

# “I AM, The Source of Comfort”

John 17:1–5

<sup>1</sup>Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, <sup>2</sup>even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. <sup>3</sup>This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. <sup>4</sup>I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. <sup>5</sup>Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” [NASB]

HOPE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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## I. Hearing

In 1965, a musical group called The Byrds recorded a song written by Pete Seeger entitled Turn, Turn, Turn. As you know, the song is a rendition from Ecclesiastes 3. Drawing from the King James text, the repeating refrain consists of verse 1: “To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.” That refrain finds its fulfillment in the passage before us today. Time, and Purpose.

### A. Time

Time, and Purpose. The *time* is now. Jesus has comforted His disciples with the preceding discourse that concluded in this way: <sup>16.33</sup>“These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.” Now Jesus turns His attention away from the disciples and upwards to His Father. His eyes are simply following His mind and His heart.

Time, and Purpose. The time is now. “Father, the hour has come.” There must be something about four words. We could easily preach a decade of sermons on the four words, “In the beginning God.”<sup>Gen1.1</sup> Or on the four words, “The Word became flesh.”<sup>Jn1.14</sup> And we could surely preach decade of sermons on “The hour has come.” Every year, every day, every hour, every minute, every second, every nanosecond since time began had looked forward to this hour. “The hour has come.” Never did a shadow sweep, never did a sand grain fall, never did a clock tick without proclaiming the coming of this hour. (I know, that last one is an anachronism... but what a mind-bender!)

Time, and Purpose. It had been the purpose of every moment of time, to declare the coming of this hour. This was the hour when Jesus Christ would go to the cross and accomplish the work given to Him: to redeem this world from its fallen estate, that it might be brought into an estate of salvation. Renewal. Life. Time. “The hour has come.”

### B. Purpose

Time, and Purpose. The *purpose* is glory. The time is now, and the purpose is glory. <sup>1</sup>“Glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You.” Purpose. Father, glorify Your Son, *in order that* the Son may glorify You. Jesus prays to the Father, asking Father to glorify Him. Why does Jesus want the Father to glorify Him? For this purpose: that Jesus might glorify the Father. How will Jesus glorify the Father? Jesus will glorify the Father by using the authority vested in Him to give you eternal life.

Are you worried about not giving enough reverence, *glory*, to God? *Jesus will glorify the Father by using the authority vested in Him to give you eternal life.* Are you concerned that your sins are too bad or too many for you to attain heaven? *Jesus will glorify the Father by using the authority vested in Him to give you eternal life.* Are you panicking because your baptized children have not professed faith? *Jesus will glorify the Father by using the authority vested in Him to give you and your children eternal life.*

### C. Doctrine

Time, and Purpose. The time is now, and the purpose is glory. We shall investigate in a moment, the details of this time and purpose. But right now let me lay down the core of Jesus’ petition in this prayer. And that core is this: *God glorifies Himself by giving you eternal life.*

## II. Examining

Are you willing to have Jesus conversing with the Father on this matter of your eternal life... without consulting you? Is it okay with you if God gets the glory for giving you eternal life? Do you mind if He claims the authority for Himself to give you eternal life, without asking your permission? Would it be acceptable to you if Jesus did all the work required to give you eternal

life? Would you think God to be mean or capricious if He determined before time began to save you from your sins—without asking you?

Would you insist on Him leaving that determination up to you? Do you think, since you weren't around with the disciples, that one of them should have intervened on your behalf and said, “Whoa, Jesus, wait just a minute... I don't think you should be praying that way; why don't You just let Johnny decide for himself when 2010 rolls around, whether he can take part of the workload for eternal life for himself? You know he's going to try to do that anyway, after all.”

### III. Investigating

#### A. *How the Son glorifies the Father*

Time, and Purpose. The time is now, and the purpose is glory. *God glorifies Himself by giving you eternal life.* There are two questions we must ask. First, how does the Son glorify the Father? And second, how does the Father glorify the Son?

##### 1. *To Glorify*

Well, I think we first need to understand what it means for Father and Son “to glorify” one another. <sup>1</sup>“Glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You.” It sounds a lot like Jesus is asking the Father to add something to Him, so that He might turn around and add something to the Father. As if Jesus were saying “Father, give Me something I don't have now, so that I might give You something You don't have now.” As if the Father and the Son were to add some material or spiritual brightness to one another.

As if the Father and the Son could *cause* each other to have splendid greatness, like God does to us when <sup>Rom8.30</sup>“these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also *glorified.*” And of course, all us hyper reformed folk start jumping up and down like a hyperactive Jack Russell terrier, barking “NO, NO, NO, You can't add anything to God, and even God can't add anything to God!” Okay, okay, calm down. *Sit, boy!* What's the alternative?

