

Jesus Prays

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[0 : 00] Well, good day everyone. It's great to be here this morning to look at God's Word together. Keep your Bibles open at John 17. Interesting as preaching through a prayer as we look at this together, just seeing the heart of Jesus and what it is that He cares about.

So let's pray as we jump in. Father, we thank You so much for the book of John. We thank You that He has recorded here this prayer that Jesus prayed in the presence of His disciples.

I thank You that we can see Jesus' heart, His concern, His desire. We pray that this might inform and encourage us, that it might challenge us with what's truly important, that it might spur us on and guide our prayers as well. Amen.

So I want to talk about eternal life for a moment. So eternal life sums up the Christian hope, doesn't it? And John's Gospel speaks of eternal life a lot.

But what is it? So John 3.16, For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. Or John 4.14, The water that I give Him will become in Him a spring of water, welling up to eternal life.

[1 : 20] Or John 6.47, There's heaps of other occasions where John speaks of this and Jesus speaks of eternal life.

But what is it? It's more than just life that goes on forever, isn't it? I mean, imagine if you were living forever, but everyone else around you grew old and died, and you just kept on going.

Like, that wouldn't actually be a good thing, would it? Or imagine if everyone lived in this world forever, even if you don't end up with eternal enemies, wouldn't you get bored eventually? You run out of things to do, places to see, run out of the energy and the will to keep on living.

There's more to eternal life than just living forever. But, imagine that you're in glory, and everything is perfect. The world's great, you're free, it's paradise.

You can, you know, slide down rainbows, or whatever you want to do in paradise. Everything's amazing, but Jesus isn't there. Would you be satisfied with that? And the answer is, well, of course not, no way.

[2 : 26] When, after something far more significant than just paradise. And Jesus prays for us, and his prayer is for something far more significant than just paradise.

So, let's look at this prayer, and be encouraged by his desire for us, challenged by what he considers important, guided in our own prayers as well. There's three parts to his prayer.

He prays for himself, and for his disciples or his apostles, and then for all other Christians ever, including us. So, we're going to look through these three parts to his prayer, and see that the heart of Jesus, and towards us as he prays.

So, firstly, verses 1 to 5, Jesus prays for himself, and what does he pray for? He prays for glory. So, verse 1, he prays, the hour has now come.

So, a number of times through John, he said, his hour has not yet come. When he turned water into wine, my hour has not yet come. A couple of times when they tried to stone him, they couldn't because his hour had not yet come. And then in chapter 12, some Greeks came to see him, and he said, the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

[3 : 33] And now here, saying, the hour has come. Glorify your Son. This is the time. And it's literally only a few hours till he will be hanging on the cross, being crucified.

This is what Jesus came for. So, he's praying, in verse 1, that his Father will glorify him, and notice, so that he might glorify the Father.

What's this glorifying? Notice, it's not self-glorification. The Father is the one who glorifies the Son, and the Son glorifies the Father. It's a relational thing. What is it? It's the Son's accomplished work that brings glory to the Father.

Father, right? In verse 2, we see that. God gave Jesus authority to give eternal life. And then, we see in verse 4, Jesus has accomplished his work, giving that eternal life, and accomplishing the job, he's glorified the Father.

And so, now he's asking, having done his work, that God would glorify him, would restore him to the glory of the Father's presence that he had before the world existed. Alright, so do you see that the Son's work reflects on the name of, and the character of God the Father, and reveals the Father's glory to us.

[4 : 48] The Father glorifies the Son in his presence, restoring to the glory he had, back when, you know, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Father and the Son dwell together in complete unity.

But the key to all this glory, everything that's going on here, comes in the middle of this section, in verse 3. Jesus completed the task of giving eternal life, and what is eternal life?

Not just living forever, but verse 3. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you've sent. What?

What kind of a definition of eternal life is that? Eternal life is knowing the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you sent. which will result in living forever.

