



SCRIPTURE:

John 17:1-5

SERMON:

I was in a conversation with a friend recently over lunch and the topic turned to prayer. Why do we struggle so much with it? Why do our hearts lag and distractions reign? Why do we read about people throughout church history that had vibrant, stunning prayer lives that seem foreign to us?

One answer I gave was two-fold: 1. Prayer is conversation with the invisible God that often requires waiting and watching...which goes against our lived experience in the flesh with tangible, material things always right in front of us, begging for our attention. 2. We are easily distracted and want quick resolutions. We don't wait for much anymore. So there are a lot of things that naturally pull at us.

Yet we all know we need to pray. And at some level, we all want to be better at praying. We know there is something mysterious and powerful in real, authentic praying.

How real is it? Even our Lord prayed regularly. Not only did Jesus pray, but He prayed because He needed it, not just to model it for us. In fact, Jesus gives us an example and outline of prayer in Matthew 6 and Luke 11. But every other instance we have is Jesus actually praying. Most of the time we don't get the content of those prayers, but we do get the context of them. Before every major event in his life, we find Jesus praying. After His baptism and before His public ministry begins, He goes to the wilderness to pray. Before choosing the 12, he prayed. Before asking the disciples who the people say he is, he prayed. Before His transfiguration on the mountain, he went away to pray. Before His arrest, He goes to Gethsemane to pray. And we see in our text today, before the events of His arrest, death, resurrection, and ascension, He prays.

Our text today is the beginning of the longest recorded prayer of Jesus in Scripture. In fact, it would be fairer to call John 17 "The Lord's Prayer" We see the importance of prayer as our Savior calls upon the Father. And through the prayer, we learn a lot about our Lord.

Scripture Exegesis: John 17:1-5

The last time we were in John, we saw that Jesus told His disciples He was going away, and they could not go where He was going. He told them tribulation was coming. And He told them the Spirit would be sent to bring remembrance of His teaching to them. And while they would be sorrowful, their sorrow would be turned to joy. We pick up now on the continuation of this dialogue that now becomes a prayer.

vs 1 -- When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you,

After his teaching on the former things, he lifted his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father." So we know He is now going from talking to His disciples to addressing His Father in Heaven. He is talking to God. Again, Jesus addressed God on more intimate terms than had ever been heard before. Not as a friend (like Moses or David), but as Father. As One.

The first thing Jesus says is "the hour has come." This is huge. Throughout John's Gospel and other Gospels, we continuously hear Jesus or the authors say, "His hour had not yet come" or "My hour has not yet come." What "hour" are we referring to here? This is His death as a sacrificial atonement for sinners.

This is a **PURPOSEFUL** death to save sinners. And it is a **PLANNED** death to accomplish the plan redemption. The reason there was a designated hour is that there was a preordained plan.

Acts 2:22-23 -- "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

Acts 4:27-28 -- for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

Notice that the language in these Acts passages, from the apostles, both in their preaching and praying, matches Jesus' prayer when Jesus talks about His "hour" arriving. There was an appointed time, determined and set, before the world began, where the Son would come into the world and pay for sins at the hands of the Roman Empire on a

hill called Calvary. Notice that Jesus' appointed hour by the plan of God doesn't lead to resigned fatalism, but to prayer. We see this often in Scripture. God's sovereignty functions as an incentive to prayer, not a disincentive.

We're at the hour. No more waiting. No more "the hour hasn't come." It's time. Jesus says, "Glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you." There is glory that Jesus receives in fulfilling this task and role He was sent to accomplish. In fulfilling His "hour," He prays for the Father to glorify the Son, so that in achieving the work He was sent to do, the Father would get glory too. If this sounds confusing, it isn't that difficult once you understand that the glory of the Son brings glory to the Father too.

Philippians 2:9-11 -- Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Notice, A belief in God's sovereign plan and prayer are not incompatible with one another.

Jesus shows us the way here. He knew the hour and purpose of His coming. He knew that His death would bring Him glory and glory to the Father, yet He prays for both. He knew He would return to Heaven and to His former glory, yet He prayed for it. Praying for what God promises or praying for His providential plan to come to pass isn't pointless.

Many things do not come about unless we pray. Yet the prayer is a means for the coming of the thing itself, and a means for the strength and help we need to endure it. This is all a part of God's good plan.

