

Jesus's Prayer

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[0 : 0 0] After Jesus said this, he looked towards heaven and prayed, Father the hour has come, glorify! your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people, that he might give eternal life to all those you have given them. Now this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing 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 began. I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours. You gave them to me, and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me, and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me. For they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them by the power of your name.

I will remain in the world no longer. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the name you gave me.

One of them and kept them safe by the power of your name, and I protected them and kept them safe by the power of your name. And I am coming to you now, and I am coming to you now. But I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your words, and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.

My prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth. Your word is truth. As you have sent them. As you have sent me into the world. As you have sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

[2 : 5 9] My prayer is not for them alone. My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me, and I am in you.

May they also be in me, so that the world may believe in me, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one, as we are one. I in them, and you in me, so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me, and have loved them, even as you have loved me.

Father, I want those who have given me, to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me, because you love me before the creation of the world.

Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known, in order that the love you have for me may be in them, and that I myself may be in them.

[4 : 1 6] Great. Thanks, Al. Good morning, everyone. Good to see you. It's nice to be with you. We're looking at John chapter 17 today. It's a really big and amazing passage.

It kind of feels like the passage that you could study basically forever, and keep finding out more and more and more wonderful things in it. But over the next 25 minutes or so, I hope we're going to

see something that is amazing about the whole passage, and then kind of three sections of Jesus' prayer.

But I wonder whether you have ever been in the kind of situation where you are trying to comfort a friend, and you just cannot tell what is going on inside their head.

Maybe a situation a bit like this. Perhaps you've had a disagreement with a partner, or a friend is upset, or something like that, and you can't tell why they're upset.

You don't know what's on their mind, or on their heart. And maybe you start to ask yourself questions like, have I done something wrong? Can I help?

[5 : 28] What is it that you're so upset about? Maybe you're the other side, and you know what it's like to be very upset, and the person you're speaking to has no idea why they've upset you.

But when there's a situation like this, when we're talking to a friend, and we don't know what is on their heart, it can be very painful for us.

It creates or reveals the kind of distance between you. They're upset. You don't understand why.

But when someone opens up to you, when they show what really is on their heart, it creates or it shows a whole new level of intimacy in the relationship.

You get them. You get what's on their mind. You get what's on their heart. And one of the best ways to see what is really on someone's heart is to see what they pray about.

If they're someone who prays, then the kind of things they pray about are probably the deepest hopes and concerns and fears on their heart. And so, if you got to hear what your friend or your partner or your sister was praying about, it would probably show you the things that they care most about.

[6 : 51] And so, as we read today's passage, we get to see what is on Jesus' heart. But as we read his prayer in John 17, Jesus is speaking to his closest disciples.

He is preparing them for when he leaves and they carry on without him. And he's reassured them over the past few chapters we've seen by letting them know that the Holy Spirit will come, that they have this amazing relationship with the Father now, that they can ask for anything in Jesus' name, things like that.

But they're still anxious about what comes next after Jesus has left them physically. And so, what does Jesus do in this last bit while they're speaking together?

Is he prays. And as he does that, he communicates to his Father. But he also communicates to those around him, revealing the things that are on his heart that he speaks to his Father about.

And so, as we read Jesus' prayer, it will show us the things that are on Jesus' heart. And three things in particular we're going to look at today.

[8 : 03] The first is, Jesus prays for his own glory. Jesus prays for the protection of the apostles. And Jesus prays for the unity of the church.

And as we see each of those, we see Jesus' heart. And we'll find, I hope, incredible reassurance, like the disciples, as we see what's on Jesus' heart.

Look with me at verse 1 of the passage as we start. After Jesus has said all the things in the previous chapters, verse 1, he looked towards heaven and prayed, Father, the hour has come.

Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. I wonder, if I asked you, what is the most important hour of your life?

What's the most important hour of your life? An hour that changes everything else? Or that it feels like everything has been leading towards? Throughout John's Gospel, we've been waiting for the hour.

[9 : 10] The hour. And Jesus has said a few times, my hour has not yet come. And yet here, very clearly, he says, my hour has come. The night before he's arrested, he clearly says, the hour has come.

What is this hour? It's the hour where Jesus will be glorified. The most important hour of his life. As Jesus finishes his work, securing eternal life for us, to the glory of the Father.

Look at verse 2 with me. Jesus is kind of slightly strangely praying in the third person here, but it's about himself. For you, the Father, granted Jesus authority over all people, that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.