Eternal life is rightly glorifying that which is most glorious, forever. It's a relational thing. The only way that actually living forever, could ever be a good thing, is when it's done in relationship, with the only true God, and Jesus Christ, his Son.

[5 : 58] Eternal life is, it's having your sin forgiven, by Jesus' work that he's accomplished. Being rescued from hell, being welcomed into the family of God, and his presence as a beloved child.

Truly knows their Father, and enjoying life with our Saviour, with our God, forever and ever. We're not looking forward to heaven, where everything's just going to be great.

We're looking forward to being with our God, with our Jesus, in their presence, forever and ever, with great joy. Right? Eternal life, it's not about the good stuff, or the good times.

It's not a shallow, selfish paradise, that we're looking forward to. It's relationship. Eternal life is knowing the only true God, and Jesus Christ, his Son.

And this is significant for the rest of Jesus' prayer. Eternal life isn't this abstract concept, it's relationship, and Jesus' accomplished work, is what gives people this eternal life.

[6 : 56] That people would truly know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, his Son. And so, that's Jesus' prayer for himself, for glory, because he's done his work, that he would glorify God, and that God would glorify him.

And then he prays for his disciples, those who have been with him. So, verses 6 to 10, he affirms, these guys are the real deal. Right? They've truly believed, they are God's, and they are Jesus's. So, verse 6, is, I've manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

Right? So, Jesus revealed, manifested, the name of the Father. Right? That is, Jesus, in all the unity that he has with God the Father, has made God visible, and present, and known, to his disciples.

Right? Made his name known, his character, his heart, who he is. Right? God's steadfast love, and faithfulness. And for the disciples, they have kept God's word. Right?

[7 : 59] They're faithful. So, then verses 7 and 8, they know the unity of the Father, and the Son. Verse 7. Why? Verse 8, for I, it's Jesus, have given them the words, that you, God, gave me.

And these disciples, have received the words, and believed God sent Jesus. Which is, this is what's happening, right at the end of, last week's section, at the end of chapter 16, verses 29 to 30, we looked at last week.

Right? Finally, his disciples, understand what Jesus is saying. Like, oh, now you're not speaking figuratively, now you're speaking plainly. They believe, that Jesus has come from God, which then prompts Jesus, to pray this prayer, in their presence.

And so, verse 9 and 10, he says, I'm praying for them. I'm not praying for the world, but for those whom you've given me, for they are yours. All mine is yours, and yours is mine, and I'm glorified in them.

So, Jesus defines, who it is that he's praying for, not the world, those who are God's, who are also his. And again, you've got this unity, of the Father and the Son, on view.

[9 : 06] But then he says, that he is glorified, in them, in the disciples. How is he glorified, in his disciples? Well, by accomplishing the work, that his Father gave him to do.

So, verse 2 to 3, that work was to give eternal life, which is knowing the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he sent. And Jesus has shared, the words of the Father, with the disciples.

They have believed, and received, God's word. So they are, Jesus' accomplished work. This is what he came to do, that they would know God. And so, Jesus is glorified in them.

Just like, Michelangelo, right? How is he glorified? Well, if you've ever seen, a photo, or been there really, and seen, the statue of David, you go, wow, that is a masterpiece carving.

Whoever carved this, must be, like, pretty genius, at carving. And so, we see, Michelangelo's glory, in his finished work, in what he's done. And it's the same kind of thing, that in the disciples, Jesus is glorified in them, because here are people, who know, the only true God, Jesus Christ, his Son, who have received, the words that Jesus gave them, and thus bring glory, to Jesus.

[10 : 20] They're his work, he's glorified in them. So then, Jesus has affirmed, these people, his disciples, to God, in verses 6 to 10, and then he makes, three requests for them, in verses 11 to 19.

So, verses 11 to 13, Jesus makes his first request, on their behalf, because he's leaving the world, and they're not. His leaving, they're staying, even though they're not part of the world, and they've been saved, out of the world.

