



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

The Gospel of John Sermon Series
Supports Session 8: I Pray

Sermon Title: "Lessons from the Lord's Prayer" (John 17:13-26)

Connection to Session 8

Jesus prayed for all believers to be unified. This unity of purpose would be grounded in each believer's relationship with the Lord and serve to display God's glory for all to see.

Introduction/Opening

When people hear the phrase *The Lord's Prayer*, they are likely to immediately call to mind this phrase: "Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy" (Matthew 6:9). Perhaps a better description of this prayer is the Model Prayer or the Disciple's Prayer. In the context of Matthew, Jesus is not praying but rather giving guidelines for His people in prayer. Jesus could not have prayed the Model Prayer because it refers to one being forgiven, and He never committed a sin for which He needed forgiveness. The Bible notes this in Hebrews 4:15: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin." It is also true that we could not express the prayer recorded in John 17. That is truly the Lord's prayer. Jesus would soon face arrest and a trial before His eventual crucifixion. He would however rise from death three days later. Knowing that context, for what did the Lord Jesus pray in verses 13-26?

Outline

1. Jesus Prayed for His Followers to Experience Spiritual Joy (v. 13)
 - a. Jesus prayed for His disciples to "have my joy completed in them" (v. 13). Jesus prayed for His followers to have not just any joy but His joy completed in them. He would be leaving them and returning to the Father.
2. Jesus Prayed for His Followers to Experience Spiritual Protection (vv. 14-15)
 - a. The experience of knowing a complete joy was not yet a reality for the disciples. So Jesus shifted back to another present reality and noted three truths.
 - b. Truth number one: Jesus had given the disciples God's "word" (v. 14). This message from the Father through Jesus and applied by the Holy Spirit filled them with hope and joy. The verb is in the perfect tense and signifies the abiding nature of the gift of the word.
 - c. Truth number two: They would face opposition because "the world hated them" (v. 14). This was true for the early disciples, and it is equally true of disciples now. The term *world* in this context refers to the world system under the power and influence of the evil one. Believers run a course in opposition to the world's standards, spirit, and message. It

is not being different just to be different nor is it being different in the sense of being strange. The believer, the modern-day disciple, is to model Jesus. God's goal for believers is to be transformed into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29).

- d. Truth number three: They would need protection "from the evil one" (v. 15). Jesus did not pray for the Father to send a rescue mission and evacuate the disciples from the antagonistic culture in which they lived. He asked the Father to protect them in it. Satan is the archenemy of God and the people of God, and believers need protection from him. Satan is like a roaring lion determined to bring about the destruction of God's work and God's people.

3. Jesus Prayed for His Followers to Experience Spiritual Separation (vv. 16-17)

- a. Jesus reiterated the fact that believers are not "of the world" (v. 16). So He prayed for the disciples to be sanctified. Sanctification is "To consecrate or set apart persons or things to God."¹ The goal is for believers to live in accordance with the truth. The foundation for holiness is the Word of God. Sanctification is not a mere human accomplishment. God works through the Word to set His people apart from the world. God's people are to be holy because He is holy (Leviticus 19:2).

4. Jesus Prayed for His Followers to Experience Spiritual Ministry (vv. 18-19)

- a. Verse 18 indicates Jesus's primary purpose of His prayer for the disciples: Jesus was preparing them for ministry. While it is true that disciples are aliens in a world antagonistic to the Gospel and the church, Jesus did not desire for His people to abandon the world system to the devil. Disciples cannot be taken out of the world because people need to hear the message of the gospel. There is only one message that can set people free, restore broken lives, and mend fractured homes. It is the message of redemption in Christ. In verse 19, Jesus confirms His own mission. In this statement, Jesus is committing Himself to the will of the Father and to the cross.

5. Jesus Prayed for His Followers to Experience Spiritual Unity (vv. 20-26)

- a. This section of Jesus's prayer has a forward focus in that it moves beyond the disciples who were with Jesus to those who would hear and believe the disciples' message. The focus in these verses is on spiritual unity.
- b. The foundation for oneness (vv. 20-21): Jesus prayed "May they all be one" (v. 21). His desire was unity. He also prayed His followers would "be in us" (v. 21). Unity is built on each believer's relationship with the Triune God. When a person is redeemed, he or she moves into a relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- c. The expression of oneness (v. 22): The expression of this oneness, or unity, is the glory of God shared with the disciples. This is glory reflected from the Godhead and not something inherent in His followers.
- d. The framework of oneness (v. 23): The framework of unity is the love of the Father for the disciples and the love of the Father for the Son within the Trinity. This is love shown in giving the Son and illustrated in the lives of disciples loving one another (John 3:16; 13:34-35).
- e. The completion of oneness (v. 24): Final and complete unity of all disciples will happen when all disciples reach heaven and enjoy in fullness the presence and glory of God. This

1. Robertson, *The Fourth Gospel*, 279.

- prayer includes not only the immediate disciples, but also all the elect—those who were “given” by the Father (v. 24). The will of Jesus and the will of the Father are identical.
- f. The assurance of oneness (vv. 25-26). The assurance of oneness rests in knowing God. The world does not know the Father, but the Son does. Because the Son knows the Father, the disciples also know the Father through the Son. The disciples know the Father through the Son and are sent as was the Son with the message of redemption. The Son continues to make known the Father through the disciples.

Conclusion

The prayer of Jesus in John 17 is an amazing example of love. The love of the Father for the Son, the love of the Son for the Father, and the love of the Son and the Father for the disciples is clear and powerful. As believers, striving for unity in love is a worthy goal. It is important to understand that such unity cannot be accomplished apart from the power and presence of Jesus, nor without His persistent intercession for His people (Hebrews 7:25). As pilgrims passing through this world of sin, unity is a great form of witness. Believers are the living advertisement for Jesus and His mission of redemption.

Dr. Neil Gant is a native of Memphis and now lives in East Tennessee where he has served as Pastor of the Oakwood Baptist Church in Knoxville since March of 2019. He has served in pastoral ministry for more than forty-one years. He has been married to the former Lea Gillespie for more than forty-one years, and they have one adult daughter, Anna. He received his Bachelor of Arts from Blue Mountain College and both his Master of Divinity and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary.

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