

EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #66

(The Real Lord's Prayer - Part #1)

John 17:1-5

When one studies the life of Jesus Christ found in the gospels, it is typical to call the prayer which shows up in the Sermon on the Mount and Luke 11, "The Lord's Prayer." But in all honesty, that prayer was an instructive prayer that He gave to His disciples. It is more accurately the Lord teaching His disciples how to pray a "disciples' prayer." There is no record that Jesus ever prayed that prayer, in fact, He couldn't have because He never prayed "forgive" Me of anything. He would not pray "forgive us our debts," He had no debts. **The real Lord's Prayer is right here in John 17.**

As we come to the 17th chapter of John, almost all Biblical scholars agree that this is the greatest prayer ever prayed. It is the greatest prayer that was ever uttered on the face of this earth and it is the greatest prayer ever recorded in Scripture. This prayer is Personal, it is Powerful and it is Pastoral. In fact, the Protestant Reformer of Scotland, John Knox, had his wife read him John 17 in the final moments of his life, and history says that he actually went into eternity with his wife reading him this powerful prayer. This is a very sacred and solemn prayer.

It is so sacred and solemn that there have been a number of men in ministry who have believed that this prayer should not even be preached. However, since it is part of the written Word and since the job of the Bible expositor is to preach the Word, the whole counsel of God, it is a text to be preached, but we would agree that it is to be handled with a great prayerful reverence and fear.

Now Jesus and His disciples were on His way to Gethsemane and, in just a short while, Jesus is going to be betrayed and handed over to various trials, which will lead to Him being nailed to the cross. **What this prayer proves is that Jesus is the One calling the shots in all of this.** He was no casualty who was taken by surprise. He was in total and complete control. This plan was operating on His time schedule. He was not a victim, but the Victor. He was not overcome, but the Overcomer. This prayer is rich in its Christology and in its theology. As Dr. C. I. Scofield said in this prayer, "The reader may look deeply into the heart of the Son of God" (Scofield Reference Bible, p. 1150). What we see is this:

**IN CHRIST'S FINAL HOURS HE PRAYED A REMARKABLE PRIESTLY .
PRAYER FOR HIMSELF AND FOR HIS DISCIPLES AND FOR HIS FUTURE PEOPLE,
SPECIFICALLY PETITIONING GOD THE FATHER FOR CERTAIN THINGS.**

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer said it is reasonable for us to assume that this is the pattern of prayer that Jesus continues to pray for us in heaven. Then he went on to point out that this prayer includes a prayer of safekeeping for His people and that the only way that this cannot be answered would be if the Father refused to answer the request of His Son, which is impossible in view of what His Son was about to do (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, p. 332).

John Wesley once said He didn't think much of someone who did not spend four hours a day in prayer. Jesus was a God/man of prayer, but if we track His life in the gospels, we cannot seem to discover that He spent four hours a day, every day in prayer. As far as this critical prayer is concerned, it actually takes about three to four minutes to pray or read, but to comprehend what Jesus is actually saying here takes a lifetime study.

As we look down through this prayer, we may see that Jesus prays it to the Father and it has three parts:

PART #1 - Jesus prays for Himself (17:1-5);

PART #2 - Jesus prays for His disciples (17:6-19);

PART #3 - Jesus prays for all who would believe in the future (17:20-26).

You will notice that the shortest prayer Christ prays is actually for Himself (5 verses). The great bulk of the prayer has to do with His disciples (14 verses) and us (7 verses). In this study, we want to examine part one of the prayer.

PART #1 – Jesus prays for Himself. 17:1-5

Martin Luther said this prayer is so deep that no one can even begin to fathom it. Phil Melancthon, Luther's friend, said there has never been a voice heard more loudly in heaven than the voice of the Son of God praying this prayer. Just imagine how the Father would be moved when Christ's voice uttered this prayer just hours away from Calvary.

The essence of what Christ specifically prays here is that **God the Father would Glorify God the Son, so that the Son could glorify God the Father.**

The word “glory” (δοξα) or “glorify” (δοξαζω) (17:1, 1, 4, 5, 5) is used five times in the first five verses of the prayer. The word is used in regard to God and His glory and it specifically refers to both glorious opinion and glorious visibility. In other words, we are to have the opinion that God's glory is to be honored and praised at the highest level. We are also to know that there is a visibility to that glory; it is majestic, it is bright and it is of great splendor. It is a glory that will one day be physically seen (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 121).

What Jesus is specifically asking His Father to do here in this context, is to give Him back the glory that He had before coming to this world. Prior to coming to this world, all creation viewed Him or held the high and holy opinion of Him that He was to be praised and honored as God. Prior to Him coming here, He visibly was seen having the physical glory of God. When he chose to come to this earth, He set aside that glory to take on human form. He is now asking His Father to give Him that glory back again.

The entire focus of Jesus Christ was to glorify God. That is why He came to this world. The hour had finally arrived for Him to leave and Jesus is asking for help in that He wanted to glorify God in what He was doing. Every believer has a right to ask God for help and enablement to glorify Him.

I am convinced that one of the prayers that we can utter that truly does move God is a prayer that asks God that we might glorify Him. When we pray a prayer like that, we are tapping into His heart that remembers the prayer of His dear Son.

