



Praying Jesus Style
Listening in as Jesus Prays the High Priestly Prayer
John 17

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We are walking with Jesus and the disciples as they heading to Gethsemane. It is there He will be betrayed by Judas. That is now less than an hour or two away.

While still in the upper room, Jesus began to brief His disciples on how life was about to change for them. The old covenant is about to end and the new would begin. The Holy Spirit is to be for all who believe, not just a few anymore.



New unheard-of privileges are in the works for those who believe as well. But there is the matter of the next 3 or so days. The disciple's world is about to be rocked...severely.

Jesus has just told His disciples He is going to be away a few days, but He will be back soon. He is about to overcome the world and the world system, and they are still struggling to understand what He is saying.

He has run out of time and has nothing more to say to them for now, but He has some to say to the Father. What we see here in John 17 is the longest of Jesus' recorded prayers. This is not a gloomy prayer either, not considering one who is going to the cross as an overcomer.

It is uttered by One who has just affirmed that he has overcome the world (16:33), and it starts from this conviction. Jesus is looking forward to the cross, but in a mood of hope and joy, not one of despondency. The prayer marks the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, but it looks forward to the ongoing work that would now be the responsibility first of the immediate disciples and then of those who would later believe through them. Jesus prays for them all. (Morris 1995, 634)

This is "the Lord's prayer." It is a model for us to study for our own prayer life. He will speak to the Father using three biblical aspects of prayer.

- Petition
- Affirmation
- Intercession

Jesus begins His prayer by petitioning, asking the Father to glorify His Son so His Son may glorify the Father. My friend, Jon Courson, puts it this way, "Prayer is not the way to get God to do our will in heaven. Prayer is the way to get man to do God's will on earth." (Courson 2003, 572)

John 17:1–5

"Jesus spoke these things; and raising His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, so that the Son may glorify You, just as You gave Him authority over all mankind, so that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I glorified You on the earth by accomplishing the work which You have given Me to do. And now You, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world existed." (NASB 2020)

Jesus is asking the Father that what He is about to do, allowing Himself to be beaten, abused and then nailed to cross, would all be to the glory of the Father and to the Son. Why would He do this? Because of what He affirms in verse 2.

John 17:2

"just as You gave Him authority over all mankind, so that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life." (NASB 2020)

This is exactly what Jesus was referring to earlier in the day when He was prophesying what was to come.

John 12:31–32

"Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself." (NASB 2020)



The purpose behind the cross, to being lifted up from the earth, is to draw all of us who will respond to His sacrifice there on the cross, to Himself. As we stand there, gazing up at Him in awe of the love He has for us for allowing Himself to be treated this way just so we can be redeemed, forgiven, have eternal life and be with Him for all eternity. That is what Jesus affirms. He has been given the authority from the Father to do this.

He has been given the authority to take upon Himself, our sentence for our sin so we would never have to suffer the penalty on our own. He does this for us as His way of saying how much He loves us and wants us to be with Him.

Romans 6:23

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (ESV)

He is looking forward to this event. All of history has pointed to this and this is why He has come to this planet. The war, declared in Genesis 3, is about to end in the conquest of the King on our behalf.

Hebrews 2:9–12

“But we do see Yeshua—who indeed was made for a little while lower than the angels—now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by God’s grace he might taste death for all humanity. For in bringing many sons to glory, it was only fitting that God, the Creator and Preserver of everything, should bring the Initiator of their deliverance to the goal through sufferings. For both Yeshua, who sets people apart for God, and the ones being set apart have a common origin—this is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers when he says, “I will proclaim your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.”” (CJB)

Christian, because of what Jesus does on the cross, because of His love, when He finally gets to see us and be with us, He will be the one who introduces us to the heavenly host and to all the gathered church in heaven. And, be ready for this, He will be the one singing for all to hear, about you and me. That is how much He is looking forward to the cross.

He gives eternal life to us, to those whom the Father has given Him. We all have some ideas about what that may look like, but I guarantee you what it isn’t, it isn’t sitting on a cloud and playing a harp all day. Not at all. What does eternal life look like?

John 17:3

“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” (NASB 2020)

So that we know, Jesus prays, in affirmation, of what eternal life consists of. It consists of knowing God. I have spent decades studying the Bible and still struggle with just not knowing who God is. An eternity of learning about Him and getting to know more about Him by seeing Him and experiencing Him, that is simply a part of it.