Right! Jesus must mean, “Father, declare some bright truth about Me, and I'll then declare some bright truth about You.” Ugh. That's just a bit insipid. Not the bright truths of the Father and the Son! There is NOTHING insipid about those glorious and highly exalted truths! Every truth of God is brighter than the Sun, moon, and all the stars and quasars in the universe put together! But if that's all Jesus meant here, then it would be little more than when the blind beggar to whom Jesus gave sight, began following Him, *glorifying* God. <sup>Lk18.43</sup> It would be little more than when the Jewish disciples hear Peter's report of a gentile being saved, and they <sup>Act11.18</sup>“quieted down and *glorified* God, saying, ‘Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.’” It would be little more than mere human glorifying.

Hmmm, so it must be more than merely *unveiling* the respective glory of Father and Son... but less than *adding* glory to the Father or the Son. What is it, then, for Father and Son to glorify one another? Is there a third way to glorify? I think there is. It is not merely *declaring* or *unveiling*, and it is not as much as adding... but it is *placing the glory where it belongs.* Placing the exalted honor where it belongs.

This is similar to setting Christ apart as Lord in your hearts. <sup>1Pe3.15</sup> Christ *belongs* on the throne of your heart, and indeed there He sits... but you glorify Him by submitting to *Him* as your King and Lord rather than to all the usurpers you usually like to put on the throne of your heart.

When Jesus said, <sup>Jn15.8</sup>“My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples,” He meant that when we bear spiritual fruit—which we can *only* do as

branches united to Christ the vine—the honor and the applause goes to God where it belongs... not to us where it does not belong. Here, then, for Father to glorify the Son, means for the Father to lay upon the Son all the exalted honor that belongs to Him. And for the Son to glorify the Father means for the Son to restore all the exalted honor to the Father that belongs to Him anyhow.

For example. We regularly try to steal God’s glory by daring to suggest we can do some of the work the Father gave to the Son to do. Christ places that glory back where it belongs—upon God—by accomplishing that work all by Himself.

## **2. Using the authority vested in Him**

So, first, how does the Son glorify the Father? Jesus reveals how in His prayer. <sup>2</sup>“Even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.” God gave authority to His Son to give eternal life. Not to Robinson as Pastor. Not to Johnson or Malone as Elders. Not to Henderson as Grand High Digi Driver. Only to Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior.

If Elder Malone gives to his son the authority to blow the snow out of the driveway (if there was ever any snow to blow), then Andrew Malone would honor his father by *using* that authority to blow the snow out of the driveway. Andrew did not fix the snowblower so it works well; his father did. Andrew does not [yet] own the house with the nice freshly blown driveway; his father does. You see? His father gets the glory of having the nicest driveway in the neighborhood, and that is where the glory belongs. The neighbors already know that Mr Malone is a master mechanic and that his is a well-disciplined household. That is not new information. But when they drive by and behold his precision-blown driveway, they pay honor where it belongs.

But if Andrew shrugs off the authority and tells Miss Katherine to blow the snow out of the driveway, which she is unable to do on account of not yet being able to handle the snowblower, Father Malone does not get the glory due to him.

Father gave *all* authority in heaven and earth to the Son. <sup>Mt28.18</sup> Father gave this authority over *all* flesh, *all* mankind. <sup>v2</sup> Jesus *exudes* authority... anyone else only *steals*—or *attempts* to steal—such authority. Jesus uses the authority given only to Him, to take all that stolen glory and place it back squarely upon the Father where it belongs. We try to steal the glory and we look like a beat-up Cadillac with a wheel in the ditch and a wheel on the track. Jesus uses His authority to put the glorious Cadillac back on the road where it belongs—in God, all in God. Only the Son can give eternal life, and when the Son gives eternal life, all the glory, honor, and praise gets put back where it belongs: upon God and God alone.

## **3. Eternal Life**

### *a) Qualities*

#### *(1) Trinitarian*

Now we find a few clues about why all this glory gets put back upon God when we consider what this passage says about eternal life. Let me point out three qualities of eternal life. Firstly, Eternal Life is a Trinitarian Work. You don’t get Eternal Life from only one or two Persons of the Godhead. Eternal Life cannot be gained from one Person, and cannot be lost by a single person.

To wit, <sup>3</sup>“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” So then, Eternal Life means *knowing* God the Father, who is the Source of all life. And by “*knowing*,” Jesus means *being in union with*. It is not just knowing facts about God. “God is great and God is good, let us thank Him for this food.” No. “God is great and God is good, if I’m not in Him and He in Me, then I’m dead.” Yes. Eternal life is being united to the

Father who is the source of all life... the *only* source of all life, and the *true* source of all life. Your dearest friend or lover cannot give you life. This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God.”

And, this is eternal life, that they may know... Jesus Christ whom You have sent. The only way to be united to the Father is to be united to the only Mediator between you and Father, namely Jesus Christ the Son. <sup>1Jn5.12</sup>“He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.”

