

## The High Priestly Prayer | John 17:1-26

- The famous 19th century English preacher Charles Spurgeon once said: “Some brethren pray by the yard; but true prayer is measured by weight, and not by length. This prayer of Jesus, commonly referred to as the High Priestly prayer is only about 650 words. It takes just a couple of minutes to read. Yet the depth of this prayer that Jesus prays for himself, for his disciples, and for us is deep enough for us to spend eternity to fully understand it.
- Scotty Smith: *No earthly feasts can even faintly compare with the nourishment we are given in Jesus’ “high priestly prayer.”*
- Why is it referred to as the High Priestly Prayer? The High Priest for God’s people was an appointed person who would approach God on behalf of the people. Here, Jesus is approaching God on behalf of his people. On behalf of us.
- **Jesus prayer shows us that he is committed to the glory of God, the good of his disciples, and the future of the church.**
- My hope is that as we hear Jesus praying these things we would be motivated to pursue the life he desires for us.
- Setting: Verse 1a- “When Jesus had spoken these words (farewell discourse of Chs. 13-16), he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, ‘Father, the hour has come.’”
- The hour= The cross.

### 3 Things Jesus Prays For...

#### 1. The Glory of God

- In the first 5 verses of John 17 Jesus is praying for himself. And he makes only one request here. “Glorify your Son that your Son may glorify you.”
- Jesus will be glorified when he dies on the cross: John 3:14 and John 12:34 Jesus speaks of himself being “lifted up.” And he’s talking about his impending death on the cross as a way in which God will be glorified. How does the cross glorify God? This doesn’t make sense to us because, in our culture, we have such a skewed way of thinking about glory. How is it glorious for someone to die alone, abandoned by his friends, after being given a false trial? It doesn’t look like victory to the world. It looks like defeat. Yet The Cross of Jesus Christ is the perfect display of the glory of Jesus because on the cross the justice of God and the mercy of God are put on perfect display. His justice- your sin and my sin needs to be dealt with by a holy God and the wages of sin is death. His mercy- You didn’t die on the cross- Jesus died in your place.
- The cross brings glory to Jesus because not only did he die for the sins of man and perfectly accomplish what the Father sent him to do- he defeated sin by rising from the grave!
- ILL> Why do we love under dog stories? Like Rocky (and every sports movie ever made). Because in weakness there is strength, in seeming defeat there is victory. And at the cross there is simultaneously humiliation and exaltation.
- Jesus shows an unflinching commitment to the glory of the Father The purpose of this request: 1c- “that your Son may glorify you.”

- His Work:

- v.2-3- Jesus has given eternal life
  - What is eternal life? “That they would know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” If you’re not a Christian. Know this, You can have eternal life. You must know God and the only way to truly know God is through Jesus Christ.
  - Jesus reflects on God’s sovereignty over salvation (v.2- “to all of those the Father has given”)
  - Are you in Christ this morning? Are you a Christian? If so, it’s not because of any worthiness or work of your own, it’s because God has given you to Jesus. As Ephesians 1:4-5 says, “even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.”
- v.4- Jesus has glorified the Father in his earthly ministry
- v.5- Repeats his request: “*And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.*” Jesus is not seeking a new position of glory, but looking forward to the return of his rightful place in the presence of God.

## 2. **The Good of His Disciples (Jesus Prays for his Disciples v.6-19)**

- v.6-8: Jesus has manifested God’s name to them. In other words, Jesus himself is the revelation of God to his people. He has given the words of God to them. and they have believed and kept the word.
- v.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.*” Jesus is very clear that he is NOT praying for the world. Why not? Because while Jesus does love the world (3:16), there is a unique love and fellowship for the disciples of Jesus. “They are yours” so Jesus is praying for them. There is only one prayer for the world: That those who are a part of the world (opposed to God) would abandon their rebellion and trust in Christ and be saved.
- Yet here we get a glimpse of the heart of Christ for his people. He’s about to be betrayed, arrested, and abandoned by these disciples, yet the bulk of this prayer is Christ pleading to God, on behalf of others. What a Savior we have!

- Jesus Prays for Their Protection (11b-12, 14-16)

- v.11b- “*Holy Father, keep them in your name which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.*”
- v.12- Jesus protected his disciples during his ministry, except for Judas.
- v.14-15- *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.*
- This implies that main priority of the disciples is a mission that will face opposition from the enemy.
- ILL> Don’t think of Jesus as an over protective parent who doesn’t want you to ever face trouble. Think of him as a general who deeply loves and cares for his soldiers. He send them out because the mission is important. Yet he makes sure they are protected and equipped for the danger they will face.

