

Do you know that prayer was one of the most important ministries that Jesus had during His life on earth?

Do you know that Jesus prayed so often that His disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray?

Of course, prayer is conversation between a person and God.

Therefore, we do not have the content of most of Jesus' prayers.

Do you know that we pray because Jesus prayed and set an example for us as to how to live in God's world?

And do you know that Jesus still prays for us. He is alive and serves as our intercessor.

**1 John 2:1** Jesus is our advocate before God the Father. He says we are forgiven, our sins paid for.

**Hebrews 7:23-25** And as our intercessor, this prayer helps us to understand how He prays for us now.

It is essential to understand this because there are all kinds of misunderstanding about prayer.

Some teach that we should pray to Mary or dead saints so that they can intercede for us.

This is a lie. It is not taught in the Bible.

Some teach that prayer has some power in itself if you pray just the right way, like a magic spell.

This is a lie. Prayer is powerful only because in it we speak with God who is omnipotent.

Some teach that prayer should only be done by priests or pastors because they are closer to God.

This is a lie. God listens to our prayers because we are His children, not because of a title.

Jesus teaches us to pray to the Father, in the name of His Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

We pray to the Father.

We pray in the way that Jesus teaches us to pray with the standing that He gives us in Him.

The Holy Spirit helps us to say the words, and He makes it all work.

### **Do you know that Jesus Christ is our intercessor?**

#### **How does He pray for those who follow Him?**

After Jesus has shared the Last Supper with His disciples, after he has washed their feet,

After Jesus has taught them late into the evening, now He prays for them.

John 17 is a prayer, unique among prayers.

It is traditionally called the High Priestly Prayer, which fits.

It could also be called the Lord's Prayer.

But this title has already been taken by the prayer Jesus taught in Matthew 16.

It is called the High Priestly prayer:

Because in it Jesus does what the OT priests were supposed to be doing all along.

He intercedes for His people.

He places Himself between God who is holy and sinful men with all of our struggles and needs.

But Jesus, in this prayer, does even more for us than any priest could ever do.

He prays for Himself and for His disciples as only the Messiah, the Son of God, the Lamb of God could do.

This is a prayer on the way to the cross, but different from Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane.

It is unique in that the one who prays it is Jesus, this sets it apart from most prayers.

It is unique in what is confidently asserted. **John 17:4-8**

It is unique in who is prayed for. **John 17:9, 20**

It is unique in the very personal request at the beginning, that Jesus would be glorified by His Father.

Notice in this prayer that, like the Lord's Prayer, it is addressed to the Father in heaven.

### **I. "Father, Glorify Me as I give eternal life to them." John 17:1-5**

Now, there are not a lot of lessons to be learned from this prayer about prayer.

But this is not a prayer that you and I can pray. It is not an example for us. That is not the point.

The content is so far beyond you and I that to pray this prayer would be blasphemy.

But right away, an important question strikes the reader.

It is evident that Jesus is praying here for what He knows His Father already fully intends to do. Why?

1. So that His disciples will learn and remember.

2. Second, so that when Jesus is glorified by the Father, meaning the death of Jesus on the Cross, the Father and the Son will receive all the glory for it.

But what is it that Jesus prays for? Which is what the Father already wants.

And here we get to the heart of the text.

For what does Jesus pray?

You see the request twice in these first 5 verses, at the beginning and the end of this section of the prayer.

Do you see it?

vs. 1 “glorify Your Son”

vs. 5 “glorify Me together with Yourself.”

And what does the word “glorify” mean?

It means to show or reveal something in all of its beauty and detail.

And we also see that this glory is beyond the sort of glory that is due any human being. (vs. 5)

This is in contrast to Jesus’ humbling of Himself, but is essential to His ultimate purpose. **Philippians 2:5-11**

There is a mutual glorification that is to take place, that Jesus is asking for.

The Father glorifying the Son. The Son glorifying the Father.

