

## *How Jesus Prayed For You*

John 17

March 19, 2023

Please open your Bibles today to John 17. As you're finding that, I want to announce a new prayer group for woodcarvers. It's called, "Oh, Ye of Whittle Faith." We all need to send prayers to the people in New Jersey. Nothing happened, they just have to live there. We're going to be talking about prayer today.

We've been on a Journey with John for the past month and are drawing ever closer to Jesus' crucifixion and eventual resurrection. We've spent time in the Upper Room watching Jesus wash His disciples feet and listening to Him promise to prepare them, and us, a room in His Father's House. We heard Him promise us His Holy Spirit and His peace and then last week we tagged along as they left the Upper Room to make their way toward Gethsemane. Along that way, Jesus revealed to them, and us, our crucial role as branches on His True Vine and our responsibility to bear much fruit for the Father's Glory. We also heard Him repeat several times already this night, "Love one another," and "If you love me, you'll obey me." Toward the end of the conversation last week, Jesus warned them about persecution they would face, about hard times to come, but He also told them, and us, "Take heart! I have overcome the world!"

All of this brings us today to John 17:1. If you are able, please stand as I read from that passage. "1 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. 2 For you granted him authority over **all** people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. 3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. 4 I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

We have here the longest recorded prayer of Jesus, in fact, the longest prayer in the entire New Testament. I am unworthy to preach on this that is often called Jesus' High Priestly prayer. The disciples were so privileged to eavesdrop on this intimate conversation between our Lord and His Heavenly Father, and thanks to John, we can still do so today. I'm so thankful that the Holy Spirit brought this prayer to John's remembrance when it came time for him to write his gospel. Jesus' prayer should encourage and bless us knowing He has already prayed for us, and it should also instruct us in how to pray ourselves. If we really want to know how to pray, we would be wise to learn from the best Pray-er of all, the Lord Jesus. Let's take a look at it now.

In verse 1, we learn of His posture. It often mentions Jesus bowing His head in prayer, but here John writes that He “looked toward heaven and prayed.” There is no one perfect way to pray. We can pray kneeling, standing, sitting, or laying. We can pray looking up, down, or out. And we can pray with our eyes open as He apparently did if He was “**looking** toward heaven.” That’s good news. I’d hate to think I had to close my eyes while praying, driving down 81.

But it’s clear where His attention was. It was on His **Father** in Heaven, for that’s the first word John records of this prayer. Say Father. Jesus was His only unique Son and here He addresses His Father. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus instructed us to address God in this same way. If you are His child, you may address God as your Father. What a high privilege.

He then says, “The time has come.” Remember we said that many places throughout Jesus’ ministry, He said, “My time is not yet come.” But now it had. And He knew it and he ask the Father to glorify Him so that He could glorify the Father. Now how would He do that? By giving eternal life to all whom His Father entrusted to Him. By bearing the fruit of obedience and going to the cross the next morning. By carrying the sin of the world and paying its full price with His shed red blood. Notice He says in verse 4, I have brought you glory by **completing** the work you gave me to do. Say complete. Jesus obeyed the Father and did His will and would continue to do it all the way through the final hour tomorrow afternoon when Jesus would say, “It is finished.” He completed His work orders. His assignments on earth.

Vs 5, “And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.” Jesus had had enough of this world and He was now more than ready to rejoin His Father in heaven. Notice how the Trinity enjoyed itself even before Creation. God did not need to humans to be complete. Notice the intimate relationship as Jesus refers back to “the good old days.” Before sin came along and messed everything up. Nevertheless, His work would be complete very soon and He was ready to get back home. Sometimes we have to travel on business. Some have to even go to other countries and stay for long periods of time. And when those assignments are finished they can rejoin their families again. They look forward to reunion and just being with people they’ve been physically separated from for so long. Jesus had been on earth 33 years and He missed His Father. And we see that He got back, for at Stephen’s stoning Jesus was sitting at the right hand of His Father.

Do **you** ever get homesick for heaven? Even though we didn’t start there like Jesus did, we all have this desire to go and be in the presence of the One who created us and loves us most. A place we talked about a few months back where all is joy and peace forever more. As compared to this earth which is the exact opposite. No wonder Jesus wanted to get back home.

Look now at Vs 6 "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. 7 Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. 8 For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me." Here Jesus mentions His followers. He says He's done His job and revealed the Father to them and that they have obeyed God! Perfectly? No! They all messed up and so do we. But as Jesus revealed more and more of the Father and the Father's will to them, they received it and they obeyed it. Most of all, Vs 8, they knew with certainty that Jesus came from God and they believed. They **believed** that Jesus was the only unique Son of the God, the Messiah, the Savior which is crucial to be saved.

Friend do you know with certainty that Jesus came from God? Or are you still on the fence? You'd better get off of it on one side or the other. Jesus said you're either for me or against me. Could anyone do what He did and not be from God? Here are His disciples who knew Him better than anyone and they believed Him completely, even **before** He rose from the dead. How much plainer and more obvious it is for us. And still people won't believe. I want you to know **with certainty** that Jesus came from God and put your faith and belief in Him, receive His Word, and obey it!