And so, verse 11, he says, keep them, in your name. That's the first request. Jesus manifested, God's name, to them, he gave them, the words that God gave him, the disciples received, believed those words, they've kept God's word, now they believe, they are in God's name, and Jesus asked, they might be kept, in God's name, and for a purpose.

So, verse 11, why? So that they may be one, even as we are one. So, kept in God's name, for unity. How do you get, you know, this kind of unity?

Well, it's unity, like the Father and the Son have. It's, Jesus has been emphasizing, this kind of unity, throughout his prayer, what the Son has, the Father has, what the Father has, the Son has, they share ownership, and of everything, they share the mission, of seeing people, given eternal life, knowing both God and Jesus, they are one, and here he says, the purpose, for keeping the disciples, in his name, is that, they might be one.

[11 : 55] How do you get, that kind of unity? Well, it's not through, branding and logos, it's not through, denominations, it's not through, enforcing uniformity, or organizational sameness. So, it's not even, organizational, doctrinal purity, or something.

How do you get this, oneness, by God himself? God is the one, who keeps them, in his name. That's what Jesus prays, it's God's work.

That is, that they would, know and trust, and praise, God himself, in all that has been, revealed to them, that they would, then live, in light of, God's name, who he is.

That God would, keep them from, going astray from him, and staying, in God's name, is what, makes people, unified. So, Jesus kept them, in God's name, in verse 12, he showed them, the character, and the nature of God, he protected them, apart from Judas, who always belonged, to destruction, rather than to God's name, so the scripture, could be fulfilled, and Jesus glorified.

But, to the rest, they have, Jesus' word, so his joy, could be fulfilled in them. What's that joy? Knowing the only true God, and his son, Jesus Christ.

[13 : 08] It's eternal life, it's being kept, in God's name. So then, verses 14 to 16, Jesus again, affirms, that he gave them, God's word, and that the world, hates them, just as it hates him, which he's already spoken about, chapter 16, because, they don't belong to the world.

So, he doesn't pray, that God's going to take them, out of the world, but he makes his second request, in this prayer, not that they'd be taken out, of the world, but that rather, the Father would keep them, from the evil one.

They've kept God's word, and now Jesus asks his Father, two things, keep them, in his name, and keep them, from the evil one. So then, verses 17 to 19, he makes his third request, for the disciples. He asks God, to set them apart, as he sends them, into the world. Now here, there's a slightly confusing bit, okay, so, just translation, issue, it's the same word, that's used, for sanctify, in verse 17, and then consecrate, in verse 19, and then again, sanctified, in verse 19.

It's actually the same word, they've just translated it, two different ways. It's the word, that means, to make holy, to holify, right, or to set apart. So, it reads like this, verse 17, set them apart, in truth, your word is truth, as you sent me, into the world, so I have sent them, into the world, and for their

sake, I set myself apart, that they also, may be set apart, in truth.

[14 : 45] Right, that's right, so he's asking God, to sanctify his disciples, or set them apart, from everything else, so that they might be, devoted to God's work. So, items in the, the tabernacle, were consecrated, or sanctified, that is, they were set apart, from everything else, these are only for holy use, these are just for use, for worshipping God, right, they're holy, and that's what Jesus, is asking God to do to us, to actually set us apart, so we are devoted, to God's use, we are different, from everything else, in the world, we are different, from everyone else, in the world, we are set apart, and separate from them, for God's purposes.

And then, why? Well, Jesus has sent them, into the world, just as God sent, Jesus into the world. So these guys are on, mission, the mission is to be, separate, different, from the world, in order to go, into the world, right into the midst of those, that hate them, that reject God, as people set apart, for God.

