

The Love of God for His People

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Preacher: Mr Donald Macleod (Student)

- [0 : 0 0] Well, let's turn back for a very short time to the chapter we read, John chapter 17. God's well, John 17. For a short time, looking again for our text, verses 22 down to verse 26.
- John 17, verses 22 down to verse 26. For the sake of a text, we can take verse 23. I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one.
- So the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. As we look at this beautiful, beautiful chapter of Scripture and see these beautiful words of prayer from the Son to the Father.
- We find ourselves, I hope in every verse, just marvelling, marvelling at the beauty of the prayer of our Saviour to His Father.
- For a short time this evening, I want us to just ask one simple question as we look at our verses. As we look at verses, mainly verses 22, 26. But taking in the whole chapter as we go through it, and please do keep your Bibles open as we look at this chapter.
- [1 : 1 7] I want us to ask a simple question. How much does God love His people? How much, dear Christian, does God love you?
- Can we even presume to even answer this question? Perhaps this question is too big for us. Perhaps you're uncomfortable being asked that question. Perhaps you're uncomfortable having to consider that question.
- But as a Christian, the reality is, dear brother, dear sister of this evening, that we can know the answer to this question. And we can know the answer to this question and know it for certain.
- As we said in our section here, we're in the middle of this beautiful prayer, as a son prays to the Father just before his arrest.
- And in our section here, verse 22 down to verse 26, I want us to look at just three, just three of the many, many, many beautiful truths we have.
- [2 : 2 3] But three of the wonderful truths we see here. As we look at what it means to be known, loved, and kept by Jesus. And this evening, as we look at these three verses under three headings.
- First of all, looking at glory, then unity, and then love. Glory, unity, and then love.
- For those who are listening in who know their Saviour, those who are listening in who know Jesus and who serve Jesus as your Lord and as your Saviour, listen to these verses.
- Spend time listening to these verses this evening and hear from the very lips of your Saviour, of the glory that you share with him, of the unity that you have with him, and with the love with which you are loved in him.
- And you can know, dear Christian, this very moment, as you listen to this, as you stand before God, this very moment, you are kept and loved by your Saviour.
- [3 : 3 1] But there remains no longer any wrath hanging over you, dear Christian. As you appear this very moment, as perfected and covered by the finished work of your Saviour.

Have these things in mind as we look at the wonder of these verses. For any of you who are listening this evening who as of yet don't know Jesus, we again thank you for tuning in.

We're so happy to have you. We really are. Please, as we go through these verses, hear, listen out what it is to know full forgiveness in Jesus.

Hear what it is to know that this very evening, this very night, you can know and know for certain that you are loved without catch, without special formula.

Learn and listen, and please listen closely as we look at these verses, of how you can know Jesus as your Saviour, and how you can know exactly what the God of Heaven thinks about you.

[4 : 32] Because right now, whilst you're still outside of Christ, whilst Jesus is not honoured in your life as Lord and Saviour, you know, you know deep down, perhaps even you know quite clearly, where you stand before God.

You know that you stand before God just now, and He is over you in His wrath, and over you in His righteous wrath, and His righteous judgment, because you're outside of Christ. So please listen this evening to these verses, as we hear the wonder of what it is, the beauty of what it is to know Christ, and to be known by Him.

Glory, unity, and love in these verses. First of all, looking with me, please, to verse 22. Verse 22, we see glory. We share in the glory of our Saviour.

Verse 22, the glory that you have given me, I have given to them. The glory you've given me, I have given to them.

The glory from the Father to the Son. The glory you have given me. We receive our glory from being in Jesus. We are well aware, if we're being honest, just how unglorious we truly are.

[5 : 58] Just how unglorious we stand just now. If we're being very honest, I'm sure right now, even you've had a long day, a long week, you've sinned, you've just done and said and thought the things you know to be wrong, you've caught yourself doing the same sin, you've caught yourself saying the same thing, you've caught yourself just making a mess of things, you're thinking, I am not glorious.

I am not covered in glory, I am covered in shame, I am covered in misery, and so on and so on. And dear Christian, that might be true in a human sense, you might have made a mess of your day, a mess of your week.

But this verse comes, and this verse tells us that we share in the glory of our Saviour. His glory comes from the Father.

The question is, how much glory does the Father give the Son? In verse 22, the glory you've given me, how much glory does the Father bestow, give, pour out onto the Son?

Well, the Father has showered the Son, showered that glory upon the Son eternally. Eternally. The eternal Father gives his eternal Son eternal glory.