Jesus came with a work to do. The Father sent him to finish his work, to give eternal life. And verse 3 tells us what eternal life is.

Now this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. When we hear eternal life, we might picture people floating on clouds, playing the harp, and getting quite bored.

[10:28] But actually, Jesus says, eternal life is not like that. Eternal life is actually quite like what Josephine was saying earlier. Eternal life is not just knowing about God, living a long time, and getting bored.

Eternal life is about knowing God personally. Knowing him in a personal relationship that dwells in your heart, and transforms your life.

And so eternal life means living forever, with God. How can we have this? Well, it's all through the hour that Jesus has been talking about.

Verse 4 says this, I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. This is the key. Jesus is glorified by finishing his work, by securing eternal life for us, to the glory of the Father.

And that work will be finished at the hour. Very soon, Jesus will say, words hanging on the cross, it is finished.

[11:37] This is the hour that changes everything else. In that hour, Jesus finishes his work, secures eternal life for us, to the glory of the Father.

So, as Jesus prays this in John 17, what do we see is on his heart? What are the kind of things he cares about so much that he speaks to his Father about?

Jesus wants his Father's will to be done. The Father has sent Jesus to secure eternal life for people. And Jesus wants the Father's will to be done.

He wants this hour to come of his glory. And this matters that it's on Jesus' heart because the hour matters so very much for us.

Every human has this great problem which requires this hour of Jesus. Every one of us has sinned against God.

[12:40] We have turned against God, the one who is life, who is the source of all life. And as we turn away from him, we are without him.

We go into death, eternal death. But God, in his love, sends Jesus so that on the cross, he takes our sin and the punishment for it.

He has to experience that rejection from the Father. He has to die in our place. And so, as Jesus prays this in John 17, he knows what is coming.

He knows the pain and the shame and the rejection of this hour that is soon to come. And yet he still prays, Father, glorify your Son in the hour.

Why? Because unlike what we're so often like, above all else, he wants his Father's will to be done. Jesus wants to finish his work, securing eternal life for us.

[13:45] And that be to the glory of the Father. In the cross, despite the pain, we do see glory. God's love and majesty is displayed in his plan that is like no other.

It's glorious that Jesus submits to the will of the Father. And it's glorious that as Jesus is lifted up in kind of a strange way and is crowned as the king, he does it for our salvation.

So, as we see in this prayer, Jesus' heart, it gives us massive reassurance that actually this is what he desires, to finish his work, securing eternal life for us to the glory of the Father.

And what does it mean for us as we think Jesus cares so much about this hour, he is so committed to us. Well, it means for us it is the most wonderful hour, not just of Jesus' life, but for any of us too. And just like Josephine was saying earlier, because of what Jesus does on the cross, your worth, your identity, your relationship with God is not based on anything you can do in any particular hour of your life, a good one or a bad one.

[15:10] But it's based on this hour, as Jesus finishes his work, securing eternal life for us to the glory of the Father. And Jesus prays about this, first of all, because he cares about it, because he's committed to it, because he asks that the Father would glorify him, that he would go to the cross, then rise again and ascend to be with the Father again.

And as we see what's on Jesus' heart, it gives us reassurance. He cares about us, he's committed to his work. And here's the second thing Jesus prays about, for the protection of the apostles.

I want you to imagine you are one of Jesus' closest disciples in the upper room with him. You've followed Jesus for the last three years. You love him.

You think he's amazing. You've seen him heal the sick, even raise the dead. You've listened to his amazing teaching. You've left everything, your home, your family, your work, to be with Jesus, your friend, your mentor, your leader.

And he says, I'm going away soon. And you're going to carry on what we've been doing without me. Can you imagine?

[16:28] You would have felt very nervous about that. And I'd love you to discuss, maybe with the person next to you, or think about for a moment, imagine you're one of the disciples with Jesus.

What kind of things might make you feel afraid about Jesus leaving you to go on without him? Do you want to take a minute with the person or couple of people next to you?

Imagine you're one of those disciples. what kind of things might be making you feel afraid. Take a minute. the disciples probably were worried about all sorts of things. What if we mess up? What if we forget the things that Jesus has taught us? What if we have a really big argument and stop managing to work together?

Perhaps they were worried, having seen the opposition that Jesus was beginning to face more and more. What if people hate us for going out in Jesus' name? They were probably worried about the violence and the opposition, the imprisonment, even the death that they might face for Jesus.

Those kind of worries would be totally understandable. They'd left everything to follow Jesus and now they're sent out into an uncertain future without him physically with them. And so as Jesus praised this in John 17 for their protection, it would give them massive reassurance.