Now in looking down through these verses there are **three main realities** that Jesus Christ presents:

(Reality #1) - God the Father turned all authority over all mankind over to the Son. **17:2**

I want you to think for a moment about the gift that God the Father gave to God the Son. He turned all authority over all people over to His Son. **All means just that, all.** All who have lived or will live. Jesus Christ has been given universal authority over everyone in the world. What a gift. It is a logical gift. If all people are made in the “image” of God, then it only stands to reason that all those people would be under the management authority of the Son of God who came to this world. In all reality, you couldn’t give Him a house or mansion or planet, but what a gift to give Him, authority over all people made in the image of God.

The particular theological area stated here is in the arena of giving eternal life to people. Now there are two very important theological truths you do not want to miss:

Theological Truth #1 - Jesus Christ has complete authority over all mankind.

Jesus Christ has authority to bring any person into a right relationship with God or not bring them into a right relationship with God. He has total Sovereignty over “all” mankind. You have to be out of your mind to read a statement like this and dare question Christ’s Deity. He can grant us life or He can drop us dead like a fly. The keys of life and death are in His hands. This is why praying to the Father in Jesus’ name for unsaved people is a very wise thing to do.

Theological Truth #2 - Jesus Christ has complete authority to give eternal life to all who are destined to receive it.

Jesus Christ is the One who is authorized to give eternal life to “all” who have been given by the Father to the Son. The idea of salvation from sin came from God. The plan to save you from sin came from God.

Now I don’t know what you think about the doctrine of election, but Jesus believed it, taught it (John 6:37) and prayed it. If you simply read down through what He prays in these verses it becomes grammatically apparent that Jesus believed and taught the doctrine of election in His high priestly prayer and is praising God for it (**17:2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 14**). He believed that there was a specific group of people who had been given to Him by the Father and that He had tracked them down and given them eternal life.

From a human perspective we believe on Jesus Christ and we receive the gift of life, but from a Divine perspective it was the Sovereign God of all creation who chose you before the foundation of the world and He tracked you down exactly where He planned to track you down and you became a gift to His Son.

The Apostle Paul said that “the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable” (Romans 11:29). What that means is, you are a child of God forever because you are a gift from the Father to the Son. God never changes His mind about the gifts He gives to His Son.

(Reality #2) - Eternal life is about being in a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
17:3

Many times when we think about salvation, we think in terms of being born again and being saved from our sins. This is a very appropriate way to think in terms of our salvation. But there is also the dimension of knowing God. When you believe on Jesus Christ you have eternal life instantly, but you also instantly open up a new door in which you may know God.

Now knowing God or having a relationship with God only comes through Jesus Christ. That is exactly what is said right here. Having eternal life is what this gospel of John is all about. You may have eternal life and you may know God through Jesus Christ. There is no other way and there is no other name.

(Reality #3) - Jesus Christ glorified God the Father on earth by accomplishing the work He gave Him to do. **17:4**

Jesus Christ glorified God on the earth all the time and had no regrets. He never made one mistake. He never had to say, I’m sorry. He glorified God from the manger in Bethlehem to the cross at Golgotha. There is no other Person in the world that can claim this. To make this claim, you must be Holy God.

There isn’t much that is more gratifying than to be given a job and to tackle it and then be able to look back on it and say that job has been done right to the best of my abilities. The work is good and it is done at the best level I could do it. However, we have probably never been able to say, the work is done perfectly and there is nothing else that could ever be added to it or there is nothing else I could have done differently. In fact, you take a woman who takes immaculate care of her home and we still say “a woman’s work is never done.” You take a man who goes to work at a job and one obligation comes after another. The work is endless. Wouldn’t it be something if there came a moment when you could say, the work is all done perfectly and there is no more need for any further work. It has been accomplished forever.

Jesus could say and did say and pray that right here. There will come a time when every one of us will be called into eternity one way or another. If we are able to say like Paul did, “I finished my course” for God, we will be honored in glory.

Jesus is saying to His Father that He had accomplished the work the Father gave Him and in it He glorified God and it was done. To glorify God means all His work was perfect work. His actions, His thoughts, His words were all perfect. It was all done.

The work of course meant the cross. Jesus Christ went to that cross and shed His blood because that was His assignment given to Him by God the Father so that sinners could be made righteous in the sight of God. Notice He completed the work, He finished the job. This is why we may preach a complete, eternal salvation of your soul. There is nothing left for us to add. There is no work left for us to do in gaining eternal life. Jesus finished the work for us.

In **verse 5**, Jesus asks the Father to now glorify Him by giving Him His glory back which He had before the world was in existence. Never again will Jesus be demeaned. Never again will proud, arrogant religious people push Him around. Never again will people spit in His face or rip His beard or hit Him with a scourge. Never again will anyone nail Him to a cross. When any see Him they will bow before Him and they will see Him in all of His glory, because of what Jesus prayed right here.

Now you may be here tonight and you may be wondering what if God the Father has not given me as a gift to God the Son. Let me ask you a question. Do you want to be a gift of the Father to the Son? Do you want to go to heaven? Do you want Jesus Christ in your life? If your heart's answer tonight is "yes," I want Jesus Christ in my life, then you are one of those gifts of God.