which reveals His nature, and even share in that divine nature. Jesus makes it clear that *truth* and *love* must go together (see Ephesians 4:15). It has well been said that truth without love is brutality, but love without truth is hypocrisy. The mind grows by taking in truth, but the heart grows by giving love. Knowledge alone can lead to pride (1 Corinthians 8:1), and love alone can lead to wrong decisions (see Philippians 1:9–10). Christian love must not be blind!⁸

It is not difficult to see the priorities Jesus had for His ministry as we read this prayer. First and foremost was the desire to bring **glory to God**. He was further devoted to the righteousness and holiness of God's chosen people, the Jews; the unity of the Church; and teaching the Gospel message to a world of people in need of salvation for their sins. We would be well advised to follow His example. Sometimes even the most dedicated of believers loses sight of the fact that they are still living in a sinful body and that they will one day stand before God to give an account of their lives.

Romans 14:10-12 NAS:

¹⁰ *But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your*

⁸ Pfeiffer, Charles F.; Harrison, Everett Falconer: *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1962, S. Jn 17:24.

brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

¹¹ *For it is written, "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD."*

¹² *So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.*

Now I am aware that some people do not think these verses apply to Christians. However, Paul uses several words here that show us they do indeed apply to Christians. First, he talks about "*your brother*," a term which he uses to describe fellow believers. Also he says, "*each one of us*," including himself as well as the believers to whom he is writing in the group that will have to give accounts of themselves to God.

In all the sermons today that seek to emphasize the positive elements of Christianity, and there are many, there is a strong reluctance among preachers to bring up accountability issues. Christians are accountable for how they live and what they do. How will it be for you, dear Christian friend, when you have to stand before Christ and explain why you lived your life as you did and why you did or said certain things? Ask yourself, "Will I be able to say as Jesus did in John 17:4: '*I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.*'"

Because of God's love, mercy, and grace, if you are a believer you have already been glorified by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (John 17:22). This guarantees that you are going to Heaven. You will never lose your salvation. It also gives you the power to live a life that is pleasing to Christ.

John 15:5 HCSB:

⁵ *"I am the vine; you are the branches. **The one who remains in Me and I in him** produces much fruit, because **you can do nothing without Me.**"*

Christ by His Spirit takes up permanent residence within all that believe in Him; they are "*one Spirit*." Christ has now closed His prayer for His apostles, and **in them for His Church through all ages**. In this prayer Christ has provided us with everything that we will ever need. Are you getting the benefit of that provision?