[7 : 14] How much glory does God the Son deserve? If we even use that word, he deserves eternal glory. How much glory does the first person of the Godhead give the second person of the Godhead?

It's eternal. The Father gives and showers the Son an eternal glory. The glory the Trinity shares, it is an eternal, perfect glory.

Of course, the full glory of Jesus was hidden whilst he was on earth. It was veiled in his humanity. We see that glimpses of his full glory, of course, being shown to us in various times.

The most notable time, of course, is Matthew 17, for example, the Transfiguration, where we see Peter and John just having a glimpse, even the smallest, perhaps, glimpse, of the reality of the glory of Jesus.

As he's shining before them, they see just a glimpse into the full reality of who he is and the extent of his glory. Yes, veiled in human flesh, but we know that he was here on earth, present, present in the full glory of his deity.

[8 : 31] Our glorious Saviour, from all eternity living and existing in perfect glory, to all eternity living and existing in perfect glory, being given eternal glory by the Eternal Father, that is our Saviour.

As verse 22 tells us and shows us, that is the glory of a Saviour that we receive even this very moment. Right now, as believers, we are sharing in this eternal glory of our Saviour.

What a thought. What a thought. Like we said before, our personal outlook might not reflect this. Even our best days, if we're honest, we perhaps don't feel all that glorious.

But we know it is the case, if we're believers, that we are. Because he dwells in us. Because he is in us.

Because we are found in him. Because he is our Saviour, we share in his glory. Because he is our head. And as long as he is our head, as long as he is our Saviour, we will participate in his glory.

[9 : 47] The question is, how long will that last for? How long will that be? How long will we share in his glory? Well, like we said, because he is Saviour forever.

Because he is our head forever. Because he is the one who will love us forever. Because he is the Saviour, as we said this morning to the kids, who will never let his people go. That means we will always share in his glory.

If we're believers from now for all eternity. We even have glimpses of this in the Old Testament. The wonderful image of Mephibosheth, 2 Samuel, chapter 9.

A wonderful gospel image of Mephibosheth, this man who calls himself and who sees himself as a dead dog. This man who deserves legally and culturally perhaps to be put to death by David.

What do we see? We see at the king's table this lame man, this lame man who is nothing but a threat to the kingdom being showered in love.

[10 : 50] Eating at the top of the table. Shown care. Invited to eat beside the king. That image of glory.

We don't deserve glory. We know that. We feel that. But because we're in Jesus, we share. We partake in the glory that the Father gives to him. This day, this week, for the rest of our lives, dear brothers and sisters, as sure as our Savior lives, as sure as he reigns, we are partaking in his glory.

For one who exists in eternal glory, in glory beyond our understanding, we now, because we are in him and for that reason and that reason alone, because we are saved, because we are saved in him, because he reigns in us, because we're now in him, we share with that glory with him forever more.

Each day being made more and more like him. That's a wonderful thing about the glory that share with us. That glory slowly transforms us. That glory slowly makes us more and more like Jesus.

That sanctifying power in our life. We don't see it, we don't feel it very often in our lives. We see slow progress, if any progress at all, but we have a scriptural promise and knowledge that as the days and weeks and years of our lives go by, we are being made more and more like our glorious Savior.

[12 : 31] That process, of course, will not be completed until eternity. But this very day, dear brother, dear sister, we have the sure, certain knowledge that we share in the glory of our Savior.

As he lives, as he has glory, as he is given eternally that glory of my Father, we partake in that. As he is covered, we are covered too.

What a thought, what an encouragement for us this new week. regardless of our own personal situation, our own world situation, where we don't see anything glorious, we are covered nonetheless in the glory of our beloved Savior.

Dear friends, who as of yet don't know Jesus, this day you are not covered in his glory. The Christians are. Not because of who they are, not because of how committed we are as believers, we are covered in the glory of Jesus because of what he has done for us.

Because he calls himself our Lord and our Savior. Dear friend, who as of yet is not a believer, you are not covered in his glory.

[13 : 47] Instead, you are still covered and the wrath of God still overhangs you and you know that and you feel that and you know what you do. The wrath of God overhangs you still. Jesus is over you, but you are not covered in his glory.

You are just waiting, waiting for wrath all the time. It doesn't have to stay that way. It doesn't have to stay that way. So we share in his glory.

We also share in his unity. At the end of verse 22 and verse 23, the glory God may give to them. They may be one even as we are one.

I in them and you in me. They may become perfectly one. We share in the unity of our Savior. Just as the Father and the Son share glory, just as the Father pours out his glory onto the Son, we also see here the unity of the Father and the Son.

