

- This morning, we are continuing on through the Gospel of John from where Andy left us last week. As always, my notes will be up on the LMC website for those who want to go over them again.
- I have titled this morning “Jesus the Great Intercessor’s High Priestly Prayer”
- John 17 is a unique chapter as it is a record of one single prayer that Jesus offered to the Father on behalf of Himself, the church and even the Father.
- John tells us that this prayer was offered just before Jesus and His disciples made their way to the garden of Gethsemane.
- Spurgeon sums up this chapter beautifully when he says:

*After the closing supper, his public preaching work being ended, and nothing remaining to be done but to die, Jesus gave himself wholly unto prayer. He was not again to instruct the multitude, nor to heal the sick, and in the interval which remained, before he should lay down his life, he girded himself for special intercession. He poured out his soul in life before he poured it out unto death.*

- The Bible is filled with great prayers, prayers like:
  - Solomon’s prayer for wisdom in 1 Kings 3,
  - Abraham’s intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 18,
  - Moses request for forgiveness and guidance in Exodus 32,
  - and Nehemiah’s prayer of petition in Nehemiah 1,
- However, the prayer that Jesus prays in John 17 is by far the greatest.
- There is no prayer more exalted, more holy, more fruitful, than the prayer Jesus is offering up to His father in this chapter.
- The sentences are simple, but the ideas are deep, moving, and meaningful.
- In John 17 we have a unique opportunity to see the nature and heart of Jesus.
- In this prayer, we read many of the same concerns that are in what is commonly called the Lord’s Prayer, yet there is something different in this prayer; Jesus did not pray as He told His disciples to pray.

- Jesus' prayer in John 17 is clearly not a prayer of an inferior to a superior because the Son and the Father are of one mind.
- Jesus is not seeking to bend the Father to Him, rather He is voicing the purpose of the Godhead."
- In this prayer Jesus shows the constant attitude of His mind, His unceasing 'intercession' for us until He returns again.
- This is actually a prayer of faith and confidence, even victory – all the while acknowledging the reality of the conflict.
- Jesus made no mention of His problems or the decisions He had to make.
- His heart and mind were fixed on the highest things, pledging Himself to the absolute fulfillment of God the Father's will no matter what the cost, so that eternal life could come to others.
- What a privilege we have to unpack this prayer this morning.
- Let's read this **High Priestly Prayer** in its entirety – please turn with me to John 17:1-26

**John** 17:1-26      *When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, <sup>2</sup> since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. <sup>3</sup> And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. <sup>4</sup> I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. <sup>5</sup> And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. <sup>6</sup> "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. <sup>7</sup> Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. <sup>8</sup> For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. <sup>9</sup> **I am** praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. <sup>10</sup> All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. <sup>11</sup> And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. <sup>12</sup> While I was with them, I kept*

them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. **13 But** now I am coming 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 ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. **16** They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **17** Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. **18** As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. **19 And** for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. **20** "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, **21** that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. **22** The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, **23** I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. **24 Father,** I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. **25** O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. **26** I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

## Pray

- The first thing that stood out to me was how Jesus prayed. He didn't bow his knees, or close His eyes, as we often do, it says

**Verse 1** .....He lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said

- Jesus prayed with the customs of prayer common of the day.
- Then you'll notice that the first thing Jesus says in His prayer is,

**Verse 1** .....Father, the hour has come.

- Jesus is declaring that a change has happened, because in the previous chapters of John's gospel, we have read many times, "my hour has not yet come".

- The change is that Jesus knows that very soon He will be arrested and will be offered as a sacrifice for our sins.
- Why was Jesus arrested at this point and not before?
- Because His hour had not yet come and because of that they – the enemy - couldn't touch Him.
- In a way this also applies to us as individual believers.
- We might not know when we are going to die but I do believe we have an appointed time on earth – an hour.

**Psalm** 31:15    *My times are in your hand*

*Psalm 139:16            You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.*

- No matter how hard the enemy might try to take us out, he can't.
- No matter what or how many sicknesses you get during your lifetime, not one of them will take you out until your hour has come.
- No matter how many accidents you might be in or what might happen to you, none of them will take you out until it's your hour.
- GN can remember once when I was driving – 5 ways Cranborne, foggy, heard and felt a truck, then I found myself on the other side of the intersection – it wasn't my time – God is in control – it is nice when you are secure in Him – Psalm 139:16

**You** saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

- Jesus continues in His prayer saying,

**Verse** 1 & 2    .....glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, <sup>2</sup> since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him."

