

Title: Jesus Prayed for Us
Date: 09/8/24
Subject: Christians should take heart that Jesus prayed for us.
Scripture: John 17:20 - 26

Intro - The Lord's Prayer (KJV)

Sometimes The Lord's Prayer is referred to as The Disciples' Prayer since Jesus taught it to his disciples as a way to pray. Some say another prayer should be called The Lord's Prayer. It's commonly known as The High Priestly Prayer because Jesus intercedes for his followers. It's also called the Farewell Prayer. It's the longest recorded prayer of Jesus. His main concern is the needs of his followers. He first prays for himself. Next, for his disciples in the room with him. Then for all believers, which includes us. Isn't it good to know and make you feel good that Jesus prayed for you?

READ John 17:20-26.

Jesus prays for three main things for us. They're a continuation of what Jesus prayed earlier.

I. Unity 20-23, 25, 26

Immediately after the Lord identifies for whom he's praying, he gives a hard to miss hint about the overriding theme of his prayer – "that all of them may be one." The concept of unity/oneness comes through at least seven times.

We should clear up the meaning of unity. Unity doesn't mean uniformity. It's a union of two or more into one. It's something that's unified around a cause. It's oneness.

At the beginning of high school band practice, our director would have us tune our instruments. He'd have the lead clarinetist play B flat. The rest would adjust our version of the note to hers. It was a chaotic cacophony at times. If there was a problem, he'd have individuals play until they were in tune with the clarinet. Once everybody was in tune, we could play Stars and Stripes Forever, Dixieland Jazz or the school fight song. The high pitched piccolo pierced the air while the brass blared. We didn't play the same notes. We couldn't play the same notes. It's physically impossible for a tuba to play the notes a piccolo can. The goal was to have a unified sound with each instrument playing its part in tune with the rest.

Followers of Christ are to tune their lives to Christ so we can be in tune with others. We don't tune ourselves to each other. Believers have done that throughout history and have gradually gotten off course. The only way to stay in tune is to tune to one source - Jesus, the one who is never out of tune.

A. Unity is first seen between Jesus and the Father.

V. 21 - Jesus says the Father is in him and he is in the Father. V. 22, he states "we are one." V. 23 - he declares that the Father is in him. The Father and Son have complete unity. They're one in essence, one in substance. Everything you find in the Father, you find in the Son. Everything you find in Son, you find in the

Father. Though they have separate responsibilities and functions, there's no division between them. They are unified. They are united in principle and purpose.

Barnes' Notes (17:22) comments about the phrase "may be one, even as we are one" – "as the Father and the Son had always done, the same great aim and plan; not pursuing different interests, or counteracting each other's purposes, or forming parties, but seeking the same ends by the same means. This is the union between the Father and the Son. Always, in the creation, preservation, and redemption of the world, the Father and the Son have sought the same object, and this is to be the model on which Christians should act."

B. Christians have unity with God.

The reason it's possible for us to have unity with God is in v. 22: Jesus gives us the glory that was given to him by Father so we may be one even as God the Father and God the Son are one.

We have to determine what's meant by the glory God gave Jesus and Jesus has given us.

There are false teachings that hold being in union with God means people become God. They share in Godness. Wrong. God shares parts of his character but not the totality of any aspect. It's impossible for God to completely share his character with people. God is loving and shares that attribute with people so they have the capacity to love. God is still God and we're still people.

The glory Christ shares is sometimes viewed as the future glory he has in mind when we get to heaven and therefore is stated as a present truth. It's true there'll be glory in the future when we see and experience Christ in all his glory.

Instead, the subject at hand is the glory we have as a current possession. This fits with what was said in the opening chapter of John's Gospel: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (1:14). Jesus showed the glory of the Father by becoming a human, thereby revealing the Father. He made the Father knowable and known.

Jesus shares his glory by allowing us to be in union with him and the Father. Another scripture (Romans 8:30) speaks of what happens to those God calls to himself and have responded to his invitation. God justifies, declares them no longer guilty of breaking his commands. They'll no longer be judged for the moral crimes they've committed against God. They've been placed into a right relationship with God. He calls them his children (1 John 3:1) who are glorified because of the relationship.

Another scripture speaks of what Jesus has done through the ministry of the Holy Spirit bringing the new covenant: "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit...For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Corinthians 3:18, 4:6).

Jesus shares his glory by allowing us to participate in fulfilling his mission. We grow in that glory by becoming more and more conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Unity with God comes through Jesus. Earlier he stated he is the Vine and we are the branches. This is made possible because of the Father's love. He first loved the Son. Then he loves those who love the Son.

Do you and I think often enough about the honor we have of being in union with Christ? We need to understand, believe it's true. Also need to understand, believe and realize that we have unity with others who've placed their trust in Christ.

C. Christians have unity with one another.

We have two types of unity with other believers. Vv. 21, 22 portray positional unity with others who place their trust in Christ. The Holy Spirit places all who trust in Christ into one body (1 Corinthians 12:13). God uses the human body to illustrate unity – different and diverse parts combined to make one entity, unity, which isn't the same as uniformity. Unity is demonstrated in diversity. Uniformity is threatened by diversity.

There's inherent unity around essential truths: Scripture, The Bible, is the inspired and authoritative Word of God; God is composed of three Persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit; Jesus Christ - fully deity and fully human; Jesus' substitutionary death on the cross is the full and only payment for humanity's sins; He bodily rose from the dead; He'll bodily return at his second coming; salvation is only possible by grace through faith, apart from works.

The second kind of unity is that which works itself out. Jesus prays that his followers will be brought to complete unity (v. 23). There's a process of growth and maturation. This unity is achieved by focusing on Jesus Christ, loving as he loved (John 13:34, 35), serving as he served.