The mission is to be, united together, mission is to remain, in the Father's name, and how is it, that God sets them apart, how is it, that God keeps them, in His name? In truth, so in His Word. So, these disciples, are dedicated, to the truth, kept in the name, of the only true God, sent by Jesus, who's the way, the truth, the life, into a world, that hates them, just as it hated Jesus. They're set apart, by God, by His Word, and sent on mission, into the world. And so, Jesus, sets Himself apart, dedicates Himself to God, consecrates Himself, devotes Himself to God's mission, and He's particularly speaking of, going to the cross, so that they might be sanctified in truth, they might be set apart in truth.

[16 : 39] They belong to Jesus, but Jesus needs to die, according to the Father's will, to save sinners, to return in glory to the Father, take away sin, and give eternal life. He sets Himself apart, for God, so that His disciples, might be truly set apart, for God.

They might be made, saints, through the removal of their sin, by the Son's, life-giving death, dedicated then, to the life, and the mission, in God's name, united together as one.

So, that's, that's the prayer, that Jesus is praying, for His people. These faithful ones, who have kept God's Word, might be kept in God's name, and so be united, might be kept from Satan, might be set apart, from the world, by God's Word, for mission to the world, that hates them.

That's what Jesus is praying, for His closest friends, and disciples. That's what's on Jesus' heart.

Notice, He's not praying, for their difficult co-worker, or their health concerns, or their stress.

Though, the disciples have every reason, He prayed for those things, as well, doesn't He? But that, God would keep them, in His name, protect them, from the evil one, and set them apart, for His mission.

[17 : 53] That's Jesus' heart, for His people. That's significant things, to be praying for each other, as well, isn't it? And lastly, Jesus, prays for all believers, including us.

He prays for you, specifically. That's pretty special, isn't it? Verse 20, I do not ask for these only, but also for those, who believe in Me, through their word.

Jesus, prays for those, who believe, through His disciples' word. That's how belief comes. That was their mission. That they would, preach the word.

They were sent into the world, to proclaim God's word, which Jesus gave them. So what does He pray for us, who have believed, through their word? Verse 21, that they may all be one. Just as you, Father, are in Me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe, You have sent Me.

Okay, so where to be like, the disciples? In the world, but not the same as the world. Where to be one? But look carefully, at the nature of this oneness.

[18 : 59] Verse 21, just as you, Father, are in Me, and I in you. Just the Father is in Jesus, and Jesus is in the Father. That's a oneness, right, there is a oneness, which is like that, of God the Father, and the Son.

The next bit of verse 21, that they may also, that they may, that they also may be in us. It's not our oneness, which means being uniform to each other, rather, it means primarily, that we're united with Christ Jesus, and with God the Father.

That's the oneness, that Jesus is praying for us. All right, it makes all the difference in the world.

Our oneness is not like a club, where we get together, just because we've got a common interest.

And so, you know, stamp collecting club gets together, because they love collecting stamps, and we get together, because we all happen to like Jesus, right, that's not the kind of oneness, that we

have together.

Our oneness is because we are in God, and in Christ Jesus. The foundation for our unity, is actually our union with Christ. It's being in God's name, in His being, in His character.

It comes through God's Word, which Jesus gave His disciples, which we now have. So, why does Jesus then pray for this unity? It has a purpose, so that, the world will believe that God sent Him.

[20 : 24] Jesus prays that we would be unified, that our unity would result, in the world believing that God sent Jesus. So, that all makes sense, but it leaves the big question, doesn't it?

Like, how does this unity work, with so many different denominations, with Christians that actually disagree about things, and we can't get along well together? It isn't being united organisationally. It isn't being united by everyone agreeing on every single theological point, or practice of our faith. It isn't being united by all studying the same book of the Bible together, or listening to the same preach together. It's being united in Jesus and God, being united in that, then we are united together.

This is, verse 3, knowing the only true God, and Jesus Christ, He is sent. So, our unity is in that, it's being separated from the world, set apart, sanctified, receiving, keeping His Word, believing in Jesus Christ.

