

September 29, 2019

John 17:1-26

"Loving Prayer"

John 17 is Jesus' prayer. Sometimes the Bible tells us Jesus goes away to pray. One time Jesus said, "When you pray, pray like this." John 17 is Jesus praying. Jesus is praying for you. Jesus is praying for me. Jesus is praying for us. Jesus is praying for Christians everywhere.

➤ Here's a hat I bought in Taiwan in April, 2018.

Jesus is praying for Christians everywhere.

Today, we're going to look at this chapter in one whole piece. We're going to hit the biggest points.

Some have called chapter 17 Jesus' high priestly prayer for us. In it, John invites us to enter with Jesus into God's presence. It's a prayer about God's glory and the holiness He wants to happen in our lives. We are in a holy place as we listen to Jesus pray.

Here are three simple things Jesus prays about:

1. Jesus prays for himself. He prayed for God to be glorified in the Son.
2. Jesus prays for his disciples. He prays that they will be sanctified.
3. Jesus prays for us. He prays for his church.

Do you see how the circles grow. Jesus...disciples...church. It's a symphony of movement and themes. Jesus is praying an important prayer about what's most important.

John 17:1-2 says, "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, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.'"

"When Jesus had spoken these words" gives us context. Spoken what words? *These words* are the things we've been looking at these past weeks. *My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you... I'm the vine and you are the branches...Love one another as I have loved you.* Jesus prayed after he had spoken these words, including teaching on the Holy Spirit and about the Father's love. After Jesus says all of these things, then Jesus prays for them.

Jesus teaches them; then he prays for them. He teaches them truths, then he prays that those truths will become real in their lives. That's a great thing. Sometimes we think we can get by on our own insight or knowledge. But here, Jesus teaches us the folly of that thinking. He shows us how to pray for how God works in our lives and world.

Can you imagine what it was like for disciples to hear Jesus pray? And then to hear him praying for them and us? The incredible thing is we are the answer to Jesus' prayer as we live out being the kind of people Jesus wants us to be.

Here are some specific ways that we are the answer to Jesus' prayer.

**First, we're the answer to Jesus' prayer when God is getting the glory.**

Jesus talks a lot about glory in these first five verses. *Glory* is used eight times in chapter 17. Jesus goes to great lengths to remind us of God's glory.

So what does it mean? What does the word "glory" mean?

To be glorified means to make visible hidden values and hidden riches. It

means to bring out into the open. To show for everybody to see. God says

He wants to glorify Himself and His Son. He wants to show us what He's

like and what Jesus is like. He wants to show everybody the kind of love He

has. God wants to show us how far He'll go to reach out to us.

What does Jesus mean when he says, "Father, glorify your Son?" He's

talking about going to the cross. Jesus is talking about dying for us. For

Jesus, the cross is a place of glory. He knows it's going to be a place of

suffering and humiliation and pain. But what better way to show the world

what God is like? We can see clearly the glory of God, the love of God, the

sacrifice of God, for us. For us. So for Jesus the cross is a place of glory.

The Bible says *while we were dead in our sin, Jesus Christ died for us.*

Notice God didn't say, "You get better, then my Son will die for you." God

didn't say, "Here's a list of things you need to get better at or do better

before my Son dies for you." No, no, no...God is glorified in that while we

were still sinners, Jesus died for us. Jesus glorifies the Father - he makes visible the love of the Father - on the cross.

Here's a verse you might want to highlight:

*I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work you gave me to do.*

What work is Jesus talking about? He's talking about taking on our punishment for our sin upon himself so we could be forgiven. Jesus was obedient, even obedient unto death on the cross, so we could be saved for eternal life with God. That is the work God gives to Jesus.

Second, Jesus helps us understand what eternal life is. As he says in verse 3, "And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." Eternal life isn't about living for a million years. Eternal life is knowing God. Eternal life is endless enjoyment of serving and praising God. It's not about how long you live. Eternal life is who you live for. That's why we say Christianity is a relationship, not a religion. That's what verse 3 says. Eternal life is knowing God. Eternal life is not a new quantity of life - it's a new quality of life. Jesus says it's a new kind of life. It's eternal life...knowing God.