Jesus makes it possible to have unity. He said he has given his disciples the glory the Father gave him, so that they may be one as he and the Father are one (v. 22).

Two quotes to help comprehend. Pulpit Commentary on John 17:22: "the glory of the supernatural life of Divine Sonship and self-sacrificing love as of the very essence of God. This glory that he should taste death for every man, this glory of nature and character as the incarnate Head of a new humanity, I have given to them, in order that they may be one, living in and for each other, even as we are one... the union among men who have received as his gift the eternal life and glory of a supernatural love."

William Barclay (*The Gospel of John*, vol. 2, p. 219): "We must never think of our cross as our penalty; we must think of it as our glory...The harder the task we give a student, or a craftsman, or a surgeon, the more we honor him...So when it is hard to be a Christian, we must regard it as our glory, as our honor given to us by God."

D. Unity enables Christians to accomplish God's mission.

V. 21: "May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me." V. 23- "I in them and you and me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me." Unity serves as an advertisement for the worth of believing in God. What if each disciple had started his own version of Christianity? Matthew's Meetinghouse for Meditating on the Messiah, must be a former tax collector to join.

Brothers James and John, the Sons of Thunder, specializing in fire and brimstone services. Thomas - doubters anonymous where you're free to question. You get the idea. Christianity wouldn't have gotten very far.

Disunity and division harm. It doesn't make a difference if it's a sports team, family or Christians. Too often the natural response, including that of Christ followers, is look for the things that are different between people, argue about them. One man said about division, the temptation is to "drop hyper emotional bombs on Facebook and push away from the relational table" (Gavin Johnson, pastor City Light Church, Omaha).

Lots of things and ideas aren't the basis for unity of believers: IQ, age, gifting, race, schooling choice, income, musical preferences, Bible versions, opinions on war, marital status, view of the end times.

The next request is definitely future.

II. Reunion 24

Jesus made numerous appearances rising from the dead. One was when he spoke to two disheartened disciples: "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" (Luke 24:25, 26).

Jesus' plan is for us to experience his glory. He wants, it's his will, his desire for the people the Father has given him to see the glory the Father has given him. The Son of God dwelled in unspeakable and unimaginable glory before the creation of the world - from all of eternity. He temporarily set aside that glory when he came to earth. After his resurrection and ascension to heaven, that glory was restored. Three disciples had seen a glimpse when Jesus was transfigured. Jesus' face shone like the sun and his clothes were as bright as a flash of lightning (Matthew 17:2, Luke 9:29).

Christians don't get to experience the fullness of Christ' glory as soon as they're saved. The outworking of the plan has always been for Christ to come to earth, die as a sacrifice for sins, be buried, rise from the dead, return to the glory he shared with the Father, then come back to take his people to be with him forever.

This future glory with Christ is addressed in other Scriptures: "But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14), "When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory" (Colossians 3:4).

This is our hope. It's the ultimate in destination planning. The glory in heaven will be spellbinding, awe inducing and flat out astoundingly stupendous. The apostle Paul felt so strongly that he said, "Our present sufferings aren't worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

We don't have to wait until the future to give glory to Christ.

J.I. Packer was one of the most influential Christian thinkers and defenders of biblical authority of recent years. He humbly thought of himself as "a voice that called people back to old paths of truth and wisdom." He resisted the idea that "the newer is the truer, only what is recent is decent, every shift of ground is a step forward, and every latest word must be hailed as the last word on its subject."

As author of the classic “Knowing God,” it’s no surprise he emphasized the importance of knowing the triune God, praying and living in fellowship with him. This would be facilitated through the church seriously pursuing holiness, making disciples, walking in the Spirit as well as fighting against temptation and sin. Shortly before he died, he was asked what his final words to the Church of Jesus Christ would be. He had one line... of four words: “Glorify Christ every way.”

There's a strong connection between glory and worship and a strong case for worship as adoration which is showing love for God. Warren Wiersbe defined worship as “the believer’s response of all that he is – mind, emotions, will and body - to all that God is and says and does.”

Worship isn't just a one-hour service on Sunday or parts of that service. The entirety of it should be considered worship as the focus is on God and proclaiming him. The rest of the week isn't “non-worship service” Or “worship non-service” as if we could serve the Lord without worshipping him. The entirety of who we are and what we do is to worship and serve the Lord.

III. God's work carried on 21B, 23B, 26

The purpose for unity with God is so the world may believe God the Father sent God the Son, Jesus, to earth. This includes the reason for his coming: people were/are sinful and would be condemned to hell if God didn't do something about it. They don’t know God.

Mark Twain had a way with words...and so did his daughter. On a trip to Europe, he was invited to dinner with a head of state. When his daughter learned of the invitation, she said, “Daddy, you know every big person there is to know except God.” She hit the nail on the head: Twain was an unbelieving skeptic.

“Know” is one of the key words in this passage. More from Packer: *If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God’s child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all. For everything that Christ taught, everything that makes the New Testament new, and better than the Old, everything that is distinctively Christian as opposed to merely Jewish, is summed up in the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God. ‘Father’ is the Christian name for God (Knowing God, p. 182).*

God's love remains with us. It's really good news that God loves us. More really good news is Jesus Christ himself is in us.

Stan Lee was the longtime publisher of Marvel Comics. He signed off his monthly columns for Marvel Comics over the decades with one word - Excelsior. He explained its meaning in a 2010 tweet: “Upward and onward to greater glory!” That's what I wish you whenever I finish tweeting! Excelsior!”

I don't know what greater glory Lee had in mind. I think he plagiarized the apostle Paul's line desire: “I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me upward (heavenward) in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14). As followers of Jesus Christ, we’re called upward and onward to God's greater glory. Now we live in the glory he shares, seek to live out the unity of our position in Christ so that the world may know him.