2 Corinthians 1:11 – You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

“By” and “through” prayer. Our prayers matter. They are doing something.

vs 2 -- since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.

"Since" is better translated as "just as." Just as "you" (Father) have given him (Jesus) authority over all flesh (all humanity). We've seen this declaration of all authority in other places too. All authority belonged to Jesus.

Take comfort in this fact: Jesus has authority over all flesh.

What is your comfort in this chaotic and crazy life? Is it not that Christ rules and reigns over all things? Jesus sits enthroned as king over the world. This doesn't mean that everyone acknowledges Him or obeys Him, but it doesn't make Him any less king.

He wields all power and authority. Find comfort today in knowing Christ reigns. It isn't over a little compartment of the heart. He isn't the Lord over the closet space we set aside for Him. He is truly the King of kings and Lord of lords. That's why the Bible calls Him such. Rest assured under His kingship. Find peace in the chaos. He is working all things according to His plan. And one Day the King is scheduled to return.

And with this authority, he gives eternal life (through His sacrificial death) to all whom you (Father) have given him (the Son). Notice the "all" doesn't mean every person in the world, but those specifically "given him." Every single one of those given him, He gives eternal life.

Recognizing that Jesus understood there were sheep that were His, that the Father had given Him, explains why we don't read about Jesus aggressively recruiting followers with overwhelming power, manipulation, tricks, or rhetoric. No, humbly acknowledges that nobody comes to Him unless the Father draws Him and nobody comes unless the Father gives them to Jesus. This explains Jesus' words to Paul in Acts 18 as he instructs Paul to go into Corinth.

Acts 18:10 -- for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people."

Jesus has many in the city. "Yeah, but the gospel hasn't even gone there yet." Right, but that's why Jesus has Paul there to preach, and when he preaches, His people will come. God has a people. Elijah thought he alone was the only faithful servant of YHWH in Israel under the wickedness of Ahab and Jezebel. But he was wrong. God tells Elijah that He has kept a remnant from bowing the knee to Baal (1 Kings 19:18; Romans 11:4). He has protected a remnant of 7,000.

Why would this be such an encouragement to believers then, and now? Because Jesus' authorization to give eternal life to his own would encourage those whose faith was challenged by opponents who claimed to speak for God apart from Jesus. Jesus gives eternal life to all the Father has given Him. They will lack nothing in time or eternity.

Who are these people? Oh, that is always the million dollar question and the one that trips up so many. But the answer is simple: **They are those who believe on Jesus and come to Jesus.**

Marcus Rainsford -- *"I cannot read the Book of Life to see if my name be there; but I can read my name in this Book of God, which is the copy of the Book of Life, and I can know assuredly for the comfort of my own soul that my name is written in the Book of Life above. I have come to Christ, I have believed on Christ; this is the description of those whom the Father has given to Him."*

Notice, Eternal life is given, not earned.

Jesus gives those the Father has given Him eternal life. It is given, not earned. It isn't given to those who do not want it or seek it. But it isn't given forcibly and against the desire of the receiver. God gives eternal life. We do not achieve it, unlock it, earn it, or merit it. It is given freely and graciously by God. It is received by us joyfully, obediently, and eagerly, because He draws us to Himself.

vs 3 -- *And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*

Jesus said He came to give eternal life to all whom the Father had given Him. What is this eternal life that He gives them? Jesus answers here? It's that they (those given) know you (the Father) the only true God, and Jesus Christ (know him) whom you have sent. This implies way more than simply "knowing about." The "knowing" here is intimate knowledge. Some of you guys know me from a distance, but my wife and children "know" me. Eternal life is "knowing" God. This is about relationship and fellowship.

Many of us in churches stop at knowing about God. We come to church to "learn more about God." That may be a byproduct, but that is not the goal. The goal is to know Him in His glory and splendor. The goal is to enjoy Him as we see Him for who truly is and all He has done. The goal is to meet with Him and so see Him in His glory that our hearts adore Him and our mouths can help but praise Him.