It's being kept in God's name, by God Himself, being made one by God Himself, in answer to the prayer, of God the Son. And so, when we're one in the Son, and in the Father, then we're one in mission, of the Father and the Son, that God's Word would come through the disciples to us, and from us to others, so that the world would believe, and there would be some who were given out of the world, to come and join, the family of Christ.

[21 : 53] So, there are many who claim to be Christian, but are not in Christ, and we have no unity with them. Though they bear the label, there is no unity.

But Christians from all over the world, who know the only true God and His Son, we are one with them, in Christ. How does it work in practice?

Well, we have it from God, the question is, are we demonstrating it? So, if you are staying in God's name, that is, if you are knowing Him, living with the Christian character, steadfast love, faithfulness, living in character of God, then you are demonstrating this unity.

If you are being worldly, if you are not being set apart from the world, if you are not being different, to the rest of the world, if you are not being holy, if you are not on mission to this world, then you are the problem.

We are the problem. Not being, living out, the answer to Jesus' prayer, not living out the unity, that we do have, in God's name.

[23 : 00] There is more, to practically living out this unity, so we will keep looking at Jesus' prayer, and see what more He says. But He extends, what He is saying.

So, verse 22, the glory that you have given me, I've given them, that they may be one, even as we're one. See what's going on in verse 22, glory makes us one.

What is this glory? The glory of Jesus' accomplished work, giving eternal life to the people that God gave Him. God has given us that glory, He's given us eternal life, that we know the only true God, and Jesus Christ His Son.

And so we are one, in God. And He unpacks what He means by this oneness, verse 23, I in them, that's Jesus in us, you in me, that's the Father in Jesus, just as Jesus and the Father are one, so we will be one, with Jesus and the Father.

That's the prayer. It's the language that Jesus has been using throughout John, isn't it? What does it mean? That we share, in the holiness, the set-apartness of God.

[24 : 13] God is not of this world, we are not of this world. Through Christ's death on our behalf, we are crucified to this world and His passions. Through Jesus' life, we're united with Him to live for God.

We share in the name of God, His being, His character, who He is, what He's like. We're shown, through the person of Jesus, through His work, through His teaching, what our God is like, and how good and glorious and faithful and steadfast and loving He is, and we're called to follow in His footsteps, and to imitate God.

And why? Why do we have this oneness with Christ? Here's another key point to the unity, in verse 23, so that the world may know that you sent me, and loved them, even as you loved me.

Our unity in Christ, and in God, will result in the world, knowing that God loves us, just as God loves Jesus. That's a big deal, isn't it? God loves you, even as He loves Jesus.

That's a whole lot of love. And then consider this, the love that God has for you, is the same love that God has for Jesus. God has that same love, for your fellow believers.

[25 : 38] Even the ones that you don't get on so well with. Even that brother or sister, who's hurt you badly, through their sin. So the Father loves even the painful brother or sister, as He loves His only begotten Son, who then are we, not to love them.

But we demonstrate our unity, as we live in line, with the character of God. And that means a lot of love, to painful people. As we think about unity, it's really a lot easier, to bemoan the state of, there's so many denominations out there, the confusing picture that is given to the world, of who Jesus is. It's much easier to kind of decry, the big things out there, that I've got no responsibility to fix. It's much harder to look at my heart, and do something about the painful brothers and sisters around me, none of you of course.

Just as if I ask the question, what's wrong with the world? It's much easier to think about, the big global issues, than it is to look at my own family, my own heart, my own sin.

But when it comes to, unity, we are unified, in Christ, are we demonstrating that unity, in our lives?

[26 : 59] Jesus says in John 13, 35, kind of near the start of this section, by this all people will know, that you are my disciples, if you have love, for one another.

How it will be known? Not by our denominations, not by our Easter flyers even, not by our particularly solid doctrine, rock and music, not by the brand, or just the name Christian.

How will they know? By our love. We're united together, by Christ in God's name, so then let us demonstrate, that love, toward one another.

