

Jesus' Prayer | John 17:1-19

Good morning church, if you have a Bible go ahead and grab it and turn to John 17.

This past Sunday Forrest did a great job finishing our time together in Jonah and this morning we are going to begin a two week series going through John 17 as we get prepared for Easter.

When we think of the weeks leading up to Easter we can look at all types of passages. We can look at the persecution of Jesus in his trial, the whole passion week from the Garden of Gethsemane to the cross, but in John 17 we are going to be looking at the prayer of Jesus.

John 17 is a window into the heart of Jesus as he prays for his disciples and those who would eventually be his disciples. This morning we are going to be looking at verses 1-19 as Jesus focuses his prayer on the disciples with him.

Before we jump in I want to set the scene for us. This chapter is the end of what is known as the farewell discourse that Jesus has with his disciples. This farewell discourse begins in chapter 13 where Jesus calls his disciples together for the passover meal and washes their feet. It is a special time he spends with them before he knows he will be handed over to be crucified.

In chapters 13-17 Jesus shares with them in great detail the plans of Jesus' death and resurrection, how they are to remain in him as the vine and they are the branches, and that he is the only way, the truth, and the life and no one comes to the Father except through him.

In chapter 17 Judas has left the group to go prepare to betray Jesus and still at the passover table, Jesus offers up this prayer to God the father on behalf of his disciples. So we begin with this scene in mind in verse 1.

Read John 17:1-19

Pray.

Intro Story of Madi at Family Worship

Jesus Prays for Glory

As this hour is upon Jesus we see continuing in verses 1-5 that...

Jesus Prays for Glory

The Hour Has Come Intro

Glory Given v. 1-2

In verse 1 he calls on God the Father to glorify the Son so that the Son may glorify the Father. And in this request we see the mutual giving of glory to one another. The Son asks the Father for glory and then the Son will give glory back to the Father.

We know that Jesus has yet to go to the cross and be resurrected, but Jesus is asking the Father for glory in a way that He is confident he will complete the mission of purchasing the salvation of those who will believe.

This is apparent in verse 2 when Jesus mentions that God the Father has given him all authority over flesh, which is much like the beginning of the Great Commission passage in Matthew 28 when Jesus says, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth."

This authority comes about through the giving of his life as a substitute for ours, and then later his resurrection showing his defeat over sin and death.

When Jesus does this, he will put on full display the goodness and grace of God for sinners and God glorifies the Son by raising him from the dead.

Jesus' resurrection is the return of all the greatness, splendor, and majesty to God the Son and in turn God the Son reflects all the greatness, splendor, and majesty of God the Father and offers eternal life to mankind who can have a relationship with the Father.

So there is unity in the glory being shared from the Father and Son.

RC Sproul explains this unity when he says, "When Jesus asked the Father to glorify Him, it was not at the expense of the Father because the glorification of the Son is glorification of the Father..

Philippians 2:11 speaks to this as well, Paul says that every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, "to the glory of God the Father."

They are two different persons of the Godhead and have different roles in salvation, but they are unified in purpose, plan, and glory.

Glory's Goodness v. 3

As a result of this glory given from the Father to the Son in his resurrection, we get to experience Glory's goodness!

Verse 3 shows us Glory's goodness toward us in the provision of eternal life.

Jesus explains that eternal life is to know God the Father and the Son. Then as Acts would tell us, we will know them through God the Holy Spirit.

Jesus' explanation of eternal life should cause us to see our salvation not as a pathway of life of things to do or not do to, but a pathway to a person. It is a pathway to a relationship that changes everything for us.

Much like your relationship with a spouse changes everything about life from your wedding day on, salvation should do the same.

Our salvation is an invitation to "taste and see that the Lord is good" every day of our lives here on earth, and then for eternity in death or in Jesus' second coming.

Glory Guaranteed v. 4-5

Lastly in this section we see Glory Guaranteed.

Verse 4 again shows us that Jesus is thinking in terms of finishing the mission. He says he has glorified God on earth and has accomplished the mission or work he was to do.

