

The High Priestly Prayer

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[0 : 00] We're going to read from God's Word. We're going to read from that chapter that I quoted to you from, John 17. We're going to read from verse 1 to verse 19.

Now, those of you who are very awake, will realize that I preached from this chapter a month ago. I'll not ask how many of you remembered. But we looked at this chapter a month ago. We're going to look at it again today. The High Priestly Prayer from John 17, verse 1.

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. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

[1 : 20] I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence, with the glory I had with you before the world existed.

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.

Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. 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. I'm praying for them. I'm not praying for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.

All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world. And I am coming to you, Holy Father.

[2 : 24] Keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. 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 this scripture might be fulfilled. And 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. Sanctify them in your 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. Amen, and may God bless to us, that reading from his word.

[3 : 40] Let's bow again in prayer. Let's bow again in prayer. Father, how we thank you, that your ear is ever open to our cry.

We thank you for that picture in your word, of the Lord bending down to hear us, and to show himself strong on our behalf. And indeed, Lord, we need that, because we are weak.

We have no strength of our own. Father, we want to pray for our nation today. We want to pray for those who lead us, in Westminster, in Holyrood.

We pray, Lord, that you will, you who hold the hearts of all men, the hearts of the King, the hearts of the Prime Minister, and the First Minister, you hold them all in your hand.

And we pray, Lord, that you will grant them wisdom, as they seek to lead, and guide our nation at this time. At this time of pandemic, and as we come out of it, we pray, Lord, that they might make good decisions, for us all.

[4 : 48] And good laws, that will encourage righteousness, and restrain the evil. Father, here I pray for them today. Father, we remember, too, the armed forces today, our soldiers, and airmen, and sailors, those that are, who have to put their lives on the line, to protect us.

We pray for them, Lord. We think of them, we think of the, the chaplains, who work among them, the, the scripture readers, from Sazerat. And Lord, we pray, that you will, bring many, of these, military personnel, you, that they might become, real soldiers, of King Jesus.

Father, bless the work, of army, scripture readers. Bless the work, of the chaplains. Give them many opportunities, to make, your glory known, we pray.

We would commit to you, Lord, the health service, as, as we all, often do, and usually do, at the moment. We pray, Lord, that you will, strengthen, each one there. Nurses, doctors, technicians, of all, every sort, cleaners, Lord, you see them all, you know them all, and they're all needed, and we pray, that you will be with them, and we pray, that those who know you, will be salt, and light, in that, situation, blessed, than we pray, Lord.

Father, we pray for ourselves, we're gathered here, with our needs, you see us, Lord, you know, the burdens, that sit in our hearts, you know, the, concerns, perhaps, for the week ahead, you know, family problems, work problems, Father, we bring them all to you, oh God, of all comfort, be our comfort today.

[6 : 56] And Father, we think too, of those who are ill, we think of Shirley, we ask you, Lord, to bless her, and keep her, in your hands, at this time.

We think of Chris, and Dick, and others, who are housebound. We pray that you will, be with them, and bless them, this morning. Now, Lord, as we turn to your word, we pray that you will, make it live to us.

We pray that we might, hear your voice. We pray that we might have, willing, and obedient hearts, today. For we ask it, Lord, in Jesus name.

Amen. Forgot to water this morning.

Good to have a, a wife on the front row, there who understands, symbols. John 17. We, we, read it together, and I want to look at it again, this morning, as I say, on the, June the 13th, we looked at this whole chapter, or the first six verses, rather, this chapter.

[8 : 18] Thank you, love. And, in, in those six verses, the glory of God, was, was Jesus's, chief concern.

He was praying, for the glory of God. And, this morning, we're going to be looking at, at verses, seven to 19, and we're going to be, where Jesus prays, for our protection, our unity, our joy, and our dedication.

Those will be the four, points in his prayer. there. Before we get there, a bit of recap, on one to six. He was, praying, for the glory of God.

He was, he showed, and he, he mentions, that God was glorified, by his obedience, and death. Jesus's obedience, and death. God was glorified, by the salvation, of sinners.

And God was glorified, by Jesus, enthronement, in heaven. And, from verse six on, he prays, for his, disciples.

[9 : 37] Now, the whole, the whole, redemptive, purposes of God, humanly speaking, were going to depend, on, these eleven, very imperfect men, who were, with him, in the upper room, that night.

men, who would, soon desert him, men, who, would deny him, who, would return, to their old jobs, on the fishing, and who, would hide in fear, behind locked doors.