Make no mistake. Eternal life is not more of the same forever and ever and ever. That's how we speak about it sometimes, isn't it? Sometimes we think of eternal life in the context of taking all the good stuff that we know and do here and simply repeating forever in heaven. Eternal life is going to be ice cream and puppies and fall sunsets forever. No, no, no.

It is not Biblical, and therefore you will never hear me say something like, "Grandpa is looking down from heaven, smiling as he watches us celebrate Christmas." Do you realize how boring we make heaven sound when we say things like that? Read John's description of heaven in the Book of Revelation for a glimpse of its glory and majesty. **It wouldn't be heaven if we were distracted from its glory by the mundane things of this world.**

Jesus says eternal life is knowing God. And the little taste of joy that we get in this world as we get to know God better and better, that spark of joy that comes from walking with Jesus Christ and serving him and worshiping him, that quality of life is going to be multiplied by a million for eternity. That's God's glory. Jesus is praying that we understand the fullness and richness of God's glory and His plan for our eternity.

Third, we're the answer to Jesus' prayer when we are living in the security of God's love. Here's how Jesus puts it in verses 12-16:

*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. But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 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. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.*

Notice what Jesus doesn't pray for. There in verse 15 Jesus doesn't pray that we be separated from the world. He prays for our protection within the world. This is huge. This is probably one of the biggest things we get wrong about our role in the world. What do the Amish do? They separate from the world. And while we don't go to that extreme, we do it in other ways. There are Christians who feel they have to keep the world at arm's length if they want to be a holy person.

That's not what Jesus prays for. He prays that we'll be protected from the world. He prays that we'll live distinct lives in the world. Because if we're not in the world how can we be light in the world? If we're not in the world, how can we be leavening in the lump of dough? So Jesus prays for our protection in the world. He knows what we're going to face as believers.

Here's something you might want to write down:

**GOD'S WORD IS OUR ROAD MAP AND OUR PROTECTION.**

In other words, the Bible informs our attitudes, decisions, choices, and interactions. As we live out of faithfulness to God's Word, we know that no matter what happens...no matter how much the world hates us or pushes back against us...God's comfort, grace, and mercy are always with us.

Here's how that plays out. Years ago, when I was pastor of another church, I voiced strong Biblical opposition to partial-birth abortion. After church, while waiting in line at McDonald's with my family for our Sunday- after-church-lunch tradition, a woman who had been in worship grabbed me by the arm - she literally began shaking my arm for emphasis - raised her

voiced and told me how wrong I was. Yikes. I calmly asked her to please remove her hand from my arm and invited her to call the church to set up an appointment where we could talk privately. Do you think she followed through?

I was secure in God's Word. I knew God was bringing His calming presence to me in that situation. So I was neither worried nor afraid. That's what Jesus is doing for us when he prays for us.

Our fourth point flows out of that truth. In verse 13, Jesus says, "But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves." **Jesus is praying the full measure of his joy into our lives.**

Here's something else you might want to write down:

**OUR DAILY JOY IS A TESTIMONY TO THE PRESENCE OF JESUS**

**CHRIST IN OUR LIVES.**

It's a good thing to know that while you're being hassled and harangued at McDonald's, Jesus is praying for your joy. That tempers your response. And

God gets the glory.

Here's the fifth, and final gift we get when Jesus prays for us. In fact, it's the reason we can remain calm and collected while living in a fallen world.

Jesus prays for our growth in maturity. As he says in verses 17-19:

*Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.*

"Sanctify" is the important word. *Sanctify* means to be set apart. It doesn't mean a person is holy or saintly or perfect. *Sanctified* means to set someone or something apart for the intended use of its designer. My glasses are sanctified when I use them to see. The monitors up there are sanctified when they broadcast images. When Jesus prays for our sanctification, he is asking God's purpose to become real in our lives. That means you are sanctified when you let God use you to show people what He's like. When Jesus went to the cross, he fulfilled God's intended purpose for his life. When you are joyful and patient and kind and loving and forgiving and gentle and self-controlled, you are fulfilling God's intended

purpose for your life. When grace and mercy flow from your life, you are an answer to Jesus' prayer that his followers might be sanctified in truth.

Amen?

Jesus is praying for you. How amazing is that? Jesus is praying for:

- Your spiritual growth
- Your joy
- Your security
- Your full and complete understanding of eternal life
- Your life to be a reflection of the glory of God.

For your homework, take time this week to read John 17, praying for an increase for all these things.