- Glorify or Glory is a common theme in this prayer which we will open up in more detail when we read verses 4&5.

- In verse 3 Jesus says:

**Verse 3** *And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*

- Jesus makes a very interesting statement here by saying, that eternal life can be defined as knowing God.
- I had never thought about eternal life in this way before.
- What Jesus is saying here is, that when we come to know Christ as our Savior we come into a relationship of knowing.
- This is not an intellectual knowing like the knowing you get from reading your Bible.
- The knowing that is referred to verse 3 is an experiential knowing, a knowing based on experience.
- It's the same knowing that a husband and wife have as they come to know one another through daily experiences and interaction.
- This knowing is through experience, but here's what's interesting about our knowing of God.
- Our knowing of God is not through time and interaction; it's a knowing through having the Holy Spirit living inside of us.
- When we become Christians, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us and the experiential knowing begins at that point and carries on through the rest of our lives.
- We see this outworked under the OT covenant in Jeremiah 31:33-34

**Jeremiah** 31:33-34 *... this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD, I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbour and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."*

- God through His Holy Spirit has implanted into us His love, His character, His wisdom, His righteousness etc.
- By His Spirit He has written these things in our hearts so that there will be an instantaneous knowing.
- I have the assurance of eternal life because I know or experience God through the Holy Spirit, my helper, leading and guiding me.
- Let's move onto verses 4 and 5.

**Verses 4 – 5** *"I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. <sup>5</sup> And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed."*

- We now come back to the thought on glory that we read about in verse 2.
- In these verses Jesus is pointing to the things that He did during His earthly ministry. He said, I did those things in such a way as to bring glory to you, Father.
- But now His prayer is that the Father would give glory to him, his Son.
- Do you notice Jesus describes this glory that He is praying for as the same glory that they shared before the world began.
- Jesus is clearly communicating that He and the Father shared glory from eternity, from eternity.
- And now Jesus is praying that God the Father would restore that glory that He laid down when he humbled Himself to come to earth.
- In verse 6, Jesus says:

**Verse 6** *I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word."*

- What does Jesus mean when He says, I have manifested God's name?
- As we have seen and said numerous times, someone's name in the Bible speaks of the person, it tells us about who they are as a person, it talks about their attributes and character.

- So, what does it mean when Jesus says, I have manifested to these men your name?
- What Jesus is saying is that He has revealed who His father is as a person, I have revealed your attributes, I have revealed your character to these people, I have given them these things.
- Jesus revealed the Father and He will continue to reveal the Father.
- So, He says in verse 7-8,

**Verse 7-8**      *Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. <sup>8</sup>For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.*

- Jesus is saying to the Father, they now know, that I came from you and I came to them.
- In fact, because of that they are now ready for the next step of the revelation. Which is? “I have come to die for them”.
- We know that’s the revelation because in the verses that now follow, Jesus begins to pray for His disciples for their strengthening, because He knows the things that are going to happen in the next few hours are going to shake their faith.
- Jesus begins to pray for them in earnest.
- In verse 9-11, He says,

**Verse 9-11**      *I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. <sup>10</sup>All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. <sup>11</sup>And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.*

- These verses really touch me because they show Jesus’ heart and love for His followers.
- Dad, I’m going to die and leave them, please keep them safe, keep them in your name.

- We just talked about what the name is; the person, attributes and character of someone.
- Jesus is saying, keep them in who you are, keep them in what you are, keep them in the character of your heart, your love, your kindness, your power.
- Now that you know what that means, to be kept in the name of God have you ever thought what it means when we say at the end of a prayer “in the name of Jesus”.
- We’re not saying some magical formula, what we are really saying is:

I pray this in the authority, in the power, in the person, in the attributes, in the character of Jesus, Amen.

- Jesus goes on, verse 12-13

**Verse 12-13** *While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction (talking about Judas) that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.*

- Jesus was aware that there would be a time coming that they were going to think back on this prayer that heard Him speak and it would give them joy, a joy that nobody could steal.
- In verse 14-15 He goes on to say,

**Verse 14-15** *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. <sup>15</sup>I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one*

- Think about what Jesus prayed and then consider the power of His prayer.
- As Christians we have nothing the scared of, especially of Satan.
- Yes, we are at war, we have an enemy who is like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, yes, we have to be alert but all of that is from a place of Victory.
- Jesus prayed for us.