And yet, Jesus, was able to say, he has completed, his work. I have accomplished, the work you gave me to do, he says, in verse four. We might say, what, what did Jesus mean?

How could he say, he'd completed the work? He is still to die, for our sins, that was going to be tomorrow, as he prayed this prayer.

Yet, when you think about it, the Bible tells us, that Jesus, was the lamb, slain from before, the foundation of the world. In Jesus' mind, his death, the next day, was as good as done.

[10 : 52] He was going to go through with it. And so, it was, as good as done. And also, he had brought into existence, this little group of men, who would be the foundation, of his worldwide church.

You see, the, the work of the gospel, message of the gospel, isn't, to proclaim in a general way, the, the fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of all mankind.

It's not that. The message of the gospel, is that God is creating, a new people, for himself, the church.

Men and women, called out of the world, to be, the people of God, to belong to Christ. And Jesus had done that. He had begun. It was only a small beginning, isn't it?

Eleven people there before him, and very imperfect at that. But, they were, his people, and they would be, the foundation, of his church.

[12:00] In verse, six and following, he begins to pray for them. But first of all, he thinks a bit about them.

He thinks about their, their situation. And, he reminds himself, if, dare you say, he reminds God the father, of what these, what he has done, for these people.

He says, I've manifested your name, to the people, you gave me, out of the world. they, yours they were, and you gave them, to me. Now, he's praying here, for the eleven, disciples.

But the prayer, is bigger than that. The prayer, is bigger than that. We are included here. In verse 20, which we didn't read, he, he, he, extends the prayer.

He says, I don't ask, for these only, but also, for all those, who will believe in me, through their word. So, he, Jesus looks down, through the centuries, and prays, for the worldwide church, you and me.

[13:14] and, so, he's praying, for the, the eleven apostles, and he's praying, for you, and me.

Bible commentator, writes, Hendrickson, writes in his commentary, engraved upon the breastplate, of the great high priest, are the names, not only of those chosen, out of the tribes of Israel, but also those drawn, from the world, of heathendom.

You and me. He, he describes, a bit more about, what has happened to them, or what, what the, who they are.

He says, yours they were, you gave them to me, and they have kept, your word. So, he tells us, who their owner is, right?

In verse six, he says, they were the fathers, and, they've been given them, to Jesus. In verse nine, it's the same thing, I'm praying for them, I'm not praying for the world, but for those, you have given me, for they are, yours.

As I said, a little earlier on, the church, is God's gift, to his son. In verse ten, Jesus says, all mine are yours, and all yours are mine.

[14:42] They belong to the father, and the son. They have, received, Jesus' teaching, they have believed it, and, they are, following, him.

They didn't know everything, they still doubted at times, but verse eight here, tells us, that Jesus had given his words, to them, and they have received them, and have come to know, in truth, that I came, from you.

So, they are, Bible-believing people, Bible-believing people. And, you know, we're reminded here, that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

You know, it's possible, of course, to have plenty of head knowledge, and yet know nothing of the author of scripture, scripture. But, when the word works in us, through faith, and the power of the Holy Spirit, then, it brings us, to Jesus.

And, the disciples had come, to know him, through, through, hearing his word. The old hymn writer wrote, I heard the voice of Jesus say, come unto me, and rest, lay down, thy weary one, lay down, thy head upon my breast.

[15:58] I came to Jesus, as I was, weary, and worn, and sad. I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad. I heard, and I came.

Faith comes, by hearing. And, this, of course, is our motive in evangelism. This is why we need to make Jesus known, because faith comes, by hearing.

So, they belong, to the Father, and the Son. But, verse 10, Jesus says, something even more remarkable, about them.

He says, all mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified, in them. I am glorified, in them. This is a really, encouraging statement. If you think about the disciples, as they were sitting there, listening to Jesus, they hadn't done anything, very remarkable, at this stage.

[17:05] They didn't really, understand Jesus. They were always, arguing about, which one was going to be, the greatest. They were afraid, and they would soon, desert him. But, they believed in him.

They trusted him, still imperfectly. But, their belief, and their trust, vindicated his work. And in that sense, it honoured him.

And he was glorified, in them. This is a great encouragement, for us, as we, seek to, work for Jesus, and live for him.

Imperfectly, but trusting him. See, he is glorified, through our obedience, and our service. But also, it's a marvellous incentive, this, to live, and to work for him.

He will be glorified, through our obedience, and service. Now, the four, the four, topics, of Jesus' prayer.

