

The Prayer of Jesus

Scripture: John 17

1When 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, 2since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. 4I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. 5And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

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. 7Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. 8For 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. 9I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. 10All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. 11And 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. 12While 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. 13But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 14I 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. 15I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.^a 16They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19And 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, 21that 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. 22The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23I 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. 24Father, 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. 25O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. 26I 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.”

Context: The Lord Jesus is talking to His Father; God the Son is praying to God the Father. He not only prays for His disciples, but He prays for all who will believe in the future. He prays for you and for me. God the Son, even on the night He was betrayed, the night prior to His death, was thinking about you and me, and praying for us. It is amazing.

We have this awesome privilege to see communication between God the Son and God the Father - the prayer that God the Son prays on our behalf shows what He wants for each of us. This shows what

was on His heart as He went to the cross. It shows some of what was most important to Him, for you and me.

This morning, let's

Be strengthened by Jesus' prayer for you

Know God

- He prays about God's glory and His glory, and this is seen through His being made manifest and His making God known to us. God deserves all the glory and honor and praise. God deserves glory and worship now and forever. And Jesus, God the Son, deserves it as well - He has accomplished the work that God gave Him to do.
- Jesus shows that God receives glory through our coming to know Him. Here He defines eternal life. Sometimes we might want to define it as being assured that you will go to heaven when you die. And that is part of it, but Jesus reveals the essence - "3 And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." and "For God so loved the world that He gave His Only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."
- Jesus made God the Father known. That was His work. You can see in His death on the cross the love that God the Father has. You can see the lengths that God went so that we could know Him, so that we could have life with Him. This is a deep desire of Jesus. When He prayed to His Father this was the first thing He prayed for - for the glory of God through our knowledge of Him.
- Come to know God. For each of the three aspects of the prayer of Jesus, I'd like to suggest a new way of thinking, or a renewed way of thinking.
 - For this first aspect, to know God and thus bring Him glory, let's remember that Jesus is the great treasure in life.
 - There are so many good gifts that God gives to us. And many of them are so easy to take for granted. For instance, just remember three short months ago. On March 8th, most of us were sitting in this room. The following week many of us were sitting in this room, but some had already begun to take precautions and did not join us. But March 8th, we were mostly here. Don't you wish you could go back? I know I do. To see you all in person, to shake hands, to give hugs, to stand a couple feet from each other, laughing, talking, joking, praying, eating - so many of those things I had no idea we'd lose so quickly.
 - It can be tempting for us to see our spiritual lives as just another aspect of living. It can be tempting to see God as one of many good things, even if He is the best thing in our lives. But I want to challenge us to a renewed thinking - that Jesus is the great treasure in life.
 - If He was taken away, which of course He can't be, would we then realize what we have now? What would it take for us to live out this truth, that He is the great treasure? Well - He prayed that we would come to know Him. So let His prayer take root in your heart, and see Him as the great treasure in life. Then,

Be kept by God

- Jesus then begins to pray for His disciples, the men who were with Him there in the garden.
- Notice how Jesus prays for His disciples, and take comfort. He prays that God the Father will keep the disciples in His name, that God will keep them from the evil one, that they would be sanctified in the truth, the Word of God, that they would be set apart for God.
- Notice what Jesus did not pray for. He did not pray for protection from disease, trouble or persecution.
- What matters most to Jesus, is that His disciples (and we) are protected in the ways that matter the most. Protected from abandoning the faith, from Satan, and from being part of the world.
- We're praying for protection from the wrong things. The things that we pray for protection from are some of the ways that God most wants to work in our hearts and lives.
- I was listening to a sermon by Tim Keller a few nights ago and he talked about the lives of people in the Bible - how normal they were, and how God used suffering in their lives to bless them and draw them closer to Him.
- Just in the book of Genesis - Abraham and Sarah were childless for so long - but it turned to strengthen their faith. Jacob was chased from his home, but it led to His finding God and truly making the God of his father Abraham his God. Joseph was taken from a home in which he was the center, and God formed him into someone who was gracious and humble.
 - So here is our new way of thinking - instead of asking God to protect you from pain, discomfort, or stress, ask Him to use those things to make you more like Jesus. Then, ask Him to protect you in the ways you need protection - spiritual protection, protection from the devil, protection from not being set apart for Him, not making a difference as you live.
 - Let His prayer take root in your heart, and know that He is keeping you and protecting you in the most important ways. Be assured that He will protect you from the evil one, and that He is keeping you in His love. And finally,

Be one with others

- The last portion of the prayer of Jesus is focused on oneness. Here Christ specifically prays not just for those with Him in the garden, but for us as well, as those who have come to believe in Jesus through their testimony.
- Consider where the disciples were - on the brink of seeing Him arrested and living life without Him. Jesus knew that one of their greatest needs was unity, to be one. And this is one of the things that is closest to His heart for you and me.
- The source of this unity is Him. He is unified. First, we are one with Christ, and only then can we be one with each other.
- To have true unity with other believers we must first look to Christ, and only then look to others.
- When love prevails among believers, especially in times of strong disagreement, it presents to the world an indisputable mark of a true follower of Jesus Christ. As a husband and a wife are one, but are not the same, so all believers, regardless of where they live or go to church, are called to be one. Let's be one by first looking to Jesus, then looking to others. As we look to others, let's be led in the same spirit as Saint Francis when he prayed: "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is doubt, faith. Where there is despair, hope. Where there is darkness, light. And where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in

giving that we receive, and it's in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it's in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.”

- A new way of thinking about unity - it is not primarily agreeing with others. Rather, it is being made right with God and letting that rightness spill over into your relationships with others who are different than you, who think differently than you, who live differently than you.
- Let the prayer of Jesus take root in your heart, allowing His Spirit to do His work in your heart as you seek to understand others and He will unite us in the love of Jesus Christ. Especially in the coming days and weeks and months, as there are as many different opinions of what should happen in our churches and our businesses and our beaches as there are people. Jesus did not pray that we'd be the same, but that we'd be one.

Be strengthened by Jesus' prayer for you

Jesus, the Son of God, prayed to God the Father, for you! Be encouraged! Be strengthened! And allow Him to be at work in your heart.

Be reminded that Jesus is the priceless treasure in life. He is not just another blessing in life. Allow the Spirit to remind you that He is better than anything else.

Be kept by God. Pray not from protection from the troubles of the world, but pray for spiritual protection and protection from the evil one. Allow the Spirit to affirm in your heart that He does protect you and keep you.

Be one with others. Don't look for a superficial unity of sameness, but go deep with God and deep with others, seeking understanding. Allow the Spirit to draw you first to Him and then naturally to others as well.

Be strengthened by Jesus' prayer for you. Go in that strength.

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