

**The Word Became Flesh
(Week 51)
John 17:1-5
“The Real LORD’S Prayer”**

Introduction

“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life. John 3:14-15

Many people refer to Jesus’ model prayer given during The Sermon on The Mount (**Matthew 6:9-13**) as “The LORD’S Prayer”. This actually should not be the case. Jesus merely offered this prayer as a model for how *believers* should pray. It was intended as a guideline, to teach us the priorities of prayer. First, we must honor and worship our Heavenly Father, longing for His will in all things. And once we have established this as a priority, we then may proceed in asking Him to provide for our daily needs. Those needs not only include those that are physical in nature, ie. our daily bread, but also spiritual. For we need to be protected from the temptations of the evil one as much as we need physical nourishment. These guidelines have been set out for us in Christ’s model prayer.

The LORD’S prayer is an entirely different subject however. After Jesus taught His disciples their final lesson before He went to the cross, Jesus lifted His eyes to heaven to pray in preparation for the severe time of trial that He was soon to face. Namely, His brutal execution at the hands of wicked men. He knew that His “hour” had come, and He prayed to His Father for the spiritual and physical endurance needed to fulfill His earthly mission. It is the longest and best prayer ever offered in all of Scripture.

From this wondrous “LORD’S prayer”, we are given a look into the inner workings of The Holy Trinity itself, as we see The Son communing with His Father in a very personal and intimate way. The prayer is simplistic, yet its depth is limitless. Anyone can read the prayer in three minutes or less, but its power will leave a lasting impression. As Christ pours out the desires of His heart to His Father, we can see exactly what He was thinking as He went to the cross to die for us. And this alone should serve as a powerful conviction to motivate us to live a life that honors His sacrifice.

I also love how this prayer is both short and to the point. So many these days, and possibly throughout ages past, have felt that God desires from His children showy, lengthy, and artfully crafted orations that are more awe inspiring to men than anything else. But what God longs for is genuine heartfelt dialog from His children. Much like a child speaking to its father. They aren’t trying to impress. They simply have a desire to communicate with the one that they love; to share with Him their joys and their concerns. If you have ever witnessed a child lovingly communicating with its daddy, then you have witnessed a perfect example of prayer.

Prayer is intended to be such a personal and intimate encounter with God, that Christ actually commands us to do most of our praying in a secret place.

“Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father Who is in secret. And your Father Who sees in secret will reward you. Matthew 6:5-6

This of course does not mean that we should never pray in public, but it does mean that we are to pray to our Heavenly Father and not be concerned for others around us who may be evaluating our prayers. For it is only God’s opinion that matters.

As we study the LORD’S prayer on the night before He went to the cross, it can be divided into three sections, which we will study in great detail in the coming weeks. Today we will analyze the first portion in which Jesus prays for Himself. His request is that His Father will glorify Him, so that He may in turn **Honor (glorify) The Father**. For by this He will offer eternal life so that people may **Know The Father**. And finally, He expresses His longing to return to His former glory and be **With The Father**.

To Honor The Father (vs. 1-2)

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, since You gave Him authority over all people, so that He may give eternal life to everyone You have given Him." **John 17:1-2**

First of all, let me start by saying that there is absolutely nothing wrong with praying for yourself. Jesus begins this three part prayer by praying for Himself. In the second and third portions of the prayer, He prays for His disciples and for those who will come to believe in Him through their message, respectively. But He began by praying for Himself. He asked His Father to glorify Him, so that He in turn could glorify His Father. It is a selfless prayer. For Christ is simply asking His Father for the means by which He can bring honor to Him. This has to do with The Father's overall plan. For in order for God The Father to receive glory, Jesus The Son, must first be lifted up.

"As for Me, if I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to Myself." **John 12:32**

The only way to The Father is through The Son. ***He is The Way, The Truth and The Life, and no one comes to The Father except through Jesus.*** So in order for The Father to be glorified (honored), then The Son *must* be honored first.

At this point, as He prayed this prayer, Jesus knew that His "hour" of obedience had come. And yet, even His own disciples had not truly *seen* Him. They knew that He came from God, but they still were not able to fully recognize His deity (***John 14:8-10***). But Jesus knew that after His death and resurrection, and the coming of The Holy Spirit, the eyes of the disciples would be opened.

"In a little while, you will no longer see me: again in a little while, you will SEE Me." **John 16:16** (emphasis added)

So when Jesus asked His Father to "glorify Him", it was not a selfish request. It was according to The Father's plan that The Son be glorified, so that He could in turn glorify The Father. Now it would be wrong for any of us to pray this prayer. We are not to be glorified in ourselves. We are to glorify Christ, so that The Father may be glorified. So our prayer should be, "let my life bring glory to Jesus." Do you remember what The Spirit's prime directive is in us?

"When The Counselor comes, The One I will send to you from The Father — The Spirit of truth Who proceeds from The Father — He will testify about Me. You also will testify, because you have been with Me from the beginning." **John 15:26-27**

But the "spirit" of Christ's prayer should apply to us as well. That we should pray for God to lead us and use us in such a way that brings glory to Christ, which in turn honors our heavenly Father. This is what it means to pray "In Jesus Name". So let us look to Christ's example, so that our prayers are for a life that honors God.

The second thing we should notice from this passage is that Christ has been given ***"authority over all people"***. The word in The Greek for "people" is actually "sarx" meaning "flesh". Although Christ has indeed been granted authority over all living things by God Himself, in this particular instance, the word is primarily referring to all mankind. Jesus will have the final say as to who belongs to Him and who does not. He is the judge of mankind.

Also, He points out that everyone who has come to Him is actually a gift from His Father (***vs. 2***). Did you realize that if you belong to Jesus, that you were a gift to Him from God? Listen to the words of Christ Himself.