In the Bible, when we see “to know” God does not refer merely to cognitive knowledge (the Greek conception); it means living in fellowship with God.” We will be living with God in fellowship with God forever. Jesus wants us to experience the same thing He has experienced for all eternity, being with the Father. We will finally experience life as the Father wanted us to experience it, in the Garden of Eden with Him. (Köstenberger 2004, 488)

Eternal life, the Son affirms (Jn. 17:3), is the life of knowing the Father in genuine faith as the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom the Father sent (cf. 25; 3:16). For Jesus is the way, the truth and the life (14:6). As the “true” (alethinós) God, the Father meets the criteria, the ideals, the ultimate possibilities of



what God can be, as Jesus is the true Vine (15:1). That the Father is the only God does not deny that the Son also is God; He is shown in other verses to be God (1:18; 20:28). (Rosscup 2008, 1852)

He is the one true God and the only way we can know Him is through the one He sent, Jesus Christ.

There simply is no other way other than through Jesus.

John 14:6

“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.” (NASB 2020)

Jesus continues His prayer by affirming what His mission was and how He has done exactly that. He has achieved the goals of the Father.

John 17:4

“I glorified You on the earth by accomplishing the work which You have given Me to do.” (NASB 2020)
The incarnation, the supernatural intrusion into the affairs of mankind by God with someone who was not of this earth, was totally alien and unexpected. He was not of this earth, and His followers, those who trust in His completed work on the cross, are also no longer of this world.

Colossians 1:13

“For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son,” (NLT)

Because we have been transferred to His kingdom, we are no longer citizens of earth, but of heaven. We are part of His family.

Ephesians 2:19

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,” (ESV)

Back in John 14, Jesus promised to come back for us, because we are not of this world any longer. We are talking about a pending rescue mission Jesus will conduct on planet earth. The rapture. To remove us from this world before the wrath of God falls on a rebellious mankind.

If you are in Christ, then you are not of this world. As a believer, you and I are “perfectly accepted now and forever before God on the ground of our place in Christ, the righteousness of God is imputed unto us, and, being saved out of this cosmos, this fallen world, we are no more of this world than Christ is of this world (John 15:18–19; 17:14, 16). The coming tribulation is the judgment of this world. Israel has her part in it since, being not yet saved (Rom. 11:26), she is of the world (cf. Matt. 13:44). As believers being what we are in Christ, we have no more a rightful place in this cosmos world’s judgments than Christ Himself or any unfallen angel....

As for any condemnation, or other judgment, we, as believers, are wholly delivered forever on the most righteous ground that a Substitute bore the condemnation and judgment and has provided a perfect standing for us before God. (Olander 2009, 244-245) “Therefore there is now no condemnation at all for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1, NASB 2020)

John 17:5

“And now You, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world existed.” (NASB 2020)



Jesus turns again to petition. That He once again return to the Father and the glory that He shared with the Father before creation. This points to John 1

John 1:1–2

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.” (NASB 2020)

The mission has been completed, Jesus is looking forward to the cross, He is looking forward to redeeming all of us, and He is looking forward to being back with the Father.

His humiliation has not yet come but it is indeed coming, and He is in full agreement with the Father and anticipating it and the results of it.

Jesus is petitioning the Father to be glorified and that He glorify the Father.
Paul gives us a look at the outcome.

Philippians 2:5–11

“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name, so that at the name given to Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (NRSVue)

John 17:6–8

“I have revealed Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have followed Your word. Now they have come to know that everything which You have given Me is from You; for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me.” (NASB 2020)

Jesus disclosed the Father to His disciples. He told them that earlier while still in the upper room (John 14:9). Those whom He disclosed the Father to, were those the Father gave to Him.

You and I, as believers in Christ are God’s love gift to His Son. We are, all of us, a gift to Him out of the world. We were unsaved, but our faith in the completed work of Jesus Christ has moved us to being saved and as such we are placed into the Vine with Him. We are the Father’s gift to the Son.

I find that hard to fathom. I know me, but so does the Father and He still wants to spend eternity with all of us. As a gift, we still belong to the Father, but we are also Jesus’ own. He is the one who keeps us safe, and He is the one who will never ever let us go.

As believers, we want to obey the words of Jesus and as such, want to be obey the words of the Father. That is what it means to believe. That is why Jesus spent so much time talking about the giving of the Holy Spirit which is the enabling power for us to be able to do exactly that, to be obedient.