It is obvious that, in the way that Jesus is praying, the Son is God just as the Father is God.

Now, will you take a step deeper into the text and see the means of this glorification?

How will it be done?

In vs. 1 we read Jesus’ statement, ‘The hour has come.’

This is the hour of the Cross, the hour of Jesus’ suffering and death for us.

Then comes the request.

Then, at the beginning of verse 2 comes a particularly important connecting phrase.

“even as” or “since” or “For” or “as” or “because” = best: “just as”

You see, this mutual glorification is to happen through the work that Jesus Christ is doing and will do.

“Just as You gave Him authority over all flesh” = The Father has given the Son authority to do this.

“That to all whom You have given Him” = The Father has determined who this will include. **John 10:27-30**

“He may give eternal life” = The glory of Christ will be demonstrated as He gives eternal life to His sheep.

How will Jesus do this? **John 10:14-18**

In John 17, Jesus is asking His Father to get Him to the Cross where He will lay down His life.

When He does this, the sin price will be paid, and His sheep (people) will be redeemed.

This will bring glory to the Son and to the Father because it is the fulfillment of all God’s promises.

In this work all creation will ultimately see that God is good, just, loving, and faithful.

It is at the Cross that the character and beauty of God the Father and His Son Jesus is most clearly seen.

Jesus wants to give you eternal life.

Do you know this?

And what is “eternal life?” Verse 3

Eternal life is to be in relationship with God the Father and His Son Jesus forever.

It is by trusting in Jesus and His death on the Cross that we are brought into this relationship.

We were debtors, owing God a price for sins we could never pay. Now the payment has been made.

We were guilty, having offended a holy perfect God. Now we are justified and declared not guilty.

We were slaves to sin and servants of ourselves. Now we are free from sin and able to serve God.

We were rebels, at war with God in our hearts. Now we have been made friends, at peace with God.

We were spiritual orphans, cut off from the family of God. Now we are His adopted children.

We were destined for death and hell. Now we are destined for life everlasting with God.

Look at vs. 4-5, the two parts of this mutual glorification are there as well.

Jesus is repeating His request.

Jesus is emphasizing the work that He is doing as the means to this mutual glorification.

And you can see that Jesus is certainly no ordinary man, but pre-existent with the Father. **John 1:1-2**

So, we can also see that our salvation is not primarily about you and me.

Jesus gives us eternal life so that He and His Father can be glorified in His doing so.

Do you see this?

Your salvation is not primarily about you.

It is about what God is doing!

And, by the end of this prayer we will see that the whole purpose of what Jesus is doing is so that...

“They may see My glory.” (John 17:24)

## II. “You gave them to Me, and I have given them Your words.” John 17:6-10

As in verses 2-3, Jesus is here speaking about His disciples, His sheep, given to Him by the Father.

In verses 6-8 we learn some especially important attributes of these disciples, people, sheep, of Jesus.

It is important to remember that these are those who know the Father, to whom He gives eternal life.

This is what a Christian is. This is what eternal life looks like lived out.

If you are not this then you are not a Christian. You are not going to heaven.

What is a Christian?

### 1. A Christian is given to Jesus by His Father. (17:6)

Jesus says this again in verse 9. Jesus is praying, not for everyone in the world, but for His own. And those who are His own were given to Him by the Father in heaven.

We have seen this in John 10. We see it another way in **Ephesians 1:3-6, 2:1-10**.

Are you a saved person? Are you a Christian? Are you trusting in the Lord for your salvation?

Well, it didn't begin with you. It was God's idea to save you.

You might think that you chose to follow Jesus. And, if you are, no doubt you did.

You are then choosing to follow Him to this very day.

But God gave to you and gives to you the grace to make that choice.

If you would consider your life honestly, and think about what happened...

You will see that God was drawing you to Himself before you ever even thought of Him.

### 2. A Christian keeps the word of the Lord. (17:6)

This is the clearest indication of who is truly a follower of Jesus, a Christian.

