

EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #68

(The Real Lord's Prayer – Part #3)

John 17:20-26

One of the most touching things I have ever experienced occurred a while back when Mr. Miles was very, very sick. I had called him to see how he was doing and could tell that he was very weak. In the course of our discussion, he said he was praying for me. Imagine that. Here was a man who was literally on the brink of death, informing me he was praying for me. That touched my heart.

There is no passage that should touch our hearts more than this one right here. When we come to this section, we are at a time when the death of Jesus Christ is a near certainty. It is not that He may die; it is a fact that He is going to die. Just before He does, He takes the time to pray for us. **I want you to think about this for a moment, Jesus Christ, on the very night He was betrayed, specifically prayed for you, if you are a believer.**

As we have worked our way through this prayer, we have discovered that it breaks down into three parts:

Part #1 - Jesus prayed for Himself - 17:1-5;

Part #2 - Jesus prayed for His disciples - 17:6-19

Now we come to **Part #3** of this wonderful prayer - Jesus prays for us - **17:20-26**.

That is what you see right here.

IN CHRIST'S FINAL HOURS BEFORE THE CROSS HE TOOK THE TIME TO PRAY FOR ALL OF US WHO WOULD BELIEVE ON HIM.

We actually are the specific target of this part of the prayer. We know that because of what we read in **verse 20** - Jesus prays for those who would believe on Him in the future. So in His final hours of life on earth, Jesus was thinking about you and me, and He included us in His prayer.

Now carefully observe from verse 20 that this prayer is for those who would believe based on the Word of God.

Faith comes by hearing the Word of God. That is what Jesus prays here and that is what is taught in many passages of Scripture (i.e. Romans 10:17). This is precisely why it is so very important that the Word of God is carefully taught. This is what produces faith and this is what strengthens faith. When you go to a church that does not take the Word of God seriously, your faith is shortchanged. Every church should consider this prayer Christ makes just before He goes to Calvary. People will believe through the Word. That is what Jesus Christ prayed and that is why it is so important that the Church carefully teach the Word. It is no wonder that Paul said in his last charge to Timothy, "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus ... preach the word" (II Timothy 4:1-2).

Now in this context there are a series of requests that Jesus Christ makes on our behalf. Many of them are hina (iva) clauses or "that" clauses. We may be certain that God always hears and answers the prayers His Son makes. Never did one of His prayers miss the mark. Therefore His prayers are perfect prayers that reach a perfect result.

There are seven requests Christ makes:

REQUEST #1 – Jesus prays that we might be one in the same connective way as the Father and Son. **17:21a**

The first question we ask when we read the statement “that they may all be one” is just exactly what type of union is Jesus praying for here? Is He asking that we all be one big ecumenical united family of religion? Is He asking that all of our emotions and will be one so we are a bunch of robots? Just exactly what does this mean? **Careful analysis of the context clearly reveals that the unity is a unity of nature with God.**

This is a prayer concerning the unity of the great mystery of the body of Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:4-6). The moment a person believes on Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit instantly baptizes that person into Jesus Christ and organically links him with the Godhead forever. You have been prayed into the body of Jesus Christ.

The “I in them” and “Thou in Me” (v. 23), clearly have this in view. “I in them” refers to Spirit indwelling us and the “Thou in Me” refers to Spirit baptism that puts us into Christ. We are organically linked to the Godhead by the Spirit of God at the moment we believe.

REQUEST #2 – Jesus prays that we might be one in God. **17:21b**

What exact unity is being discussed here? We know that the cry of the ecumenical religious world is unity. Was Jesus praying that there would be a unity of all religions? Furthermore, Jesus said that He came not to bring peace, but to bring division (Matthew 10:34-37). So what kind of unity is Christ discussing here or praying here?

Again, this is a reference to Spirit baptism. How are we “in” God? The answer is Spirit baptism. At the precise moment we believe, the Spirit of God puts us into Christ and into God’s family. This is a deep theological union that takes place the moment a person believes.

REQUEST #3 – Jesus prays that the world would come to believe in Him through us. **17:21c**

When people of the world spot that we are linked with God, God will use that to reach others because of this prayer. When the world sees that God has worked in our lives to the point that we show we are connected to God, God will use that to draw people to His Son.

REQUEST #4 – Jesus acknowledges that the glory His Father gave to Him, He has given to us so we may have the connection to the Godhead. **17:22**

The moment we believe on Jesus Christ, we immediately have His glory within us and eventually we will see and have His glory forever. But in between these two moments is the prayer of Jesus Christ that we reflect the glory of God.