Jesus comes to give eternal life, which is a restoration of the relationship and knowing of God available to mankind in Eden prior to the fall.

vs 4-5 -- 4 I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

Jesus states that he has glorified the Father on earth with the work that He gave Him to do. Now, there are two ways to understand this. First, is to see it as everything up until this point. Second, is to see it as encompassing everything, including the death and resurrection coming in the next few days. It is actually the second interpretation that is most likely. We know this because the petition in verse 5 is for the Father to glorify Jesus in His own presence. So Jesus assumes the work is done, though there it is not technically done.

Notice, we should Glorify God in your work and obedience.

Jesus says He glorified His Father by doing the work He gave Him to do. This is how we bring God glory too. Be faithful to honor God and live for Him in all you do, at school, in your job, in your family. God gets glory when every sphere and aspect of our lives is lived for His glory.

And His prayer focuses now on restoring His previous glory before the incarnation. This is huge. What Jesus is praying for is a return to the glory previously laid aside when He left Heaven, came to earth and took on flesh. There was an eternal glory the Son had. The Second Person of the Trinity was robed in matchless glory as the eternal Son of God. But when He laid aside His glory and took on flesh, He limited His glory. His prayer is now restoration to His previous glory, but it won't be just in Spirit form as before, but in His resurrected and glorified body. The body won't stay in a grave...it will ascend to Heaven and return to the glory previously shared with the Father and the Spirit.

To be clear, we've talked about this before, but who talks like this? If Jesus isn't every bit of who He says He is, then He is crazy for talking like this. Talking about returning to His previous glory that He shared before the world was made is nonsense if He is just a man like us. But if He is the Eternal Son of God who became flesh, the Word who became flesh, then it makes sense for Him to talk like this. But He is certainly not just a good

teacher or moral philosopher. As C.S. Lewis said, he is either a liar, lunatic, or Lord. He hasn't given us permission to have Him any other way.

He is enthroned. And He retains the glory He had before the world began.

In Exodus 33, Moses appeals to YHWH, "please, show me your glory." And the LORD tells Him, you can't see it. I can't show it to you, or you'll die. You can't see the fullness of My glory.

The idea of Jesus' authority over all flesh and the return to His preincarnate glory is connected. You see, after His death and resurrection, Jesus ascends to Heaven and is enthroned in glory. He sits as the world's rightful King. He has all glory. This is why Paul says in 1 Timothy 1's doxology:

1 Timothy 1:17 – *"To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."*

King Jesus is filled with glory that He had before the ages began. This is why His return is going to be a cause for rejoicing for some, and terror for others. Because now the One Moses was told He could not see and live is going to be visible in full splendor.

1 John 2:28 -- *And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.*

To shrink away is to hide away in shame. Why would people shrink at His coming? Because they will see the glory of the King of kings and know they did not live for Him.

Revelation 19:11-16 -- *Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.*

Psalm 24 repeatedly speaks of the King of Glory and asks, “Who is this King of Glory?” The answer is in verse 10, “The LORD of hosts; he is the King of glory.” In the Gospels we learn that the name of the King is Jesus. All hail King Jesus. The King of Glory. Follow Him. Imitate Him. Call upon Him. Trust Him.

REVIEW:

- ❖ What hour is Jesus referring to in verse 1? Why would Jesus pray to God if this hour had already been appointed?
- ❖ What does it mean that Jesus gives eternal life to all whom God the Father had given Him?
- ❖ What is the eternal life that Jesus gives in verse 3? What was the work that Jesus accomplished in verse 4?
- ❖ What glory is Jesus referring to in verse 5?

REFLECT:

- ❖ How often do you pray?
- ❖ How would you rate your prayer life on a scale of 1 (the best) to 5 (the worst)?

RESPOND:

- ❖ How should these verses inspire us to spend more time in prayer?
- ❖ How can you glorify God in your work and obedience?

MEDITATE:

- ❖ John 17:3 - *And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*

MEMORIZE:

- ❖ 1 Timothy 1:17 – *“To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”*

PRAYER FOCUS:

- ❖ Pastor - **Larry Davis**
- ❖ Ministries - Student Ministry
- ❖ NAMB Church Planter - **Simon Sim** - Lynn, MA - Above The Hills Church
- ❖ Unreached People Group (UPG): **Bathari in Oman**
- ❖ Population: 300
- ❖ Christian: 0.0%
- ❖ Evangelical: 0.0%
- ❖ Primary Religion: Islam
- ❖ Primary Language: Arabic (Omani Spoken)