

What Would Jesus Pray?

John 17 - Glory of the One & Only - 2/23/2020 - Ryan Patty

Good morning Christ Community! If you have a Bible please open it up to the book of John. Particularly John 17, and while your turning there let me ask you a question. **Have you ever asked yourself, what would Jesus pray?** I know for myself growing up, as one who proudly wore a W.W.J.D bracelet for many years, I often asked myself *“What would Jesus do?” “Would he do this? Would he abstain from that? How would he react in this situation? But have we ever, whether in our prayer times or in the generalities of life, asked, “what would Jesus pray in this moment?” “How might I offer a prayer that is modeled after him?”* That is the title of our morning’s sermon as we look at this prayer of Jesus in Jn. 17. What would Jesus pray? Today we will answer that question. Many of us are familiar with the Lord’s prayer, “Our father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be your name,” but are we as familiar with the other Lord’s prayer, the one we find here in chapter 17 today. Because this is a prayer that is layered with love, compassion, and even urgency. Urgency, because Jesus knows what is about to happen to him. The coming events are of no surprise to him. But it’s urgent because he doesn’t want his disciples, his followers, to be dismayed at what they will soon see. Remember the end of ch. 16 that Pastor Patrick hit on? Expect sufferings and sorrows, but Jesus tells them, reminds them, even commands them to “take heart, be courageous, I have overcome the world.” The disciples are going to need that reminder as we will see next week, but right after telling them to be courageous, Jesus prays for them. And it’s that prayer we will be in today.

If you’re taking notes or filling in the outline this morning, there are four key parts of this prayer we need to see. Again it is one prayer, but four parts to the prayer that give us instruction, hope, and encouragement in this Christian life. I’d like to give them to you up front: 4 key parts to John 17. First we see:

1. A Prayer of Petition
2. A Prayer of Protection
3. A Prayer of Purpose
4. A Prayer of Presence

1. A Prayer of Petition

John 17:1-5: Jesus spoke these things, looked up to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, 2 since you gave him authority over all flesh, so that he may give eternal life to everyone you have given him. 3 This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and the one you have sent —Jesus Christ. 4 I have glorified you on the earth by completing the work you gave me to do. 5 Now, Father, glorify me in your presence with that glory I had with you before the world existed.”

Petition by its very definition is a request for something. It's a desire for something to be known or done. Here, in the first five verses, we have a petition by Jesus to the Father for the Father to glorify the Son in order that the Son may glorify the Father. It's a reciprocal glory. V. 1, “Father, glorify your son so that the son may glorify you.” Glory here, especially in light of v. 5, speaks of “to clothe in splendour.” Jesus is petitioning the Father to “reverse the self-emptying in his incarnation and to restore him to the splendour that he shared with the Father before the world began” (Carson). **But how will this take place?** Jesus here is praying in some measure as if the Cross has already happened, but we see in v. 1 the characteristic language of John, “the hour has come.” The hour which speaks to the coming crucifixion of Jesus. The hour that will look for all intents & purposes as if Jesus was a hoax, a fake messiah, another great teacher who died. But the beauty of the Gospel lies in a paradox: salvation comes through sacrifice, death brings life. What will occur on that Roman cross to Jesus of Nazareth seems to be utter mockery, brutality, and humiliation.. And it was. But when combined with the truth of his resurrection we have the glory of the Son of God on full display, and when Jesus Christ is glorified, the Father is as well.

So the question of how the son will be glorified is answered through his death, burial, resurrection and ascension, **but we still need to see the why?** What is the purpose in the son being glorified through a bloody cross? It is for us! The purpose clause “ἵνα” is the “so that” in the text and tells us the reasoning, that Jesus might give eternal life to all whom the father has given him!” That we might be reconciled to God as his chosen people, and that God's eternal plan of calling and redeeming his people will be accomplished through the ministry of Jesus. God's plan is that we would be brought to eternal life through the accomplished work of Jesus Christ. And what is eternal life? V. 3 - “that we know God the Father and Christ his son.” To know here does not simply mean to learn about, to have a

general knowledge of, no to know here speaks of intimate relationship and to know is actually eternal life itself! Did you catch that? Knowing God is not the way to eternal life, it is eternal life!

