

## “Listen to Jesus Pray for You”

### *John 17*

And 1 John 2:1 also says,

*My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.*

This Advocate, we are told, intercedes or prays for us to the Father.

*Rom. 8:33* Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.<sup>34</sup> Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

*Heb. 7:23* Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; <sup>24</sup> but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. <sup>25</sup> Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

After Jesus endured the cross, rose and ascended into heaven, He sat down at the Father's right hand where His main ministry is prayer for you and me. What if we could hear Jesus pray for us? Would it change the way we live? I'm sure you're like me that whenever you've been praying with people and they are praying for you directly you feel humbled to know they actually think about you enough to talk to God about you. It may humble you to the point where you feel unworthy and that you're not living up to what they are asking God for you. But it also strengthens you to want to live the way they are praying for you. So when we hear people pray for us there is a mixture of humility, repentance and responsibility. If that's the way we sometimes feel when people pray for us, how much more should we feel humility, repentance and responsibility to know that Jesus lives to intercede for us? But we can't hear Jesus praying for us, can we? Actually, we do have some idea of how He prays for us in the Lord's prayer. No, I don't mean Matthew 6. Matthew 6 is the disciples' prayer. Matthew 6 is Jesus' answer to the disciples' question 'Teach us how to pray' and so He does. Jesus always did the Father's will so there's no need for Jesus to ask that He do the will of God on earth as God does in heaven. Jesus has no needs and always trusted God to meet His needs. Jesus has no sins to confess and already forgiven everyone else. Jesus is greater than Satan and already won our victory over him at the cross. No, the Lord's prayer is found in John 17 where our Lord is actually praying for us.

Let's listen to Jesus pray for us so we'll be humbled to know He thinks enough of us to bring us to the Father, that we might have hearts willing to repent for the things we're not listening to in His Word and we'll be strengthened and challenged to live more for Jesus who lives to intercede for us.

John 17 is after the last supper and just prior to His arrest in Gethsemane. John records Jesus teaching the disciples some important but hard truths in 13-16. The big surprise in His teaching is that He tells His disciples He is going away to His Father's house to prepare a room for them but that he will come back for them [us] one day. Do not let your hearts be troubled (14:1). He also tells them in ch. 16 that they will be persecuted for their belief in Jesus but He ends ch. 16 saying,

<sup>33</sup>"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

As they (and we) hear Him pray for them (us) we can know His peace when we're experiencing the troubles of this sinful world.

The Lord's prayer here, like any prayer, is from the heart. So there's overlap of thoughts. There's repeated requests. There's a mixture of praying for Himself and praying for us, so we're not going to be able to break it down into nice clean sections. But there are 5 clear requests He makes for His followers which includes you and me.

So how does Jesus pray for us? Jesus prays . . .

## **For our Spiritual Protection** **(17:6-12, 15-16)**

After praying for Himself in vv.1-5 (which we'll come back to at the end) He prays,

*<sup>6</sup>"I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. <sup>7</sup>Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. <sup>8</sup>For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. <sup>9</sup>I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. <sup>10</sup>All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. <sup>11</sup>I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. <sup>12</sup>While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.*

Jesus knows that His crucifixion is going to throw the disciples into confusion. He knows they will "scatter". He knows they will desert Him temporarily. He also knows that there are times in our life that difficult circumstances will tempt us to take our eyes off Jesus and stop looking above like we need to. So Jesus prays for our protection (not physical) but spiritual. How does he pray for our spiritual protection?

### ***Through the power of His Name (v.11)***

And

### ***From the enemy and the sin-filled world (vv.9-11, 14-16)***

Jesus said His followers are those who have had Jesus revealed to them and have believed Jesus' words about God, about Himself, about our own sin but also about salvation by faith in Him. Notice all this starts from God. God gave Jesus the disciples. Jesus revealed God to them through the Word. He shared God's Word with them and they believed that Jesus came from God resulting in their salvation. Once we accept Christ we switch allegiances; we no longer belong to this world. Jesus obviously means more than geography. In John's gospel 'world' is often a reference to the sinful environment we live in (unless clearly indicated). Once saved we no longer belong to the sin-filled environment; we belong to God. But while we're still in this geographical world we are tempted by the sin-filled environment we live and work and go to school beside us. So Jesus prays for our

protection from the sinful temptations the world throws at us and from Satan Himself who likes nothing more than to see us question our faith and choose worldly pleasures over pleasing Jesus.

We are kept safe by the power of Jesus' Name. Not that simply saying 'Jesus' is magical – all kinds of people use Jesus' name in many ways – but for those who believe in Him and trust Him, the authority that He has over the world and the enemy is tied up in His Name and identity. When we call on His Name He protects us from the world and the evil one because the enemy has no authority over Jesus.

