

Jesus' Prayer

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[0:00] This morning, I want you to go with me as we go to the upper room. There we're going to find Jesus and his disciples in their final moments there. And Jesus will find us sharing a prayer with them.

But first, I want you to think back about some of the things that have brought them to the upper room and some of the things that have happened. We know that Jesus had Peter and John go ahead into Jerusalem to find the man carrying a pitcher of water and prepare the Passover meal in the furnished upper room.

We know as Jesus and the twelve apostles arrived, a dispute breaks out among the disciples regarding who is the greatest. Later on, we know that Jesus will arise from the meal and lay aside his garments. He'll take a towel. He'll wash the disciples' feet to model humble service.

We also know that Jesus, as they're all reclining at the table, Jesus will announce that one of them will betray him, eventually identifying Judas Iscariot by giving him a piece of bread. And it's during this time Jesus will tell Peter he will deny him three times before the cock crows in the morning. It's also during this time that Jesus will tell Peter he will deny him three times before the cock crows in the morning.

[1:48] He'll also tell his disciples, I am the vine and you are the branches. He'll share with the disciples their relationship with each other and the disciples' relationship with the world. He'll warn them of coming stumbling blocks.

And Jesus tells of his death and resurrection. It's during this time Jesus will share, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me.

It is during this time too that he will give a new commandment saying, A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

During this time Jesus will promise the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Helper. Now the high priestly prayer for his followers is coming to an end.

After they finish this prayer, they'll sing a hymn, they'll walk out of the upper room late at night, head across the Kidron Valley towards the Garden of Gethsemane, and there Jesus will be betrayed, abandoned by his disciples.

[3:11] He'll be tried, beaten, later crucified, and then buried in a borrowed tomb. And three days later, he'll be resurrected. Now in John 17, this is Jesus' prayer.

Now we often know that Jesus prayed. It's often spoken about in the scripture that he goes off to himself and prays. But, this is one of the few times his prayer is recorded.

And this is also the longest recorded prayer of Jesus. Here Jesus offers a high priestly prayer.

Why? Because the disciples, and we, need to understand God's plan.

Now we come to the conclusion of the high priestly prayer of Jesus, in verses 20-26, in chapter 17 of John.

The prayer is for the Father to glorify him, Jesus. The prayer is for his disciples in the world. And the prayer is the interceding for all future believers.

[4:17] A core passage asks God to grant the church profound supernatural unity. A unity that reflects the very relationship between the Father and the Son.

This unity, this oneness, will act as a powerful witness to the world. And this is the climax of the high priestly prayer. The passage centers on the themes of the divine unity and oneness, the mission of the church, and the eternal love of God.

Jesus says, May these and the ones believing through them all be one and united. He says, Father, I want them to be with me, and to see the glory you have given me.

And then he says, Father, I made you known to them in order that your love, may be in them. This prayer is for all believers. Here his focus shifts to those who will believe in him through the words of his disciples.

We, you and I, were on Jesus' mind, and in his prayers on the eve of his crucifixion. So bow your heads with me, if you would please, as I conclude the prayer that he was sharing that evening, with verses 20 through 26 of John chapter 17.

[5 : 39] He says, I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those who believe in me through their words, that they may all be one, even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, and that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you sent me.

The glory which you have given me, I have given to them, that they may be one, just as we are one, I in them, and you in me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that you sent me.

The love, and love them, even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, be with me, where I am, so that they may see my glory, which you have given me. For you loved me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, although the world has not known you, yet I have known you, and these have known that you sent me, and I have made your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love which you love me, may be in them, and I in them.

So Jesus, as he's sharing this prayer, he says, may these, his disciples, and the ones believing through them, which will be the future church, all be one.

[7 : 15] Jesus is saying, for those, also, who believe in me, through their words, and he's referring to his disciples, here, here, Jesus' heartfelt petition, is not for, his immediate disciples, but for all the future believers, that are spending time, and space.

He says, they may all be one, he's speaking of us, that is, one with us, as he is in the Father, and the Father is in him, and as defined as the followers, they also may be in us, which is equivalent to saying, may all abide in us, and us in them.

And two, he also says, one with each other, linking it to the command of, love one another. Now, when Jesus speaks of one, he's mirroring the core Jewish declaration of God's oneness, found in Deuteronomy chapter 6, verse 4, where it says, hear, O Israel, the Lord is your God, the Lord is one.

Jesus is speaking of the unity, the Trinity, as the model of oneness. Jesus prays that his followers may be one, just as he and the Father are one.

This is not merely organizational or institutional unity, but it's a profound spiritual oneness, modeled after the essential, loving unity of the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

[8 : 47] This unity will be the ultimate witness. The unity of the church will directly be tied to the effectiveness of the evangelism. When believers are perfectly one, the world witnesses Jesus.

The authentic, loving community of the church is the ultimate apologetic of the gospel of Jesus Christ. So we have to remember that this oneness, this uniqueness, is how we witness for Jesus. Then he continues to say, they, God, and Jesus, that their future glory is in the believer. This glory is not a bright light, but rather the splendor of God's character, his weight, his authority, and his presence, which enables unity among the Christians, just as the Father and the Son are united. It is the glory of God's name in the word revealed through Jesus. See, the core purpose of sharing the glory is that believers may be one as God and Jesus are one.

And it's the glory of his working through his followers and disciples that it's revealed, whatever you ask in my name, that will I do.

[10 : 08] So the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything, in my name, I will do it. And it's the glory of the humbly taking up one's cross and serving God as Jesus Christ did.

It's the glory of Christ Christ in us and in the disciples when Jesus says, If anyone loves me, he will keep my word and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our abode with him. And it's this divine nature and dwelling of the Holy Spirit. When Peter wrote, For by these he has granted to us his precious, magnificent promise so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature having escaped the corruption of this world by lust.

Jesus is speaking of sharing divine glory and love. He states that the Father's glory has been given to the church. It's an invitation, an invitation to the same intimate, eternal love of the Father for the Son and the Son for the Father.

The problem is we have to be careful of the obstacles that come to the church today that divide us, that tries to break the unity, that tries to break the oneness.

[11:29] And when we get distracted and we become self-centered instead of God-centered. So we have to always be on guard and always be careful. Then Jesus continues to say, Father, I want them to be with me and see the glory you have given me.

He shares that the goal of the internal presence, Jesus concludes with his ultimate desire for the church. What is that? That they may be with him where he is to behold his glory.

He is saying salvation is not the future destination, but a promise of eternal fellowship and relationship with the Trinity, which transforms our understanding of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. And then he concludes when he says, Father, I made you known to them in order that your love may be in them. In John chapter 1, verses 1 and 2, it says, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God. In the very beginning, the love of the Father was for the Son, and the Son for the Father. That love existed before even man existed.

[12:49] Jesus is saying, Father, I made you known to them in order that your love may be in them. When we receive Christ as our Lord and Savior, we are receiving God's love in our heart.

And we should always cherish and remember that for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Jesus went to the cross because of his love for us.

He went to the cross because God's love for us. So this reflects God's love and his sacrifice for us. And we, in the same way, should be reflecting God's love for others. So friends, Jesus concludes this prayer and he says he wants all to experience the divine unity and oneness of God.

[13:55] He says he wants all to experience God's glory and know the mission of the church. He wants all of us to be with him, to see and experience his glory.

and he wants all to know and experience the eternal love of God. What a wonderful gift we have been given through Jesus Christ.

A gift that is more than we can even completely understand. So I ask you, do you know the love of God? Do you know his Son, Jesus Christ?

If not, make that decision today and experience the love of Christ in your heart. Thank you.