“No one can come to Me unless The Father Who sent Me draws him, and I will raise Him up on the last day.” **John 6:44**

Now, there have been countless arguments as to how this sovereign election actually works. But as for me, I believe that the process is so far above that of which the human mind can comprehend that it is not worth arguing about. But know this, The Scriptures plainly teach that all those who come to Christ have been sovereignly chosen by God Himself. And The Scriptures also teach that those who are chosen must respond in faith. So free will is also involved in this process. How to reconcile these two truths is far beyond my ability, so I simply accept by faith that God knows exactly how and what He is doing in regards to such deep doctrinal truths.

Also, we can better understand the response of Christ to any who will come to Him based on this reality.

“Everyone The Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him Who sent Me. This is the will of Him Who sent Me: that I should lose none of those He has given Me but should raise them up on the last day.”

John 6:37-39

Did you catch that!? Jesus will not refuse anyone that God sends to Him. For to do so would be to reject a gift from His Father! He will never do such a thing. So no matter what you have done, no matter how lowly you think of yourself, if you have been drawn to receive Christ, then He will never reject you, for you are a gift from His very own Father. And as such, He will keep you safe in Him so that your salvation will be secure, and you have the guarantee of everlasting life. This is how The Son is glorified, so that He may in turn glorify The Father. Now that my friends is something to shout about!

To Know The Father (vs. 3)

This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and the One You have sent — Jesus Christ. **John 17:3**

Every soul has been designed by God to live forever. They will either live in hell for all eternity, or they will live in heaven with The One Who created them. And the determining reality comes down to whether we choose to believe in Christ or whether we reject Him. What Jesus defines as “eternal life” is the life that comes from believing in Him. Those who place their faith in Jesus Christ will be reconciled by Him to The Father and will come to know The Father. This is Christ’s definition of everlasting life: To know God personally.

There are many people who claim to believe in God. Many will even say that they pray to Him. But if you are not in Christ Jesus, you can never *know* God. Jesus is the only means by which we can have an intimate relationship with The Father. Just as we have learned earlier in the study. Jesus is the veil by which we can enter into the holy of holies (**Hebrews 10:20**). You do not come to know God by being good or living a moral life. You cannot come to God even by prayer and fasting. You may only have an intimate relationship with God The Father by coming to Him through God The Son. Period. This may, to some, seem dogmatic. But truth is by its very definition, dogmatic. Do not let the false teachers deceive you. Jesus is the only way to know God.

The very mission of Christ coming to earth was to die upon the cross to pay for our sins, so that we may be reconciled to God. God The Father literally took our sins and placed them upon His Son. So although He never sinned, He was punished as if He had committed all of our sins combined. And whosoever will place their faith in The Son shall be presented in Him to God The Father as spotless, as if we had lived the sinless life of Christ! Christ put on the filthy rages of our unrighteousness, so that we could be clothed in *His* righteousness. The Prophet Zechariah offered a foreshadowing of this spiritual reality, when He spoke of a High Priest named Joshua.

"The He showed me the high priest Joshua, standing before the angel of The LORD, with Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. The LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! May The LORD Who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Isn't this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?"

Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel of The LORD. So the angel of The LORD spoke to those standing before Him, "Take off his filthy clothes!" Then He said to him, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with festive robes."

Then I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So a clean turban was placed on his head, and they clothed him in garments while the angel of The LORD was standing nearby.

Then the angel of The LORD charged Joshua, "This is what The LORD of Armies says: If you walk in my ways and keep My mandates, you will both rule My house and take care of My courts; I will also grant you access among these who are standing here. Listen, High Priest Joshua, you and your colleagues sitting before you; indeed, these men are a sign that I am about to bring My Servant, The Branch. Notice the stone I have set before Joshua; on that one stone are seven eyes. I will engrave an inscription on it — 'this is the declaration of The LORD of Armies'— and I will take away the iniquity of this land in a single day." **Zachariah 3:1-9**

Christ died to exchange His righteousness for ours. In Him, we have forgiveness and life everlasting.

To Be With The Father (vs. 4-5)

I have glorified you on the earth by completing the work you gave me to do. Now, Father, glorify me in your presence with that glory I had with you before the world existed. **John 17:4-5**

Many false *Bible* teachers have tried to claim that Christ set aside His deity when He came to earth. **He did not.** He was always, and shall always be, God. What He did lay aside was His glory (**Philippians 2**). It was the glory that He had with The Father that was rightfully His. He laid it aside to live as a man upon this earth in order to carry out the will His Father. He came as a man to die for the sins of mankind. And by His obedience even to death upon a cross, He glorified The Father.

I love the fact that in His prayer, Jesus speaks of this obedience as though it had already been fully completed! He viewed His mission as completed even though He wouldn't actually be going to the cross until the next day. But this is a testimony to The Son's perfect love for The Father. There was never any doubt that He would submit Himself to His Father's will. It was always the redemptive plan of God for Christ to die, and Christ would see to it that the plan was carried out. The end result was always guaranteed. Jesus, The Lamb of God, was slain before the foundation of the world (**Revelation 13:8**).

In the final portion of Jesus' prayer for Himself, He longs to return to The Father's side and once again take up the glory that was rightfully His. On this earth He is despised and rejected, but in heaven He is worshipped and adored. Oh what He was willing to give up in order to save us! He laid aside all the glory and accolades of heaven in order to be hated and crucified. And He did this in order to demonstrate The Father's great love for us. Is it any wonder that He prayed on that fateful night:

"Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, so that The Son may glorify You." **John 17:1b**

And this is what He most certainly has done.

So let all those who believe and have everlasting life say... TRUTH!!!