



# CAPITOL COMMISSION

## The Perfect Prayer (John 17:1-26)

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As we begin the final five chapters of John's Gospel, let's reflect on the last words of instruction and encouragement Jesus gave to his disciples (*John 16:33* "... *In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*") In a few short hours Jesus would be slain for the sins of the world. It would be a time of incredible pain, fear, and confusion, and a time of scattering. If there was ever a time that required protective prayer, it is now. Except for the first ten words in this chapter, it is entirely Jesus prayer, first for His own needs (1-5), second, for the needs of His disciples (6-19), and then for the needs of all future believers (20-26).

### JESUS PRAYER FOR HIMSELF (JOHN 17:1-5)

*(v.1) After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.*

Six times in His prayer Jesus addresses God as "Father". Many times Jesus' enemies had tried to take His life, but they were not able because His time had not come. But now it had, and in His prayer He speaks tenderly and emotionally to His Father.

Jesus knew, as He looked ahead to His death on the cross, that if He was to remain in a grave the world would see Him no different than any other man. However, if His Father glorified Him by raising Him from the dead; that would be proof He was God's Son and the world's Savior.

*(vv.2-3) 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 may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*

Jesus now proclaims how He will glorify the Father – by giving eternal life to those the Father had given Him. It is important to note here, that we who have put our faith in Christ are those that the Father gave to the Son (*John 6:44*).

*(vv.4-5) I have brought you glory on earth by completing 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.*

Most commentators would suggest that what Jesus prays here is prayed as if He had already died, been buried, and had risen. Although this could certainly be true, there could be another meaning that Jesus had in mind (*Mark 3:14*). Jesus began the multiplication process of making disciples. He finished the

work and prepared 12 disciples, who would turn the world upside down (*Acts 17:6 KJV*).

### JESUS PRAYER FOR HIS DISCIPLES (JOHN 17:6-19)

*(vv.6-10) "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.*

Again Jesus identifies the disciples as those God the Father had given Him. Charles Swindoll notes the following concerning these: the Father's Word, they had kept (*v.6*); His provisions, they had acknowledged (*v.7*); His plan, they had accepted (*v.8*); His glory, they had helped contribute to (*vv.9-10*).<sup>1</sup>

Now Jesus, knowing how scared these men will be when He is absent from them, prays that they will be protected.

*(vv.11-13) 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. <sup>13</sup> "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.*

Those of you in the legislature surely understand the value of unity. In fact, without it, very little gets done. As it is with the legislature, these disciples whom Jesus is praying for are a very diverse group. In fact as we look at them and see the diversity, you may be able to picture men and women such as these— independent and strong willed. Matthew, could have been a tax attorney with an accounting minor. Peter, often caught with foot in mouth—impulsive, born to lead. And then there were James and John, the brothers known as "Sons of Thunder." But Jesus was their leader, and with His character and charisma, the sometimes volatile elements surrounding these men, was kept in a state of equilibrium. However, Jesus was about to be removed from the equation and the unity of these men was of utmost importance.

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# NORTH CAROLINA

## The Perfect Prayer (John 17:1-26)

When you and I make a choice to be unified with our brothers and sisters in Christ, even though we are very different, much can be accomplished that will bring glory to God. Guess who gets upset.

*(vv.14-16) I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. <sup>15</sup> My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.*

There is an enemy who is always at work, and if he can create division he can stop progress – whether in the church, a ministry, or in the General Assembly. His desire is to disrupt anything that may bring glory to God. Jesus never intended for the believer to retreat back into the salt shaker (*Matthew 5:13*), nor for their light to be kept under a bushel (*Matthew 5:15-16*).

There are some in the body of Christ who have come to believe a Christian should keep himself separated from life in the world, and especially from politics. That has never been God's intention, nor purpose. We are to be in the world but not lovers of the world (*1 John 2:15-16*). It is in this world that we represent the kingdom of God as salt and light to those God loves and chooses to draw to Himself (*1 Corinthians 5:9-10*).

*(vv.17-19) 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.*

Although it is doubtful the disciples understood the significance of the mission on which Jesus was sending them, Jesus prayer would have caused many questions in their mind. These men, and we today who are His disciples, have been given a mission, and Jesus has prayed we would be set apart to accomplish it. The only way a person can be truly set apart is through the truth of God's word. A true, set apart disciple of Christ must be captivated by the Word and immersed in God's Truth. Have you made time in God's word a priority in your life? If not, start today.

### JESUS PRAYER FOR ALL BELIEVERS (JOHN 17:20-26)

*(vv.20-21) "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.*

Here Jesus prays for a supernatural unity that is modeled and enabled by the Godhead. This unity is possible because true

believers are united in the core of their beings. That is why we often can sense that we have met another believer before words have even been spoken. We share the divine nature!<sup>2</sup>

Note why the unity is so important – vs. 21b.

*<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. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*

Unity! Unity! Unity!. In verse 11 Jesus prayed for unity in fellowship. In verse 21, it was unity in witness-bearing. Now it is unity in the glory that will be received when saints receive their glorified bodies. Jesus loves us so much that He is willing to share His glory with His children. The glory He would never have received, unless willing to die. Again, though it will be too late, this incredible love will be evident to a lost world and they will believe that Jesus was the Sent One from God.

*<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."*

In all death there is sorrow, but for the believer who has died, it is, in a sense, an answer to this prayer. To die is to go with Christ where He is and to behold His glory (*1 John 3:1-3*).

Charles Swindoll notes three wonderful applications to our study today, especially to verses 20-26.<sup>3</sup>

**To grow in unity means *giving in*.** It means refusing to get hung up on trivial disagreements or particular philosophies. Those who enjoy Christian Fellowship in its deepest sense have high tolerance levels. Do you?

**To know your destiny means *giving up*.** Being secure in our future requires that we stop striving and simply give up and trust Jesus (*Ephesians 2:8-9*).

**To show His love means *giving out*.** Christian love is visible and tangible. God not only tells us He loved us, He has shown it (*Romans 5:8*). And we are to do the same.

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Following Christ, A Bible Study of John 15-21*, (Insight For Living, Anaheim, CA, 2000), p.48

2. R. Kent Hughes, *Gospel of John*, Crossway Books, A Division of Good News Publishers, 1300 Crescent Street, Wheaton, IL 60187. Database © 2004 WORDsearch Corp.

3. Swindoll. p.59