

Jesus' Prayer For You

April 17, 2011

PSL: Prayer As A Second Language- Part 6

Andy Wirt (andy@clearviewgrace.com)

Introduction:

One of the most encouraging experiences as a Christian is to be prayed for by someone else – and not only prayed for but prayed with. When someone prays for you in your presence, *something special happens in your heart: you feel warmed and encouraged.* There's a sense of intimacy, both between you and the other person and between you and God. It's like you're knocking on heaven's doors together.

It is a blessing for us to pray with and for each other... **it is whole other amazing blessing to know that Jesus is praying for you!** *Do you know that Jesus prays for you?* Do you know that he goes to the Father on your behalf and on our behalf? Listen to these verses:

- **Hebrews 7:25:** ²⁵ *Therefore he is able, once and forever, to save^[a] those who come to God through him. **He lives forever to intercede with God on their behalf.***
- **Romans 8:34:**
³⁴ *Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and **he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us.***

Robert McCheyne once said this: *"If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no difference. He is praying for me."*

I invite you now to imagine Jesus praying for you. I want you to close your eyes and to picture yourself sitting with Jesus. I want you to picture him praying for you. As you picture Jesus praying for you, eyes closed, I'm going to read our Scripture passage. Listen to Jesus, as he prays these words.

Read John 17.

In this passage, which is Jesus' final moments with his disciples before being arrested, Jesus prays for his disciples. Knowing that he will be leaving them, praying for them is the best way to prepare them. Jesus prays for five things on their behalf and our behalf.

Before we go any further, I want to make sure all of us are aware: *This prayer is for you and for me today!* Listen to what Jesus said:

John 17:20

²⁰ *"I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message."*

5 Ways Jesus Is Praying For You:

1. “God, Give Them Protection”

John 17:11, 14-16

¹¹ *Now I am departing from the world; they are staying in this world, but I am coming to you. Holy Father, you have given me your name; now protect them by the power of your name so that they will be united just as we are.*

¹⁴ *I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁵ I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. ¹⁶ *They do not belong to this world any more than I do.**

Jesus has spent His time, energy, and wisdom in training, primarily 12 men. He’s already lost one (Judas). Now, He is leaving. He will die, be resurrected, and return to Heaven. His time on earth with His disciples is done. School is over. The apprenticeship has been completed. The students are about to graduate. Jesus is resting His legacy...the growth of God’s Kingdom...the building of the Church...to 11 men...common men...uneducated men... So, what does He pray?

He asks God to protect them. He asks God to protect us. What was He requesting protection against for His followers? He asks God to *keep them safe from the Evil One*. Peter warns his readers (1 Peter 5:8):

⁸ *Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.*

Jesus knew that the intention of the Evil One is to devour. I find that a lot of Satan’s schemes can be described in words that begin with “D”. He wants to **destroy**. He wants to **disrupt** your plans for good for God. He wants to **discourage** you in your life and mission. He was to **distract** you from loving God and people with all the attractive things of the world. He wants you to **distrust/doubt** God. He wants you **depressed**. He wants you to **disobey**... We could go on...

Jesus wants God to protect His followers from all of this. Eugene Peterson translates the word “protect” as “guard.” This is the picture of a loving parent looking over their child as their child walks for the first time. You let him go, he might fall, but you are trying to protect Him. **(EVER CATCH YOURSELF LOOKING FOR SHARP CONERS?)**

Satan’s work comes in the context of our world. Notice, though, what Jesus says. This is so significant. He asked His Father for protection...but He did not ask Him to take them out of the world. *The world is exactly where He wanted them. That is where their mission was. That is where the people were that needed to hear the message of Jesus that these followers would carry. Removing them would have sacrificed their mission...what they needed was protection...not extraction.*

What protects us best in the world? Jesus said it was God’s Word. Notice, He says: protect them by the power of your name¹⁴ *I have given them your word....*

It is like Jesus is asking God, *Father...help them to remember what they have been taught. Help them to remember your words...your Name...your power... Protect them, preserve them, move them forward by remembering You and the words you gave me to teach them.*

David knew this principle. He said (Psalm 119:11)

¹¹ *I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.*

The best way for us to be primed for God's protection and defend ourselves against being devoured by Satan is simply to be a student of God's Word. Know what it says... know the promises there to lay hold of...live in hope.