Have you ever thought of the despair, guilt, shame, and loss that Adam and Eve felt when sent out of the garden?

They had known God! Enjoyed his presence and fellowship, and felt his tender love and care. Communicated and truly enjoyed him. They had known God! Think on that. And then were cast out. They would hide from God because their guilt and shame were too much when near his holiness. The door, so to speak, of Eden was shut behind them and because of their sin they could no longer remain in the garden-like temple of God. Their sin had cut them off. Now God would continue to pursue his people as we see throughout the OT, but that fundamental capacity to know Him truly, had been broken. Yet, there was a promise.. That one day the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. AND here in John 17, that promise is forecasted and about to be realized! The eternal plan of God to *reverse what happened in the Garden* is going to come to fruition. No longer are we cast out, no longer is the relationship broken, but in and through Jesus Christ we can and do know God! We are called sons and daughters, we are a part of His family. And we now have eternal life. A life not so much focused on quantity, but quality. We know God! Rejoice in that, brothers and sisters.

2. A Prayer of Protection

6 “I have revealed your name to the people you gave me from the world. They were yours, you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. **7** Now they know that everything you have given me is from you, **8** because I have given them the words you gave me. They have received them and have known for certain that I came from you. They have believed that you sent me. **9** “I pray for them. I am not praying for the world but for those you have given me, because they are yours. **10** Everything I have is yours, and everything you have is mine, and I am glorified in them. **11** I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by your name that you have given me, so that they may be one as we are one. **12** While I was with them, I was protecting them by your name that you have given me. I guarded them and not one of them is lost, except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture may be fulfilled. **13** Now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy completed in them. **14** I have given them your word. The world hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **15** I am not praying that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. **16** They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **17** Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. **18** As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. **19** I sanctify myself for them, so that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

Jesus turns the focus off of himself and onto the disciples. He has been warning them that he is going to depart, that his time physically with them is almost up. He has told them that things will be difficult, they will have trials, sorrows, opposition and sufferings. He tells them of the coming advocate, the Holy Spirit who will guide them into all truth and both convict and clarify as Patrick taught on. These are the disciples whom the Father has given to the Son, as the first few verses tell us. The disciples who have come to know, and will know even further in the coming days, that Jesus is truly from God. But Christ, filled with compassion, prays for his disciples. Prays for those who follow him, and he prays specifically for their protection in the world without him. This is instructive to us, there are two parts or two aspects to this protection we need to look at. The first is:

1. Protected by the Name of God

- Vv. 11 and 12 highlight that we as disciples of Jesus are protected by the name of God. What does this mean? In Biblical thought, a person’s name was a designation of who they are, their whole character, work, and action. **Your name is your being in the bible.** How did God reveal himself in Ex. 3, what name? He said I am who I am. My very nature, my being, is who I am. So when we are protected by the name of God we are protected by his very being. Now on this side of the incarnation, he has another name.

His name is Jesus. Do you remember that startling and bold statement Jesus said in John 8? “Before Abraham was, I am.” We believe that Jesus is God. That we we are found to be in Christ we are protected by the very name of God. We remain in him as chapter 15 tells us.