Again we know that Jesus has not died and been resurrected yet, but he is speaking toward that end. Jesus has glorified God the Father on earth and has shown mankind who God is.

Hebrews 1:3 tells us that Jesus, "is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power."

This is seen most clearly on the cross where Jesus shows the holiness and wrath of God against evil and sin, but also his love and grace toward us because His Son took our wrath in our place.

With this in mind Jesus says verse 5, that he is looking forward to being restored in the Father's presence with the glory as he had before.

This verse speaks to the pre-incarnation of the Son of God. He has always been and will always be. He has never not existed.

But we know from Philippians 2 that Jesus emptied himself and for the time he was on earth forfeited the glory owed to him Philippians 2:5–7 says,

⁵“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,
⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.”

And now as Jesus sees his hour coming, he is asking the Father to complete the plan. Jesus is saying that he is ready to give his life, be resurrected, and come back to home to heaven in the glory that he previously had.

Verse 5 also gives us insight into the truth that this plan of Jesus coming to show us who God is and what he is like has been the plan from the beginning. The plan for Jesus to rescue God's people has been in motion since the beginning.

Jesus knows that the road ahead of him to the cross and tomb will be difficult, but he knows this has been the plan all along, and through him God is glorified and we have access to eternal life.

Landscaping Illustration

When I was in seminary I did landscaping work for 2 years and we would cut the same yards week after week. And at the time I began there were only two of us working, there me and a guy named Mark.

As we began cutting yards together we got to a place where we could pull up to yard, get out, get on our zero turns, cut, trim, and blow the whole yard without saying a word to each other. We were a well oiled machine.

We were unified in the mission of getting that yard cut and knew exactly what the other was going to do before we even arrived.

When we look at these first 5 verses we see this shared vision and unity of glory and we are given insight into the perfect unity, will, and mission of the Father and Son which results in their glory and our good in eternal life.

Jesus Prays for His Disciples 6-19

In the next section in verses 6-19 we see Jesus shift his prayer focus to the disciples with him and we see him pray for 6 things. Their faith, unity, joy, protection, mission, and provision.

Their Faith 6-8

First, in verses 6-8 we see Jesus prays for their faith.

Explanation

Jesus manifesting the Father's name to the disciples means he shared the character or nature of God the father to them.

In their culture and even now in our culture, one's name is connected to one's character, their reputation.

The Father called these disciples to Jesus and when Jesus called them to follow him, they did and as they did they walked with Jesus for 3 years seeing the character of God on display.

Then in this section Jesus confirms their faith in his prayer for them. He says they have kept the Father's word, they know Jesus is from the Father, they received the words the Father gave them, they know them to be truth, and they believed Jesus was sent.

In essence they believe the gospel good news, that God the Father sent God the Son to reveal who God is and to pay for their sin. They know this truth and believe it.

Application

One last thing I want to point out is Jesus comments on them knowing and believing. It is not enough to know the right things about Jesus, they must be trusted. They must be believed.

What we believe about Jesus needs to be convictional truth. Convictional truth is our beliefs that govern what we do and don't do. And we see this is the type of belief the disciples have.

They were so convicted that Jesus really was who he said he was and really did what he said he did that in the midst of severe persecution and even death, they held fast to their belief.

In a world full of compromise and diluted faith in Jesus, let us be followers of Jesus fully convicted in our belief of who Jesus is and what he has done.

Their Unity 9-12

Next we see Jesus pray for their unity.

Explanation

First, Jesus directs his prayer for his disciples, not the world. He says, "I am not praying for the world, but for those whom you have given me."

Then we see an incredible truth as it pertains to our relationship with God the Father through the Son. Jesus says, "All mine are yours, and yours are mine." This shows us two main things I want to highlight here.

First, knowing, trusting, and following Jesus brings us to the Father. If we belong to Jesus, we belong to the Father.

Secondly, the Father and Son work together for our salvation. The Father draws us to himself, and through the Son's work on the cross we have access to the Father to be in relationship with him.