[18 : 13] He prays, for their, their protection, their unity, their joy, and their dedication. These are Jesus' final words, almost, to the disciples.

His last prayer for them. So, he prays for things, which he think, which he believed, as he knew, to be important. Things which were important.

And, that is what he prayed for, the protection, their unity, their joy, and their dedication. First of all, their protection. He prays, for the protection, from the hatred, and the opposition, of the world.

Jesus, is about, to lead them. He said, in verse 11, he says, I'm no longer, in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them, in your name.

Jesus has, walked with them, he has kept them, through three years, and now he's about, to leave them. And they'll have to, walk by faith, from now on.

[19 : 27] He won't be there, beside them. They will walk by faith, even, as we have to do. So, Jesus prays, Father, protect them. They're in the world, which I'm leaving, and the world hates them.

Look at verse 14. I have given them, your word, and the world, has the world. Sorry, I'll start again. I have given them, your word, and the world, has hated them, just because, they are not, of the world, just as I, am not, of the world.

Again, in verse 16, he says, they are not, of the world, just as I, am not, of the world. The world, has, hated them, the, the first, apostles, the disciples, and the church, all through, because, they don't, fit.

They don't, fit. They don't, belong. And they're different. They're different. And, even though, everybody, would say nowadays, it can be your own person, they don't like it, if, you're too, obviously, a Christian.

[20 : 48] Because, the, the, the non-Christian world, will react against the Christian, because, the Christian's lifestyle, is different. And the lifestyle, shows up, the sins of the others.

Not that we should be, deliberately, or unnecessarily, odd. You know? But being a consistent Christian, will often be enough, to earn us, the world's, hatred.

Perhaps, we could say, if the world, likes us, too much, all of the time, then maybe, we aren't what we ought to be. Because, we aren't, the salt, and light, showing up, the decay, in our society.

And, in today's world, where there's, sexual, free for all, and, the whole LGBT, agenda. If we cannot, affirm those lifestyles, and we cannot, because they're sinful, then, we become, in some people's eyes, part of the problem, instead of the solution.

We think that, we become, part, of the problem. And so, the world doesn't like us. Because, we will not call, evil, good.

[22 : 08] Protect them, from the world, Jesus prayed. In, in verse, in chapter 16, in verse 33, Jesus says, I have said these things to you, that in me, you may have peace.

In the world, you will have tribulation, but take heart. I have overcome, overcome the world. It was going to be, they were going to experience, they were going to know, opposition, from the world. And, so do we. So will we. In parts of the world, that opposition is, is violent. Parts of it, it might even lead to your death.

Now, it, it doesn't, at the moment here, it might lose you your job, in certain jobs, certain careers, it might lose you your job. But, it, that opposition, is going to be there, because the world, hates, the followers, of Jesus.

And, it will do all it can, to make us, a bit more, acceptable. It will make more, it will do all it can, to, to make us live, just like, the rest of us, to fit in, as it were.

[23 : 30] In, in, Romans 3, Romans 12, verse 2, J.B. Phillips, wrote, don't let the world, squeeze you into its mold.

It will try to, it will try to, make us, more acceptable, less, less of a challenge, to its lifestyle. But, we must resist it.

We must resist it. We're to be made new, in our minds. We're to be renewed, in our minds. In Christ.

The world, will resist us, will oppose us, but Jesus, has prayed for us, for protection, from the world. He also prays, for protection, from, the devil. In verse 15, there, he says, I do not ask, that you take them, out of the world, but that you keep them, from, the evil one.

[24 : 36] Now, perhaps, we don't, think that much, about, the devil, the devil, now days, here in, Scotland. But, the Bible tells us, he's a formidable foe, in the Lord's Prayer, which he taught us to pray, deliver us, from the evil one.

And here, Jesus prays, that God, would protect us, from the evil one. at the time, he was praying, the devil, had tempted Judas, and he had fallen away.

He was about, to sift Peter, and Peter, would fall too. He would come back, but he would fall. And Peter, would later, refer to the devil, as a roaring lion, seeking, whom, he might devour.

And Paul would say, that our fight, is against, spiritual agents, from the very, headquarters, of evil. Ephesians 6, and verse 12.

And Jesus prays, that we will be protected. How? How are we, to be protected? Verse 11, we are to protect, we are to be protected, in his name.

[25 : 53] While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me, and I have guarded them. We are to be, protected, in his name.

