

Series: Transition

February 9, 2020

Title: Jesus' Prayer

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Text: John 17

Glory to Jesus (John 17:1-5)

A prayer for such a time as this:

How should I pray? What should I pray for? What words are adequate for talking to God?

Ever ask yourself those questions?

How should we pray as a church as we look forward to choosing a new pastor? What should we focus on in this time of change and transition? What is most important?

Thankfully, Jesus answered those questions for us in His final prayer – the prayer He prayed just before He went out to the Garden of Gethsemane where He would be betrayed and subsequently condemned to death on a Roman cross.

His prayer can in many ways be our prayer as a church and as individual Christians. It is a prayer for such a time as this!

A prayer for Jesus to be King:

His prayer begins with these words:

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John 17:1 NIV

"Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you."

This is not a prayer of pride and self-exaltation. Jesus is asking that He might fulfill the purpose for which He came to this world in the first place. He came to be Messiah King. When He asks that God "Glorify your Son," He is

asking that despite the horror and shame of the Cross, the Father would vindicate Him as the world's true Lord and King.

The gift of eternal life:

As King, Jesus came to give us "eternal life" – the life of the Age to Come in the here-and-now. That means forgiveness for our sins. It means God's Spirit living inside us – the very Spirit of Jesus Himself. It means that we experience the love of God in the middle of a broken world.

Jesus puts it this way:

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John 17:2-3 NIV

"For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."

But for that life to come to you and me, Jesus had to first "be glorified." In a strange way, that glory came only when He demonstrated God's fathomless love on the Cross. Jesus prays that the Father will bring it all to pass.

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John 17:5 NIV

"And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began."

Our first prayer is that Jesus be honored and glorified as King of kings and Lord of lords in our lives and our church.

Corporate Prayer: Claude Chevalier

Let's take a few moments to join Jesus in this prayer for Him to be King in our church and in our lives.

Let's thank Him for the gift of Eternal Life.

Let's thank the Father that Jesus now reigns in glory over all Creation.

Prayer for His People (John 17:6-19)

A prayer of protection in this world:

The second part of Jesus' prayer focuses on you and me: *"those whom you gave me out of the world."* (John 17:6 NIV)

It is a prayer that celebrates the fact that we have put our faith in Jesus and accepted His words:

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John 17:6-8 NIV

"They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me."

Jesus prays that the Father protect us in a world that is hostile to our faith in Him.

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John 17:11 NIV

"I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one."

A prayer for protection from evil:

More specifically, Jesus prays that we be protected from the dark spiritual forces that battle against God and King Jesus:

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John 17:15 NIV

"My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one."

What an important thing for us to keep in mind at all times! Our real struggle isn't against people or culture. Our enemy is none other than the dark being Jesus calls "the evil one." We battle against unseen spiritual

forces: what Paul calls rulers, authorities, the powers of this dark world, the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 6:12) To win that battle every day we need God's protection – His spiritual armor. Nothing else will keep us safe.

A prayer to be set apart for God and His work alone:

Jesus prays that we be set apart for God alone. We're called to always wear His uniform, always fight on His side, always be loyal to Him alone!

How easy it can be to get drawn into the wrong battles even if it is for all the "right reasons." Jesus prays that we stay set apart for God and let Him protect us.

Jesus prays that we be set apart for God in the truth of the Good News:

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John 17:17-19 KNT

"Set them apart for yourself in the truth; your word is truth. Just as you sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world. And on their account I set myself apart for you, so that they, too, may be set apart for you in the truth."

Our second prayer is that God protect us and set us apart in His truth alone. No other loyalties. No fear.

Corporate Prayer: Parks Pearce

So let's take a few moments to pray for God to protect us as a church as we bear witness to Jesus in an often hostile culture. Let's ask God to protect us from that unseen enemy whom Jesus called the evil one. And let's ask God to make us set apart and holy – loyal to Him alone!

Prayer for Oneness in Jesus (John 17:20-24)

A prayer for us to be united in Jesus:

The third part of Jesus' prayer focuses on *unity*:

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John 17:20-21 NIV

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

This is not just a prayer that we all get along with each other, as important as that may be. Jesus is asking for something far more wonderful: He is praying that we be as tightly bonded as God's Family as He is bonded with His Father. This is what "eternal life" looks and feels like. It's a foretaste of God's whole Creation restored at last.

Unity – our greatest witness:

Jesus says that it is our unity – our oneness with Him and the Father – that is our greatest witness to an unbelieving world. He makes the point not once but twice:

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John 17:21a NIV

*"May they also be in us **so that the world may believe that you have sent me.**"*

John 17:22-23 NIV

*"I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. **Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.**"*

Jesus has invested all of His love and power in us through His Holy Spirit. He has done so in order that we might show the whole wide world what it looks like to belong to God's family. It's our greatest witness, more powerful than

any argument or sermon. In reality, our oneness together in Jesus *is our sermon.*

A prayer that we might always be where Jesus is:

How important is this unity with the Lord and with each other? Jesus' final prayer puts it this way:

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John 17:24 NIV

"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world."

Isn't that the ultimate goal of our glorifying Jesus? Isn't that what God is protecting us *for*. Isn't that the one thing that the Evil One wants to take away from us?

To be with Jesus where He is and to see His glory! That is Jesus' greatest prayer for you and me. And that is our prayer for all who do not yet know Him!

Corporate Prayer: Laura Chevalier

So let's close our time by praying that we be the best witness we can be to our friends, our community and our world.

Let's pray that we be in the same kind of unity that exists between the Father and the Son.

And let's pray that we will always be where Jesus is and see His glory.