Now, dear friends, we are here dealing with the very nature of the Trinity. But this is not just some abstract theology for us. No, this is the beautiful prayer of our Savior as he talks to his Father.

[15 : 02] And right from the start of creation, we see the blessed Trinity. We see Father, Son, and Spirit active in their creation. We see them in unity.

We see the work of our Trinity in all its unity working together. We are one with the Son who is one with the Father.

Unity forms the very foundation of all that we are as believers. The great wonder is that the eternal unity of our Savior with the Father underpins our very hope of being kept in Jesus.

we all know unity. We all feel unity in different ways. We have unity with friends and family members and with colleagues perhaps.

But we also all know that unity can change easily, quickly. We can become disunited with loved ones or disunited with friends and so on. Perhaps even we can confess yes, I know I am united with Christ, I am united with him, I know that, I believe that, but I don't feel that.

[16 : 15] I don't sense that, I've lost that reality. Our feeling of it can be weaker at times and that's very often if we're honest to do with our own sin. If we aren't making the most of the means of grace very often we will find ourselves feeling further and further away from our unity with our Savior.

Perhaps there's other reasons sometimes too. Sometimes it's times of testing and sometimes it's issues of mental health and physical health, that can all impact it. But Scripture is clear that the unity we have with our Savior, it is eternal, it is unchanging.

Just as we will always receive glory from the Son because we are covered in him, because he is over us, because we are in him, the same is true for unity.

Verse 23, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one. Because we are in Jesus, because we are under his headship, because he is Lord over his people, because he lives in us, we can know for certain that we are united with him.

And if that is true, it is true, that means for certain that we are united to the Father. There's one way to the Father, it is through the Son. Through the Son.

[17 : 40] The wonderful truth of our unity of our Saviour, it's not just some dry theological point to be made, no, this is the central truth of all that we are as Christians.

And our very basic reality of who and what we are, we're united with our Saviour. We are one with our Saviour. He has made us united with himself. And he is in us and we are in him.

He keeps us. We are kept in him. And the practical outworking of this is actually shown for us in these verses. We see that the practical outworking of being united in Jesus is seen by the world.

Halfway through verse 23, I in them and you in me, so that the world may know that you have sent me and love them even as you loved me.

if we fully grasp our unity with Jesus, if we fully grasp the fact that we are united in our Saviour, never to be disunited, never to change, that has an impact on how we present ourselves to the world in verse 23.

[18 : 53] As we grasp our unity, as we understand and relax as we're into our unity with our Saviour, the world will know more about Jesus.

So the world may know that you sent me. Sin damages, sin mars the perfection of unity here.

It mars our understanding of it, it mars our perception of unity, it mars our participation in it, but it does not damage it. We are kept. We are kept by our Saviour.

He keeps us in himself. He keeps us united to himself. I might get in trouble here. I do quite enjoy that wonderful poem, The Footprints in the Sand, and we know how it goes, but the times where there's only one set of footprints, it's the times that Jesus carried us.

That's not really true, is it? Because it's all times he carries us, it's at all times we're united in him, at all times he keeps us himself.

[20 : 07] Because if it wasn't the case, we would be lost. If for one second he was to let go of us, we would be gone. But no, that's not what happens. That's not what happens.

We're united in him. Across denominations, across cultures, across races, across languages, we have that shared unity, do we know, with our brothers, our believers, even across time itself.

Famous, well-known kids, him, kids, Sunday school song, Father Abraham. Well, Father Abraham is a father, yes, in many senses, but also in this sense, Father Abraham becomes very quickly Brother Abraham.

because just as Abraham was united to his saviour, we are also united to him. We're all united together in our saviour, Jesus.

Father and son in perfect unity with us there. Father, son, and spirit, eternal unity, eternal perfection in that perfect united sense.

[21 : 20] And then we are brought into that. Through the finished work of our saviour, through his completed work, we are brought into that perfect unity. Unending, uncorruptible.

Now this is hard for us to grasp. Of course it is. We're dealing with things far, far greater than ourselves, but here we have in these verses a simple, simple truth. In Jesus, we have the sure hope, the sure confidence, but no matter how we might feel or perceive it, scripture is clear.

We are united with our saviour. And because he holds on to us, it means we will never be disunited. He will keep a hold of us, never to let us go, because we are in him, covered by him.

Nothing will break the union of our union of Christ. nothing can, nothing will, because it's him who keeps these bonds.

Because our union with our saviour is tied up with the union of the trinity. And because that union is perfect and will never, ever be touched or ever be marred, we have the same hope for our union with our saviour.

