

Christ boldly responded to His foes in John 2 and 5, declaring freely that His work was *co-extensive* with the Father's, proclaiming Himself equal with God. He promised that *after three days in the hands of His foes*, He would raise this body up (John 2:19).

This week's notes will clarify the *motivation* behind Christ's boldness – not to vindicate Himself, to further His own cause, or to assuage His hurt feelings about being rejected by men. Rather, it was *His zeal for His Father's glory* that drove Him to so fiercely oppose His enemies. Their hatred of His Father drove Him to take stands against wicked unbelievers at every turn. His wrath was an expression of His great devotion and love for His Father.

May the Lord likewise purify our passions so that high regard for God's name and honor may control our reaction to this God-hating world. May the world, indeed, learn from our standing for God's honor that we love the Father, just as the world witnessed the filial love which drove our Savior. As John 14:31 says: "I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father."

Mon/Tues: Read John 17:1-5

A Plan Perfectly Executed

Christ shows His love from eternity for His Father by rejoicing in His Father's plans in creation and redemption. He and God the Father, delight in the world of men which they created.

Then I was beside Him, *as* a master workman;
And I was *His* delight daily,
Rejoicing always before Him,
Rejoicing in the world, His earth,
And *having* my delight in the sons of mankind.

(Proverbs 8:30-31 NASV)

Delight in the Father's work was part of the eternal love which the Father and the Son shared from eternity. Indeed, we know God is love because we see the Father loving the Son through the Holy Spirit. There is a glorious, eternal reality of love whenever we think of God the Father and Son, sharing eternal communion with the Holy Spirit.

In John 17:1-5, Jesus describes the love which He and the Father shared in the contractual terms of what theologians call "The Covenant of Redemption." Notice how Jesus speaks of glorifying His Father by finishing the work which the Father gave Him to do: completing the work of salvation. He also has in mind the Covenant of Redemption as He respectfully asks His Father to keep His end of the bargain by *glorifying His Son as Mediator once again* (John 17:5). He was set apart to be our Savior. In terms of Proverbs 8:23, Christ was "set up" as our Savior in this covenant. This is why in John 17, Jesus effectively says, "Now restore me to that place of glory which my finished work deserves."

Meditate and Pray: Give thanks that God the Father answered Christ's prayer, exalting His Son as our Savior. When His work on earth was done, He received Him back into the glory of Heaven as the Son of Man, there to stand victorious on our behalf forever. Compare John 17:1-5 with God's exalting His Son in our nature in Daniel 7:13-14.

Sing about the exalted place that belongs to Christ in Heaven with hymn # 318 of our red Trinity Hymnal:

Lo! he comes, with clouds descending,
once for favored sinners slain;
thousand thousand saints attending
swell the triumph of his train.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
God appears on earth to reign.

Ev'ry eye shall now behold him,
robed in dreadful majesty;
those who set at naught and sold him,
pierced, and nailed him to the tree,
deeply wailing, deeply wailing,
shall the true Messiah see.

Wednesday: Read John 17:5-10

Glorified as Man

Peering through the window at this heavenly conversation, remember that Christ is speaking about His glory as tied to His mediating and saving work, rather than His unchangeable, essential glory that He always has had as God's Son. He speaks of this glory (verse 5) as something that *that He asks to be restored*. In other words, Christ was glorified in Heaven from eternity as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (1 Peter 1:19-20). Now He is asking that all Heaven would witness, in His upcoming death on the Cross and Resurrection, His glory as God's appointed Savior for sinners. By the Cross, Christ is glorified as our Prophet, Priest and King in His office as our Savior (John 12:27-28). This is the very glory for which Christ prays in John 17 – *His economic glory as our Savior and Mediator*.

Meditate and Pray: Give thanks that Jesus Christ, who possessed by nature all Divine Glory as a member of the Trinity, committed Himself to also *attaining* glory in *our* nature as *our* Savior. His zeal was to honor the Father by finishing the work of salvation which God gave Him to do. The glorious result is that now our nature is glorified in Heaven by the God-Man and our interests are furthered as He stands there to obtain all blessings necessary for our salvation. Our inheritance is now secure! And in Christ's Heavenly exaltation, we now are "blessed in the heavenly places with every blessing in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3). Hallelujah!