- **Think of a healthy relationship between a father and his child in today’s world.** Maybe this is your own relationship, or maybe you have seen it modeled in the life of another. Does that father, and even mother, not have an innate desire to protect their child. An innate desire to shield them from wrong-doing. There are few things that get me angry. Truly angry. But when I think of someone hurting my child, I am not sure there is a limit to the extent I’d be willing to go to protect them. I experienced this the other day at chick-fil-a. Jed was playing in the play place and I saw a young boy punch him. Before I realized it I had levitated into the play place and was ready to both protect and annihilate. Now, thankfully Laura was there and she reminded me that that’s sometimes what young kids do. In the moment I wasn’t wanting to hear that. And every mom who has taken their child to a park here has experienced something similar. This innate desire to protect. *Do we not then think that our heavenly father will protect us?* Jesus prays not that his followers will be taken out of the world, so we still expect sufferings and trials, but he prays that the Father would protect us from the evil one. From the schemes of Satan. Can we not trust our sovereign and good God to do that very thing?
- **Proverbs 18:10 - The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are protected.**
- **2 timothy 2:19 - Nevertheless, God’s solid foundation stands firm, bearing this inscription: The Lord knows those who are his, and let everyone who calls on the name of the Lord turn away from wickedness.**
- The Lord protects. He Protects those who belong to him. When we are transferred from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of light, when we are no longer in the world but now in Christ, we are protected by God’s name, the very essence and character of who he is.

2. Protected by the Word of God

- V. 15-17 - I am not praying that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.” (Expand) They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”
- We live in the already/not-yet tension. Jesus has ushered in the kingdom but we await it’s full consummation. He prays here that his followers would be sanctified. To be sanctified means to be set apart, to be holy. This word grouping is often used in describing God himself as completely holy, other, set apart. Jesus that his followers would be set apart by the truth. That there otherness in this world, our otherness in this world, our holiness, would be because of the truth. What is the truth? It’s His Word. This Word is multifaceted in John. **1)** It’s the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. John 1, the word of God. It’s also the good news concerning God’s son. **2)** It’s the truth and message of the Gospel. **3)** AND it’s God’s revelation of himself embodied in the pages of this book. To be sanctified by the truth, to be protected from the evil one, in John 17 means to know Jesus, to know the good News of Jesus, and to know the words that have revealed Jesus. I have hit on the first two, but its the last one of the Scriptures as the word of God that I want to hit on for a moment.
 - It is very hard for us to be sanctified, to be holy, to come to think God’s thoughts after him, without learning to live in conformity with the word he has graciously given us. My goal is not to guilt you one bit this morning into reading your bible, my goal is to help you to see your *NEED* as a Christian, a follower, a disciple of Jesus Christ to read, be filled up with, and to know God’s word. To be sanctified, kept, protected in a hostile world by the Word of God. And it’s not just a clinical sanctification, it is a blessing to abide in God’s word. Just as we looked at few weeks ago that the commands of God are a blessing. His word is a blessing. When you abide in his word, you are blessed!

Do you know what question Jesus asked more than any other in the Gospels? It was this: “Have you never read?” This is instructive for us in how we ought to love and cherish the Word of God.

3. A Prayer of Purpose

20 “I pray not only for these, but also for those who believe in me through their word. **21** May they all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us, so that the world may believe you sent me. **22** I have given them the glory you have given me, so that they may be one as we are one. **23** I am in them and you are in me, so that they may be made completely one, that the world may know you have sent me and have loved them as you have loved me.

Jesus now prays that those who come to faith through the disciples’ message will be one. Here he is praying specifically for us. This should get us excited! What did Jesus pray for me? What is the purpose here? Unity! Unity in those who believe the Gospel message. Unity that is shaped and marked by holiness and love. So did God the Father not answer this prayer? Because some would argue today that the church is not unified. Many in this very room have had conversations with those in Idaho Falls that say, “but you all are so divided. There are so many churches.” Non-denom, Baptist, Lutheran, Charismatic, Pentecostal, Reformed, Methodist, you name it and there is probably a denomination. And they might even quote this very passage from John 17 to you: Jesus prayed that His followers would be one, that there would be unity. So was this prayer not answered?

