

"This is Eternal Life!"

Thomas Robinson, May 16, 2010

John 17: 1-8

¹ After **Jesus** said this, he looked toward heaven and **prayed**:

"Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ² For you granted him **authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.**

³ **Now this is eternal life:**

*that they know you, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*

⁴ I have brought you **glory on earth** by **finishing the work you gave me to do.** ⁵ And now, Father, **glorify me in your presence** with **the glory I had with you before the world began.**

⁶ I have **revealed you** (your name) to those whom **you gave me** out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and **they have obeyed your word.**

⁷ Now **they know** that everything you have given me comes from you. ⁸ For I gave them **the words you gave me** and they **accepted them.** They **knew** with certainty that **I came from you,** and they **believed that you sent me."**

John 1:14, 16-18

¹⁴ And the **Word became flesh** and dwelt among us, and we have seen **his glory,** glory as of the **only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.** ... ¹⁶ And from **his fullness** we have all received, **grace upon grace.** ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; **grace and truth** came through **Jesus Christ.** ¹⁸ **No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.**

John 3:16-17

¹⁶ **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.** ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but **in order that the world might be saved through him."**

John 5:24

²⁴ **"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life."**

John 12:23-24, 27-28

²³ Jesus replied, **"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.** ²⁴ Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But **if it dies, it produces many seeds.** ... ²⁷ Now **my soul is troubled,** and what shall I say? **'Father, save me from this hour'?** No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. ²⁸ **Father, glorify your name!"** Then a voice came from heaven, **"I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."**

John 14:9

⁹ Jesus said to him, **"Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."**

1 John 4:7-10

⁷ Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and **knows God**. ⁸ Whoever does not love does **not know God, because God is love**. ⁹ **This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.** ¹⁰ **This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.**

Jesus Takes His Disciples into Prayer

Jesus began the evening washing the disciples' feet. He has led them through profound spiritual preparation for what was coming - many images: new command; my father's house, the coming Advocate, God at home in you, vine and branches, a dangerous world, sorrow and joy, pain of childbirth.

Now he lets them enter with him into prayer - the inner sanctum of his life with the Father. Inside the meaning of the whole story they are part of, the depth, mystery and wonder of what is being accomplished in what will unfold.

Glory and the Cross

The "hour" has come - consummation: death/victory over death; shame/glory; total vulnerability/complete authority; exalted/lifted up on a cross; injustice and violence/overflowing love. "Glorify your Son" means "lead me to the cross."

"Glory" carries the Hebrew sense of *kavodh* - weight, true reality, full significance. The self-giving love of Jesus as he gives himself for us on the cross is the most direct window into the heart/true reality/glory of God possible on earth. To learn to see the reality of the cross is to change your vision of the world.

"This is Eternal Life"

The powerless Jesus has "authority over all people" not as a tyrant but to give eternal life to all who believe him. We do not have eternal life in ourselves.

Eternal life is not just extended survival, living on and on. It is not life after death. It is God's own divine life. Jesus can give it because he unites God and humanity. It is his own life - his Glory/reality before the world began. His divine reality makes it possible for him through death to break the grip of death and bring the resurrection reality of God's new creation into the present. By the presence of the Holy Spirit it becomes our true life before death, life not subject to death.

Knowing God

Jesus defines "eternal life" as a relationship - Knowing You, the only, true God. Knowing about God is only a beginning. This is entering a relationship of trust with God - seen in the face of Jesus the Messiah - at the center of life. No other God. Everything else has its value and place in the light of the reality of God.

Nothing here is mechanical/magical. Personal knowledge can't be faked with God. In Jesus God does everything to make this relationship possible. We receive.

Hope for Disciples

In spite of the misunderstanding and failures of the disciples, Jesus sees their obedience, knowledge, faith. God understands where we are and knows what we can become. He is more generous with us as we seek him than we can imagine.

We begin, receive grace. In Jesus God gives everything we need - eternal life.