What does it mean to “keep” His word? Well, the entire Bible speaks to this.

It means that you learn what He says and you listen to it, study it, remember it.

It means then that you obey what He says, in detail, the way that He says it, about everything.

About your time, money, relationships, marriage, sex, church, children, mission...

It means that you teach what He says to others. You do not keep it a secret.

You see, it makes no sense to call Jesus Lord and then say, “But I'm not going to obey You.”

Later on, in this very prayer, Jesus will speak of the importance of His words.

John 17:14, “I have given them Your Word...”

John 17:17, “Sanctify them in the truth; Your Word is truth.”

### 3. A Christian knows that Jesus comes from God the Father and speaks for God the Father. (17:7)

There is no one else like Jesus who has come into this world.

There is no other religion, philosophy, institution, party, or organization that speaks such truth.

There is nothing else that can save you or fix the world.

Mohammad cannot do it. Buddha cannot do it. Trump cannot do it.

No one but Jesus has the answers, knows the way. It is useless to follow these others.

Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father but by Me.” (John 14:6)

### 4. A Christian receives the words of Christ, understands them, and trusts in Jesus. (17:8)

To know the words of Christ, to receive them, to understand them, is to trust in Jesus.

If Jesus has come from God, there is nothing more important in all the world than what He says.

If He is not from God, then ignore Him.

But if He really is sent by God, you need to live by everything He ever said.

Even when you think you know better.

Even when you feel like it would be more fun or profitable to ignore Him.

Even when you feel as though you don't really understand why He says what He says.

You need to obey Him because in that obedience is trust. This is what faith means.

Verses 9-10 make clear that when you live this way you show that you belong to Jesus.

When you belong to Jesus, He is praying for you.

When you belong to Jesus, He is glorified in you. You show people what Jesus looks like.

### III. “Holy Father, keep them in Your Name.”

**John 17:11-12**

In these two verses we learn of a very important way that Jesus is praying for those who are His. Again, we see Jesus praying for something that He knows the Father fully intends to do. And here is his request of the Father, verse 11 “Keep them in Your Name.”

What does that mean?

For what is He asking?

Verse 12 gives us a hint.

“keep in Your name must be similar to what Jesus was doing when He spent 3 years with them.

He kept them in His name by teaching them.

He kept them in His name by showing them who He is.

He kept them in His name by setting an example.

He kept them in His name by rebuking them.

He kept them in His name by correcting them.

He kept them in His name by training them.

He kept them in His name by praying for them.

But now He will not be with them.

So, in His absence the Father will be doing it in answer to His prayer... for them and for us.

And how does it happen now?

Much the same way, except that the Holy Spirit is His active presence.

**John 14:16, 26-28**

**John 16:7, 13-15**

The Holy Spirit will take all these things that Jesus has already been doing and guide us in understanding them.

And the Holy Spirit confirms that we are His. **Rom. 8:14-17**

The Puritans of the 17<sup>th</sup> century were soul doctors.

Maybe no other pastor-theologians were so adept at helping people to follow Jesus with all their hearts.

And they taught that an essential part of being a Christian was perseverance.

Why?

Because this world, your flesh, and the devil are going to do all they can to tear you away from Jesus.

Have you felt it?

So, you must fight the battle.

But you are not alone.

You have Christian brothers and sisters to help you, pray for you. Don't fail to depend upon others.

God puts people in your life to help you, sometimes to rescue you.

If you don't believe that, give me a call.

If I cannot help you, I will find someone who can.

But, more than that, you have Jesus praying to God the Father to keep you.

Never forget this.

When the temptation come, when you are tempted to despair, when you want to give in...

Remember that Jesus prays for you and the Father sends His Spirit to help you.

If you are truly His He will not let you go.

But you show that you are His by not letting go.

Don't let go of Jesus. He will not let go of you.

He wants to get you all the way home, for His glory.