
The Lord's Prayer

John 17:1-26

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Introduction

What is going on (interaction)...

Jesus and the disciples are walking along on the way to a public garden called Gethsemane. This is the very end of the conversation on the way. Jesus has been promising what His going away is going to mean for them. They will receive the person, presence and power of the Holy Spirit as the love of the Father to them.

Our text opens with "When Jesus had spoken these words..." So, what has He just said that leads into this prayer?

²⁵ "I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father. ²⁶ In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; ²⁷ for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. ²⁸ I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father."

²⁹ His disciples said, "Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech! ³⁰ Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God." ³¹ Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? ³² Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. ³³ I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

The prayer of our Lord...

¹ When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ² since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴ I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

⁶ I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. ⁸ For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹ I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰ All mine are yours,

and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹ And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. ¹² While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³ But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

²⁰ I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 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 that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. ²⁴ 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. ²⁵ O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I 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.

Here is truly the Lord's prayer. I want to take a quick flyover of the whole mountain range before landing on the first peak and trekking its amazing vistas.

Overview: Jesus and His Prayer

Jesus prays in way that moves from heaven to earth, from the moment to the future, from Himself to others. His priorities in praying are carefully highlighted.

Jesus and His Father (v.1-5)

The focus is on the glory of Jesus as shared with the Father and given Him by the Father.

Jesus' request is that this glory may be made public through His completed work.

Jesus and His Disciples (v.6-19)

The focus is on the words they have heard and the Word they will receive all as the truth that they need.

Jesus' request is to His Father preserve and protect the disciples through the Word.

Jesus and All Believers (v.20-26)

The focus is on the unity of believers flowing out of the unity of the Godhead.

Jesus' request is for His people to maintain the unity that actually exists in their union with Christ.

Focus: Jesus and His Glory (v.1-5)

Now, let's focus on the first paragraph. Here, John is concerned about Jesus and His glory.

"Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ² since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴ I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

His Request (v.1)

In the hour of His redeeming death, in the time of His greatest humiliation, He wants to glorify His Father. This means that He must walk in obedience through the hour. He must go to the cross and die. In this hour of suffering, pain, humiliation, desertion this is His focus and His request.

He asks that there would be reflective glory. The Father is glorified in our eyes when Jesus is glorified in His. He wants His disciples to understand that though He will go through humiliation He will be exalted. When the Father magnifies the worth and value of Christ even in the hour of the cross, then that will reflect back and magnify the worth and value of the Father. It will be a brightness that simply reflects back and forth, ever increasing in intensity, magnitude and greatness.

His Reason**(v.2)**

Jesus gives the reason that He will be glorified by the Father. The word "since" here is not only a reason but also a comparison. The reflected glory of verse one is grounded in and compared to the grant of verse 2. The reason there will be glory is because the Father has given the Son an authority, a right. In eternity past, in view of Jesus going through the humiliation and suffering of the cross, He was given authority over all peoples. His crown will come through the cross. He is given saving authority. Because of his death and resurrection, He has power to save. He has purchased the salvation of those who have been given to Him by the Father. Having died in their behalf, He now can give them eternal life. Do you hear the reflexive sense here? The Father gives Jesus authority. The Father gives Jesus the people He has chosen. Jesus exercises that authority by giving those people eternal life.

This is such an important idea in the gospel of John. Jesus is the King of the Universe. We rebelled and sinned against the King. We owed a death for our sin. Jesus died a death for us. But that only leaves us dead. Jesus has also given us life, eternal life. This is the life of God in our souls through the giving of the Spirit (*see the context ch 14-16*).

Why does this mutual glory and giving work the way it does?

His Clarification**(v.3)**

Jesus clarifies what the purpose of eternal life is. We have been given eternal life in order that we might know God. To know God is life. The purpose of living is to know God. The purpose of eternal life is to know God eternally. This is the final realization of the shadows and promises of the Old Testament. Here is the unfolding fulfillment of the New Covenant. Everyone in the new covenant will know God. There will come a day when "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Habakkuk 2:14)

An eternal life of knowing God is just "spirituality" or some "knowledge of the divine" or some "connection to the all world". Rather, it is the knowledge of the one and only true God. Jesus affirms a great truth. There is only one true God. He is the God of the Bible. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is God. The Holy Spirit is God. And there is only one, the true and living God. All others are the figment of people's imaginations. They may be crude wooden idols or the product of sophisticated blends of science and philosophy and psychology, but they are nevertheless, false gods.

Eternal life has been given that we might know, acknowledge, love, worship and obey as God, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the One sent by the Father. He is sent into the world as the Word, the creator. He is sent as the fulfillment of all the pictures, promises and prophecies of the Old Testament. To deny Jesus, to refuse to believe in Him, to not acknowledge Him as God of very God is demonstrate the you do not have eternal life.

His Accomplishments

(v.4)

In His prayer, Jesus highlights two accomplishments. These are not separate from one another. They are interconnected. Jesus has glorified His Father. He has glorified His Father by finishing the work He was given to do. Through His humble life and sacrificial death, He showed the greatness, brightness and weightiness of His Father. This is how much He loved His Father and welcomed the gift of the church from the Father. He obeyed Him even through death.

The coming of Christ into this world to live and die and be raised again was the Father's plan and Son's task. The Father gave the task to the Son. The Father sent the Son on the mission. The task was accomplished. It was not merely a potential success. It did not potentially secure the salvation of a people. It was an accomplishment. It did what it was supposed to do.

It is the work that would be finished at the cross. God created the universe, forming it and filling it in six days. On the seventh day, He rested from His work. Then man fell taking creation down with him. So, God went back to work. Down through the ages He was preparing for the coming of His Son. Then, Jesus came into the world and did the work God gave Him to do. On the cross, that work is finished. With the resurrection, the eternal Sabbath day has begun. So we do not work for salvation. Salvation has been procured for us. Jesus has done all the work. Now, we enter into that rest by faith.

Praise God – Jesus has glorified His Father by finishing the work He was sent to do.

His Expectation

(v.5)

What now? Jesus' expectation is expressed in petition. His prayer ranges from eternity past to eternity future. Jesus asks to be given the glory that He had before the world existed. He is asking for what is rightfully His. His prayer is aligned with trajectory of God's purposes. He looks back into eternity past and recalls His former place, position and preeminence. He looks into eternity future and requests that the Father restore the glory and return Him to that former place, position and preeminence.

With the horror of cross just hours away, Jesus sets his eyes over the horizon of the resurrection and sees the full circle of glory. He prays according to what He knows will glorify His Father and what His Father intends to accomplish.

Reflect and Respond

This prayer is commonly called the Lord's intercessory prayer. In this section, we see how Jesus prays for Himself. Now, we pray for ourselves because we have lacks, needs, wants. Jesus does not pray for Himself to get His needs met. Jesus is praying with His eye on His Father. He is concerned for His Father's glory, His Father's people and His Father's task.

Does Jesus pray this now? Is this what His intercessory prayer in heaven is like? No, I don't think so. Every petition that Jesus asked for here has already been granted. All that remains is for all the universe to acknowledge the reflected glory of Father and Son.

What does this mean for us?

In how we pray...

- Pray with a focus on God's glory...
- Pray with a focus on God's mission to complete...
- Pray for what God has promised and purposed...

In what we have been given...

We have a sure and completed salvation. Stop trying to do what Jesus has already done for us. No more self-salvation projects...

We have a King who we are to worship, adore, love, obey and serve. Stop serving other lesser masters and cheaper gods...

In where we are headed...

Let us face suffering and hardship with an unshakable confidence in God's love and care for us. He may have chosen a hard path, but we will all arrive safely at home.