

## **“A JOURNEY THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JOHN” SERIES**

### **#32: “The Lord’s Prayer”**

**SCRIPTURE:** John 17:1-26

#### **INTRO:**

While we commonly refer to the model prayer in Matthew 6 as “The Lord’s Prayer,” here in John 17 is really “the Lord’s Prayer.” However, the prayer here is usually referred to as “The High Priestly Prayer” or “The Lord’s Intercessory Prayer.”

This prayer Jesus prayed in the presence of His disciples is in three parts:

1. Jesus prays for Himself, verses 1-5;
2. He prays for the disciples, verses 6-19;
3. He prays for all believers, verses 20-26.

Let’s consider each one. First,

#### ***JESUS PRAYS FOR HIMSELF.***

*<sup>1</sup>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.*

Jesus had just told the disciples that the Father loved them because they had loved Him, and that they need not fear the world because He had overcome the world. Now, He begins to pray – aloud so that the disciples could hear. He wanted them to hear. Even this prayer was a teaching session.

Do you remember someone in a church somewhere whose prayer was somewhat of a teaching session? I do. My home church was started by an old, retired preacher who had false teeth that whistled. His name was J. G. Parsons. He had preached in the Texas panhandle in his younger days as an evangelist for the Disciples of Christ before liberalism took over that wing of the Restoration Movement. Some of us would count the number of times his teeth whistled when he prayed. But I also remember how he prayed. His prayers were a little long, compared to most, but the content and expression was beautiful. He was a warrior of the faith. He won my father to the Lord.

Through the years I have heard many people pray. I remember a nervous elder in the Winona, Missouri church who wrote out his prayers and read them forcefully at the proper time. I remember a deacon in the church at Kermit, Texas who would often begin to cry as he prayed. His name was Billy Jack.

So, I repeat, prayers can be teaching sessions.

Jesus, by saying that the hour is come, was declaring His acceptance of the cross, with all its agony and humiliation, the three days in hades, and the resurrection from the dead.

He declares His authority over all mankind – authority to give eternal life to all who will believe in Him. He would state plainly His authority in the commission of Matthew 28:18-20, where He says, ***“All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth...”***

He declares that He has finished the work that He came to earth to do and asks His Father to glorify Him with the glory He had in the beginning, before the universe came into being. You see, Jesus existed in heaven long before He came to live on earth.

Then,

### ***HE PRAYS FOR THE DISCIPLES.***

***<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. <sup>13</sup> But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.***

Jesus pours out His heart as He prays for this special group of followers. In His physical absence, carrying on the task of spreading the gospel to all the world would fall upon eleven men, thirteen when Mathias and the apostle Paul joined their ranks.

***First of all, He prays for their unity, their oneness.*** They were quite a diverse group. They tended to be quarrelsome and to vie for positions. They didn't all think alike.

The apostle Paul addressed the importance of unity among believers in his writings to the various churches. An example is in Philippians 2:1-4:

***<sup>1</sup> So, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, <sup>2</sup> complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing***

***from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.***

I believe that this is the greatest weakness of today's church. We have hundreds of denominations. We have well over twenty churches here in the Village most of which have hardly anything to do with each other. They teach varying and *opposing* unbiblical doctrines. They are loyal to various unbiblical names and unbiblical practices. We should have over twenty congregations of believers, period!

Paul wrote in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:10: ***"I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you should be united in the same mind and the same judgment."***

***Second, Jesus prays for the sanctification of the disciples in the word of God.*** Here's the core of our unity problem: not all congregations of believers accept all 66 books of the Bible as the word of God, and not all believe that the written word of God is the church's rule of authority. Some believe we must follow the Scriptures, and some believe we must follow the directives of the officials of the church. They should be the same thing.

As an elder and leader in Village Christian Church, it is my desire that all of you be learners of the word of God. That's why most of our gatherings focus on the Scriptures. We want you to know what God has to say. I feel that in so doing we are being what Christ prayed that His disciples would be.

***Thirdly, He prays that His disciples be kept from the evil one – from Satan.*** Jesus knows how cunning Satan is, how deceptive he can be. He knows that they need to avoid him – to stay away from him.

Peter would later write that ***"your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being***

***experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world” (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:8-9).***

James would later write, ***“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (4:7).***

Finally,

### ***HE PRAYS FOR ALL BELIEVERS.***

***<sup>20</sup> “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> 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. <sup>25</sup> 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.”***

***He prays for the unity of the church of the future – the church of future generations – for you and me – that we may be one – so that all mankind will believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that God loves them.***

In an essay on ***“Our Lord’s Prayer for Unity”*** Seth Wilson, late dean of Ozark Christian College, lists nine reasons why we must have unity of Christians:

1. Jesus wants it that way;
2. The Holy Spirit through the apostles urged unity;
3. The practice of division will lead us to condemnation;
4. We are commanded to avoid or turn from those who cause division;
5. Division keeps the world from believing;

6. Division comes from putting human authority in the place of Christ;
7. Division comes from putting the words of men in the place of the infallible word of God;
8. Christ is one and not divided;
9. Division wastes and dissipates the energies and resources of evangelistic workers and supporters.

Is it not evident that God's greatest desire is that we who believe might be unified to the extent that the whole world may be motivated to believe? And is it not evident that we are *not* one? And is it not evident that the whole world is *not* motivated to believe? I cannot help but say, "What a failure we are! May God have mercy on us!"

Is that too negative? Am I wrong?

***Finally, He prays that believers who come to Him in faith may be with Him in heaven. 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."***

He prays that we will experience His glory. Ralph, do you remember "The Glory Song"?

*When all my labors and trials are o'er  
And I am safe on that beautiful shore  
Just to be near the dear Lord I adore  
Will through the ages be glory for me*

*O that will be glory for me  
Glory for me, glory for me  
When by His grace I shall look on His face  
That will be glory, be glory for me.*

Butler says in his commentary:

***Verses 24 through 26 form the climactic crescendo of the whole night's discourse (chapters 13-17). He has already expressed His will that all disciples shall one day be with Him in glory (14:1-6).***

*He has already explained how and why the world did not know or receive Him (chapter 16). He has already explained the coming of the Spirit (14, 15, and 16). He has already explained the glory of giving self (chapter 13). And now He sums it all up. He made known the name and nature of the Righteous Father so that the boundless, filling, glorious love with which the Father loved Him may be in the disciples and that He Himself may also be in them. . . Christ cannot dwell in us until love of the Father dwells in us..." (p. 342).*

**CLOSING:**

**May the Spirit of the living God have victory in our lives!**