Look at verse 11 with me. Jesus prays to his father, I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world and I'm coming to you.

[19:04] Holy father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. Jesus prays for their protection. He prays that God would protect them with the power of his name. So even if they are afraid of a world that might hate them, Jesus prays that they would have protection by God's name. It's a little bit like, I think, being a foreign ambassador.

You imagine a foreign ambassador goes to another country, kind of representing their home country. And it's a little bit like a foreign ambassador for the UK going out and King Charles saying to him, you have protection in the name of the king. If any harm is done to the foreign ambassador, it's a direct offense against the king because the foreign ambassador is guarded by the name of the king.

And all the might and majesty of the king is invested in looking after the foreign ambassador. And so as Jesus prays to his disciples, Jesus prays for his disciples to the father, protect them by your name.

It's a little bit like this. They bear the name of their father, the king of heaven, and the father is invested in protecting them. But along with that, Jesus emphasizes that the disciples are not just protected, they are sent out. Look at verse 14 with me. Jesus says, I have given them your word and the world has hated them for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.

My prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one. And what it means is this. The disciples are not of the world.

[21:12] In fact, they're not of the world as much as Jesus is not of the world. And yet Jesus' prayer for them is that they remain in the world.

They are not of the world, but Jesus sends them into the world to remain in the world. I think a question we might have sometimes is, why, when we believe in Jesus, do we not just get zapped up into heaven?

Because we've kind of done the job and we want to be with God. So why does he not just take us to be up there with him? Well, Jesus explains here, he has a purpose for his people that they remain in the world and to be witnesses for him in the world.

Jesus is so committed to redeeming the world that he doesn't want redeemed people to just zip up into heaven and disappear, but to stay here and be witnesses to him.

And the reassurance here is that the apostles could see that something on Jesus' heart is their protection, that he wants to look after them.

[22:19] Jesus cares about them so much, he prays to his father that God would protect them.

And so even when in the years to come, they face imprisonment and harassment and even death, they would remember Jesus cares about us so much that he prayed that the father would protect us.

And so the father does protect them. Sometimes in this life, letting them out of prison and helping them. And sometimes when they die, delivering them even through death and to return to be with Jesus.

As Jesus prayed for the protection of the apostles, we too can trust that Jesus will look after those he sends. He will look after his mission.

He will look after the gospel going out. He will look after his church. And Jesus cares about this mission going out. And he prays for it. It's on his heart.

And so we can trust, even when we have kind of all uncertainties and fears, that he will look after the thing that he's begun. And here's the last thing.

[23 : 32] Jesus prays for the unity of the church. And look at verse 20 with me. Jesus says, That means Jesus is not just praying for the 11 disciples in the room with him.

But he is praying for all believers in all generations, in all nations. It means Jesus prayed for us. It's amazing. You can imagine that Jesus, as he was praying this, imagined people like us today in Orchard Park Primary School and prayed for us.

It's amazing. Even more than that, you could look elsewhere in the New Testament and see that Jesus prays for us still today.

You could look up or ask me about later passages like Hebrews 7.25 and Romans 8.34, which tell us that right now Jesus is speaking to his Father in heaven about us.

He's praying for us. Isn't that incredible? It's a little bit like when a friend sends you a text or sends you a message to say they're thinking of you.

[24 : 54] It means a lot, particularly if you've had a nervous day or a big day coming up. Jesus, as he is in heaven with his Father now, is thinking of you.

He is interceding for you, praying for you, just like he did in John 17. So he does now. That is amazing. But what is it particularly that Jesus prays about for here?

Above all else, he prays, verse 21, for our unity. He prays that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.

Jesus desires a unity among believers that connects with the perfect unity between himself and the Father. And what's more, our unity has a purpose.

As the verse carries on. Here's another little question for you to discuss with the person next to you.

[26 : 02] That is, how could Christians' unity be a powerful witness? Or, how could disunity be a bad witness?

If that's what Jesus prays for, that we would be united so that people may know God, how could our unity be a powerful witness or our disunity a bad witness? Take a moment to discuss that with the person next to you.

Thank you.

All right.

I want you to imagine, I hope no one is about to walk in, otherwise they'll feel really awkward. But I want you to imagine someone brand new who's never been to church before and walks in just this moment.

[27 : 41] And they come in and see us in here bickering and fighting and hating each other and being so bitter to each other. They will probably walk straight back out again.