Jesus disciples came to realize that everything they heard Jesus say, everything they saw Him do, was Jesus faithfully performing the works and words of the Father. The Father is the source, authority, character and author of all Jesus does. And Jesus affirms that He has been faithful with that so that those who were given to Him would believe.



With that, Jesus turns to a concern He has on behalf of those given to Him. Now we see Jesus being the great intercessor on behalf of His own. We see the love He has for His disciples and the concern He has for them to be preserved through what it is they are about to go through. The prayer though does not only deal with the next 3 days but is much broader in scope.

John 17:9–16

"I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but on the behalf of those whom You have given Me, because they are Yours; and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. I am no longer going to be in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, so that they may be one just as We are. While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name, which You have given Me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled. But now I am coming to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. 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. I am not asking You to take them out of the world, but to keep them away from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world." (NASB 2020)

Jesus is concerned about those who have trusted in Him, He is not concerned about the world at this moment. He is praying on behalf of those whom God has given to Him recognizing that up to that point, God has taken care of them. He is asking for that protection to continue.

For His disciples, Jesus is concerned. He will no longer be there with them and knowing them as He does, He is concerned for their safety and their preservation. He is the one who is leaving, notice He does not ask for them to leave with Him. Because we remain in this world, Jesus is concerned that we remain in the Father and in His name.

The world is ruled by Satan, Jesus knows this. The disciples, all believers as well, belong to God and have been given to Jesus, we are not part of this world and as such, we are the ones most in need of divine protection and guidance.

For three years Jesus has poured His life into His disciples. Now that He is leaving, the mission flips to them. No one else has had the same relationship they have had the past 3 years; they are unique on this planet and the entire future of the mission relies on what they do. He protected them but He will not be there anymore.

Christian, you are no different. As a believer we have been given the same task, to continue the mission. Each of us has a unique and special mission given to us by the Father. Only you can do it. I can't do what God has tasked you to do. No one else can either, just you. You are unique on this planet and the entire future of the mission relies on each of us. If you do not do it, then the entire body of Christ misses out.

Right up front, Jesus is praying on our behalf to be kept in the Father and to be one with each other. Even though we each have a unique ministry and service we are doing for the Lord; we still are to be one in the Lord with each other. The love we have for each other, as Jesus has previously said in John 13:34-35, is to be the primary characteristic telling the world that we are followers of Jesus Christ. This reflects a unity that is only available as fellow brothers and sisters in Christ operating together in the body of Christ. Jesus is the one who kept the disciples safe, with the glaring exception of Judas. That is in fulfillment of scripture(Psalm 41:9).



Here is the thing, we need His divine protection in this world. In Christ, we are not part of the world, neither were the disciples. Once Jesus is gone, the attention of Satan is going to be on stopping the work of the disciples. However, they will be empowered with the Holy Spirit which will be new for them as well.

The disciples had received hints in the past of the opposition they were facing in the unseen realm. This will result in persecution simply because they follow Jesus. This is why Jesus is interceding on behalf of His disciples and us as well. We are in enemy territory and Jesus knows that this is why He intercedes and prays for protection.

John 17:13–16

“But now I am coming to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. 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. I am not asking You to take them out of the world, but to keep them away from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.” (NASB 2020)

Jesus knows what is about to take place. His whole reason for coming in the first place is about to take place. He wants His disciples to be protected, but more than that, He wants them to share in His joy. Joy? He does know He is going to the cross, right? The writer of Hebrews talks about this.

Hebrews 12:1–2

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” (ESV)

“It is not difficult to trace an affinity between the joy of which our author speaks here and the joy to which Jesus himself makes repeated reference in the upper room discourses of the Fourth Gospel. He tells his disciples there of his desire that his joy may be in them, so that their joy may be complete (John 15:11; cf. 16:20, 21, 22, 24); and in his high-priestly prayer he asks the Father “that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves” (John 17:13). So here, “the joy set before him” is not something for himself alone, but something to be shared with those for whom he died as sacrifice and lives as high priest. (Bruce 1990, 339)

Part of the joy is in the gift Jesus has given to His disciples, God’s word.

The joy Jesus wants us to have, the joy of having God’s word, the joy of being forgiven, the joy of eternal life, the joy of a changed life will be experienced even in the middle of hostility from the world. Again, we are not of this world. When we come to Christ, we are justified, made right with God through Jesus Christ, then He begins to sanctify us, that is a present activity, and it means we are becoming holy, more and more like Jesus. As that happens, we become more and more alien to the world which really does not understand anything about what has taken place. Eventually, either through death or the rapture, we will be glorified. Totally freed from the sin nature.

