

John 8:50

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

Analysis

And I seek not mine own glory—Jesus disclaims self-seeking motives. "I seek" (ζητῶ/zētō) in the negative (οὐ) indicates Jesus does not pursue, strive for, or desire (ζητέω) His own glory (δόξα/doxa). This stands in stark contrast to the religious leaders who "loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God" (12:43, cf. 5:44). Jesus's consistent testimony is that He seeks the Father's glory alone (7:18, 17:4).

"Glory" (δόξα/doxa) refers to honor, praise, reputation, radiant splendor—the visible manifestation of God's presence and character. Fallen humanity craves glory, seeking honor from others to validate identity and worth. Jesus, being God, possessed intrinsic glory (1:14, 17:5) yet humbled Himself, taking "the form of a servant" (Philippians 2:7). His mission was not self-glorification but revealing the Father's glory through perfect obedience.

There is one that seeketh and judgeth—the Father seeks Jesus's glory and judges (κρίνω/krinō) those who dishonor Him. The present participles ("seeketh," "judgeth") indicate ongoing divine action. While Jesus doesn't pursue self-vindication, the Father vindicates His Son. "Judgeth" (κρίνων/krinōn) refers to the Father's just evaluation—He will exalt Christ and condemn Christ's rejectors.

This anticipates Philippians 2:9-11: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every

knee should bow." Jesus doesn't need to defend His honor; the Father will establish it eternally.

Historical Context

The cultural context heightens this statement's radicalism. In honor-shame societies, one must defend one's honor and reputation. Public insults (like v.48) demanded public response, often violent. Family honor required vindication, sometimes through blood feuds.

Jesus's refusal to seek His own glory subverted these cultural norms. He modeled the kingdom ethic He preached: "Blessed are the meek" (Matthew 5:5), "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted" (Matthew 23:12). His trust in the Father's vindication enabled Him to endure the cross "for the joy set before him" (Hebrews 12:2).

For first-century Jewish opponents, Jesus's claims seemed arrogant—calling God "my Father" (v.49, 54), claiming preexistence (v.58), accepting worship. Yet here He clarifies: His claims aren't self-promotion but truth revelation. The Father, not Jesus, initiates Jesus's glorification through resurrection, ascension, and cosmic lordship.

Early Christians facing persecution drew comfort from this verse. Though dishonored by the world, God would vindicate them. Though martyred, they trusted divine judgment would right all wrongs (Revelation 6:10).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. In what subtle ways do we seek our own glory rather than God's in ministry, relationships, or career?
2. How does Jesus's example of leaving vindication to the Father shape how we respond to criticism or injustice?
3. What does it mean that God the Father 'seeks' Christ's glory, and how should this affect our worship and service?

Interlinear Text

ἐγὼ	δὲ	οὐ	ζητῶν	τὴν	δόξαν	μου·	ἔστιν	ὁ
I	And	not	one that seeketh	G3588	glory	mine own	there is	G3588
G1473	G1161	G3756	G2212		G1391	G3450	G2076	
ζητῶν	καὶ	κρίνων						
one that seeketh	and	judgeth						
G2212	G2532	G2919						

Additional Cross-References

John 5:41 (Parallel theme): I receive not honour from men.

John 8:54 (Parallel theme): Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:

John 7:18 (Glory): He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.