When people look at us and see the glory of God, they are drawn to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ specifically has prayed that we will glorify God on earth. The question is, do we?

REQUEST #5 – Jesus prays that we may be perfected in unity so that we will influence the world. **17:23**

Again, carefully notice that the unity is not a unity between believers, but specifically a union with the Godhead. The word “perfected” does not refer to sinless perfection, but to a full complete development of unity.

You and I belong to the same Father that Jesus did. We have a sonship status with the Father like He did. You and I have been given the same eternal Word of God that Jesus had. You and I are to govern ourselves in the same God-glorifying way that Jesus did. When we do, we will make an impact on the world.

God does not want His people shallow; He wants them fully developed to a complete level.

REQUEST #6 – Jesus prays that we could go to be where He is so we could behold His glory. **17:24**

When we get to heaven we will not only behold Christ in all of His glory, but we shall have great fellowship with Him.

Dr. Warren Wiersbe said this was one of his favorite funeral texts to use. How do we actually know that we will go to heaven? Because of the price Jesus paid (John 3:14-16); because of the promise Jesus made (John 14:1-6) and because of the prayer Jesus prayed (**John 17:24**).

Now I want you to think seriously about what is prayed here. Jesus is praying that every one of His people get the privilege of going to heaven and seeing Him in all of His glory. Since God the Father always will answer the prayer of God the Son, this is your guarantee as a believer. **This prayer guarantees that you will go to heaven and you will see Jesus Christ in all of His glory.**

REQUEST #7 – Jesus acknowledges certain concluding realities to the Father. **17:25-26**

There are seven concluding realities that Jesus prays before ending the prayer.

(Reality #1) - The Father is righteous. **17:25a**

We may observe that in **verse 11**, Jesus identified His Father as being Holy. But now He changes the adjective and identifies Him as being “righteous.” The difference is that here the judicial righteous nature of God is the main thought.

(Reality #2) - The world does not know God the Father. **17:25b**

The world does not get the fact that God is judicially righteous. The world does not know that God cannot tolerate anything unrighteous. That is why many people falsely think when they leave this world, their good works will somehow convince God to let them into His heaven. The world just doesn't know that the righteousness of God may only be found in Jesus Christ.

The word “know” (γινώσκω) which shows up five time in these two verses is one that refers to knowing God in an experiential way. The idea here is knowing and understanding and recognizing Him and having a personal relationship with Him (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 92). This is to know God experientially in a way that is based on His Word and will. The world has knowledge of God’s existence, but it does not have an intimate relationship with God. This is exactly what Jesus is saying right here.

Contextually this means that the world does not know how righteous God the Father actually is and it does not know that the only way that it can possibly know Him is through Jesus Christ.

(Reality #3) - God the Son knows God the Father. 17:25c

The Greek here is emphatic; Jesus is saying that He has an emphatic, intimate relationship with God the Father. He emphatically knew His Word and His will. The contextual reason why Christ brings this point up is because the world does not know God, however God’s people may know God because God the Son had intimate knowledge of God and He imparts that to His people.

(Reality #4) - Christ’s disciples know He was sent by the Father. 17:25d

This is a statement which informs us that by the time Jesus Christ went to the cross, His disciples knew exactly who He was and exactly why He came.

(Reality #5) - Jesus Christ has made God’s name known to His disciples. 17:26a

This refers to His own work as God the Son. He made God’s name known by everything He did and said. He revealed God to these disciples.

(Reality #6) - Jesus Christ will continually make God’s name known through His disciples. 17:26b

This refers to His work through God the Spirit. Now that Christ was leaving this world, it would be His Spirit who would continue to develop the name of God among the people of God.

(Reality #7) - Jesus Christ will make this knowledge known so that God’s love may be in them. 17:26c

It is very clear that Christian love is not a blind love, it is a love based on truth. But it is also very clear that God’s people ought to be moving the church into a direction of loving unity. When people are truly in a right relationship with God the Father, they will care about all those in the family. They will realize the importance of every body part, regardless how weak or strong.

When we look carefully at the prayer Jesus made for us, there are some very practical applications we may make:

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS:

1. God desires that we live our lives in a close union with Him and His Son.
2. God desires that we become mature in our faith through our knowledge of His Word.
3. God desires that we reflect His glory in this world and to this world.
4. You have been prayed into heaven and nothing can keep you from there.