They think, I do not want to be with those people. They seem horrible. But they will probably also think, they talk about a Jesus who supposedly loves people and forgives people.

I cannot believe that if they are so full of hatred and bitterness to each other. You see, our unity can either underline our witness or it can undermine our witness.

Our unity, when it's good, it can show that we love one another, that we are united. It might show evidence that the gospel is real. It brings people together to have a common knowledge of God and to be changed by his forgiveness.

But our disunity can also undermine our witness. When we are divided and full of hate, it undermines the gospel of love and forgiveness that we say we're trying to share.

[28 : 46] I found this quote this week that I found very helpful by Carl Henry, who's a Baptist American scholar. He said this, And what he's saying is that it doesn't matter how much we say we love the Bible, we're people of the Bible, if actually in our actions we totally disregard the will of Jesus that we see.

And he's writing specifically on these verses. The will of Jesus that we see, that we would be united and one and love one another. If we are just full of bitterness and anger and we disregard what Jesus says he desires for the church.

I guess the big question we might have about this though is, How on earth can this be a reassuring part of Jesus' prayer?

If we see a church that seems so utterly divided, there are probably more denominations than there ever have been. And many churches and many arguments between churches.

I think one thing to say is, I think when there is division between believers, I think that must make Jesus sad. He has said that he desires the church to be united.

[30 : 18] But I think also we can have hope and reassurance that underneath the disunity, there is true unity. To give you one little example, you probably know that I work with Christian unions in the universities.

So with students who are believers. And that means I get to chat with students who are godly Anglicans and godly Pentecostals. Some who are complementarian and some who are egalitarian. Doesn't really matter if you don't even know what those words mean. They're different. But they're people who commonly love Jesus and want to serve him. And it's wonderful to see believers spurring one another on and being together for the gospel.

And there are of course loads of divisions. But I think Jesus is committed to making sure that underneath that, there is real unity in the church. And I think we see that when believers who are from different nationalities or different social classes care for one another very deeply and look after one another in our church or around the world.

And so this third, last bit of Jesus' prayer, I think is reassuring. Because we see once again what Jesus cares about. He cares about his church and looking after it.

[31 : 38] And particularly those last two points, the protection of the apostles, the unity of the church. We see that Jesus cares for his church so much. He wants to look after it.

And it perhaps reminds us of the verse in Matthew's gospel where Jesus says, I build my church and the gates of hell will not overcome it.

And Jesus is committed to looking after his plan, his church. And so it means for the disciples then, who had all kinds of worries and probably had all kinds of questions in the years to come, they could look back and think, this is what Jesus cares for.

This is what he's praying for. We can have confidence that it will be answered. And so as we round off, we've seen today what Jesus prays for and therefore what is on Jesus' heart.

I must admit, two weeks ago, if you'd asked me this passage, I'd have said I thought it was a bit random that it was in the Bible and I didn't really know why. But I think over the last week, coming to study it, it's been wonderful to see that.

[32 : 45] We get to see the things that Jesus prays for, the things that he cares most about. Jesus is committed to finishing his work, securing eternal life and to the glory of the Father.

Jesus prays for the protection of the apostles. Jesus prays for the unity of the church. These things give us great reassurance that he's committed to and cares about these things.

And so just as we finish, one last question for you, which is this. What difference does it make for how you think about Jesus to know these other things on his heart?

What difference does it make for how you think about Jesus? And take a last minute or so to talk about that with the person next to you. Thank you.

Thank you.

[34 : 32] So as we see Jesus' prayer this morning, it's not like the friend who have no idea what they're thinking about or why they're upset.

Instead, Jesus, to his friends, reveals the things that are on his heart as he prays in front of them. And how wonderful it is that we get the access to know the things that Jesus prays about.

How wonderful it is to know that Jesus prays these kind of things actually with us in mind. I hope this morning that makes you love Jesus all the more, to know how much he cares for you as one of his believers.

Let's pray together before we sing in a moment. Our Father in heaven, thank you so much for sending your son and that he might secure for us eternal life.

Thank you that we can know you as our Father and look forward to eternity knowing you. Thank you so much for Jesus, our Lord, our Saviour, our brother, our friend.

[35 : 37] And thank you that we can know him more as we know the things he cares about, he prays for. And Father, please would it give each of us deep reassurance to know Jesus' commitment to his glory on the cross and to looking after us, his church.

We thank you in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing together a song which speaks of the unity that we can have through Christ with God and through Christ with one another.

So do you want to stand and we'll sing together? Amen.