

The Lord's Prayer-2: Jesus Prays for Himself (John 17:1–5)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (8/28/2022)

INTRODUCTION

1. We began last Sunday to examine the prayer of Jesus (John 17) before He entered the Garden of Gethsemane. When one compares the two prayers, the one before and then the one in Gethsemane, the first (His high-priestly prayer) focuses on *the disciples' welfare* after His departure while Gethsemane's focuses on *the Savior's submission* to the will of God.
2. His high-priestly prayer ties to what He said at the end of the preceding chapter (16:33). In the prayer, Jesus informed the disciples that when they suffered, the Father would be keeping, protecting, and using them as His servants in the world. They needed to hear this prayer.
3. As we previously noted, the prayer of John 17 can be divided into three sections: (1) Jesus prays for Himself (vv. 1–5); (2) Jesus prays for His disciples (vv. 6–19); and (3) Jesus prays for His church (vv. 20–26). Two points are seen in Jesus' prayer for Himself.

I. The Faithful Son

1. The *hour* that Jesus expected came. His *hour* is a clear reference to the purpose for His coming, His work of redemption on the cross—His death and resurrection—that will lead to His *glorification*. This is a major theme in the gospel.
 - a. The references to *His hour* until Chapter 12 were that it had not yet come. The approach of the Gentiles (vv. 20–26) signaled the hour had arrived.

John 2:4 is first mention of the *hour* without any immediate and obvious reference. This reference to the *hour* is a literary device known as a *prolepsis*. It triggers the reader's expectation to follow the development of its meaning as the story progresses.

In this initial reference to the *hour*, Jesus intended that Mary understood she had no claim on Him. Only the Father's authority mattered, and His will was the Son's sole duty (John 6:38). However, His *hour* also had great symbolic significance.
 - b. The primary question is: What does His *hour* have to do with the shortage of wine at the wedding feast? Mary's request was simply mundane: "The wine has run out. Will you do something about it?"
 - 1) Mary wanted the host to suffer no humiliation; Jesus saw the lack as reflecting the spiritual condition of the nation. He remembered what the prophets predicted about the age to come (Amos 9:13, 14).
 - 2) The *wedding* itself was symbolic for the consummation of the messianic age (Matthew 22:2, 3). The parable notes that those invited (Israel) would not come when the feast was announced. This was Israel in her spiritual bankruptcy. Thus, the king ordered the servants go out and to compel any they found to come in, and the house was filled. This is the work of the gospel age. But the hour of great wine—His glorification—has yet to come.
 - 3) Jesus is alone identified as the *messianic bridegroom*. Israel, as pictured in the unknown bridegroom of Cana, did not provide sufficient wine. Jesus, the true Bridegroom, provided more than enough, and what He provided was better than previously served (Revelation 19:7).
2. In returning to the text before us, note how Jesus petitioned the Father for success in the hour as He lifted His eyes to heaven.

- a. He acknowledged His *hour* had come, but He did not ask for strength or enablement to sustain Him in that hour. Nor did He ask to escape the hour. Jesus was fully determined to follow through and redeem a people for His name. He treated the act as if it were accomplished already.
 - b. His sole petition was “*Glorify your Son.*” He had already stated that in John 12:23. He followed with an explanation (v. 24). Self-preservation leads to self-destruction (v. 27). At that point, He prayed, “*Father, glorify your name.*” The seed must die for the fruit to come.
 - c. Three things result from His dying: (1) “*Now is the judgment of this world; (2) now will the ruler of this world be cast out. (3) And I, when I am lifted up from the earth [His resurrection and ascension], will draw all [the redeemed] people to myself*” (vv. 31, 32).
 - d. The purpose of the petition (“*Glorify your Son*”) is followed by a purpose clause—“*that the Son may glorify you.*” The glorification of the Son was *not* an end in itself. In other words, the Father’s glorifying the Son would result in God’s being glorified. The Father made the death of Christ succeed in its purpose (as noted above).
3. The *argument* of the petition follows. (Prayer should always be supported by a biblically supported argument—why God should hear and answer the prayer.) The petition is linked to the argument with the word, “*since,*” meaning “*like*” or “*as*”—“*just as you have given him authority over all flesh.*”
 - a. Observe five things in Jesus’ argument: (1) His relationship to the Father (“*your Son*”) is expressed; (2) the commission and goal of His work is stated (Ephesians 1:4); (3) those chosen in Christ before creation (“*all whom you have given to Him*”) are then regarded as a *trust*; (4) in light of this trust, a task planned before the ages, Jesus declared His obedience to the Father in carrying out the task: “*I glorified you on earth.*” (5) His obedience was successful: “*I have finished [not, I will, or I plan to finish] the work you gave me to do*” (v. 4); and “*I am glorified in them*” (vv. 10, 22).
 - b. In this one petition Jesus established His claim in the eternal plan of redemption. There is also no embarrassment between the fact that God has sovereignly chosen a people for His name, redeeming them for Himself, and His purpose to give a general call to all sinners through the gospel, subjecting those who refuse that gospel to His eternal wrath.

II. The Fruitful Son

1. The Father’s will was clearly upheld in the prayer. Jesus used the past tense since His determination to complete the task was certain. Two reasons are given to demonstrate this resolve.
 - a. His *authority* over all flesh was asserted. In John 5, Jesus pressed His authority to grant spiritual life to His own, and then, at the final resurrection, to raise all the dead either to eternal life or eternal punishment (John 5:27). Jesus is the Son of Man described in Daniel 7. He is the King with an everlasting dominion. This truth is supported in Psalm 2:6, 7. No wonder Jesus could command (Matthew 28:18, 19).
 - b. His *responsibility* was to “*give*” eternal life to those *given* Him (v. 2). To do this, He *manifested* the Father’s name to them (v. 6). He *prayed* for them and not the world (v. 9). He also *desired* (willed) that they should be with Him in glory (v. 24)
2. Eternal life is defined as *knowing* the only true God through the Son. *Knowing* is an intimacy with the Father that is continuous and dynamic, not mere information. It is also eternal, not temporal, in nature.

Do you know the Father in a personal and intimate way? Do you desire to dedicate your whole existence to His one eternal purpose of God, the kingdom of God? Are you doing the will of God in obedience to Jesus Christ in every aspect of your life? Is Jesus truly the Lord of your life?