Now in verse 11 we see the focus on unity.

Jesus knows his time with the disciples is short. Very soon after this prayer he will be given over to the Roman authorities to be crucified. Then 3 days later be resurrected, but even after his resurrection, he is only with the disciples for 40 days.

He prays that the Father would keep them in His name. This means Jesus wants the disciples to remain in the understanding of the character of God that Jesus has shown them.

Again, the Father's name is directly tied to His character, so Jesus wants them to remain in their understanding and trust in the truth of who God is and his character.

Why is that? "That they may be one, even as we are one."

Jesus knows that if they do not remain in the truth and trust of who God is they will not be unified. Their unity is directly tied to what they believe about God.

Verse 12 shows us what happens when the truth is not trusted about God. In this verse we see Jesus explain how Judas was lost from being kept in God's name, but that Judas was a son of destruction.

Judas doesn't trust in who God is, he thinks Jesus is holding out on him. So he trades his relationship with Jesus for money and proves to have never really been in a relationship with Jesus.

Moving Furniture Illustration

I don't know if this has ever happened to you, but have you ever been moving a piece of furniture and get to a door, hallway, staircase, or something tricky and you and the person helping you are not on the same page at all.

You don't know who is going left or right or up or down and it is obvious that neither one of you are on the same page as to what is happening.

Application

Jesus knows that when he leaves and the disciples continue the mission of God in making disciples, if they are not on the same page as to who God is and what his mission is, things are going to go badly. When something tricky happens things are going to go sideways.

So we see Jesus interceding for his disciples and for us, that we would remain unified in our faith and trust in who God is because he wants unity for his disciples.

We can have a lot of different opinions about a whole host of things, but it is our shared belief in who God is and what he has done for us that bring us and keep us together.

Their Perseverance 13-16

In verses 13-16 we see Jesus prays for their perseverance.

Jesus begins verse 13 again recognizing that he is going to the Father soon and will be leaving the disciples, but that he has spoken some things in the world for the disciples to have joy.

These things Jesus has spoken I think refers to the whole farewell discourse from chapters 13 to here in chapter 17.

These things include chapter 13 where Jesus washes the disciples feet and calls them to love each other with a sacrificial love.

In 14 he explains that he is the way, the truth, and the life. He promises that he will not leave them as orphans but that he would send a Helper to them, the Holy Spirit.

In chapter 15 he has told them that he is the vine and they are the branches and they must abide in him and if they do they will produce much fruit. They experience great joy in seeing all that God can do through them. He also warns them that the world will hate them because of their own sin.

Chapter 16 Jesus tells that the Holy Spirit will guide and keep them in truth. He also tells them in 16 that he is going away for a little while then he will return, speaking of his resurrection. They will have sorrow for a time but verse 22 says, "I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you."

Why does Jesus tell them all this? Why does he show them all the plans?

Because now they know what is coming, they know what to expect. They don't know how it will all play out, but they know joy is coming. There is a happy ending no matter how we get there.

Madi / Daddy Day Illustration

Usually on a Saturday when I have to get things done around the house Madi will sometimes opt to go with me to run errands and get things done.

When she does this I will tell her the plan for the day. Daddy has to go here and do this and go here and do this, and fix this and work on this. Then when we are done we can go to delta dairy. Are you sure you want to come with me today?

And as long as I am sure to include the delta dairy part, it's usually an astounding YES!

She doesn't know how all the day is going to go but she does know its going to end at delta dairy so she is willing to go for the ride.

Explanation

In the same way Jesus unfolds this plan for his disciples and for us, so we know there is joy in the end. So they would know that they would not be alone and that Jesus would not be gone forever, he would come back to them.

And we see in verses 14-16 why he does this, he wants them to persevere.

Jesus knows that if they obey his word and call others to obey and worship God in the same way they are going to experience hatred.

They are not of this world, they have been reborn, they have had their eyes opened, they are living from a new perspective that is contrary to this world and the evil here.

Not only will they be hated by many they will be the target of the evil one, and Jesus prays for their safety.

