

Lessons from the High Priestly Prayer

Opening prayer

Setting the stage

Why is this called the High Priestly Prayer?

- Merriam-Webster defines priest as: *“someone who is authorized to perform the sacred rites of a religion, especially as a mediatory agent between humans and God.”*
- Because Jesus is our High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-16) ¹⁴ *Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*
- Because Jesus is mediating (being in a middle position, settling or reconciling differences) for us (1 Timothy 2:5) *“For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”*

Context: Where are we in the story of Scripture?

- It began with a *Holy God, with His Holy People, in His Holy Place*
- Mankind chose to rebel against the Holy God, which broke our relationship with Him, and also with each other.
- We were now separated from the Holy God by sin, meaning there would have to be a mediator to reconcile us, or bring us back into right relationship with the Holy God.
- Jesus prays this shortly before heading to the cross, knowing His time on earth was ending, with the weight of all the world hanging in the balance as He would complete His mission of redemption.
- This is Jesus' prayer just before dying for you and I.

Stand to read [John 17](#)

Who Jesus prayed for

- Jesus prayed for *Himself* (v 1, 4-5)
- Jesus prayed for *His disciples* (v 6-9, 12)
- Jesus prayed for us! (all believers) (v 20)

These are a **shadow** of the things to come,
but the substance belongs to Christ. Colossians 2:17

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What Jesus prayed for & what lessons can we learn?

- Joy (v 13)

What should it be based on? We see that our joy should be rooted firmly in who Jesus is, and our relationship with Him.

Is it dependent on our circumstances? Many of us may be facing difficult circumstances in life. Maybe you're moving, maybe you're losing a friend, maybe you're about to start school or a new job. Maybe you face

uncertainty in your family or finances. Remember that joy based on circumstances quickly fades, but true joy that is based on who Jesus is, and our right standing with Him, isn't diminished by toils and trials, but rather grows brighter, the darker the night. (Psalm 5:11) "But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy, and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exult in you." Are you struggling with joy? Remember the circumstances when Jesus prayed this.

- Protection (v 14-15)

From what? The Satan (the adversary) (John 8:44) "You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies." He seeks to steal, kill, and destroy. That includes your joy, that includes your family, that includes your relationships, your hope, and even your life.

Is there really any danger? Absolutely. Our enemy is powerful and is the ruler of this present world (Ephesians 6:12) "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." We are dependent on God's protection. Pray for it daily as you equip the full armor of God, and don't forget (John 16:33) "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

- Sanctification (v 17-19)

What does this mean? To be made holy; by knowing and becoming more like Jesus (Romans 12:1-2) "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." Are you growing to be more like Jesus? Pray for Him to continue transforming you by renewing your mind.

How is it accomplished? *By the truth. Not the truth as our culture defines it, not the truth as our emotions define it, not your truth or my truth, but THE unchanging, exclusive, eternal standard of truth, the Word of God. Why is the Bible truth? Because it is God's self-revelation, and He IS truth. (2 Timothy 3:16) "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" Are you struggling with what is truth? Read the Bible daily and allow God to use it to sanctify you.*

- Unity (v 20-23)

What is our example in this? *It is clearly the trinity. This is a difficult concept, but it is our standard none the less. Are we loving, delighting in, honoring, counting each other as greater than ourselves, and submitting to one another as the Trinity has? We must pray for God to help each of us love, forgive, give grace, and mercy to others, the way He has given each of those to us.*

What is the purpose? *It is clearly so that the world might believe. Our unity as the body of Christ says more than we'll ever know to the world around us. How are we representing God in our body? Let us pray for forgiveness where we have not done that well, and pray for God to lead us in being the salt and light He wants us to be.*

- To be with Him (v 24)

What is this pointing to? *You may have guessed from our garden introduction, but yes, this is looking forward to the great day when it will once again be a Holy God, with His Holy People, in His Holy Place! (Revelation 21:1-4) "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 22:1-5) "Then the angel^[a] showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life^[b] with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever."*

Why does He desire this? So that we can behold His awesome, unveiled glory and experience the true fullness of His love. (Psalm 16:11) "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore." Are you struggling with hope tonight? Fix your eyes on Him and the eternity that is just around the corner.

Final thoughts

- This whole passage is bursting with God's triune love and also His great love for us. Be encouraged tonight, knowing that our great High Priest, Jesus Christ Himself, is interceding for you, praying for your joy, protection, sanctification, unity, and for you to be with Him.

Closing prayer

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