

John 17:1-19 The Lord's Prayer Pt 1

A sermon delivered at Calvary Chapel DC Metro
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For several weeks now we have been looking at Jesus' final words to the disciples – John spends roughly a quarter of his gospel, five chapters out of twenty-one (13-17), covering just a few hours of the night before Jesus was killed. Why so much emphasis? It's because here we find the answer to the big question, so what? OK, Jesus came, so what? That was 2000 years ago. What does it mean for us today? In the Upper Room, at the Last Supper, Jesus gives the answer – He explains why He came and what was to happen next.

We see that culminate this morning as we begin a two-week look at what is often referred to as Jesus' High Priestly prayer - a prayer that the Lord Himself prayed as He committed everything to the Father. Read with me,

1 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, 2 as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. 4 I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. 5 And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

Now, there's a lot for us to learn here, but the first thing I want us to note is the simple fact **1. Jesus prayed.** Now consider that for moment - He was fully God and fully man – He had a better, and more complete relationship with God the Father than any human being since Adam before the Fall. And He prayed. If it was necessary, or at least beneficial, for Jesus to pray how much more so for us?

But look, I don't want to beat anyone up here - prayer tends to be something we all feel like we could be better at, or do more often, so let's just note the fact that Jesus did pray and then move on to some additional points that might prove helpful for us.

2. How He prayed - out loud and in public. The disciples heard what He prayed and it wasn't the first time, it wasn't even unusual. A few chapters back (John 11:42) we saw He prayed out loud at the tomb before calling for Lazarus to come out. He prayed "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me." So Jesus said He prayed out loud so we would benefit from hearing what He prayed. We need to hear His prayers and think about what they tell us.

And sometimes we need to pray out loud too – especially when we are praying together or praying for someone. I do a lot of this, as a dad, as a husband, a pastor and of course as a

chaplain, and so people come to me sometimes and ask about praying out loud and I tell them, look, there are no rules. You're just talking to God like you would normally talk to Him and other people are listening.

It's really not that big of a deal – it's not like you're making a speech and all eyes are on you judging what you say and how you say it. To me it's similar to the way I talk to my wife. I don't have any problems talking to her in public or in front of people. And I don't use any special words or phrases when I talk to her in public that I don't use at home.

The only exception is when the kids are around and we don't want them to know what we're talking about, then we're intentionally confusing. We used spelling for a while, but now the kids can spell too, so we're using ig-pa atin-la and obscure phrases – but again, that's because we *don't* want them to know what we're saying. Most of the time I speak plainly to my wife, in normal language, and she understands and everyone else who hears understands what I mean.

If you can talk to a person, you can talk to God. In fact, talking to God ought to be easier in a sense because it's like, "hey, who are you to judge on how I talk to God?" I can understand being nervous about making a speech or speaking up in class, but prayer? Prayer should be the easiest public speaking in the world for you – just remember - you're only speaking to one person.

3. Jesus also prayed privately. Mark (1:35) tells us that after an especially busy day of ministry, He got up early, "a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed."

Luke (6:12) tells us that He went off and prayed by Himself all night before choosing the Twelve Apostles. And of course, just an hour or so after praying this prayer, He will go off by Himself and pray in the Garden of Gethsemane.

So, going back to our analogy of marriage – I said that I talk with my wife in public and people can hear the things I say to her. But, there are also times when I talk to her about things that are personal, or private, or not meant for large open discussions, and so I also have conversations with her when it's just the two of us, alone.

I have prayer times like that too – just me and the Lord. In fact, that's probably the bulk of my prayer. Most of my conversations with my wife are just between the two of us, most of my prayer is just between me and God, but I can, and do, talk to my wife in front of people, and I can, and I do, talk to God in front of people too. And so can you – and if you want to talk more about that some time, if you need some help praying in public, just let me know – or talk to one of the other pastors, we'd love to help.

4. His Position/Pose - When He prayed, He lifted up His eyes to Heaven. That's not something we usually do, right? When we think of prayer we think eyes closed, heads bowed, hands clasped – unless you're in a group or at the table and then it's like this awkward moment where you have to figure out – are we holding hands or no? And if we

hold hands, do I put my hand out palm up or palm down? Jesus didn't have any problems like that – He just lifted His eyes up, and quite possibly his hands too.

We see many different postures for prayer in the Bible – you see people sitting, kneeling, face down in the dirt, face up to the sky – what you don't see, is what we do – head bowed, eyes closed, hands folded. So know this, there is freedom – pray however you want to pray – I don't adopt a particular posture every time I want to talk to my wife, or my kids, and I don't have a specific pose for every time I talk to God – remember, Christianity is a relationship, not a religion – you don't have to use specific words and you don't have to use a specific stance.

5. What He prayed. Most people divide this chapter up into three sections. In verses 1-5 we see Jesus praying for Himself. In verses 6-19 He prays for the disciples and in verses 20-26 He prays for Christians of future generations. Right now we're in that first section where Jesus prays for Himself. And what do we see Him asking for?

He is asking for the glory He had before the world was. Remember how this gospel begins – John 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him and without Him nothing was made that was made.”

Jesus existed before the world began. He actually made the world. And then He came into the world to save it after we began the rebellion of sin. So now, He is about to go to the cross where everything will come to a head and He's asking God to glorify Him in the process. That's what He views as glory – not a nice car, not an expensive suit, not 5,000 followers on Twitter – no, His idea of glory comes through the humiliation of the cross because of all it will accomplish.

He left His throne, His position of honor in Heaven to come down and live among us, to save us. And now He is preparing to pass through a portal of pain on His return trip to where He belongs. And in the process He makes eternal life available to all who will come to Him.