Illustration:

Seth- *I believe my teacher more than you, Dad.* **WE NEED TO PRAY PROTECTION FOR OUR KIDS!**

2. "God, Give Them Unity"

There is a Peanuts cartoon where Lucy demands that Linus change TV channels, threatening him with her fist if he doesn't. "*What makes you think you can walk right in here and take over?*" asks Linus. "*These five fingers,*" says Lucy, "*Individually they're nothing but when I curl them together like this into a single unit, they form a weapon that is terrible to behold.*" Linus' response: "*Which channel do you want?*" Then he turned away and looked at his fingers and said: "*Why can't you guys get organized like that?*"

Jesus wanted His followers to be an organized unit for missional effectiveness. John 17:11c

...now protect them by the power of your name so that they will be united just as we are.

It is interesting that Jesus asked God to protect His followers **so that** they will be united. This tells me that Jesus knew that one of the primary ways the Evil One would try and harm Jesus followers was to distract, discourage, destroy, and devour them (all those "d" words) **BY** stirring up divisions between them. So, not only did Jesus pray for protection...he prayed for unity.

It is also important for us to notice that Jesus gave the perfect example of unity and a significant rationale for unity. Listen to this:

John 17:21-23

²¹ *I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.*

²² *"I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one."* ²³ *I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.*

What is the best example of unity? What is our model? What are we to exemplify?
Christ-followers...the Church...each of us here today... (remember this prayer was not just for the 11 disciples...it was for us) *are to be one...just as Jesus and the Father are one.* Wow... what a standard. Jesus said His Father was in Him, and that He was in His Father. Jesus wants us to be also in Him and the Father...all unified.

What is the reason/rationale/significance of unity? ... so that the world will believe you sent me...May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them. What Jesus was saying is that ***unity enhances mission. Jesus is saying that our mission will be more effective when the world sees believers unified together and with Jesus/Father.***

The reason unity is crucial to witness and mission is that *in a world defined by conflict, broken relationships, dysfunctional families, and fractured and nearly non-existent communities, unity is a sign that God is at work because no human effort can accomplish it.*

Unity cannot be achieved by our own efforts. Our unity emerges as a result of our remaining in Jesus – by being focused on him. A.W. Tozer in *The Pursuit of God* asks “*Has it ever occurred to you that one hundred pianos all tuned to the same fork are automatically tuned to each other? They are of one accord by being tuned, not to each other, but to another standard to which each one must individually bow. So one hundred worshipers [meeting] together, each one looking away to Christ, are in heart nearer to each other than they could possibly be, were they to become ‘unity’ conscious and turn their eyes away from God to strive for closer fellowship.*”

Unity wasn't just important to Jesus. Listen to Paul:

- **1 Corinthians 1:10 (New Living Translation)**
¹⁰ *I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.*
- **Philippians 2:2 (New Living Translation)**
² *Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.*

Listen to Peter:

- **1 Peter 3:8 (New Living Translation)**
⁸ *Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters.^[a] Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude.*

What does unity in the church look like?

- I don't think it means you agree with the way everything is done.
- It doesn't mean that things are perfect- or that you can't see things that need improvement.
- It doesn't mean you like everyone.

It does mean:

- You have committed yourself to fulfilling a vision not just benefitting from the best programs.
- You refuse to speak unless it follows Ephesians 4:29: *Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.*
- Your best is going towards building the church. 1 Peter 4:10: ¹⁰ *God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.*
- *Our collective mission supersedes my personal preferences.*
- You verbalize concerns through proper channels.
- You practice love, forgiveness, grace-giving, allowance for others' faults, etc.

Illustration:

Students on bus 47... kindness and respect (positive attitudes) is contagious. Other students... ambivalence is contagious.

Application:

Friends, the last several months haven't been easy ones for ClearView...or for my family. We've definitely hit some turbulence as we grow and find our footing as a new church. I know that if you've been around here for a while...you notice this too.

If you have questions, or suggestions OR ALSO stories of how God is working...would you share these with me? I'm willing to hear what God is saying to your heart. If you have something that is causing anxiety...maybe it would help for us to talk about it. I'll make the time...

Friends, I ask for your unity today. We have an exciting vision. We have a transcendent mission together. God is working in people's hearts here. We'll be effective in accomplishing our mission to the degree that we remain in Jesus and we show real love and camaraderie together.

3. "God, Give Them Purity"

John 17:17, 19

¹⁷ *Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth.* ¹⁹ *And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth.*

Look at the rich theology in this verse. Two times Jesus made reference to God "making us holy by (His) truth" and He also said that he was giving Himself "as a holy sacrifice" to make this possible. Wow! Jesus lays out the whole Gospel right there for us.