And Eternal life means union with the Holy Spirit sent to comfort you by *giving* you knowledge of Father and Son. Like Peter, you cannot know Jesus Christ as your Savior unless God shows this to you, and He shows this to you by sending the Holy Spirit to illuminate your hearts and minds in the knowledge of Christ. Eternal life is a *Trinitarian* work

### (2) *Sure*

Secondly, Eternal Life is a *Sure* work. <sup>4</sup>“I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.” Jesus *did* what the Father sent Him to do. Jesus *did* glorify the Father by giving you Eternal life. Jesus put the glory where it belongs, and who can snatch that glory away from God? Who can undo what Jesus has done? Who can take back the death that Jesus died to pay fully for your sins? Who can defile the perfect obedience Jesus completely gave to satisfy all the demands of God’s holy Law for you? It’s done! You yourself cannot even undo what Jesus has done for you! Eternal life is a *sure* work.

### (3) *Eternal*

And thirdly, Eternal Life is an *eternal* work. That may sound redundant, but have you never had the daisy syndrome? “He loves me... He loves me not...” Time, and purpose. We just don’t see things the way God sees them. We think His purpose changes from day to day or hour to hour. But eternal life is an eternal work and an elected work. <sup>5</sup>“Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”

I say it is an elected work. Did you catch those words in v2, “that to *all whom You have given Him*, He may give eternal life”? God chose those whom God chose, to give them to His Son. And I say it was an eternal work. “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world.”<sup>eph1.4</sup> Well, that means also before the foundation of time. From all eternity it was God’s *intention* to send His Son to give eternal life to those God chose from all eternity to give to His Son.

Now if this work of eternal life was *not* established from all eternity, then Christ would *not* have had this glory of giving eternal life before the world was! And Jesus would have no grounds for His prayer of v5, let alone for all of ch17. The work of eternal life, then, is eternal. Trinitarian, sure, eternal.

## b) *Tastes*

### (1) *Touching*

Eternal does not have to mean distant. God gives us some tastes of eternal life, some tastes of heaven, right here on Earth. Here are four tastes of eternal life. One: *touching*. Eternal life is an eternity of *touching* Jesus and being *touched* by Jesus. How many glorified God when Jesus touched them and healed them of leprosy, lameness, dumbness, deafness, blindness... *deathness*? When Mr Malone puts his hand on the back of your neck any you just kind of go limp but feel healed all over... that is a little taste of eternal life.

### (2) *Found*

Two: *found*. Being found by Father, by Son, by Holy Spirit. You are baptized as Christians into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. You are *found* by the Triune

God and united to Him. When orphan August Rush (in the movie by that name) was found by his parents, they by him, they by each other... that is a little taste of Eternal life.

(3) *Friend*

Three: *friend*. Being reconciled with a smile. Eternal life is an eternity of God’s smile beaming upon you and warming you even far more than a sunspot in front of a south window on a cold winter day. Have you ever beheld the beaming smile of someone with whom you’ve been at odds—or even just out of touch—for years or decades? That is a little taste of Eternal Life.

(4) *Welcome*

One more: *welcome*. Eternal life is an eternity of hearty welcome into fellowship with all around you. I walk the streets and run the roads of Portsmouth all year long. This is not just a winter thing—it holds on the sunniest days of summer: the silent scowl prevails, being the predominant image on the faces I see. But every once in awhile somebody looks at you with a completely genuine, hearty, non-forced smile. One thing you gotta love about Northern New England; when someone smiles at you, it really counts! It is a little taste of heaven. Touching, found, friend, welcome.

**B. How the Father glorifies the Son**

Well, here is another little taste of heaven, we spend so much time talking about how the Son glorifies the Father, that it seems it will take all eternity to get to how the Father glorifies the Son. In heaven, of course, that will be just fine, because we’ll have all eternity. Here on earth, however, we’ll have a week, and then we’ll get back to this matter of how the Father glorifies the Son.

**IV. Receiving**

God glorifies Himself by giving you eternal life. Receive His glorifying Himself. Here are three ways. One: *take comfort*. He will not botch this up, for He does all things well. He *will* glorify Himself, and if you will receive it, He will glorify Himself by giving you eternal life. He won’t mess up, and you won’t miss out. Take your comfort not in your relationship with Him, but in *Him*. God, not your relationship with God, is the source of all comfort.

Two: *Relax*. You have nothing to hide, nothing to lose. Boast in the Lord, whether you are high or low. Your highness or your lowness has no bearing on His determination to glorify Himself by giving eternal life to you. Relax!

And three: *Call*. <sup>Ps50.15</sup>“Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.” When you call upon the name of Jesus Christ, you put the glory back where it belongs. You give up trying to steal the glory by saving yourself, by proving yourself worthy, by saying you don’t need the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is where that glory, honor, and praise belongs, so give up and call upon Him. He will glorify Himself by giving you eternal life.