This prayer for you and me tells us a lot. One, Jesus takes the enemy and the temptation of sin seriously enough to pray for our protection from them. Second, He also tells us He is the key to victory over sin and Satan. His Name represents who He is and all authority that He brings. He has authority over sin, over the world and over Satan. We need to pray as much if not more for our spiritual protection than our physical. Both are necessary but Jesus is more concerned about our spiritual walk than our physical travels. If Jesus prays this for us, shouldn't we pray this for ourselves, our family and each other? As well, if Jesus prays this for us how are we being an answer to Jesus' prayer? When we fall for the temptation to sin, we hurt Jesus and His father. We're going against what He's praying for us. Have we ever realized our obedience and trust in Jesus answers His prayers for us?

Jesus prayed in v.13 . . .

### **That We Would be Filled with His Joy Now** **(17:13)**

Jesus prays to God,

*<sup>13</sup>But I am coming to you now but I say these things while I am in the world, so that they will have the full measure of my joy within them.*

This is extremely important for us. It tells us that Jesus' joy (which would be eternal joy) is available now while we live on earth. It also means it is available regardless of circumstances because He knows His disciples will struggle with sin and will suffer consequences for their faith. Yet, He still prays that we would know the full measure of His joy now.

Back in 10:10 Jesus said,

*<sup>10:10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it to the full [abundantly].*

In the same conversation earlier that night Jesus also said,

*<sup>John 15:8</sup>By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. <sup>9</sup>As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. <sup>10</sup>If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup>These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.*

Eternal joy in Jesus is available now when we obey His commands and remain faithful/abide with Him. 'Abide means dwell. When I live in Jesus; when I'm aware of His ongoing presence and love for Me and prayer for my protection then I can confidently obey Him knowing that He's with me

even though the world is against me. This joy is the 'peace that surpasses all understanding' knowing we are in the perfect will of God. David understood this himself. He prayed in Ps. 16:10-11,

*<sup>9</sup> Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. <sup>10</sup> For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. <sup>11</sup> You make known to me the path of life; in your presence is fullness of joy and at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

If we doubt Jesus is with us and for us and assures of His presence and our salvation then we won't experience His peace and joy. Jesus prays we would experience the fullness of His joy now. Are we being an answer to His prayer? Are we praying that for each other?

Jesus also prayed for our testimony. He prayed in vv.17-19

### **That the Word Would Set us Apart from the World** **(17:16-19)**

*<sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.*

When Jesus prays that we would be sanctified as He sanctified Himself, He's not talking about sanctification in the sense of our spiritual growth. Jesus is, has been and always will be completely mature. But the word 'sanctify' means to be set apart for God's purpose. Jesus has always been committed to God's purpose in His life. So He prays the same for us because one day, in God's presence we will be fully sanctified (cleansed from all sin) and be fully set apart to God. So Jesus prays this for ourselves now; that as we read and obey the Word we will become more separate from the sinful world we live in and more set apart to God. The truth of God's Word makes us distinct. We don't march to the drumbeat of the world but to God as He reveals Himself in His Word. If Jesus prays this for us it means it can happen.

This means we must be in the Word regularly so the Spirit can speak to us and be ready to listen to do what He says. Then we will experience His joy and show our set-apartness from the world to the world. Am I/are you answering Jesus' prayer to be set apart for God by obeying His Word? Are we praying this for each other? This is how Jesus is praying for us so this is how we should pray for ourselves and one another.

How else does Jesus pray for us? Jesus prays . . .

### **That We Will Live in Unity so that People will be Saved** **(17:21-22)**

Jesus knew the disciples would scatter at His crucifixion but He also prayed they would come back and be restored. When Jesus rebuked Peter who rebuked Jesus for telling Him He would suffer and die, He told Peter

*Luke 22:31 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you that he might sift you like wheat, <sup>32</sup> but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."<sup>33</sup> Peter said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to*

prison and to death.” <sup>34</sup> Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me.”

When the resurrected Jesus appeared to Peter and the others on the beach after they went fishing, Jesus asked Peter 3 times if he loved Him – to which Peter said yes, 3 times – each time Jesus reminded Peter of his mission, feed my lambs. Lead the disciples. Bring them together. Jesus prayed for Peter to be restored, to be re-united with the others so that he could keep them on mission.

That’s why our unity is so important to Jesus that He prays,

<sup>20</sup> “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, <sup>21</sup> that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup> I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Our unity is made possible by Jesus’ glory in us; His indwelling presence through the Spirit. The Spirit brings us together, our sin separates us. If we are unwilling to get along with or work with another believer we are literally fighting against the Spirit and fighting against Jesus’ prayer. It should shock us to think that we could be deliberately frustrating Jesus’ prayers for us.