The glory to which Christ refers in John 17 is His *mediatorial glory*, now bestowed on the church. Listen to what He says in those two places:

I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am **glorified** in them.

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just 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 have sent me. **The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one ...**

The bold emphasis is my own – to stress that the glory of which Christ speaks is something (or rather Someone) that He pours out (not only on His Apostles) but on those who, “will believe through their word.” The result will be that the world “will believe that Christ has been sent from Heaven” (John 17:21), when the world sees the glory of God poured out upon His church through the Holy Spirit.

Now ask yourselves - When did this happen? Turn with me to Acts 4:31-33:

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.

Is this not a fulfillment of Jesus’ prayer in John 17:21-23? Note what happens. The church prays in Acts 4:24-30. God answers their prayer by pouring out the Holy Spirit of glory in Acts 4:31. By the power of the Spirit they are unified in “heart and soul” and able to testify that Jesus Christ is resurrected (Acts 4:32-33). On the Day of Pentecost, Christ’s prayer that the church would be unified in powerful witness comes true when Peter stands up to preach and the Spirit is poured out (Acts 2:33).

Meditate and Pray: How mighty are Christ’s prayers for His church! He alone, by His Spirit, is able to bring God’s glory and blessing down upon the Church. As Von Zinzendorf says:

Christian hearts, in love united,
Seek alone in Jesus rest;
Has He not your love excited?
Then let love inspire each breast;

Members on our head depending
Lights reflecting Him, our sun,
Brethren His commands attending,
We in Him, our Lord, are one.

Come, then, come, O flock of Jesus,
Covenant with Him anew;
Unto Him who conquered for us,
Pledge we love and service true;

And should our love’s union holy
Firmly linked no more remain,
Wait ye at His footstool lowly,
Till He draw it close again.

Sat/Sun: Read John 17:20-23 & Acts 5:25-32**The Universal Solvent**

God the Father answered Christ's prayer (John 17:20-23) by pouring out the Glorious Gift of the Holy Spirit upon sinful flesh, unto repentance, faith and the salvation which flows from this Spirit outpoured. Our passage in Acts is an encouraging illustration of the Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in His office as our Mediator and Savior. Consider how Peter and the other Apostles declare to the hostile religious leaders Christ's exaltation into Glory and the outpouring of His Spirit of repentance. Those leaders demanded their silence, but the Apostles said in their determination to continue preaching, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:27-29)

In Acts 5:31, Christ is "exalted with God's right hand to give repentance and forgiveness of sins."

Now if, dear hearer, thou art distressed this morning beneath the burden of sin, I pray thee to catch at this blessed sentence, for there is honey here which shall take away the bitterness of thy soul. I think I heard thee say, "Fain would I have Christ as Prince and Saviour; I am willing enough; but this hard heart, this rebellious will, what can I do with them?"

Listen: "He is exalted to give repentance." This does not mean, as some have said, to give space for repentance. We must not add words to Scripture. Nor does it mean to make repentance acceptable. Look at the text, and no trace of such a meaning is there. But "to give repentance," and repentance itself is intended, which is as much the gift of the ascended Savior as the forgiveness which follows upon it...

... Repentance includes a most needful sense of sin, and the Savior can give thee this by his Spirit. He can fill thy soul with the barbed arrows of conviction till thy heart bleeds with inward grief on account of sin, or he can work more gently and make thee repent by melting thee beneath the smiles of love. He can make thee sing—

"Thy mercy is more than a match for my heart,
Which wonders to feel its own hardness depart;
Dissolved by thy goodness, I fall to the ground,
And weep to the praise of the mercy I've found."

Charles Spurgeon, sermon on Acts 5:31:

Meditate and Pray: Lord, dissolve this hardness of our heart which we cannot even feel. Open the blinders of our eyes of faith which are bound by false and limiting beliefs. May we rest even more today in the patient work of your Spirit, set loose at Pentecost, which gently and relentlessly works until the Final Day.