

Prayer: Communicating with The Father Series: 7

The High-Priestly Prayer of Jesus

John 17

This whole chapter is the prayer of Jesus, this is what we really should call the Lord's Prayer.

It is His High-Priestly Intercessory prayer. Jesus is our great High Priest (Hebrews 4.14-16).

It was customary for the High Priest just prior to the Day of Atonement to perform certain acts, which are also evident in the life of Jesus. Jesus was about to offer Himself as the sacrifice for the Atonement of the sins of the world.

The High Priest would perform certain acts:

- Wash himself and put on clean linen garments. (John 13.4-14)
- Offer the sacrifices for the sins of himself and all the people (Mark 14.34-36)
- Pray a prayer of consecration in which he prayed for himself, for the sons of Aaron, and for all the people. (John 17)
- Send the scapegoat into the wilderness (John 19.17-18,30)

One of the key words of Jesus in this prayer is glorify. The definition of this word is 'to impart glory to something, to clothe with splendour, to extol, magnify or hold in honour'

The Structure of the Prayer

1. He prays for himself (John 17.1-5).
 - Jesus addresses the prayer to His Father, He had a close intimate relationship with His Father. We cannot truly pray in faith unless we know who we are praying to. Eg. We need to know God as provider if we are asking for some needs.
 - "Glorify Thy Son" (1) – He asks for God's grace to accomplish His mission
 - "Glorify Thou Me" (5) – He asks that He might return to the place that He shared with the Father.
2. He prays for those that are his.
 - He does not pray for the world but for those that the Father had given Him from out of the world (John 17.9).
 - Then He prays for those who would come to believe in Him through the words of His disciples (John 17.20).

[a.] That they might be kept (**John 17.11-16**).

- from the world (**v11-14**)
 - The Father had given them to Him from out of the world – they had been brought out of the world's system, and while with them He kept them. Now that Jesus was departing to be with His Father, He prays that they might be kept from the world.
 - through the name -
 - through the word -
- from the evil one (**v15-16**)
 - 1 John 5.19 says 'the whole world lies *under the sway of the wicked one*' – Jesus didn't pray that we would be taken out of the world but that by the word of God we would be kept out the sway of the evil one.

[b.] That they might be sanctified (**John 17.17-19**).

- The truth of God's word is what sanctifies us.
- Sanctify means 'to purify or make holy, to be separate'.
- It is by the Word of God that we are kept separate from the world.

[c.] That they might be united (**John 17:11** and **John 17:20-23**).

- through their love and unity that the world may also believe
- that those who believe in Him will have a close relationship with the Father

[d.] That they might be glorified (**John 17:24-26**).

- to be with Him in heaven and to behold and share His glory

Lessons from the Prayer of Jesus

- It was a prayer after a sermon; when he had spoken from God to them, he turned to speak to God for them. Those we preach, witness, speak to we must pray for.
- It was a prayer after Jesus and his disciples had eaten the passover and the Lord's supper together, and he had given them a suitable exhortation, he closed the solemnity with this prayer.
- It was a family-prayer. Christ's disciples were his family, and He prayed for them and with them. We too should pray for our families
- It was a parting prayer. When we and our friends are parting, it is good to part with prayer.
- It was a prayer that was a preface to his sacrifice, we should pray when we bring our sacrifices, offerings.