The reason why it’s so important is so that the unsaved will see our joy and unity together and some will come to “believe that You have sent Me”. The majority of the world doesn’t believe in God or that he sent Jesus to die for our sins. Some of them don’t believe Jesus because they’ve been appalled at how Jesus’ followers treat each other. People who claim to believe in Jesus sometimes argue and divide over the silliest of things. Sometimes these people leave their churches and take their grudges to another church. Sometimes they stay in the church but refuse to reconcile with others. They have lost their focus of why they are there; so that the world would know that God sent Jesus to die for our sins.

When we refuse to reconcile or get along with each other we hinder Jesus’ prayers and God’s purpose. So let’s work at making this a prayer priority for ourselves, for our church and the churches around us and for Jesus’ followers everywhere so that the unsaved can’t use our sinfulness as an excuse not to follow Jesus.

One more significant way Jesus prays for us as He mentioned here the night before He died; Jesus prays . . .

### **That We Would See His Glory** **(17:24-26)**

Jesus concluded His prayer by asking His Father,

<sup>24</sup> “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

<sup>25</sup> “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. <sup>26</sup> I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

Jesus finishes His prayer in the same way He started; He is praying for God to be glorified and for His followers to see His glory. There are two aspects of God's glory that Jesus is praying we will see. He is praying we will soon see His

### ***Future glory (v.24)***

Jesus looks forward to the day when we will be with Him and see His future glory, the glory that He had before He became a human; the glory that He gave James, Peter and John a glimpse of on the mountain in Matthew 17. This is how we will see Him when He returns (if we're still alive) or when we have died and will be in His presence.

As strange to say as this sounds, Jesus is looking forward to our separation from this world and our coming to see the glory of His presence, heaven and ultimately the new perfect earth. While we want to see Jesus in His glory and heaven we struggle because we don't want to leave here. But that's because we haven't seen glory yet. Think of it like this: Imagine you ask your child, 'Would you like to go to the toy store?' and because the only toy store they've seen is Lower Mercantile, which has a room with cool toys, they think that's what you mean. But you tell them 'We're going to Kingston to a different toy store', but they don't want to because they like Lower Mercantile. But you say, 'Oh there's lots more toys where we're going', but they are not convinced and so they go unconvinced and maybe even a little angry that you won't take them to their toy store. But then you pull into Toys R Us and they see the size of the store – all full of toys! And they can't get over how many toys there are and of course when it's time to go they don't want to go.

The reason why we don't have the same joy about finishing this life and going to Jesus is because we're not convinced eternity is better by far. Here's the thing though. We might leave some cool stuff behind but we can take some people we love with us if we share the gospel with the prayer that they believe in Jesus. Perhaps if we become more eternally minded we'll be more willing to share our faith and excited about what Jesus has to offer.

That's where Jesus' prayer for us to see His . . .

### ***Present glory (vv.1-5)***

. . . is crucial. Jesus started His prayer with,

*"Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. <sup>2</sup> For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. <sup>3</sup> Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. <sup>4</sup> I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. <sup>5</sup> And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. <sup>6</sup> "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word.*

Jesus would glorify God at the cross by magnifying God's love for us. The crucifixion and resurrection was the solution for our sin problem. Each of us must accept God's solution in Jesus for ourself if we want eternal life. No one can do that for you. Baptism doesn't save you. Good works doesn't save you. Church membership or involvement doesn't save you, only faith in Jesus Christ through repentance of our sins.

But Jesus said He brought God glory on earth. How? Through the evidence of how He changed people's lives. How do we see God's glory now? Through the way He changes people's lives today. When people make a decision to obey God's Word that's evidence of God's glory. When

we see His handiwork in creation around us, that's evidence of God's glory. Many times we don't see the evidence of God's glory around us because we're not asking. *"Ask and you will receive. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door shall be opened to you"* (Matt. 7:7).

Jesus thanked God that He was able to glorify God through the work God gave Him to do, which He defines in v.6 as *"revealing you to those whom You gave Me out of the world."* I believe that's our purpose as well; glorify God in our life by completing whatever it is God has called us to do and in that revealing God to those he sends into our life. That makes life very simple to figure out because no matter where God puts us and what we do for life we can always reveal God to the people He gives us and glorify Him.

I pray that we have listened to Jesus this morning. That we have listened to Him pray for us so that we will know better how to pray for ourselves and pray for each other. Jesus' prayer focuses on our spiritual maturity; protection from the enemy, filled with His joy, set apart through the Word, live in unity together and look for His glory. Can I challenge you this week to pray this for yourself, for everyone on your prayer list and in doing so seek to answer Jesus' prayer doing these things.

\* \* \* \* \*  
If you have any comments or questions about this message please contact us  
at [olivet@rideau.net](mailto:olivet@rideau.net)