- *John 10:28- I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.* | This assures that those who are truly in Christ will never be taken out of Christ. In other words, you did nothing to gain your salvation. Why would you expect to lose your salvation. If you could, you would.
- Jesus Prays for Their Joy (v.13)
  - v.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."*
  - Points back to 15:11 *"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in your, and that your joy may be full."*
  - Jesus longs for his disciples to know the immeasurable joy of communion with God, just as he has enjoyed it.
  - Objection: Isn't Jesus committed to his glory? Is that a contradiction? Is Jesus all about our joy or is he all about his glory? The answer is "yes." Jesus knows that true joy comes when we glorify God.
  - Piper: "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him."
  - Jesus knows that hardships are coming for his disciples. Circumstantial happiness will not stand against the sufferings in this life (whether it's persecution, cancer, losing your job, the death of a loved one.)
  - Do you have such joy? One way to answer that question is to evaluate your heart when you lose something in this life. When things don't go your way. How do you respond? Joy in God will sustain in every trial. It's an untouchable joy.
- Jesus Prays for Their Holiness (v.17-19)
  - *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, 3 that they also may be sanctified in truth.*
  - Sanctify: to set apart from evil for the purposes of holy living. (v.17)
  - How does this happen? by the truth. by God's word (v.17)
  - What's the purpose of Jesus praying this? (v.18) Just as Jesus was sent by the Father into the world to accomplish salvation, so the disciples are sent into the world to share the message of salvation.
  - Just as Jesus is set apart by the Father to accomplish his will, so the disciples are set apart by Christ. (v.19)
  - In other words, mission demands holiness. One of the reasons God's people need to be set apart from the world, pursue holy living, fight against our sin, is because if we look just like the world in our morality, we hinder the mission of God. I would say that this is one of the greatest problems within the church today. In an attempt to appeal to the world, we neglect holiness. For fear of being rejected by the world, we soften the truths of scripture.
  - ILL> Dr. Pepper & Mt. Lightning. Cheap imitations of the real thing.
  - But if we neglect holy living, we abandon any hopes for true effectiveness in mission. We put forth an off brand Christianity. We need to be in the world, but not of the world.
  - Don't misunderstand holiness. It's not "pull yourself up by your boot straps" nor is it "Let go and let God." Jesus wants us to pursue what Jerry Bridges calls "Dependent responsibility."

### 3. The Future of the Church (v.20-26)

- v.20 “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word.”
- Jesus prays for our unity (v.20-23)
  - v.21a- “that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us...”
  - What kind of unity did Jesus have with the Father? *Andreas Kostenberger says this was “the unity of a common mind and purpose, an unqualified mutual love, and a sustained comprehensive togetherness in mission.”*
  - Just as Jesus and the Father were singular in their commitment to love one another and accomplish the mission so, Jesus prays, all future believers; the church is to be unified.
  - This unity is evangelistic (21c, 23b).
    - 21c- “so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” 23 “So that the world may know.”
  - Jesus gives an illustration of this in Matthew 5:14- “A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.”
  - This was the vision of John Winthrop (the Governor of the Mass. Bay Colony) when he penned his famous sermon A Model of Christian Charity: *For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us.*
  - One of the greatest ways we display our love to the world around us, who desperately needs Christ, is by loving one another well, by living in community.
  - RGC: Our community that has been meeting weekly since January. People from different countries. People with different musical tastes (country, hip hop, metal,). Married, Married with kids, engaged. All kinds of different jobs, backgrounds, pay-grades. Most of us didn’t know each other a year ago.
  - It may seem that we have nothing in common, but what we have in common is what matters most: we have been transformed by the love of Jesus. And when the world asks, we have the privilege of telling about him.
- Jesus prays for us to see his glory (v.24-26)
  - v24- that they “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.”
  - We end where we began. With the glory of Jesus. Christ is glorified and we who trust in him will one day, when this life is over, be with him where he is and will see his glory.
  - In v.26- Jesus promises to continue to make God known to us.

### In Closing

- Hebrews 7:25- Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.
- To the non-Christian: Draw near in faith and be saved.
- Christian: Jesus prayer shows us that he is committed to the glory of God, the good of his disciples, and the future of the church. He is praying for you NOW. At this moment! Let this comfort you and encourage you to pursue all of the things he is praying for: his glory, your good, your protection, your holiness, joy, unity, and the mission of the church. This should cause us to press on by grace in fearless commitment to these things!
- Robert Murray McHeyne: *If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million of enemies. Yet the distance makes no difference; He is praying for me.*