So it's important for us to see *how* we receive this eternal life – He says He will 'give' it us. That word occurs 13 times in this chapter. God *gives* to Jesus and Jesus *gives* to us. No one *earns* anything when it comes to eternal life. The only thing we *earn* is eternal punishment for the sins we commit. We blow it all the time, in big ways and little ways, in things that we really just want to forget about and in things that don't seem like that big of a deal to us, but which God says are still sins. And so the Bible says,

Romans 3:23 “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”

And what do we *earn* from that? According to **Romans 6:23** “the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” We *earn* death; we are *given* life.

And what is eternal life? Well, He answers that question, doesn't He? Jesus says in verse 3 that eternal life is to know God, the only true God He says, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.

OK then, but what does it mean to "know God"? They say that when it comes to finding a job in this city, it's all about who you know. You need to network. Is that what Jesus is saying? You need to 'know God' – He's got the connections – He's the hub. If you can be seen with Him, or if you can get Him to make some introductions for you or pass along your resume, doors are going to open. You're going to get your big break because, you 'know God?'

No. Because when we talk about knowing someone in that sense, we're really not concerned with knowing *them* we just want to know them so we can get to something else - because they can introduce us to someone else. Have you ever done that? Have you ever tried to get to know someone in order to get to know their friend – especially a really good looking friend? When we want to know someone like that, whether it's for professional reasons or personal reasons, the person is actually just a passage to where we're really trying to get. We don't usually put it in such crass terms, but we want to use them to get to where we'd ultimately like to be.

That's not what it means to know God – as if you get into eternal life because you know God – like He's the gatekeeper who lets you through or shows you the way – the one who makes the introductions for you and sends you the invite. No, knowing God IS eternal life.

In the Bible the phrase 'to know' someone has the deepest possible meanings. It's a phrase used to describe sexual intimacy between a husband and wife. Adam knew Eve. He didn't just know her phone number, or what she liked on her pizza. He knew her – naked and unashamed, with nothing hidden, completely exposed. That is the way that lovers KNOW each other. When marriage is done right, we know more about our spouses than anyone else except God. No one else on earth, not even their own parents, siblings, or best friends should know a man or woman as well as his or her spouse.

This kind of knowledge recognizes that we know people and things factually AND with feelings. So, we are to love God with all our heart, all our mind, all our strength, and all our soul. It's a full body, multi-sensory experience.

And that means we do need to know, intellectually, a few things about God. We need to know who He is, what He is really like. And we need to know what He has done. What was so significant about Jesus? Why was it a big deal for Him die on the cross? When Jesus says He has finished the work that the Father gave Him to do, what does that mean? You have to know the answers to these things. You don't have to take a test in order to be saved – salvation is a gift, eternal life is a gift, you don't earn it by studying hard, but at some level you should understand what you're responding to when you say Yes, I want Jesus to save me. Who is Jesus? Do you understand?

And yet it's not enough just to intellectually know. You ought to be moved as well. Now, I understand some are more emotional than others and just because you cry every time they sing Amazing Grace doesn't make you more spiritual than others – you just respond differently. So, don't feel like anyone is broken if they don't weep in church. But at the same time, if you really KNOW God and His son Jesus Christ, that knowledge ought to move you emotionally at times. When you consider the fact that He gave His life to save us from our sins, when you consider what He has saved you from and compare that with what you get, it ought to cause you to emote on some level. These aren't just facts, this relationship, this knowledge, ought to give birth to feelings as well.

We shift gears now as Jesus changes the focus from Himself to the Apostles.

6 “I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. 7 Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. 8 For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

Again, we see some of the themes we've already mentioned repeated:

- The idea that they would 'know' God because Jesus gave them His word and His Word led to knowledge – they 'knew' that Jesus came from the Father, they understood it and they believed it, and they experienced it – they knew from both fact and feeling.
- The Father 'gave' these men to Jesus and Jesus 'gave' them God's word – it was free, it was not earned.

9 “I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. 10 And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. 11 Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as *We are*. 12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

As He prepares to die Jesus talks about the Apostles being kept 'in God's name.' That's a little odd for us in modern America, we don't make too much of a fuss about names. But the Bible does, especially God's name - from Genesis to Revelation we constantly hear about it.

The third commandment is that we should not take the Lord's name in vain. God's name was meant to be a source of blessing. He gave instructions to the priests back in the Old Testament in Numbers 6:

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:

23 "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them:

24 "The LORD bless you and keep you;

25 The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you;

26 The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace." '

27 "So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."

We could do a whole sermon series on God's name. But just to give you a few more instances from Jesus:

Mat 18:5 "Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me. ...

Mat 18:20 "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

Jhn 14:13 "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

So, we understand something of the power of God's name and why Jesus is praying in verses 11-12 "Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. 12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name."

And He goes on in verse 13.

13 But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 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 pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

We saw two weeks ago that the world sometimes hates Christians, but only because it hates Christ first. You can download that sermon from the website or iTunes if missed it. But let me just say this, Jesus knew what was coming up next, but He wasn't depressed by it, He wasn't feeling anxious about it, in fact, He expected that they could still have joy in the midst of the these difficult times, "these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves."

Life isn't always easy, but God is always good. Do you know that? Do you know Him? You have His word, just like the early disciples. But have you received it? Have you believed it? Are you being sanctified by it? And are you sharing it with others? Are you going out into the world? Maybe this morning is a good time to talk to Him about that.

There's certainly an awful lot of need around us – a whole lot of people who could use God's joy – but you can't point them toward it if you don't know it yourself.

We will have to stop here this morning. We'll look at the rest of the prayer next week when we'll see how it applies even more directly to us as Jesus prays for all of us who are spiritual descendants of the men in the Upper Room.