

“The Lord’s Prayer” John 17:1-5, 24-26 Shane Hatfield 4/11/21

Well, open your Bibles up to John 17, and we’re going to begin studying God’s word. Over the last several weeks, we’ve been studying Jesus’ final teachings here called The Farewell Discourse, recorded in John 14-16. Every week we see how Jesus taught them everything they needed to know to withstand the trials and tribulations of this life, and to carry out His mission here on earth while He is gone until they get to go see Him again, or until He comes back. Well tonight, we’re going to begin studying His final prayer with the disciples. I’ve titled this sermon, “The Lord’s Prayer,” because it’s the longest and most detailed prayer that we have from Jesus. You might be familiar with the Lord’s Prayer in Luke 11 and Matthew 6, which is really more of a disciple’s prayer. It’s Jesus teaching the disciples how to pray. Literally they say, “Teach us how to pray,” and then Jesus teaches them how to pray. Well, this is interesting because this is not a “how to” passage on prayer. What I think we get here is something much, much deeper. Here we get to see Jesus’ heart in prayer. We get to see Him relating to His heavenly Father in prayer. And we get to see the height and the width and the depth of His love for us, and His mission in the world. So, we’re going to read John 17:1-5 and then we’ll skip down to 24-26. Hear the word of the Lord:

“<sup>1</sup>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, <sup>2</sup>since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. <sup>3</sup>And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. <sup>4</sup>I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. <sup>5</sup>And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

<sup>24</sup> Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. <sup>25</sup> O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. <sup>26</sup> I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

This ends the reading of God’s word. When Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration, God spoke and said, ‘This is my Son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him.’ So, let’s give our attention to His words now.

This week, Steve and I had the pleasure of interviewing three candidates for our youth intern position, and hopefully we’ll get to update you guys on that soon. They were three fantastic interviews, because we had three fantastic candidates. With two of those candidates, in their story, they began to talk about their parents. One of the ladies talked about how when she was in middle school, she really struggled with doubts about her faith. Well, she brought those doubts to her mother, and her mother sat down and answered all of her questions in this really kind and patient and loving way. I thought, ‘Wow, that sounds amazing. That sounds like a really wonderful mom!’ The other candidate, she told a story about how her father was a pastor and he loved to disciple people. He was good at it and he enjoyed it. She said that as a young girl she would wake up and her father would be sitting at the table with a devotional ready, and anyone from the family could come and just sit down and join him for a family devotional. I just thought, ‘Man! That’s awesome! I wish I was that kind of a dad. That sounds like a great dad!

I'd like to meet him.' I even got to clicking on the internet. I found his website. I found his bio. I thought about emailing him. I was like, 'No, don't do that. Don't creep.' I kind of turned into creeper mode, because I was thinking, this sounds like a guy I would want to know. He sounds like somebody I would want to be with.

Well tonight, as we study Jesus' prayer, what I want us to come away with is this sense of 'I want to know the God that He knows. I want to know the Father that He knows. I want to experience the Father that Jesus is talking to. That sound like a God I want to know. That sounds like a God I want to know and experience.' What we're going to find is the good news is the God that He is talking to wants to know us and be with us, and He's made a way so that we can. So, we're going to look at three things from this passage. We're going to look at what Jesus prayed, why Jesus prayed it, and why it matters for us. If you're a young listener out there, I'm going to give you three things to listen for: a question, what is glory? Then, why does Jesus want glory and why does Jesus pray?

So, the first thing we're going to look at is what Jesus prayed. So, Jesus makes two requests in this passage. If you look at verse 1, He says, "Father the hour has come." Now, when Jesus talks about His hour, He's not saying a specific hour, He's referring to an event. He's referring to the crucifixion. From eternity past, the Father, Son and Spirit had planned out Jesus' life and death and history had been moving toward the moment of Jesus' death. Jesus' entire life and ministry were a preparation for His death. It's as if everything else has been the practice or the first three-quarters of the football game, and now Jesus is in the fourth quarter. It's the final two minutes, and on the cross He is going to achieve victory at the end of the game. He's saying, 'Now is the time for victory.'