- He prayed that we are not taken out of this world, but that we will be kept from the evil one.
- Jesus' prayer has been answered – we have been given armour and spiritual weapons as well as this great promise in Luke 10:19.

**Luke 10:19** *Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.*

- Jesus goes on to pray in verse 16 & 17.

**Verse 16-17** *They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.*

- “Sanctify them” means to set them apart for God's use, “in the truth” and then He explains what truth is – “your word is truth.”
- What is the truth? the Word is truth, Jesus is the Word, Jesus is the truth.
- Jesus said, “I am the way the truth and the life”.
- Do you want to really want to know the truth?
- Then get to know the person of Jesus intimately – a great start would be to read all the red letters in the gospels.

**Verse 19** *And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth*

- Notice we read in verse 17 Jesus praying “Sanctify them.” And then in verse 19, He says, “And for their sake I consecrate...” and then at the end of verse 19 Jesus uses the word, sanctified again.
- Sanctify and consecrate are two different English words that actually mean the same thing in the Greek.
- They mean “to be holy or holiness”.
- Holiness comes about through separation.
- Separation from what?
- Separation from anything that is unholy, or corrupt.

- What Jesus is praying, is that the Father would keep us from the corruption of the world and so He says, I pray that you would sanctify them, that they may be sanctified in truth.
- And then in verse 19, He says, “...for their sake I consecrate myself.”
- What Jesus is saying is, I'm going to set myself apart from them physically, and be with you but I will send them the Holy Spirit or helper, that they might be empowered to be sanctified and to live a separate life from the way the world lives.
- So often we skip over passages like this because words like holiness and separation don't sound like fun.
- Jesus's desire is for us to be kept safe, and He knows the only way this is going to happen is for us to separate ourselves from worldly, corrupt things.
- To be separate from the world because we're not of the world.
- We have been “reborn” out of the world, we are to act not like the world but to be set apart from it.

**1 Thessalonians 5:22**      *"abstain from all appearance of evil"*

- Why – to show the world we are separate or different to the way they live.
- Unfortunately, in the compromising PC world that we live this has been lost, doing so would be seen as being old fashioned.
- We all know what temptation is like – if we don't consciously consecrate or separate ourselves then we will become and act like the world.
- Hence Jesus prayer to be separate from the world, not like the world, but separate.

**Verse 20**      *I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word,*

- Who is Jesus talking about here? He's talking about us.
- Jesus is praying for you and I - so pay attention.

**Verse 21-23** ....that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup> The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

- In these verses we read Jesus' prayer is for unity by loving one another.
- I covered this extensively in my last message on John 13 and therefore because of time I won't open this up except to say – once again the way we act toward each other as individuals and as churches has an impact on how the world views us.
- We can't expect politicians to take us seriously regarding the laws they make if we are not in unity regarding God's Word.
- This also has an impact on our witness in the way we are received by our workmates, friends and neighbours etc.

**Verse 24** Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

- As Jesus comes to the end of His prayer, He prayed that we would ultimately be with Him in heaven.
- Jesus says, I want them "to see my glory," that same glory that I had with you before the foundation of the world.
- I really love this bit.
- Jesus knows He is going to leave His friends who He has imparted His life into and wants them to see where He came from and taste and see first hand His Kingship, His glory that He gave up when He humbled Himself to come to earth.
- Hey Gra, come and check out my house!!!
- I don't know about you, but this really blesses me – it makes me feel like I belong.

**Verse** 25-26 *O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. <sup>26</sup> I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

- The last two verses of Jesus prayer states that the revealing of the Father is an ongoing work.
- Jesus says I've made you known, and I will continue to do that.
- How is Jesus going to do that if He is back in heaven?
- And as we heard from Nic, Matt and Andy in their last messages, this happens through the receiving of the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus says at the end of verse 26

**.....the** *love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

- There is so much that I haven't been able to unpack in the High Priestly Prayer of our Lord Jesus.
- Can I encourage you to read it again and again and let the spirit of this prayer touch you as it has me.

**PRAY**

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