He does not want them to be removed from the world, they are agents of God's mission in the world, but he wants them to be able to persevere.

Application

In the same way, Jesus wants us to persevere as we navigate a world that is hateful toward followers of Jesus and increasingly so in America.

Make no mistake, if you are making a difference in the world for God's kingdom, you will be the target of the evil one, Satan.

The way we combat him is with the joy that comes from knowing the story of the good news of Jesus. He has paid for my sin, he delights in me, and invites me into his mission, which ends with satan being defeated and Jesus the victor.

Their Mission 17-18

And it is this mission that Jesus prays for next. In verses 17-18 he prays for their mission.

Explanation

First, Jesus asks the Father to sanctify them in truth. This call to sanctify them is a calling to set them apart or consecrated for a mission or purpose. This language is used of Aaron and his son in Exodus as they were set apart for service as priest and in Jeremiah where Jeremiah is set apart for service as a prophet.

In like manner the disciples are to be set apart in truth. They are to be witnesses of the truth of who God is and soon what Jesus has done in his life, death, and resurrection.

Then in verse 18 we see what they are set apart for, mission. Jesus say, "As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world." In the same way Jesus came to the world to accomplish a mission, the disciples carry out that mission by being witnesses of the truth.

Application

And we are here today in this church singing praises to God and hearing his word because the disciples fulfilled their mission and call us to do the same.

We serve a missionary God. The Father sent the Son, the Son sent the Spirit and the Spirit empowers us to be sent as well. This is the mission of the Church.

Lesslie Newbigin says in reference to this mission of the church, “The church is not meant to call men and women out of the world into a safe, religious enclave, but to call them out in order to send them back as agents of God’s Kingdom.”

In the same way Jesus prays for his disciples here as they join in God’s mission, he continues to intercede for us as we participate in God’s mission.

Their Provision 19

Lastly, Jesus prays for their provision.

Explanation

In 19 Jesus says, “And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.”

Jesus consecrating himself is him setting himself apart, he is setting himself apart as a sacrifice for them.

Jesus knows that without a payment for their sin, the defeat of death, or the sending of the Holy Spirit the disciples cannot do anything he has just prayed for them.

They cannot have saving faith, be unified, be preserved, and be on mission without Jesus being their provision.

None of this happens for the disciples unless Jesus goes to the cross.

Luke’s gospel account says it like this in chapter 9:51, “When the days drew near for him [Jesus] to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.”

There was never a doubt that Jesus was willingly going to give his life for his disciples. He set himself apart for such work. Luke’s account explains that he set his face to go to Jerusalem, knowing that would be the place of his betrayal, trial, and crucifixion.

Application/Conclusion

Just as Jesus set himself apart to give his life for his disciples he has also done for us.

Jesus gave his life so that we would have trusting faith in Him.

Jesus gave his life so that we would be unified as He and the Father are unified.

Jesus gave his life so that we could persevere in the midst of evil and hatred.

Jesus gave his life so that we could be on mission, being witnesses to the truth of who Jesus is and what he has done for us.

Jesus gave his life as a provision for us, so we would not have to endure the wrath of God.

How are we honoring his sacrifice today?

Are we growing in our trust and faith in Him?

Do we pursue unity with our brothers and sisters in Christ?

Are we steadfast in our love and devotion to God when the world around us isn't?

Are we committed to being on mission for Him?

Maybe you are here today and you don't really have a trusting, convincing faith in Jesus. You know you don't have a relationship with God.

I have good news for you today, Jesus can be your provision today. When we turn from our sins and disbelief in Jesus and trust Him to pay for sins and submit to him as Lord, the same salvation he accomplished for his disciples is applied to you.

Maybe you are here today and you have Your One on your mind this morning.

Jesus can be their provision too. This morning I encourage you to spend some time praying that the Lord would draw them to know and trust in Jesus.

We know no one comes to the Father unless he draws them, so pray for God the Father to draw them to Jesus.

Let me pray for us then as we close then we will have a time of response.

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