

The Lord's Prayer, Part I – John 17:1-5

Main Idea: The glory of Christ is evidenced in the work of Christ.

I. The Hour | John 17:1-2

In our study of John's Gospel, we have come to the seventeenth chapter, which contains the Lord's High Priestly prayer. Over the centuries, many Christian traditions including modern translation of the Bible refer to Matthew 6:9-13 under the heading "The Lord's Prayer." However, the text in Matthew 6 deals with a time in Jesus' ministry in which His disciples asked Him how to pray. Instead of praying Himself, Jesus gave the disciples a model so they would have direction on how to pray. As God in the flesh, Christ could have prayed every word of the prayer described in Matthew 6 except one portion, "forgive us our sins" (Matt.6:12). Christ was sinless and owed God absolutely nothing since He is God! A.W. Tozer once said: "the only sin Jesus ever had was ours, and the only righteousness we will ever have is His." So, **Mathew 6 describes our prayer, and John 17 narrates the actual Lord's Prayer moments before taking up His cross.** In His Prayer, there was no involvement from any of the disciples. Here, the Savior prayed as the Mediator between God the Father and man in the power of the Holy Spirit right before He delivered Himself to be killed on behalf of sinners. There is absolutely nothing parallel to John 17 in all Scripture. In this prayer, Christ prays for Himself (1-5), for His disciples (6-19), and for His church (20-26). Jesus' prayer to the Father right before the agony of the cross affords us a rare glimpse into Jesus' consciousness and perspective on His imminent suffering. Once the prayer is completed, the final events of Jesus' earthly ministry ensue in rapid succession: the arrest (18:1-11), the Jewish and Roman trials (18:12-19:16), the crucifixion (19:17-31), the burial (19:38-42), the empty tomb and resurrection appearances (20-21).

Jesus was fully aware that "the hour" had finally come for Him to do all that had been planned by God from before the foundation of the world. Thus, when Jesus asked the Father, "Glorify your Son," He asked that the eternal plan of redemption be consummated exactly as it had been sovereignly planned and that the Son would have the fullness of His glory on display through His death, resurrection, ascension, and coronation as King of kings, and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16; Matt. 28:18; Acts 10:36). **Jesus' rightful glory affirms His deity, since God will not give His glory to anyone other than Himself** (Isa. 42:8; 48:11). Yet, Jesus' final prayer portrays Him as the obedient, dependent Son who came from the Father (Phil. 2:6) to accomplish the salvation of sinners. Following the exchange of glory between the Father and the Son, in verse two, we are told that the Father has also given the Son authority over all flesh. The word "flesh" refers to all living creatures. In understanding this, we should notice that Jesus speaks of His authority in the past tense. He does not refer to a kind of authority that will be given to Him in the resurrection or His ascension to heaven but to the authority that has already been given to Him over all things from eternity past. **Jesus has glory and authority over all flesh, not by grace but by right.** In the church, we speak of the authority of the teaching office (Elders). But we must understand that the authority vested to the teaching office in the church is not ultimate but delegated authority. **The authority vested in those who are called to teach and lead the church is a delegated, temporary, and conditional authority.** Every human responsibility is a delegated responsibility. A preacher teaches from Scripture, but Scripture itself holds authority, not the man. A believer evangelizes a person, but Christ has the authority to save the person! Likewise, outside of the church, all who exercise authority do so under (whether they recognize it or not) the ultimate authority of Christ. In a dialogue with Pontius Pilate, Jesus clearly said: "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above" John 19:11). So, Jesus' authority comes as the covenant Head of humankind in the place of fallen Adam (Rom.11:36) and what seals His authority is the work He accomplished in His death, burial and resurrection.

To Ponder:

1. Is it difficult for you to understand/accept God's timing for everything? If yes, how so?
2. Can we ever separate the three persons of the Trinity? What is the problem in doing such thing?
3. Biblically, how are you to understand Jesus' authority over your life?
4. Practically, how can people (especially religious leaders) unrightfully take upon themselves the authority that belongs to Christ?

II. The Work | John 17:3-4

In His incarnation, Jesus' eternity entered into human existence. Now, all who receive the gift of salvation also begin to enjoy eternity here on earth not only through the cognitive knowledge of God but through the relationship they have with God. Eternity with God will be marked by an eternal relationship between Creator and His creation. The greatest aspect of eternal life is not just that those who have been saved will never experience death again but because they will finally have and enjoy an everlasting relationship with God. **Every person to ever live will live eternally; those who are saved will have eternal fellowship with God; those who are not saved will be eternally separated from God.** In verse four, Jesus shows us that the work given to Him was perfectly and fully accomplished. **God is not at the mercy of men for their salvation; it is the other way around.** Notice that in Jesus' prayer, the cross had not happened, and yet He spoke as if it had already happened, "I glorified your name on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do" (v.4). In His incarnation, Christ did what Adam failed to do, which was to glorify God on earth through perfect obedience. He took the judgment Adam (and all humankind) deserved for their sin and crushed the head of the serpent who had become the ruler of this world since the fall (Gen. 3:15). The glorious Son was placed under the law, making Himself liable for His own obedience to the Father. Because of the work accomplished by Christ, everyone who comes to Him for salvation must come empty-handed. **Salvation is a gift purchased and offered by God, and all who come to Him must come as beggars.** Many have come to Christ with demands when, in reality, they should go to Him with a repenting heart and nothing else.

To Ponder:

1. Practically, what does it mean to come to Christ empty-handed?
2. What are common misconceptions (even in churches) regarding the source of salvation?

III. The Glory | John 17:5

Of all Gospel accounts, John's is by far the one that most clearly affirms the preexistence of Jesus (John 1-1-5; 14). **Our story begins at creation, but before the world existed, there was the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.** Before there was the universe, there was the Trinity, in the existence and intimacy which is theirs alone. In the Godhead, glory is given and received before the world exists. **In the eternity of the Trinity, there has always been a reciprocity of glory.** In His incarnation, Jesus did not lose the glory He had before creation but rather had His glory veiled as He emptied Himself to the point of becoming a servant (Phil. 2:5-8). Before taking up the cross, Jesus looked beyond the humiliation and suffering (Phil. 2:5-8) to the glory that awaited Him upon His return to heaven. The glory He would receive was rightfully His, both by His divine title (God the Son) and His perfect obedience to the Father during His time on earth. He also knew His death would bring eternal life to all who believed in Him. The contemplation of those marvelous realities enabled Him to rejoice in the cross. As those on the other side of the cross, believers must never lose sight of the glory and honor Christ deserves!

How many people recognize that the entire purpose of the cosmos is an exchange of glory between the Father and the Son in the power of the Spirit? And let us admit that no one would ever figure any of this out on their own. We only know this because of the revelation of God in Scripture, but even more importantly, we only know it at this point because of this prayer between the Son and the Father. In His divine purpose, God has made this prayer known to us by inspiring the Apostle John to remember it. Otherwise, we would never know these things. From the beginning of John's Gospel, God has told us that the Word, the Son, belongs to the world of glory but stepped into a world of shame to bring us the glory to which He returns. The same pattern is present in the Lord's prayer prologue. He has come from the glory He had with the Father before creation. He came to rescue His people from eternal condemnation and grant them eternal fellowship with His Father in His heavenly glory. Because of that, **in the kingdom of God, there is no saving work (from men) but only serving work. All we can do is to serve and give Him the glory He rightfully deserves.**

To Ponder:

1. How can believers (churches) give Christ the glory He deserves?
2. What can you (as a believer) do to never lose sight of God's glory?