[22 : 40] I in them and you in me, they may become perfectly one. well, that's a wonderful truth of this evening, dear Christian. You're covered in the glory of your saviour.

But also we see here, you're united eternally to your saviour, never to be lost, never to be let go. We'll see again in verse 23 that unity with Jesus should look more and more like unity together.

We strive, of course, we know we strive to be more united as believers. And why is it? Well, our unity together, in verse 23, it serves as a witness to the world of who Jesus is.

So the world may know that you sent me. Our unity as believers, our unity together, it's a witness to the world of who Jesus is.

our unity is to be a witness to our villages, a witness to our own homes, a witness to this island that we worship our risen saviour who unites his people together.

[23 : 53] Dear friends, as we let sin, as we let our own gripes, as we let our own personalities begin to come before that unity, as we become disunited with each other and disunited with congregations, we are marring our witness and bringing shame to these verses.

We give praise to our saviour that his unity is not as fickle as ours is with each other. No, his does not change. He keeps his people, he unites his people, he does not let his people go.

So we partake in his glory and we partake in his unity. We may ask, well, that's all good and fine and well, but why does it matter to me?

Why should it matter to me at all? Well, dear Christian, it should matter to you because it's assurance. Assurance, assurance, assurance.

you feel far away this day, this week. You feel perhaps as if your prayers aren't leaving a room. You feel lost, you feel whatever else you might feel, I don't know.

[25 : 03] You're lacking assurance for various reasons. Perhaps there are things completely out of your control. This verse tells you that no matter how you might feel, you can still trust in the wonderful reality that you are known, you are kept, you are united with your Saviour, never to be let go, that your future is secure, your future is with your Saviour, united with him for all time.

That is the hope, dear Christian, for you this evening, that in him we are united for all time without separation. Again, to those who are listening who as of yet don't know Jesus, you're not united with him.

The scripture is clear, if you're not united with Jesus it still means you're united, still joint with the world. As long as you're united with the world you can do nothing to please God, nothing.

But that doesn't have to be that way, please keep listening, it doesn't have to be that way. We share in his glory, we share in his unity, and then thirdly and finally and briefly we share in his love.

Verse 23, please do read it with me. I in them and you in me, they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know, may know what?

[26 : 37] So the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. To come back to the question we asked at the start, dear brothers and sisters, how much, to what extent does God love his people?

How much does God love you? Can we qualify that? Can we quantify that? Are we allowed to? Are we able to? Well, yes we can.

And we have the answer here in this verse, the previous verses, the previous points leading up to this wonderful reality. And this quick passing reference almost at the end of verse 23, just to the extent of how much God loves his people.

The end of verse 23, the world may know that you sent me and that you loved them even as you loved me.

Loved them as you loved me. This is not our Lord using some form of poetic wordplay, not some strange grammar going on behind the scenes, no.

[27 : 54] It is plain, it's simple, every translation, every way you possibly do it, it says the same thing. When God looks in his people, he does so in love.

love. And the intensity, the depth of the love of which God looks on his people, it is the same as when he looks on the sun.

We should step back and think, well, how is that the case? How does that make any sense? How can that be true? Surely that can't be it. Well, dear Christian, as we saw a minute ago, you are united with your saviour.

You are covered in his glory, that you are in him as he is in you. When a father looks down on you and looks down on you in love, he does so because he looks down and sees the sun.

He sees you as covered in the perfection of his saviour. He sees you as covered in the finished work of his beloved son. He sees you as covered in his son's finished work, in his son's righteousness.

[29 : 04] Just as a father on the cross saw his son nailed there and saw sin nailed to that cross, he now sees Jesus our head when he looks down on us.

He saw the sun on the cross and called it sin. He nailed sin to the cross. He dealt with the punch of sin on that cross just as he now looks on you, dear brother and dear sister, dear Christian and he sees the sun.

And because the father always looks on the sun with an eternal and an indescribable love, that is now your position to this very evening.

The wrath has been removed. Why do you still think if you do that God looks down on you with a throne? Dear Christian, he does not.

If you are in Christ, he looks on you through the sun. He looks on you in love. You say, yes, I sin.

[30 : 13] I sin. I am wayward. I don't always serve him well. And yes, he sees that too. Yes, he knows that too. And yes, you may well face in his love towards you, in his fatherly love, some form of gentle learning and teaching for that.

Yes, he may well convict you of your sin. He may well show you areas in your life where you're not serving him well. Yes, he may well in his love discipline you.

