



When Jesus Prayed for You

Message Notes, October 23, 2016

John 17

In John 17, Jesus is transitioning from an intimate time with his beloved 12 towards his betrayal into the hands of the religious Pharisees and their soldiers. His last attention, before his arrest, is to pray to His loving Father, for the glory of “his hour come,” for his beloved 12 disciples, and for all of us who follow him in their wake – for you and me.

1. Jesus prays (briefly) for himself:

- We see the glorious intimacy he shares with his Father. We feel his devotion to see Father’s mission through to completion, and we sense his longing for home – for his heavenly reunion with his Father.
- We hear him define and declare the true nature of eternal life – “that they might know you, the one true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (vs 3). Eternal life is not so much a duration of time (though it is unending); it is a quality of life born out of a personal relationship with God (and Jesus, by his Spirit). It is an intimate relationship where we know our triune God and are deeply known (and loved) by Him.
- We hear him declare (in advance) that he has “accomplished the work that you gave me to do”, but his finished work (the Cross) is the beginning of his followers’ work. He has been preparing them to carry on the kingdom after he leaves (through the power of his Spirit soon to come). He transitions to pray for them.

2. Jesus pray for his disciples (and thereby for all who follow Him in their wake). He prays for:

- Protection – “Keep them in your name ... keep them from the evil one.” He didn’t pray for blessings, comfort or even safety, but rather to “keep them” in the world – to keep them strong, keep them true, keep them from the evil one while they live out the kingdom in the world.
- Unity – “... that they may be one even as we are one” (v. 11). One of the greatest dangers we face is that our enemy would separate us. One of our greatest impacts is our oneness in Jesus – “so that the world will know (Father) that you have sent me” (v. 21). Our unity in Jesus is our greatest witness to a broken, divided world.
- Fullness of Joy – “... that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves” (v. 13). Not for happiness that is fleeting, based on circumstances, but joy that is rooted deeply in the eternal promises of God, in the completed work of the Cross and Resurrection, in His shakable love. Joy is rooted in our created purpose – “to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” Salvation frees us to love God over self. This is the greater love, for self can never satisfy the heart that was created for God.
- Holiness – “sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ... I consecrate myself that they also may be sanctified in truth” (vv. 17-19). Not self-righteousness (like the religious Pharisees) but to be “set apart” (the meaning of “holy”), like items in the temple “set apart” for the worship of Yahweh. We are set apart to be used by God for His glory and called to “not be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds” (Romans 12:1-2). We are to align with God’s truth and ways, without compromise.



3. Jesus prays for “all those who will believe in me because of their message” (v. 20). That’s us!
- Complete unity (vv. 20-21). Not a fruit of our own determined efforts, but a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit among us ... not trying to make us all the same but tuning us, like piano keys, to the one true tuning fork (Jesus). We are united around Him, but not with a uniform sameness.
 - That we will be visible in the world, revealing that God has indeed sent Jesus (again, evident in our unity).
 - A glimpse at our eternal future (that actually begins now), “that they may be with me, where I am, to see my glory” (v. 24).
 - An ever increasing revelation of his love and presence. (vv. 25-26).

Reflection Questions

1. How does it feel to read this personal prayer of Jesus, his very words spoken for you (and he continues in such intercession even now)?
2. How do you respond to this idea that Jesus is not really praying for your safety from the world, but that He is praying for God to “keep” (protect) you *in* the world (which can be a difficult and costly place to be)?
3. Which aspect of his prayer most captures your attention? Why?
4. Is there any relationship of “dis-unity” that you need to bring before the Lord and ask His Spirit to renew his desired unity?
5. Is there any area of your life right now that you need/want God to do his “sanctifying” work in you – towards wholeness and holiness?