And here, He makes a request. He says, "Glorify Your Son." That's what He wants. He's asking the Father to glorify Him. Now, glory is one of those Christian-ese words that we throw around all the time, but it's really hard to define, it's really kind of vague, so let me just take a minute to try and explain what Jesus means. The Hebrew word for glory, literally means 'weight.' Something that has glory has weight. It matters. It has importance. Then the Greek word for glory or to glorify means 'to exalt' or 'to lift up' or 'to raise.' So, the concept that it's trying to get at is that you have something that's important, that matters, and this thing matters so much that it is lifted up and it is exalted and it gets the praise and honor and glory that it's due. Think about the sun. The sun has the most matter of any object in our solar system. It has the most mass. Because the sun has the most matter, everything in the solar system orbits around the sun. And when that sun comes up in the morning, we see it. It is exalted. We behold it and we give it all the glory that it deserves because it is the thing that matters the most. So, when Jesus asks the Father to glorify Him, He's saying, 'I want you to show the world how much I matter on the cross. I want to be lifted up, exalted, praised and honored as something that should be worshipped and adored.' As Charlie and I were talking about this, he described it well. He said, 'So, the Father wants to put Jesus on blast.' And I said, "Yes." Jesus is asking the Father to put Him on blast, before all of creation. If you don't know what that means, ask somebody that's under 20 or 25, they'll explain it to you.

So, His first request is to be glorified, and His second request is similar. Look at verse 5, Jesus says, "And now Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed." So, Jesus asks the Father to glorify Him again, but this time it's in a different context, right? Jesus is saying, instead of glorifying Him on earth, Jesus wants the Father to glorify Him in His presence. This is more of a personal, face to face glorification. Whereas on the cross Jesus wants God to glorify Him to the world, in His resurrection and

ascension, Jesus wants the Father to glorify Him to Himself. He said, 'I want to see you. I want to see you face to face. I want to be in Your presence. I want to know that I matter to you, and that You matter to me.' Think about a parent, a new parent lifting up their child and just gazing into their face and looking at every little detail. They're adoring each other back and forth. That's what Jesus is asking for. So, what did Jesus pray? Jesus prays for the Father to glorify Him through the cross to the world and to glorify Him to Himself through the ascension. He wants the cross to have weight in the eyes of the world. He wants the whole world to see just how much the cross matters, and He wants to see how much He matters in the face of the Father. He wants the world to behold the cross, and He wants the Father to behold Him.

Now, you might think Jesus is self-centered for praying this. He's not, and we'll get to that in the second point. But what I want to point out to you quickly is that the Father answered this prayer. The Father has displayed the glory of Jesus before the entire world. The world knows that Jesus matters. Richard Dawkins is a famous Evolutionist, an atheist. He wrote a book called "The God Delusion," and he once called the crucifixion parochial. The word parochial means general or narrow. He's basically saying that it only mattered to this small group of people in this small time period and it doesn't matter to anybody else. The problem is that the crucifixion has been widely displayed in art and history ever since it took place, and the Bible is the number one selling book in the world with over five billion copies sold, that's what the Guinness Book of World Records said in 1995. The cross has mattered throughout history, and ever since it took place. God has exalted Jesus despite opposition from all the world. And if you or me or anyone else lets that sink in, then it changes us.

This week I saw a video clip about a man named Jordan Peterson. Jordan Peterson is a psychologist, and he wrote a book recently called "Twelve Rules for Life: An Antidote for Chaos." He is not a Christian. He says that he doesn't believe in God, but maybe he should, but the concept of God is terrifying for him. In this interview, he was talking about what he calls the Narrative world, which is the world that we live in, and the Objective world, which is the world that we can't see; it's true, but it's outside of us. And he said, 'Every now and then in my life, I see this Objective world come in and touch the Narrative world.' He begins to choke up, and he begins to cry. And he says, "I guess, the greatest example of this is Jesus Christ.' He's saying, in Jesus the Objective world and the Narrative world collide, and he says, 'I want to believe this, but it's too terrifying for me to believe.' What is happening here is the weight of the crucifixion, the weight of Jesus and His glory, is coming down on him. God has answered Jesus' prayer to be glorified. As we'll talk about later, there's a way that Peter said that all of us can experience the goodness of that glory and not the terror. But the first thing we see is that Jesus prayed that the Father would glorify Him to the earth, and that He would be glorified to the Father.

The second thing that we see is why Jesus prayed. Look back at verse 1: "glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you." So, Jesus asked the Father to glorify Him so that He could glorify the Father! Jesus' desire for glory is not grounded in Himself and His own selfishness. It's grounded in His love for the Father and His desire for the Father to be glorified. It's grounded in His desire to give the Father the weight and the glory and the exaltation that the Father desires. This is nothing new for the Father and the Son. This is what they were doing before all of creation. That's why Jesus said in verse 5 that He wants the Father to glorify Him in His presence with the glory that they had before the foundation of the world. See, before the world existed, there was God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, loving, serving and glorifying each other. There was a vibrant, dynamic relationship. It's one God in three persons, but they're not static and stoic. They're not a monad. They're not one being. There are three beings, loving,

servicing, glorifying each other. And Jesus says, 'I want to glorify You, because that's who we are and that's what we do and that's how we have been from all of creation. So, Jesus' prayer is not self-centered; it is radically others-centered. It is radically others-centered, because that's the kind of God He is. That's the kind of God we have. That's the kind of God we serve. At His core, the Christian God is not a taker, He's a giver. He is others-centered, not self-centered. All through this passage, we see givers and gifts, right? The Father gives the Son authority over all flesh. The Son gives people eternal life. The Son glorifies the Father through His work. He's a giver of gifts. That's who He is! And that makes Him different than every other god in every other religion that has been created. The other gods in other religions, they are monads. That's one being. And because they're monads, they can only take. They can only use. They can't give. They're static and stoic. They're not this pulsating, loving, dynamic being that the one and only true God is.