- The Bible says all of us have a sin problem. None of us are righteous. Romans 3:23 says: *For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.* Romans 6:23 communicates the punishment for our sin: *For the wages of sin is death...* Put simply- we've got a problem. And, Jesus

knows it because He asks GOD to make us holy... *He knows we can't do it on our own.*

- What it takes is Jesus' sacrifice. We are coming up on Good Friday. On that day, we remember Christ's death. This is so important because we can't have holiness, we can't have righteousness, we can't connect with God now and for eternity without Jesus "giving Himself as a Holy sacrifice so that we can be made holy by God's truth". ***Would you take time Friday and be thankful?***
- Through God's truth we learn about our sin. We read about Jesus' sacrifice. And we also learn what to do. Romans 10:9-10 (New Living Translation)
⁹ *If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* ¹⁰ *For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved.*
- When we believe in Jesus, accept His sacrifice for our sins, we take on His righteousness and are made holy in God's eyes. Amazing. The miracle...the beauty...the wonder...the love...the power of God's plan of redemption.

This next week we celebrate Easter. I have two questions for you as we get ready to celebrate Easter.

*One, are you ready to celebrate? **Have you accepted that gift of God's love?** How do you do that? Simply by telling Him. It's a relationship. You talk to Him. You say to Jesus Christ "I understand now. Thank you for dying on the cross for me. Please forgive me. Please help me follow you. Lead my life." If you haven't yet made this commitment but God is stirring in your heart, I want to give you the opportunity to do that in prayer at the end of our time today.*

If you've already accepted that gift of Christ's love, here's the second question.

Who are you sharing the gift with? The fourth thing Jesus prayed was that God would give them mission.

4. "God, Give Them Mission"

We tend to fall into a trap of thinking that church is a part of our lives on Sunday morning and is a place we go to. But, to Jesus... He had spent time with His disciples for a reason. He was releasing them. He was sending them out. He had invested in them...so that they could now go and share His love and Truth with others.

The same is true for us. We are, by nature, to be sent ones. We are to gather regularly as a spiritual family and then go out.

Listen to what Jesus prays for in verse 18:

¹⁸ *Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world.*

Why is this so important? Because:

²⁴ Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began!

Jesus cares so much about people that He sends us...He wants us to tell them about Jesus' love and God's plan of redemption to they can go and be with Him. What are we to tell them?

³ And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth.

When Jesus prayed, He did not pray that people would figure out God's plan on their own. He prayed that we would understand that we have a mission...that we have been sent.

Friends...this is why we are investing so much in SpringFest next weekend. I know this is a lot of work. Believe me, I've spent a lot of time on this myself. A lot of energy. A lot of planning. Sometimes I sit in my office in the quiet and I ask myself...*why are we doing this?*

Two reason keep coming to mind:

- People. **SEE PICTURES OF CROWDS AT SPRING FEST. We want to go to them...we are sent ones! We must go to their turn to begin relationship...**
- Teamwork. **SEE PICTURES OF TEAM AT 2010 SPRINGFEST.**

We're still looking for a few more smiling faces. So many of you have signed up to help. Thank you. Maybe you know a friend or parent that can help us as well? **Pray for a great day! See back of your program for how to pray.**

Friends, this next week is Easter. There is no better week in the year to invite people to church. I encourage you, invite people to church this next week. *They are far more willing to be invited than we are to invite them.* We're a little nervous about it. But the truth is people are looking for people who care about them that much.

Illustration:

LifeWay Research Study.

Application:

Who do you need to invite this week? Who needs to hear the incredible good news? God is sending you.

Take 3 post cards. Write a name, right now, on the top of each. Pray. Give them out.

5. “God, Give Them Joy”

John 17:13-14

¹³ *“Now I am coming to you. I told them many things while I was with them in this world so they would be filled with my joy. ¹⁴ I have given them your word.*

Living as Jesus prayed is the key to joy. We maintain a close relationship with God as we seek protection from the evil one in Him. We maintain and reap the benefits of living in community with other believers. We live in purity- taking advantage of Jesus’ forgiveness. We fulfill our mission and have the satisfaction of knowing we are on task with God in the building His Kingdom. Sounds like a good life to me.

Finally... we revel in Jesus’ love.

²³ *I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.*

Join us at the PSL Round-table! ☺

This Week’s ClearView Challenge:

- Read through this weeks’ Bible reading- the Easter story from John.
- When you meditate on the Easter story, *why did Jesus pray this prayer?*
- Pray Jesus’ requests for your own life.
- Invite someone to attend ClearView’s Easter Gathering with you.