

The First Section of the Lord's High Priestly Prayer

John 17:1-10

John 17:1-10 - *"Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, ² as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. ⁴ I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work that You have given Me to do. ⁵ And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory that I had with You before the world was.*

⁶ "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. ⁷ Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. ⁸ For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. ⁹ "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. ¹⁰ And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them."

Background Notes

John 17 is known as the "High Priestly Prayer" of Christ because most of the prayer is intercession on behalf of His own beloved followers. It is sometimes called "the Lord's Prayer," but this title is seldom used because it would be confused with the more familiar "Lord's Prayer" ("Our Father who Art in Heaven...").

This High Priestly prayer is the longest recorded prayer of Jesus Christ. Most likely it was given in the upper room on the occasion of the Last Supper. It was not given in the Garden of Gethsemane, because John 18:1 tells us that *"when Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered."* So the High Priestly prayer of our Lord was *not* part of our Lord's communication with God the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane.

A brief outline of the prayer would be as follows:

Verses 1-5 - prayer concerning Himself

Verses 6-19 - prayer concerning the apostles

Verses 20-26 - prayer concerning future believers

The prayer opens in verse 1: *"Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You..."*

In earlier chapters of John, we frequently heard the Lord say, “*My hour has not yet come.*” That hour had now arrived. The “hour” in which He would go to the cross and die for the sins of the world had finally come.

The Lord’s request was, “*Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You...*” The Lord’s desire was that throughout this “hour” God would be glorified - both the Father and the Son. He asked that the Son would be sustained in His sufferings on the cross, as He suffered for the sins of the world. He also prayed that the Father’s righteous wrath against sin would be satisfied, and that the holiness and righteousness of God would be maintained through the Son’s death and resurrection.

Doctrinal / Teaching Points

1. God the Father was glorified in the finished work of Christ.

In verse 4 the Lord said to His Father, “*I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.*” Both the earthly life and the sacrificial death of the Lord are in view in this verse. The Lord was praying as if His work on the cross has already been completed. So the “finished work” mentioned here includes the Lord’s public ministry as well as His sacrifice for sin on the cross.

The Lord accomplished everything that the Father had given Him to do in His public ministry. Not all the lame people were made to walk, not all the blind people were made to see. But all the work that the Father had given the Son to do was accomplished - and in that finished work God had been glorified.

Then the Lord Jesus accomplished all the work that the Father had given Him to do in His death. His perfect sacrifice was sufficient to take away the sin of the world and maintain the righteousness of God, and in that finished work God was glorified. God the Father was glorified in the finished work of Christ.

2. God the Son was glorified in the ongoing lives of the apostles.

In verse 10 the Lord said to His Father: “*And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them.*”

In what way was the Lord Jesus glorified in this group of men who would actually forsake Him and run away in just a few hours? How could the Lord possibly be glorified in them?

a. The Lord was glorified in the salvation of the disciples. The disciples were saved and taken out of the realm of this world’s system (v2,6,9). These “trophies of grace” brought glory to the Lord! In the same way, we bring glory to Christ when we come to Him for salvation.

Trophies signify great achievement, and believers are like trophies that are placed in the Lord Jesus Christ’s “trophy case”! We are evidence of His great accomplishments – we’re on display as trophies of His grace to the whole intelligent universe!

Verse 3 is one of the great salvation verses in the Gospel of John: “*And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent...*” This verse gives us the basics of what eternal life is all about – to know God, the only true God. Not just to know **about** God, but to **know God**.

“And Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” Not just to know **about** the historical Jesus of Nazareth, but to really **know Jesus Christ**, the One who was sent from Heaven. Jesus Christ is God, and He came from Heaven to accomplish the work of our salvation. These are the basics of what eternal life is all about.

b. The Lord Jesus was glorified in the growth of the disciples as believers.

Verses 6-8: “*I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.*”

This is not only saving knowledge, or knowledge leading to salvation. This is more than salvation. This is growth! And the Lord Jesus was glorified in the growth of the disciples as believers.

Think of the lack of understanding that the disciples showed so often. How could the Lord be glorified in them? Look at Mark 8:17-20, for example. “*Jesus said to them, “Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts still hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears, but fail to hear? And don't you remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of pieces did you pick up?” They said to Him, “Twelve.” “Also, when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of pieces did you pick up?” And they said, “Seven.” He said to them, “Do you still not understand?”*”

When we think of the disciples' lack of understanding of the Lord's word and the Lord's works, and when we think of the way James and John wanted to call down fire from Heaven on the Samaritans, and when we think of the jealousy among the disciples, and their desire for prestige about who would have a greater place in the Lord's kingdom - well, the truth is, they sound a lot like us, don't they?

The fact that the Lord said He was glorified in these disciples should be very encouraging to us, for sure! We should be encouraged that the Lord said, “*And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them*”(v10). When we think of the disciples' shortcomings and failures, we can all identify with them. And yet the Lord said He was glorified in them! And what a blessing - the Lord can say the same about us!

I'm sure the Lord had the disciples' future lives in mind as well. He was thinking of the future potential of this group of men, as well as their present devotion. But it's encouraging to know that God the Son was glorified in the lives of the disciples!

3. God the Father and God the Son are now glorified together in Heaven.

“And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was”(v5).

While the Lord was here on the earth, His pristine glory was veiled. There was no halo of light around the Lord's head to identify Him as God. But the Lord has now resumed His glory in Heaven, and now God the Father and God the Son are glorified together in Heaven. And the glory of both the Father and the Son is enhanced, because God's great plan of redemption for mankind has been eternally accomplished.

I want you to notice: the eternal distinction of the Persons of the Godhead and the Lord's eternal Sonship are clearly seen in verse 5. *“And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”* Do you follow the doctrine of that verse? This is heavy, but it is fantastic! There always was the Father and the Son; there always will be the Father and the Son.

The clear distinction of Persons in the Godhead and the eternal Sonship of God the Son are seen in this verse. There always was the Father and the Son, and there always will be the Father and the Son. The only difference is that when the Son became Man, He became Man forever. He was fully God and fully Man when He was on earth, and He is fully God and fully Man today in Heaven. But in Heaven He is now glorified in His humanity. God the Father and God the Son are now glorified together in Heaven.

Practical Application

Did you ever think of yourself as one of God's personal possessions?

“I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them”(v9-10).

We belong to God! We are God's personal possession! **God loves us** - and we are special and precious to Him!

Now what do we do if someone starts to mess around with one of our special personal possessions? We become very protective, right? We do our best to keep them safe.

Recently I traded in our old car for a new one. I was very protective of this vehicle (well, at least up until the first scratch!). One day I looked out my office window and saw some of my students playing football in the parking lot near my new car - so I rushed out to protect that car! I didn't want any footballs or Frisbees or large bodies anywhere near that car! That car was my valuable personal possession. I had paid a lot for it, so I was going to make sure that it didn't get hurt.

In the same way, we are God's beloved personal possession - and He is very protective of us. No one can hurt us and get away with it! Now I suppose I should have used a parent/child relationship as an illustration about protecting beloved possessions - that would have been better than the car illustration! But either way, you see the point and the application: Did you ever think of yourself as one of God's precious personal possessions?