

Let This Be Our Prayer

June 1, 2014

John 17:1-26

1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee, 2 since thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. 4 I glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do; 5 and now, Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made. 6 "I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them to me, and they have kept thy word. 7 Now they know that everything that thou hast given me is from thee; 8 for I have given them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from thee; and they have believed that thou didst send me. 9 I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom thou hast given me, for they are thine; 10 all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. 11 And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. 12 While I was with them, I kept them in thy name, which thou hast given me; I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. 13 But now I am coming to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 I have given them thy word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15 I do not pray that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth. 18 As thou didst send 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 consecrated in truth. 20 "I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22 The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me. 24 Father, I desire that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which thou hast given me in thy love for me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father, the world has not known thee, but I have known thee; and these know that thou hast sent me. 26 I made known to them thy name, and I will make it known, that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Prayer is an important part of our faith life. Prayer is how we communicate with God. There are many forms of prayer and ways of praying but we need to pay particular attention when it is Jesus praying. We every Sunday say together our Lord's Prayer which is one way Jesus taught us to pray and here in John we have another example of one of Jesus' prayers.

This prayer in the Gospel of John comes to us right before Jesus enters the Garden and is betrayed by Judas and arrested to be crucified. We are in an interesting part of our liturgical calendar celebrating this final week of Easter and heading towards Pentecost. In this time we continue to focus on the words of Jesus, the profound messages he left for the Disciples to ponder as he knew what was coming. The Gospel of John is also always pointing to the wonderful calling that we need to accept and believe in Jesus as Savior and the Son of God.

So as this is part of the specific words of Christ, call them red letter words, it is important for us to take note of them and understand them. We also see in the prayers of Jesus, Jesus communicating and talking with God in a very personal and unique way. As Jesus is our model for who we are in our lives of faith we need to take his words and use them as a model for ourselves and our understanding of Christ as our bridge to better understanding God and our personal relationship with God.

That is what it is all about is it not. How do we each Sunday, each day, each hour, each minute better build and strengthen our personal relationships with God? So to focus on this prayer it is actually best to view it in its individual sections and understand what and how these different parts can impact us. It was a longer scripture section

purposefully. Remember each section of scripture is a pericopy and within those pericopies can be smaller ones or they can connect to passages before or after or be in a particular place or order to be more impactful for us as the readers to better understand the point of the writings.

This may be a Sunday where we want to pull out our Bible's and really look at the scriptures in front of us as well as hear them. So this prayer begins with verses 1-5. These first five verses are often sectioned in our scriptures under Jesus prays to be glorified and to glorify God. Remember when this verse comes in the Gospel of John right before his betrayal and crucifixion and here Jesus is saying take me and use me God that I might bring you glory. He is on the brink of death and yet is taking a moment to thank God, to praise God, and to glorify God and ask not for much but to further glorify God through what is to come.

Even with all of that in his mind he is incredibly aware of the people whom he has called to be with him and learn from him and be trained by him. This next section is called prayer for the Disciples. In fact this entire chapter often falls under this title, the prayer for the Disciples. Because it covers the majority of this chapter from verses 6-19. But even this section of the prayer can be divided and understood as two distinct sections. Verses 6-11 is simply a prayer for the situation that the disciples are in and then verses 12-19 are a prayers for protection and sanctification. He is praying for those closest to him out of love for them and out of hope for what they have been called to do as he prepares to leave them.

We then come to the third section of this prayer and verse twenty says it best that this prayer is not for them, meaning the disciples, alone. Verses 20- 26 enters into a section of prayer for all believers. Where Jesus lifts up all those who believe in him and by believing in him also believe in God.

So if we sum it up, this prayer is: Jesus praying for himself, for his disciples, and finally for us. He in one prayer covered a lot of our personal prayer lives. There are so many kinds of prayer out there. It is helpful to remember the bulk of them handily through one little acronym entitled ACTS. ACTS stands for Adoration, Confession, Supplication, and Thanksgiving. These are four of the major forms of prayer. There are other categories such as prayers of Love or Meditative/Reflective prayers but even those tend to fall easily into these four subgroups of types of prayer.

These categories can also be elements within any type of prayer. Add in an opening greeting and a closing Amen and you have a fairly basic prayer form. Take the Lords Prayer our Greeting is: Our Father who is in Heaven. Then we enter into the adoration stage: Holy is your name, Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is Heaven. Supplication, our requests come in at: Give us this day our daily bread. Confession: forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Supplication again in: and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Thanksgiving: for yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. And our ending Amen.

We can easily take any prayer or use this form in any prayer that we pray to help us to pray. But Jesus does not give us all these various elements in this prayer in John. He offers standard greeting and elements of adoration but the heart of this prayer is a prayer of petition and supplication. Jesus is asking God simply to help him glorify God, help his Disciples and protect them, and help us to believe in him and therefore believe in God.

Jesus is praying in some of his final words and one of his final lessons before his imminent death for these things. We often get caught up in the parables the stories the amazing power of Jesus reflected in his miracles or his teachings. This prayer is such an example of Jesus as simply a man communicating with his God. But it is his prayer for us that stands out strongest in my mind. He is praying for us

I leave us too with this song and prayer, take time to reflect and to pray along with it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCzLU8gnWAQ>