And Jesus' prayer, is that the world might believe, that God, that Jesus is sent by God. Right? That the world might know, that we are loved by God. They might come, and join the family, of those who have believed, through Jesus' word.

And then just in the end, the last few verses, Jesus does a couple of things, he shares his heart, with us, his desire, he says, and he makes a commitment, to us as well. Verse 24, first, his desire, Father, Father, I desire, that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me, where I am, to see my glory, that you have given me, because you loved me, before the foundation of the world.

[28 : 16] Right? What is Jesus' desire, for all Christians? That we would be with him, in glory. That we would see the glory, that he has, through the Father's love.

That we would know, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he sent. That we would have, this eternal life, which is all about relationship, with God the Father, and Jesus the Son. That we'll be where Jesus is, in the presence of God, loved eternally, seeing his glory.

That's Jesus' desire for us. Isn't that awesome? And then lastly, Jesus makes a commitment to us. And it's a big one, in verse 26. It says, I've made known to them, your name, and I will continue, to make it known.

That the love, with which you have loved me, may be in them, and I in them. So, eternal life is knowing, our God and our Saviour Jesus. Jesus will keep, making God known to us.

His name, his character, his being, his faithfulness, his steadfast love. Jesus will keep, making that known. His love, even for the enemy. This is the commitment, that Jesus makes, in this prayer.

[29 : 24] Even when he's not, in this world, and that he's, physically ascended, to being with God, he's still revealing God's name, and making it known. And he's doing that, right now, by the Spirit, through his Word.

Jesus is actively, at work, revealing himself, revealing God to us. Why? So that, God's love for Jesus, will also be in us, and Jesus himself, will be in us.

We might have this unity of love, God's love for Christ, God's love for us, God's love in us, given to each other, and given to others. And Christ himself, in us, united with him.

It all comes through, God's name being made known to us, through Christ's ongoing work. The only way that we can possibly love each other, is because of God's grace to us.

The only way that we can continue to be united, and demonstrate that unity we have, is because of the name of God that we're in. There's so many ways that we can hurt each other, and I'm sure that many of you here today, that have been hurt by someone else, another Christian somewhere, or possibly even someone in this room.

[30 : 37] But we're called to even love our enemies, let alone our brothers and sisters in Christ. Jesus even washed Judas' feet. Jesus died for arrogant sinners.

Jesus called us, to be servants of all. And it's in the works, and the words of Jesus, that we see God's character. It's by his grace, in giving up his life for us, that we live.

And it's only by giving each other, that same grace, of forgiveness, of mercy, of love, that we demonstrate as a church, the unity that we have, that we work in our mission, that the world will know, that God sent Jesus.

And God loves us. But Jesus has prayed for us. Isn't that awesome? Jesus has died for us. Jesus has committed, to keep on making God's name known to us, so that God's love will be in us, and Christ will be in us.

So let's demonstrate this unity that we have, have this prayer of Jesus, lived out amongst us, in our lives. Let us stay in Jesus' name, knowing the only true God, set apart for God's mission in the world, united together, and loving one another.

[31 : 56] And let's pray, these kinds of prayers for each other, that we'll be kept in God's name, kept from the evil one, set apart for God's mission in unity together. Jesus is making his name known to us, that we might share eternal life, with all who believe, one with the Father and the Son, in glory forever.

Let's pray together. Let's pray these things. Father, eternal life is, knowing you, the only true God, and your Son, Jesus Christ.

Please, keep us in your name. Please, keep us from the evil one. Please, set us apart for your mission. Please, help us to demonstrate the unity, that you have given us, in knowing you, living in your name, being set apart, for your mission together.

Father, please help us to love one another, with real, sacrificial love. Please, work through us, so the world might know, Jesus has come from you, and put their trust in him.

Please, keep us, in you, all the way to being with you, and Christ your Son, in glory forever. Amen.