

John 17: 1-11 (May 28, 2017)

Eternal Life

John 17: 1-4

17After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, 2since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. 4I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do.

Eternal Life

Today’s passage is it by far the longest prayer we have from Jesus. It’s a unique glimpse into Jesus’ prayer life and his personal relationship with God. This prayer is confident and passionate and inspiring. This is the real Lord’s Prayer, and we are privileged to eavesdrop on it.

So what can we learn about Jesus from his prayer?

We learn a little bit about **why Jesus was on earth in the first place**. The work that Jesus came to do is to give eternal life to all those God has given him. And he defines eternal life in an interesting way. When most people think of eternal life, they automatically think duration.

But Jesus doesn’t **define eternal life** using a watch or a calendar. For Jesus eternal life is not about duration but about relation. Eternal life begins when we begin to know God.

The traditional thinking is that when we die then we’ll have eternal life and receive the fullness of our relationship with God. Why wait? Eternal life doesn’t start after we die. It’s now, and God wants us to experience his full love and forgiveness and empowerment right now.

But believing in that and trusting in that is very, very hard in our world today. “OK, my eternal life has started...now what? What does that look like?” A key word in this passage is “glory.” What does it mean to glorify?

We **glorify God** when we call on God’s name, when we pray to God, when we ask God for strength, when we give God thanks for our blessing or for carrying us through difficult times.

But Jesus did more than glorify God by speaking his name; he did it by living out his call. By virtue of our faith, we are known to others as followers of God. Therefore, what we do has an impact on how we represent God in this world. Since Jesus went around healing and eating with sinners and welcoming outcasts and reaching out to the poor, what does that tell us about God?

By extension, what do OUR actions say about God? Through our habits, our spending, our treatment of others, are we glorifying God? Each time we live as God has called us to live, each time we speak God’s name with our words and our actions, we are glorifying God. We are completing the work God has called us to do.