John 17:17–22

“Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. Just as You sent Me into the world, I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, so that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. I am not asking on behalf of these alone, but also for those who believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one; just as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. “The glory which You have given Me I also have given to them, so that they may be one, just as We are one;” (NASB 2020)

Jesus continues to intercede on behalf of His disciples.



Right here is the key to being holy. If you have desired to be holy and sought for the secret to it, Jesus lays it out for us right here. How are we made holy? By the word of God. That is the key to sanctification and becoming more like Jesus, the key to becoming holy. We must live in His word.

Why do we study the Bible the way we do here at Calvary? Because we desire to wash in the water of the word (Ephesians 5:26). That is how we become more like Jesus.

Here also, Jesus points out that His interceding is for more than His immediate disciples.

They are listening to Him and what He says in prayer is meant for them to hear. You see, they have a mission and there will be many many more who come to Christ simply because of their words.

The ministry of the disciples, which we still enjoy today every time we pick up and read the New Testament, is also what we are participating in.

Just as Jesus wanted His disciples to be one in Him, He has that same desire for us today. Because we work together in diversity; diversity of gifts, diversity of ministry, diversity of background and culture, but in unity at the same time in Christ, the world sees and believes.

Setting believers apart to growth in God's will is not as an end in itself, that they merely sit, soak and feel satisfied. The benefit is not in isolation, but in relation. As Jesus, submissive to God's Word, fulfilled the will of the Father who sent Him, Christ now sends His people into the world with this truth abiding in them. (Rosscup 2008, 1858)

Jesus is praying for all believers now. We see Him operating as the great intercessor on our behalf.

He prays that those who are His in the future, because of the word, they too become saved, grow in holiness and work in harmony to reach those who still have not heard.

John 17:22–26

“The glory which You have given Me I also have given to them, so that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and You loved them, just as You loved Me. Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” (NASB 2020)

Jesus wants us to experience the same oneness that He and the Father experience. As we serve the Lord together, each of us using the gifts and skills He has given us, we begin to experience that. I remember working one summer as a counselor/laborer at a Christian camp in the mountains of Southern California.

We came from all over and all various backgrounds, there were those who would only be there for a week but there were a group of us who were there all summer long. We all had different skills and different spiritual gifts but together we were there to reach young people for Jesus Christ and to see them grow in Him.

Because we were all heads down doing work towards the same goal, it didn't matter if this week, I worked in the kitchen, or the next week, worked out on the lake. At the end of the day, we prayed together and learned how lives were being changed because of the work we were doing. It was the toughest work I



have ever done and the most rewarding as well and I think it was because of the unity we had which Jesus is talking about here.

Jesus, who has already promised that He is coming back for us, goes further and petitions the Father to allow us, as believers, to be with Him so that we can see for ourselves His glory.

Jesus prayed that one day we would be with him in Heaven and behold his glory, and one day that is indeed going to happen. And when it does, he will say, "Welcome home!" We will arrive at the home we have always longed for, and we will find that we really have never wanted anything else. Christ's prayer asks literally that we will keep on beholding his glory, and his prayer will be answered. We will constantly behold his face and will become like him. (Hughes 1999, 412)

John 17:25–26

"Righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." (NASB 2020)

What Jesus desires of us, He talks to the Father about here. He wants His love to be manifested in each of us. As Christ's love becomes reality for us, it changes how we do life and that is His desire for each of us. With His love flowing through us, we live life satisfied. We are beholding His glory and allowing His glory to flow through us.

What has Jesus requested for us in this prayer?

- Preservation (v11).
- Joy, the fullness of the Spirit (v13).
- Deliverance from evil (v15).
- To be holy, set apart, sanctified (17).
- Unity (v21).
- Fellowship with Him (v24).
- Satisfaction (v24).

I don't know about you, but knowing that Jesus prayed for us before going to the cross and that He is praying for us right now interceding with the Father on our behalf, encourages me to continue on in faithfulness for Him.

But did you notice, here He is not praying for the world, but for those who believe. He died on the cross making it possible for anyone to be saved and once that decision is made, then all that He prayed for on our behalf, becomes yours as well.

If you don't know Him, why not get to know Him today? If you do know Him but have been straying a bit, come home.

Romans 3:21–24

"But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins." (NLT)



Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

ABC's of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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