Well, later on in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus would ask, “Father, if possible, please take this cup from me” and the answer was no, he had to take that cup. But here in John 17, I don’t think the request is denied. *Let’s look at the text closely*, v. 21: **May they all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us, so that the world may believe you sent me.** The unity Jesus is speaking of here is not primarily horizontal, but vertical. The horizontal comes only after the vertical. It is the unity he shares with the Father. He wants those who believe the disciples’ message to share in that unity with the God. In other words, it is not horizontal unity, not primarily about our relationship with one another (although that comes); nothing here about institutional structures, or race, gender or background, or class or it is not based on a church identity, a denomination, a network, or an association, all important concerns but not the concern here. The unity here is vertical, it is our *position in Christ*. The unity Jesus wishes for his followers is the unity he shares with his father, a unity that we partake of when we are baptized by the Holy Spirit into faith and communion with God! A unity that everyone who believes, repents, confesses that Jesus is Lord has and partakes of. *True unity comes through conversion. And true believers value and pursue that unity*

amongst one another today, although not yet perfectly. But hear me here, if you have no love for God's church, no love for God's people, it may be an indication that you have no love for God and have not experienced that vertical unity yet. True horizontal unity will one day be seen and realized for every believer when those from every tribe tongue and nation are bowing down before the lamb of God.

Unity as well in no way implies uniformity. The fact we have diversity within true Gospel believing and teaching churches and denominations is a beautiful thing, for if God wanted all of our churches to be the same he would not have gifted us with a variety of spiritual gifts. No, the true church of Jesus Christ is composed of all true believers in Christ, no matter denominational lines. Our unity exists in Christ first and foremost, and through that unity in Christ we share a unity with one another. Our unity flows from the relational unity of our trinitarian God: One God, three persons. Joined together in a relationship of committed mutual love.

- This is true of us here at Christ Community. We come from different backgrounds and social classes, different denominations and different testimonies, but what unites us here as a church first and foremost, is that each Christian here in is Christ. Our unity horizontally flows from the unity we have vertically.
- Christ's prayer of purpose here is that we would be united to the Father through him, and for every believer for the past 2000 years that prayer has been faithfully answered.

4. A Prayer of Presence (A Petition, Protection, Purpose)

24 “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, so that they will see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the world’s foundation. **25** Righteous Father, the world has not known you. However, I have known you, and they have known that you sent me. **26** I made your name known to them and will continue to make it known, so that the love you have loved me with may be in them and I may be in them.”

Jesus prays that he wants those given to him, that is followers of Christ, the elect, God’s chosen people, to be with him so that we might behold his glory. That we might be in his presence. That we might see our Lord Jesus face to face. **Do you ever dream on that? Meditate on it?** Wonder what life will be like once we pass on from this life? It’s not difficult for us to desire to be with Jesus, *its stunning to think that he would want to be with us*. But this is what he prays, that we would be where he is, in his presence, beholding his glory. That we would persevere to the end, run the race well, eyes fixed upon Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith. That we would behold his glory! The glory that he is anticipating on the cross, the glory that he will suffer through for you and for me, and the glory that will be shown in his final conquering of sin and death. His radiant glory that shines so bright there is no need for the sun or the moon as Revelation 21 tells us!

- Revelation 21:22-23 - “**22** I did not see a temple in it, because the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. **23** The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, because the glory of God illuminates it, and its lamp is the Lamb.
- 22:5 - “**5** Night will be no more; people will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will give them light, and they will reign forever and ever.”

That, brothers and sisters, is the glory that we will one day marvel at, behold, cherish, and rejoice in! That is what we long for and look forward to! Fix your eyes upon Jesus and take heart that you will one day be in his presence!

C.S. Lewis describes it so well in the last of his narnia books, The Last Battle, as they enter into Aslan’s country, a representation of heaven: “I have come at last! This is my real country! I belong here. This is the land I have been looking for all of my life, though I never knew it till now... come further up, come further in!”

Would we heed that call, to come further up, to come further in. To press on in Christ, to labor faithfully for him, and to look forward to being one day in his presence forever more. Pray with me.