

Humanity Redeemed

Week 3 – The Upper Room

John 17

The High Priestly prayer of our Lord has been described as “perhaps the most sacred passage in the four gospels” (*The Message of John* by Bruce Milne, Logos).

Jesus was a man of prayer. The Gospels mention that He frequently pulled away by Himself for prayer. Jesus wraps up His discourse with this prayer for His disciples. Closing His teaching time with prayer and seeking the Lord to fulfill His will in the lives of the hearers should be emulated by His followers. Nowhere else are the specific prayers of our Lord recorded in such detail. The fact that the Holy Spirit has given us such insight into this prayer, speaks of its power and significance.

“While prayer never can be measured by mere quantity, it is generally true of the western church today that there is simply not nearly enough prayer. The exposition of the Word of God and prayer belong together. It is in prayer, costly, sustained and prevailing, that the Word of God is released through teaching and preaching. Prayer is the price of power, and the church of Jesus Christ is not likely to recover its lost authority until this basic biblical truth is recovered” (*The Message of John* by Bruce Milne, Logos).

The prayer is naturally divided into three sections:

I. Jesus’ Relationship with the Father (John 17:1-5)

A. We have been given to the Son by the Father.

B. We have been given eternal life.

“God is clothed in splendour in the eyes of those who perceive what has been achieved by God himself in the cross, resurrection and exaltation of his Son. To see God’s glory, to be given eternal life—these are parallel, and, lest the reader miss the point, the two themes are drawn together in v. 3. Eternal life turns on nothing more and nothing less than knowledge of the true God. **Eternal life is not so much everlasting life as personal knowledge of the Everlasting One**” (D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, Logos, emphasis mine).

C. Jesus accomplished the will of the Father.
Philippians 2:5-8

D. Jesus prays for a restoration of the glory He experienced “before the world was” (v. 5).

II. Jesus Prays for His Disciples (John 17:6-19)

A. They would manifest His Name.

- B. They kept His Word.
- C. Keep them in Your Name.
- D. That they would be unified in the Trinity.

Because we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we have been included in the Trinitarian relationship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all” (2 Corinthians 13:14).

The order is significant in this verse. The grace of Jesus precedes our ability to grasp and experience the Love of God which opens the door to the fellowship we have in the “oneness” granted through the Holy Spirit.

- E. That they may have joy made full.

“It was God’s deed, God in action to take the tragic wrongness of this wayward, warring world upon His own heart. God defeating the principalities and powers of darkness at the very point of their proudest triumph, and shattering the shackles of their tyranny, to set the prisoners free. And so the beam that shines from the cross, the very light which pierces and condemns, and wrecks my self-defenses, heals also and blesses and gives life; and the shame of the despairing becomes the joy of the reconciled” (*The Strong Name*, by James Stewart, p. 22-23).

- F. Keep them from the evil one.
- G. Sanctify them in the Truth.

His requests for the disciples are all about relationship! **“Sin is about wounding a relationship not about breaking a rule”** (Grace Wade as quoted by Rachel Dawson in *These Twelve Stones*).

III. Jesus Prays for Us (John 17:20-26)

“The gifts we exercise, the prayers we offer, the proclamation we share, the acts of compassion and mercy we endeavour, all flow from this primal moment in the shadow of Calvary as Jesus in prayer presents the mission of the church to the Father” (*The Message of John* by Bruce Milne, Logos).

- A. We are those who believe through their Word.
- B. We may be One in the trinitarian relationship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

“Without the work of the Spirit in our hearts, even Jesus is a great unknown. ‘He shall receive of Mine,’ said Jesus, ‘and shall shew it unto you’ – He shall convince you of My truth He shall authenticate to you My power and My divinity. He shall make My living presence the most intimate and unchallengeable reality of your life” (James Stewart, *The Strong Name*, p. 259).

- C. That the world may believe.
- D. That we may be perfected in unity.
- E. That the world may know that He loves us.
- F. That we may be with Him.

“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” (John 17:26).

The division in the church today is a direct violation of John 17. The only way we can be perfect or mature in unity is to follow the example of Christ – “have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:5-9).

As His disciples were arguing over who was the greatest, Jesus was girding Himself with a towel and washing their dirty feet. Most of the arguments on social media today are all about whose theology is right (thus, who is the greatest) and how those who don't agree are heretical. If we agree on the gospel, that Jesus Christ is the only way to God, that He was born of a virgin and lived a sinless life, dying in our place on that cross - there are a host of other things that can be considered secondary issues.

What does the world know about the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ because of your life?

Are you obeying the Greatest Command? What is the proof?

“The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, 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 loved them, even as you have loved Me” (John 17:22-23).