Look back now at vs 9 "I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. 10 All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. 11 I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name — the name you gave me — so that they may be one as we are one. 12 While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. 13 I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the **full measure** of my joy within them. Vs 14 I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. 15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one."

The focus of this nearly last prayer of Jesus, is His followers. His disciples. Although they messed up a lot, in vs 10, Jesus says they did bring glory to Him. My prayer is that we will also! And although He would soon be leaving the world, they would not be. So He prays for His Father to protect them. You talk about a safety strategy, Jesus commissioned the most powerful Bodyguard in the universe to protect His disciples, the Holy Spirit. And one of His chief concerns was not even their physical safety, but their unity. We'll say more about that in a bit. But He also prays for them to have the full measure of His joy! Say joy. The Amplified Bible says, "that they may experience My delight fulfilled in them... that they may have My gladness within them,

filling their hearts.” Jesus wants us to have the full measure of His joy! Say full. Back in chapter 15, He told them their joy could be complete by obeying Him. Ours can be also!

So in verse 15, He again prays for our protection. Not that we be taken out of the world. If only, and one day we will be, but while we’re here, we have His work to do! And Jesus has already prayed for us to be protected from the evil one. The Devil, Satan. Remember that. Before you ever become fearful, worried, or defeated, Jesus has asked the Father to protect you from the evil one.

16 “They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. 17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. 19 For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.” Friends, Jesus knew His followers are not of this world. We belong to heaven. We are sojourning here. Traveling through. If you feel like a stranger here sometimes, that’s a good thing! If you’re an obedient Christian, you are a stranger here. And strange indeed. And the more we obey Jesus, the more the world will hate us and the more strange we’ll be. Hate is a strong word and yet that’s what Jesus uses.

He also asked the Father to sanctify us. Say Sanctify. That means to become more holy. To become more like Jesus. And that is a lifelong process. Yes, He sanctifies us and sets us aside for Himself when we get saved, but the process of becoming as holy as Jesus takes the rest of our time on earth. And the means by which He does it is also mentioned in Vs 17. Say God’s Word. Sanctify them by thy truth. Thy word is truth! Nothing is truer than God’s Word and nothing will make us any more like Jesus! With the Holy Spirit’s work revealing, applying, and teaching us God’s Word, we become more like our Master every day. I pray every morning for God to sanctify me, Nancy, our family, our church, and the CBC by His Spirit and His Word. So we must spend time in God’s Word. Individually and together with other believers. That we might honor Jesus’ prayer request and allow the Father to sanctify us by His Word. We often lift up our prayer requests, let’s pay attention to these prayer requests of Jesus.

You say, George, Jesus is praying for those 11 disciples who are listening over His shoulder, He’s not praying for me. Oh yes He is! Vs 20 “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message.” Who is that? If you’re saved, say, “That’s me!” Through **their** teaching, the message has spread until it eventually has come to us. Jesus was praying for you and me that night! **We** are the focus of His High Priestly prayer! Jesus prayed for your protection and blessing and sanctification that night.

And He prayed for something else for us. Vs 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that

they may be one as we are one: 23 I in them and you in me. May they be brought to **complete unity** to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

Say unity. One of Jesus’ other chief prayer requests that night was for our unity. That we may be one! United. Completely unified. Why? So that the world can tell Jesus is from God. Nearly 3 centuries ago, outsiders remarked, “My how the Brethren love each other.” They could tell. I pray they still can. This doesn’t mean uniformity. We don’t all look the same or even think the same about every issue. We may not all vote the same way or cheer for the same teams, but we can still hold each other in love and have the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

But not united at the expense of truth. Jesus already prayed for us to be sanctified by His truth, His Word. I must quote Nathan Rittenhouse who said, "When unity becomes the goal, the minimum becomes the standard." And that’s what has happened in many denominations and churches. “Let’s not stand against error and heresy; we don’t want to cause a split.” Jesus prayed for our unity but only **after** He prayed for the truth to make us holy. Let’s not separate the two. We don’t have to choose. His truth is what should unite us!

And then He finishes off, Vs 24 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. 25 "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. 26 I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them." Can you hear Jesus’ eagerness to get us all to heaven so we can see Him there face to face? In His own element, in all His glory. Without His human limitations. “You should see me back home!” And then He finishes by repeating that He has made the Father known to them just as He was assigned to do. SO THAT... So that His love might be in us. He wants us to know and have His love.

Jesus is praying here not for the world, not for the government, nor even for people’s health. He’s praying for us. For our protection, our sanctification, and our unity. For the 11 remaining disciples as well as for all who would get saved through them. If you have accepted Jesus, take comfort in the fact that He prayed for you that night and is interceding for you even now.

But if you’re not saved today, He didn’t pray for your protection, your sanctification or your unity. You’re not included in Jesus’ prayer. But you can be by doing what verse 3 says. We skipped over that verse earlier, but I can think of no better way to close this message. Vs 3 “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” Friends, He is the only true

God! His Son is the only way to the only true God! Don't you want eternal life? You can freely have it by knowing God through His son Jesus. Not just knowing about Him, but personally knowing Him as your Savior, Lord and friend. Come to Jesus today! If you want to be included in Jesus prayer, accept Him that you might have eternal life!