



“Finished” part 1
John 17
 by Pastor Tim Dodson
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John 17 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, 2 "as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You

have given Him. 3 "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. 4 "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. 5 "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.6 "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. 7 "Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. 8 "For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. 9 "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. 10 "And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. 11 "Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. 12 "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. 13 "But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. 20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 "that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 "I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. 24 "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. 25 "O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. 26 "And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

"It's clear that human beings have a profound need for understanding of their origins and their place in the cosmos, some meaning and rationale in their often frenetic lives. From archaeological, anthropological and historical records, we've learned that humans have always searched for answers to how they got here and what they were all about. Humans need to believe that there is some overriding "purpose" in life, which is beyond everyday commerce and consumerism. They're looking for essential meaning of their lives, something uplifting, transcendent, even transformational."

(Psychology Today, *The Search For Meaning: Spirituality and Belief*, Nov 04, 2015, Saul Levine M.D.)

Way back in Luke chapter 2 we read about an event that occurred when Jesus was around 13 years old. It was the account of when he drifted away from his parents in Jerusalem and they went looking for him believing He was lost. Once He was "found" again in the temple with the religious teachers, He made an interesting comment that illuminated the life path before Him...He said "*Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?*" It seemed that Jesus knew early what He was called to, and just where He was going. Seldom does the rest of humanity fare as well.

Jesus now...some 20 years later, says to His heavenly Father "*I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.*" It was *given* TO Him and it was given to Him by God. *What* about us? Is such a heart and frame of mind just for deity, or do we have a cosmic calling...a great personal life objective given to us by God? Ephesians 2:10 tells us that "...*we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*" Certainly we can gather then that there are universal and corporate good works prepared for us ... issues of Godly obedience, sharing our faith, supporting our local church in service and finances, family responsibilities, etc. But the Bible is full of examples of God's personal calling on people's lives also. Abraham, Noah, Joseph, Ruth, Esther, Mary, and multiple others were used by God in their day, with their unique abilities, and for His purposes.

1st Corinthians 12:12-31 talks about the Church in terms of a body. Each member of the Church has a different purpose, just as each portion of the body is used for different things. Then there are passages such as Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 that lists various spiritual gifts a person might have. In various places and various ways, scripture drives home the point that there is indeed a unique purpose that God has just for you. A "work" for each of us to complete in our time on this planet. What an awesome thing to be able to say on your way out the door of this life! That we too "*have finished the work that God gave us to do.*"

Way back in Matthew 6 of our "Life and Times of Jesus" series we covered what the world knows as "The Lord's Prayer." The apostles had asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, and what followed therein was Jesus' class on prayer. But in reality that prayer in Matthew should rather be called the "disciples prayer." And this chapter 17 of the gospel of John more fittingly should have that title of "The Lord's Prayer."

A lot had happened in this past 24 hour period for the disciples. It was no doubt a whirlwind experience. No doubt the whole day had been exhausting. No wonder they would all later be falling asleep in the garden! All of this had begun just hours before at the Passover "last supper"...*the first communion, the foot washing by Jesus, the exit of Judas.* Then came 3 chapters of some seriously radical teaching. Now, whether they knew it or not, after 3 years together this would be their last evening together, *at least as things had been.* For when they would get together again, things would be so very very different. These were their last hours together with Christ before the cross. I wonder if they knew it?

Jesus had just completed what are called the "table talks" with His apostles. All of it was clearly aimed at preparing the boys for what was coming. All they would have to expect, what was coming and all of it without Jesus! He had spoke concerning the trials, the persecution, the priorities of ministry, and the parameters of heavenly involvement after He would finish His calling and had returned to the Father.

It was a pinnacle moment. An epic finale of fellowship between brethren. They had fought the battles together, laughed, cried, ate, and traveled together. They were family now, a community, a 'fellowship.' That is why one day John would be able to pen the words (1 John 1:3 NLT), "*We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*"

Now in the final 'hours' of His destiny, His calling and purpose, He stops to communicate with His Father as to what lay ahead. For it is not enough for any of us to just know where we are going, we must know *how* and *when* we are to go, and seek God's hand of care every step of the way. Otherwise, even with the best of intentions, we can become the proverbial "bull in a china shop."

We have now come to "the inner sanctuary" of the Gospels. Jesus herein gives an accounting to His Father of His life, His calling and His ministry upon this earth. It is something that apparently each of us will have the opportunity to do. Even at this point in His life He is still seeking the opportunity to bring glory to His Father. It seems apparent that doing so is the ultimate manifestation of all of our callings. Even His.

He also takes the time to intercede on the behalf of this company of disciples there with Him. These men actually had the incredible experience of listening to Jesus pray. I wonder if we... reading this today, grasp that we too have now been invited into that place? That “inner sanctuary!”

Everything that Jesus ever taught, everything He had ever done leads to this passage. For in it He speaks of His obedience to the Father, the revelation of God through the Son, the calling of His disciples ‘out of this world,’ their mission, their call to unity, and their destiny. We experience all the work, the miraculous, the miles traveled. All leading to here...to this place. This is not about what He was being asked to do, not even what He *hoped* to do. No, this was now about *what He actually had done*. Once again, that epic moment is something we all will experience.

