

When I studied in Germany, we talked a lot about Christology. I loved dogmatics. That may sound surprising to some – because dogmatics often has the reputation of being dry and overly theoretical. But for me, it was alive.

Dogmatics tries to think the faith through.

It asks: Who is God? Who is Christ? What do the cross and resurrection mean? How can we speak about Jesus without making him too small – and without making him so distant that he no longer has anything to do with us?

One of the great themes was Christology.

The word comes from Greek.

“Christos” means the Anointed One – the Messiah.

And “logos” means word, teaching, or reflection.

So Christology is the doctrine of Christ – the reflection on who Jesus Christ is.

And what fascinated me was the conversation around it.

We read the great debates of church history – Athanasius, the Council of Nicaea, Chalcedon, Luther. For centuries, people tried to find language for this mystery: Who is Jesus Christ really?

Not just a prophet.

Not just a moral teacher.

Not just a special human being.

But the Son of God who became human.

And today I want to walk with you along the traces of that Christology – into the high priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17:1–11.

This Sunday feels especially fitting, because just a few days ago we celebrated Ascension Day.

Ascension does not simply mean: Jesus is gone.

It means: the risen Christ returns to the Father. The Son shares the glory of God. The human Jesus is taken into the divine life.

And that is already a deeply Christological claim:

Humanity is not left behind. It is brought into God.

That is why John 17 fits so closely into this time between Ascension and Pentecost. It sounds almost like a glimpse behind the veil of heaven.

Jesus says:

“Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, so that the Son may glorify you.”

Jesus does not speak here like an ordinary believer.
He speaks as Son to the Father.

And in John's Gospel this is more than metaphor.
Jesus later says:

"...the glory I had with you before the world existed."

Here we touch the heart of Christology:
Jesus is not only the man from Nazareth.
He shares eternal communion with the Father.

The early church wrestled deeply with this.
Arius argued: the Son must have had a beginning; there was a
time when he was not.

But the church responded at Nicaea: Christ is "of one being with
the Father" – true God from true God.

Not created.

Not secondary.

But eternally the Son.

Because if Christ is less than God, then God has not truly come
to us.

But if Christ is truly God, then God himself has entered our
human life.

And yet Jesus is also truly human.

He prays.

He suffers.

He goes toward the cross.

The church held both together:

true God and true human.

Not divided. Not mixed. But united in one person – Jesus Christ.

And that is exactly what makes this prayer so powerful.

Because Jesus is not speaking about God from a distance.

He is praying.

And he is praying for his disciples:

“I am praying for them.”

That is one of the most comforting parts of this text.

Christology is not abstract theory. It is about salvation.

Only if Christ is truly human can he stand with us.

Only if Christ is truly God can he save us.

A merely human Christ cannot redeem the world.

A distant God cannot reach us.

But in Jesus Christ, God comes near.

God enters our fragility.

God shares our life.

And Ascension reminds us: this Christ has not disappeared.
He is exalted with the Father – and therefore present with us.

That is why John 17 is not distant theology.
It is Gospel.

For people with fear.

With questions.

With exhaustion.

And maybe the deepest truth of Christology is this:
we never fully grasp Christ.

All our doctrines, councils, and debates remain human attempts
to speak about a divine mystery.

And yet they matter – because they protect us from making
Jesus too small.

John 17 brings us to the edge of language.

We hear the Son speaking with the Father.

We glimpse eternal communion.

And we confess: in Jesus Christ, God himself has come to us –
full of grace and truth.

And this Christ says:

“I am with them.” Not only then.

But also now. Amen.