Now, when the Bible, talks about God's name, it's talking about, the manifestation, of his character. And it's also talking about, his might, or power.

That mighty name. And, we are protected, in, through the might, and the power, of God.

When our confidence, is in him. When he holds us, in his hands. And we've seen that. We are his people. Doubly his. We belong to the father, and the son.

As long as we remain, confident in that power. And the Lord, keeps us, and holds us, from the devil. And, we remain, protected, from his, his attacks.

[26 : 59] Of course, this presupposes, that we belong to him. That we are new creatures, in Christ. That we have repented, from our sins. And, turned to him, in faith, for salvation.

But then, he holds us. And, I'm very thankful, that, it depends, much more, on his hold on me, than on my hold on him. He holds us, by his power.

But, that's not to say, that we're passive. That we don't do anything. We must play our part.

Ephesians 6, talks about, putting on the whole armor of God.

That we might stand, against the devil's attacks. And we remember, we face a, a foe, who is like a raging lion. And, but Jesus' power, should encourage us.

And, we know that, that God answers that power. Or, that prayer rather. God answers that prayer. In Romans, in John 11, verse 41, Jesus was praying, for Lazarus, his resurrection.

[28 : 05] And he, in his prayer he said, he looked up to heaven, and he said, Father, I thank you, you've heard me. You always hear me. But I say this, for the benefit of those who are listening.

You always hear me. So, he heard him here, when he prayed this prayer. And we know it's heard. We know it's answered. He's prayed for our safety, our protection.

And the devil, is a defeated foe. You know, there's a wonderful, illustration of this, in John Bunyan's, Pilgrim's Progress.

Excuse me. I'll have a little sip of that. In Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan, describes a Christian, walking along, the narrow way.

The Christian way. To the celestial city. And ahead of him, he sees two lions, lying on the path. And he couldn't, he could see no reason, why those lions, wouldn't just eat him up, and tear him apart.

[29 : 16] But then, somebody on the other side of them, shouted back, and said, they are chained. Stick to the middle of the path, and they can't reach you.

And so, Christian, he walks down the middle of the path, he's trembling, as the lions are roaring, other side of him, straining up their chains. But he was safe.

He was safe. The devil, a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, cannot touch us, when we're in the middle, of God's will.

In the middle of that path, that Christian path. He prays for the protection. He prays for the unity. In verse 11, I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I'm 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. A wonderful prayer for unity. And the unity here is in the context of attacks from the devil. And of course, the devil really wants to destroy our unity.

[30 : 39] He wants to destroy our unity. Maintaining it is in itself a victory. You know, there are so many things that disturb and destroy unity in a church.

When you look at the church worldwide, with so many divisions, we must lament the lack of unity. Now, some of those divisions are necessary, because, to maintain doctrinal purity, we cannot be united with evil.

We cannot be united with evil. Error. But sadly, there is so much disunity among us for secondary issues, personal disagreements. Jesus prays that they may be one, even as we are one.

And we are to be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond with peace. Jesus prayed for that.

His final prayer. He prayed that we would be one. So we have to work for that unity. It's worth working for. How excellent a thing it is, and how pleasant and how good, when brothers dwell in unity, and live as brothers should.

[32 : 01] Sing Psalms 133. Let us strive to maintain that unity. Let us resist all things that would split that unity needlessly.

He prays for their joy. Their joy. I'm coming to you, verse 13, and these things I speak in the world that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

My joy. Isn't it amazing that just hours before his arrest, and hours before his crucifixion, which he knew all about, Jesus can speak about his joy.

And ask that the disciples, and us, remember, might have the full measure of his joy. Neither the apostasy of Judas, nor the hostility of the Jews, nor his impending death, could quench the joy of Jesus.

And he wants us to share that joy. My joy may be fulfilled in them. Now we face disappointments often in the church.

[33 : 29] A lack of interest in the gospel. Hardness in men's hearts. Converts not growing as fast as we had hoped, turning back even.

Sickness in our own families. Family problems. Work problems. All these difficulties that we have. And yet, we are to experience Christ's joy.

Jesus prayed that we would. Our joy is to be Jesus' joy. Only that can last through the trials and disappointments of life.

Hudson Taylor, the great, or the founder, rather, of the China Inland Mission, which is nowadays the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, he wrote a prayer letter from China at a very difficult time.

And this is what he wrote. He said, The need for your prayer has never been greater than at present. Envied by some, despised by many, hated by others, often blamed for things I never heard of or had nothing to do with.