Hebrews 10:5-7 *That is why, when Christ came into the world, he said to God, “You did not want animal sacrifices or sin offerings. But you have given me a body to offer. You were not pleased with burnt offerings or other offerings for sin... ‘Look, I have come to do your will, O God — ”*

As we look back now, over what for these guys was 3 years of intensive full time ministry, we see that everything we stand upon for our redemption, our faith living, and our eternity is all based on the fact that Jesus fulfilled His calling, **His mission**. I wonder why then, are we so quick to dismiss the importance of us doing the same? He lived to do the will of the Father, to complete His mission and to finish the race, but why do we not have to?

“The hour has come.” Throughout His earthly ministry, men attempted to silence or even kill Christ, and failed repeatedly. Often Jesus referred to this fact:

John 7:5-6 *For even His brothers did not believe in Him. Then Jesus said to them, “**My time has not yet come...**”*

John 2:3-4 *And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? **My hour has not yet come.**”*

John 7:30 *Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, **because His hour had not yet come.***

John 12:27 *“Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But **for this purpose I came to this hour.***

But the time *had* now come! Just as certainly as it will to its fullest manifest in the rapture of the church and in His second coming to be seated in rule over all the earth. People failed to grasp the reality of Jesus’ “time.” We make the same mistake today as we blissfully skip through life embracing this world and living as if we will never die.

Jesus understood something else that many of us never grasp. Prayer is not a way to get what we want, or our will done. It is a way to get God’s will done through us, to participate in the fullness of God’s evitable plan. Once we grasp this crucial fact, the way we pray and our attitudes toward prayer will change dramatically!

I wonder how many of us are brave enough to go before God in this way and ask, “How am I doing, Lord?” How many of us really want a progress report? No matter what we think we are and what we think we might be doing for the kingdom, *who is getting the glory?*

Jesus would so often do some great or miraculous thing, and the people responded by giving glory to God his Father. He calls upon us to be and do the same, *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”* (Matt 5:16)

We are all familiar with the scriptural premise of “believe on Christ, and you will be saved.” Yet often this passage is an attempt, *albeit a poor one*, at a “get-out-of-jail-free” card. The **redemptive effect** of a life changed and **one that now glorifies God**, is a real leap for many of us. Salvation tends to be relegated to an intellectual position, a mental understanding of His existence and deity, not a glorifying life at all.

These folks often find their faith manifest in church attendance, voting republican, listening to 'religious' radio and living at least a publically moralistic lifestyle. This outward façade of faith often becomes a replacement for knowing God and none of it ever finds root in a relationship with Him. There is no innate drive to know Him intimately, personally, or dramatically. And so, of course, it never finds its way to our feet and hands. We know what it means to believe in the historical and cultural aspects of Christ, but we fail to know what it's like to get our hands dirty working and serving beside him. We fail to ever actualize what it is we are here on this planet to do.

Verse 3 says "eternal life is to know Him." Let's see if we have a handle on this: we are saved so that we can know God. "Knowing Him" is an innate aspect of our eternal life. But do we? Not know *of* Him, nor *about* Him, but *know HIM*. There is a big difference between those things. "To know" here is a form of the Greek word "gnosko." Meaning we are saved so that we can come to know God through our experiences with Him. This is the walk of faith. Everything else, our service, our joy and peace, our maturing in knowledge and sanctification, all come out of that experiential walk with Him. Without ever pursuing such an experiential path, we never get out of the gate at the start. And having never *started* we definitely never *finish*. Thus we never know the joy of hearing those words "well done my good and faithful servant." Remember how Jesus condemned those who had stood before Him? Those having done many works and were even a part of the miraculous, yet they were lost because they "never knew Him?"

In the passage before us Jesus speaks those immortal words that are my life goal to be able to utter as I take my final curtain: "Father, *I have glorified you on the earth...I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.*" So much said in such few words! Don't step away from this without noting that next sentence, "*I have finished the WORK...*"

Work? You know what that word means in the original language? It means *work*. In the classic and simple sense. So let see if we have this straight: *Jesus was here to work*. Once again if our Savior came to work, why is it that we often seem to do all we can to excuse ourselves from such and base our walk on feelings, emotions, intellect, etc.?

But we must also note that it's not just work for works sake. This isn't an issue of 'busy work' to be 'good little Christian soldiers!' or insinuating a "works oriented salvation." Jesus says, "*I have finished the work that you gave me to do.*" So this isn't just a matter of 'breakin' a sweat for Jesus,' somehow 'earning our position in line.'

This is about fulfilling our own personal destiny, the task for which we each were created! He completed the work GOD gave Him to do. Jesus didn't say, "I started the work," or, "I thought about the work," or, "I was going to get to the work." He said, "I have *finished* the work." What has God given *you* to do? Have you checked lately?

Let's imagine for a moment that none of us is going leave this room alive. This is it, we're all toast. Would you be able to say to God, "ok, I'm ready. I have finished the work that you sent me to do?" Now you might say, wait a minute, that's not fair, obviously if that were to happen, we didn't have the time; we are all dying prematurely. Well, yes you did, and no you're not. If God is taking you home today, you are not dying prematurely, therefore you had the time to complete your work.

You could say, "*Well, I was going to get around to it, but I had to _____.*" We cannot help but be reminded of Jesus' words to the man who needed to first bury his father, then he would follow Jesus. "*Let the dead bury their dead....but you go and preach the kingdom of God.*"

Aren't you glad the Jesus didn't *almost* die on the cross? That He didn't climb down in the nick of time? He finished what He started. He finished His calling. **Will you?**