But he does not ever and will never remove his love for you because when he sees you, he sees the sun. the wrath has been removed.

You are covered in the sun. This very second and indeed for all eternity, for all time to come, the God of all creation, the only living God looks on his dear people and he looks on them in love.

And some might say, well surely this gives Christians then, if this is true, if you're saying the Bible says it, surely this is because Christians have freedom to do whatever they want, to go and do whatever they want because God loves them, it's fine, it doesn't matter what they do.

[31 : 30] Well no, of course it doesn't. Because if we truly love our Lord and our Saviour, if we truly grasp these words, if we truly believe that we are found to be saved in Jesus, kept in Jesus, loved as a father loves a son, if we believe these things then we want to serve them.

We know that ourselves. We do it imperfectly, we go wrong but we want to serve him. As long as that is true for us, we have no worries of these things.

The argument of, well that means you can do whatever you want, it means nothing to the real Christian because we know we don't want to do that. We want to please our Lord, we want to show our love towards our Lord, we want to follow our Lord.

But we do all that not under the coercion of being forgotten or cast aside by him, no, we do all that serving him. We do all that under the knowledge, the sure knowledge that he looks on us eternally in love.

The idea that we are seen in love because of the work of our Saviour, it leads us to serve and to live with joy, it leads us to praise his name more. To bring our time to a conclusion, we see at the end of the section, verse 26, it just summarizes the same point again, verse 26, I made known to them your name and I will continue to make it known for the love of which you have loved me may be in them and I in them.

[32 : 58] This again just confirms to us, makes clear for us the connection between the love of God for the Son and the love of God for his people. Dear friends, this very evening, dear brother, dear sister, you can know and know from these verses and from many more verses, but even from this section alone, you can know that in your Saviour, you share in the glory that's poured out to him.

You share in the unity he has with the Father and the Spirit and that you share in the love that his Father shows and has for him.

The eternal glory, the eternal unity, the unbreakable love of the Father for the Son, we share in that, we share in that, we can know right now as dear believers, as his dear sons and daughters, we can know for certain right now that he calls us his own, he looks on us in love.

And I close this last thought for those who are listening who as of yet don't know Jesus as your Saviour, you are not covered in his glory, you are not united with him, you are not covered in his love, the Father looks on you and still looks on you as an enemy, the Father looks down you and still sees your sin hanging over you, but it doesn't have to stay like that, come to Jesus, come to the one who has done all the work for you, he has done it all, come and trust in him as your Lord, come and cry out to him, as we said this morning, pray, if you've never prayed before, you haven't prayed for years, it doesn't matter, use whatever words you can, just talk to him, talk to the God who hears the prayers of the people who cry out to him, ask for salvation, ask that you would have Christ as Lord and Saviour in your life, there's no special ceremony, there's no special handshake, there's no nonsense like that, no, come and believe, come and have him as Saviour in your life, come and trust in him as your

Lord, come and join us, join the people of God as we share in the glory of our Saviour, as we're united with him, never to be lost by him, come and join us as we know for certain that we are loved by him and loved by the God of all gods, loved by the living, the only true God, the God of all creation, that we know him, that he loves us, he does so in the Son, come and place your hope in this Jesus, please do talk to the elders or talk to the minister here, please get in touch with them, they'll be overjoyed, or talk to any Christian you know, they'll be overjoyed to share with you and to share with you in answering any questions you might have, any concerns or worries you might have, please don't waste any more time, please don't, I know it's very comfortable in our houses to sit and listen to these services but this is real and this is serious, this is life and death, please come, come to

[36 : 18] Jesus, come and share in his glory, come and share in his unity, come and know what it is to be loved by him and loved in him.

We can bring our time to a close by singing to God's praise again, this time, again from Scottish Shelter and from Psalm 89. A few verses from Psalm 89.

God's mercies I will ever sing, and with my mouth I shall, by faithfulness make to be known the generations all, for mercy shall be built, said I, forever to endure, by faithfulness seen in the heavens, thou wilt establish sure.

We send together some verses from this psalm to God's praise. God's God's God's name, God's name, and with my mouth I shall, and with my mouth I shall, thy faithfulness make to be known to generations all.

For mercy shall be built, said I, forever to endure, thy faithfulness that seen in the hands, thou wilt establish sure.

[37 : 57] I with my chosen one have made, a crown and gracious thee, and to my servant to my love, to David's for now I, that I see his salvation forever to remain, and will to generations of thy throne build and maintain.

The praises of thy wonders, Lord, the heavens shall express, and among In the congregation of saints, my faithfulness.