[34 : 45] An innovator on what have become established rules of missionary practice, an opponent of mighty systems of heathen error and superstition, working without precedent in many respects and with few experienced helpers, often sick in body as well as perplexed in mind and embarrassed by circumstances.

Had not the Lord been specifically gracious to me, sorry, had not the Lord been specially gracious to me, had not my mind been sustained by the conviction that the work is his and he is with me, I must have fainted or broken down, but the battle is the Lord's and he will conquer.

His favourite hymn, we're told, was, Jesus, I am resting, resting in the joy of what thou art. I am finding out the greatness of thy loving heart.

Thou hast bid me gaze upon me and thy beauty and thy beauty fills my soul for by thy transforming power thou hast made me whole.

Jesus, I am resting, resting in the joy of what thou art. Are we? Are we?

[36 : 11] Jesus prays for our joy, joy that we will find in him alone. And finally, Jesus prays for their dedication in verses 17 to 19.

He prays, sanctify them in your truth, your word is true. 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.

Jesus had said, the world is going to hate you. I'm sending you into the world. It's going to be a tough place. He said to his father, it's going to be a tough place, but I don't want you to take them out of it.

Why don't I want you to take them out of it? I've got a purpose for them. In verse 18, he says, I have sent them into the world. I've got a mission for them to fulfill.

He said, as you sent me, I'm sending them. As the father sent Jesus, so he sends us.

[37 : 30] Jesus came to do his father's will. That's why he was sent. To carry out his father's word. He could say, carrying out the father's word is like meat and drink to me.

my work is to do or my food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. Jesus said, I'm sending you the same way.

The mission of the church is in some ways a continuation of the mission of its Lord. Jesus continuing to call out and save his church through us.

looking for the sheep who are not yet in the sheepfold through us. Now Jesus came, of course, to die, to purchase our salvation and that work is done.

We can't complete that. But the work of making him known continues and is going to be tough, Jesus said. It requires us to be totally consecrated to the claims and call of Jesus and his father.

[38 : 38] The word here, sanctified, consecrate, it means, first of all, to set apart for the work of the gospel.

Jesus sanctified himself and certainly he did not need any purification from sin because he was sinless. So they've translated it in the ESV as consecrate.

I believe it's the same word and it means to live separate from sin and dedicated to the cause of righteousness. You see, we're to be all for Jesus.

All for Jesus. Romans 1, verse 1 says, we're to be set apart for the gospel of God.

Or 2 Corinthians 5, 15, we read that Jesus died for all that those who lived might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

[39 : 49] Can't dedicate. Jesus prayed for their dedication. Now that's our challenge, you see. We're to no longer live for ourselves.

We're to live available for the service and for the service of the gospel. Are we living that way? Your time is his if you're a Christian.

Your gifts are his. Your money is his. Are we dedicated to a service all for Jesus? I surrender all to him. I surrender all, everything, everything.

take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to the old hymn writers who wrote it in the hymns. Are you living that way?

Jesus said for their sake that they might be sanctified. Verse 18 says, as you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

[40 : 57] You see, they were sent out as missionaries into the world. Now we have to ask ourselves, are we living as missionaries? You see, missionaries are not only people who've climbed into a plane and flown a few thousand miles, that doesn't make you a missionary.

We're called to be missionaries here and now where Jesus has placed us. Whether we're young or whether we're old, young people, I don't know who's listening on the YouTube, but young people, you too, are to be set apart for the gospel.

You shouldn't think, this isn't for me, I'm too young, there's nothing I can do, I'll wait till I'm older. If Jesus is your saviour, then you're called to live for him.

as you are now, you mustn't wait. You know, the devil comes along and he says you're too young. You can't do anything for Jesus. We mustn't listen to him.

He's an enemy, he's a liar. Jesus prays for your dedication, our dedication, that we might be all that we should be for him.

[42 : 23] So Jesus prays for his disciples, given to him by his Father. He prays for protection from the world, he prays for protection from the devil, he prays for unity, for joy, and for our dedication in his service.

Jesus has prayed for all these aspects of our lives. May we so live, so that his prayers are answered in us and in our lives.

May God bless his word to us this morning. Let's pray. Father in heaven, we thank you for your word, and we thank you for this prayer of Jesus, and what he desires to see in our lives.

Father, grant that we might so walk with you, and allow you to work in our hearts, that you will be honoured and glorified in seeing this prayer, answered in each of us.
We ask it, Father, in Jesus' name. Amen.