C.S. Lewis describes this well in his book "Screwtape Letters." If you haven't read it, it's a great book; it's the second highest selling book of his behind "Mere Christianity." But it's written as a senior devil writing to a junior devil trying to teach him to tempt the patient, which is a Christian. Lewis captures this difference in our God in this exchange, so I'm going to read it to you, and it'll be behind me. "One must face the fact that all the talk about His love for men, and His service being perfect freedom is not as one would gladly believe mere propaganda, but an appalling truth. He really does want to fill the universe with a lot of loathsome little replicas of Himself, creatures whose life on a miniature scale will be qualitatively like His own. Not because He has absorbed them, but because their wills freely conform to His. We want cattle who can finally become food, He wants servants who can finally become sons. We want to suck in, He wants to give out. We are empty and would be filled, He is full and flows over." You see, the devils that Lewis describes are solitary, needy gods that only take. Our God is a God that is overflowing with love and passion. He's a lover who gives. Let me ask you this: what is your view of God? And specifically, what is your view of God the Father? Do you view Him as some distant creator that just created this watch called the world and started it and then left? Do you view Him as some cruel dictator who has established all these rules to keep you from having fun? Do you view Him as a sort of self-absorbed celebrity? Or do you view Him as the Father, the Son and the Spirit eternally existing in love to give love? That's who the God of the Bible is.

That's why when Jesus prayed, He prays for glory. He prays to give glory because that's who He is, and that matters; that is life changing, and that's what we're going to look at here as we come to a close. Why does that matter to us? Let me give you three reasons why that matters to us. This is not a how-to sermon on prayer, but I want to point this out here, because I think it's important. Jesus teaches us that prayer is relational, not transactional. Prayer is relational, not transactional. The thing that I just could not wrap my mind around while I was reading this prayer at the beginning of the week was, "Why did Jesus pray this prayer? He knows what's going to happen. He knows the plan. He's got everything He needs to carry it out. What is He doing?" Then it dawned on me. He prayed because He wanted to talk to His heavenly Father about it. He had been spending all this time teaching the disciples about this glorious plan and He was so raptured up into it, that He said, 'I want to talk to my heavenly Father about this. I have these desires that I want to express to Him, that I want to share with Him.' His prayer was a conversation with a person that wants to be with us; it's not a transaction.

I think we tend to view prayer the way I view a repairman. I call a repairman when I have a problem with the house. I see the problem. It needs to be fixed. So, I call the repairman and I say, "This is what's wrong with my house. I need you to come fix it." We set up the

appointment. The repairman comes over and he fixes it. If he doesn't, I call my brother-in-law, Joe, and I beg him to come help me because I am too inept to do things by myself. Well, that's normally what happens, but, whenever we were selling our house, a guy came over to inspect for termites and when he came over, this guy didn't just want to inspect my house for termites, he wanted to talk. He wanted to tell me his whole life's story. He told me where he lived, where he was from, he told me about his family, his wife and his kids, he told me about the weather and all the different jobs he had done. He was not there just to check my house for termites, he was there to get to know me. I felt like I had to take off my shoes and invite him for dinner! He was not there for a transaction. He was there for a relationship. That's how our prayer life ought to be. That's what God wants from us. He doesn't just want a transaction. He wants a relationship! So, by all means, bring Him your requests, bring Him the deepest desires, questions, thoughts of your heart. But bring it to be with Him because He wants to be with you.

That's the second thing we see from this prayer. As Jesus says in verses 24-26 that we read, Jesus not only wants to glorify the Father, but He wants to glorify us. He wants to bring us into that relationship. It's so beautiful. I want to read it again. If you look at 17:24. Just listen to Jesus' heart. "24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world... 26 I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them." Glory, for Jesus, is to have us with Him. It's to be with Him. It's to be near Him. It's to be raptured up in the Father, Son, the Spirit, and then to have us with Him! That's His desire. Jesus went to the cross, not only to glorify the Father, but to glorify us with Him. I once heard a seminary professor sort of summarizing all these different books and movies and their abuse of heaven and everything that was in their view of heaven and how they described it, and he said, 'Now, the problem with them is, there's not Jesus in any of them. Heaven is where Jesus is.' But for Jesus, heaven is also with us. Jesus died so that we could come to heaven with Him.

