

The Lord's Prayer-3: Christ Prays for His Own (John 17:10-19)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (9/4/2022)

Introduction

1. Jesus' prayer contains but one petition: "*Glorify your Son*" (John 17:1). The reason for the request is also stated: "*In order that your Son may glorify you.*" How does this work? The Father glorifies the Son:
 - a. By granting Him authority to give eternal life to those chosen by God in eternity past and given to Christ to redeem (v. 3).
 - b. By accepting His perfect obedience to finish the work of redemption (v. 4).
 - c. By returning the glory He had with the Father in Heaven before coming to earth (v. 5).
2. In the previous message, the focus was on the *hour* referenced in verse 1. The message also showed that Jesus demonstrated His faithful obedience to the Father in rightly using His authority by giving eternal life to the chosen.
3. Next, Jesus turned the focus of His prayer to the consequences of His giving eternal life to those given Him. In this section, Jesus pressed His *argument* in support of His original petition—"Glorify your Son."

I. The Son's Argument

1. Jesus manifested the Father's *name* to His chosen ones. In this instance, *name* signifies His divine character with respect to humanity. The disciples *kept* His *Word* (*logos*, the body of truth—the doctrine of God in His divine character; v. 6; Isaiah 52:6; John 14:23, 24).
2. The result of keeping His Word is greater spiritual understanding: "*They know all that I have come from you*" (v. 7). This is further evidenced by the next statement: "*They received your words [rhema—teaching or instruction] and believed that you sent me*" (v. 8). The word translated *words* (*rhema*) is different from the *word* (*logos*) of verse 6. *Rhema* is teaching or instruction based on the Word (*logos*) of Truth (Romans 10:17; Exodus 20:1; 20:6). To be able to love Him and obey Him, they needed to know who God was and what He expected of them.

Every believer must understand that difference between God's revelation of Himself on Mount Sinai (old covenant) and Christ's revelation of the Father on Mount Zion (new covenant; Hebrews 12:18–24). Israel refused God's instruction (Jeremiah 17:23). Thus, God sent Jesus to gather a people for His name who would keep His instruction to love and obey Him (John 14:21). This law or instruction is only for the regenerate. It does not itself *save*. Only Christ's shed blood can do that. However, new-covenant believers are to be holy, and for that, they need instruction and enablement to keep His Word.

3. Jesus testified that He accomplished this with the Twelve and that He was *praying* (literally *asking*) for them but "*not the world*" (v. 9), because:
 - a. Only they, not the world, belonged to the Father (v. 9). John uses the *kosmos* (world) in two different ways. Jesus clearly places the *world* in a sharp antithesis with the disciples. Obviously, *world* is used here to identify the whole of the evil rebellion against the Most High. It is equally obvious that *world* in John 3:16 is not used in the same way (1 John 2:15; John 3:17; 1 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1)?
 - b. The disciples also belonged to Jesus because the Father gave them to Him *in trust*, and thus, by keeping the trust, He was glorified in them. (v. 10). Jesus asked the Father to glorify Him so that He

would glorify the Father (vv. 1, 2). Now the Father must cause the Son's work to succeed and thereby glorify Him. Alone in the world, they would face both temptation and hostility (vv. 11–19). This put responsibility on the Father for the redeemed—that they be kept.

II. The Son's Request (vv. 11–19)

1. Jesus requested, “*Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me*” (v. 11). God is addressed as “*Holy Father,*” unique to the Gospel of John, combining God's awesome transcendence and familial intimacy (Matthew 11:25).
 - a. The foundation of the relationship Christ and His followers have with the Father is *holiness* (Leviticus 11:44; 1 Peter 1:14–16; Matthew 5:48). Holiness as opposed to worldliness is the distinguishing mark of Christ's followers (2 Corinthians 7:1).
 - b. The Lord asked the Father to “*keep them in your name*” (v. 11). Keep them in your power (Psalm 54:1; 20:1; Proverbs 18:10). Should this request be understood as *locative* (*where* His own are kept) or *instrumental* (*how* they are kept)? The AV has “*Holy Father, keep through thine own name*” The locative view (ESV, NASV) has the keeping *in* His name, that is, “in loyalty to You.”
2. The purpose that Jesus gives for His request is seen in four areas:
 - a. *Unity* in covenant oneness: “*That they may be one, even as we are one*” (v.11). It involves the covenantal work of Christ to save a people by union—making them one with Him—“*in Christ*” (Ephesians 1:3, 9, 12, 20; 2:6, 7, 10, 13).
 - b. *Joy* in obedient allegiance to the Word (Romans 14:17). The present emotional state of the disciples was one of grief and sorrow at the news of Jesus' imminent departure. Jesus desired that in His absence, His own would experience joy to the fullest. God desired the happiness of His creatures, but sin perverted happiness by seeking it anywhere but in God. Salvation restores joy, and selfless service to Christ deepens it (15:11).
 - c. *Protection* to guard them while they remained in a hostile world (1 John 5:18). So many great promises are found in the Word that His own can claim, such as Psalm 91:14.
 - d. *Sanctification* so that they may be His ambassadors to the world (Romans 6:19; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:13).

Lessons

1. We must pray the Lord's petition. “*Glorify Your children in order that Your children may glory You,*” which means “grant grace and power to enable them to do Your will so that Your Kingdom comes to them, and Your will is done on earth as it is in heaven.”
2. We are kept, not by self-effort or resolve, but in His name (in the character of Him whose steadfast love and faithfulness to His own is established by covenant promises).
3. Our security rests in the transaction of Christ with His Father, not our efforts.
 - a. He keeps us by His faithful obedience to His Father's purpose.
 - b. His Father keeps us in answer to His Son's asking. The Father always hears Him (John 11:41, 42).