It says in Psalm 8 that God created us for glory and honor, but it says in Romans 3:23 that we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. So, the only way that God could bring us into glory is to send His Son to rescue us. God made Him who knew no sin, to be sin for us so that we might have the righteousness of God and so we could come to heaven and experience glory with Jesus. That's where we find life, right? That's where we find eternal life. If you look back at verses 2 and 3, Jesus says, "2 since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." Jesus wants us to have true, deep, meaningful life, and that is found in knowing God and being in a relationship with Him, being raptured up into this loving community of Father, Son and Spirit. Now, we're going to talk next week about how to know God, as we get into the rest of the passage. But, this week, what I really wanted you to feel is that this is a God that I want to know, that I want to be with, and I want to love, because He is a God that loves me and wants to be with me. He loves us the way a good father loves his children and wants to provide for them and love them and be with them. He loves us the way a husband and a wife love each other, and they get intimate and they see each other face to face and they're naked and they're unashamed. This word 'to know' in the Bible is what God uses when He says, "And Adam knew Eve." It is the most vulnerable, intimate, passionate kind of knowing that we can experience on earth, and God wants us to share it with Him, because He loves us, and because that's who He is.

A few years ago, actually five years ago, my wife and I went on our tenth anniversary trip. So, we just celebrated fifteen years. Five years ago, we went on our tenth anniversary trip. We went to Jamaica, which was a good trip! It was my first time ever out of the country, my first time ever to do one of those beachy all-inclusive things. It was good! But what was interesting was, the first few days, all we could talk about was how great it was to be at the beach and to be alone and to be together and to not be with the kids and not have all the responsibilities and just rest on the beach. And we just enjoyed that the first few days. It was wonderful just to be together! But then, as the week went on, things started to shift. Not because we didn't like each other, which could have happened, but not in this particular case. We were enjoying each other so much, we said, 'Wouldn't it be nice to take this trip with some friends sometime?' 'Wouldn't it be fun to do this kind of trip with our friends?' And then we even thought: 'Maybe this kind of trip would even be fun with our kids once they're a little bit older!' You see, what happened was, as we were loving and enjoying each other, we wanted that love to spill over onto other people. We wanted to include other people in it.

That's the God of the Bible. Father, Son, and Spirit loving each other and loving us out of the overflow of that love and wanting us to be with Him. That's the very heart of God, and when you give your life to Christ, you submit to Him. He becomes your sun. Right? He becomes the center of your solar system and you glorify Him, you worship Him, you serve Him, and you experience His love and His radiance, and everything is put in its proper place. The way the solar system orbits around the sun, we orbit around God. We let Him be the center of our lives, and we experience His love. Maybe that's you. Maybe you've put your faith in Christ, and you know, and you love, and you experience that. But maybe you're still a little cynical, maybe you're still a little afraid. Maybe you're like Jordan Peterson and you have doubts. Maybe you're thinking, 'Hey Shane, you keep saying this God is love, but I've read the Old Testament and there are some chapters in there that aren't very loving. And I've read some of Jesus' hard sayings in the New Testament, and they don't seem very loving!' That's true. There are a lot of hard things in the Bible to understand, especially in the Old Testament, and I don't want to downplay that at all.

But I do want to tell you that where I start to understand those passages is on the cross. I look at Jesus on the cross. When Jesus says, the same Jesus that prays this prayer, says, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Think about that. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" For a moment on the cross, Jesus, in His human nature, lost what He had never lost before, and that is the presence of His heavenly Father that loved Him. Can you imagine the agony, the pain, the suffering that Jesus had to go through in those moments? Yet, He trusted the Father enough to pray for that here. He prayed for that moment here! God granted that prayer, and He used that prayer to rescue this fallen creation from sin and misery. I may not be able to understand every passage in this Bible, but because of the cross I can start with the presupposition that God is love and that He loves me and that whatever He had to do must have been the right and loving thing to do.

Jordan Peterson says he just can't believe the gospel because of the weight of the law, that he sees the law and he sees the weight of it and it just terrifies him. If that's you, or if he happens to see this on Facebook, which I'm sure he will, what I would say is on the cross you see the weight of the law falling on Jesus. He took the penalty for our law-breaking for us, so that we could receive God's love and His grace by faith. And when you believe that the terror of the cross becomes beautiful. It becomes something loving. It becomes powerful and it transforms your life. And this God becomes a God that you want to know, that you trust, and that you give your life to. So, let's take a moment and let's pray as Jesus prayed, let's pray that God would

bring us into His glory, that He would show us the glory of the Father, and that we would be raptured into His love. Let's pray together.