

## **October 16<sup>th</sup> 2011: In the Prayer Room With Jesus : John 17:1-5**

It had been quite an evening for Jesus and his disciples. They had in secrecy gone to that upper room and there Jesus had washed their feet. And as they shared in the Passover meal he had told them that one of them would betray Him. Then Judas left and the evening became even more sombre as Jesus spoke of his coming death. He then taught them many things. Told them of hard times in the future until He finally said as recorded in John 16:33, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart I have overcome the world."

"I have overcome the world!" The disciples may not have understood what he meant, but they would have heard the note of triumph in His voice as He said it. And perhaps, with their hearts just a little lifted, they then followed Him as He left the room to walk towards Gethsemane.

Then it would seem, in a quiet place along the way He paused to pray to His Father. He entered the prayer room, and He graciously allowed His disciples, and through John, us too, to enter it with Him. John 17:1 says that Jesus looked toward heaven—toward the beautiful night sky—and said, "Father".

That beautiful word that proclaimed so well the depth of connection between Jesus and His God. A connection that Jesus promised would be ours too, simply because of our trust in Him.

Straightaway here in John 17, Jesus shows us something that is so important about praying to our God. That prayer is communicating with One whom we love, honour, reverence and cherish. We do not come with a list in our hands of wants, to a Storekeeper. Neither do we come with a record of demands to a judge. We come to a father whom we love because He first loved us, and whom we revere because He is Almighty God.

*There has been times when I have sat near someone as they have prayed, and they have prayed in such a sincere and intense way that I have felt at that moment, that they have really connected with God, and in some mysterious way have drawn me along with them. And the reality of that connection has sent shivers through me—feelings of immense joy and peace. And it was as though the content of the prayer was nowhere near as important as the presence of God as our Father there with us.*

To the most ultimate height, that's what those disciples would have felt as Jesus prayed and they listened. The experience of joining Jesus in the privacy of the prayer room became for them all a lesson in prayer as the vehicle by which we truly connect with the Fatherhood of God. And as they listened those disciples would have noticed that after Jesus had opened that connection between Himself and God by the wonderful word, 'Father', He then began by praying for Himself.

***"Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you."***

The hour is now come—a reference to all that would now follow. The predictions He had made about His arrest, abuse, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection were about to be fulfilled. The purpose for which He had come into this world would reach its zenith as he would be lifted up upon a cross. He comes now to meet that hour with the confidence that He has already overcome the world. Such confidence does not save Him from the knowledge of the immense suffering that lay ahead for Him, and He would battle with that in the privacy of Gethsemene, but He never had any doubt that He would succeed there on the cross in 'disarming the powers and authorities and triumphing over them' as Paul declared later on in Colossians 2:15.

Yet knowing that all this was ahead the prayer that Jesus prayed for Himself was not only for His own sake but for the ultimate sake of His Father.

Glorify me, your son, so that I may, as your Son glorify you.

Jesus wanted His Father to glorify Him so that He could do what He was about to do:- glorify the Father. And He would glorify the Father by giving eternal life to all those who God would give to Him. All those who would come to believe in Him, including us here who have trusted in Him as Saviour.

*Imagine a whole Nation of people who are steadily being destroyed by a terrible sickness that affects everyone of them, and by intense poverty that is daily killing them off. You have the power and the means to change all that but by the unchangeable rules that you have commissioned and support, you are not allowed to intervene yourself. The only way you can help is through an agent who, though one of them, now lives with you and is therefore free from their terminal situation. For Him to go to them would*

*mean immense suffering and death for him, before that gift of life could be imparted to that Nation.*

*Imagine now the moment when your agent who you care for so much, comes before you and says, the time is right. Now send me into that place of death and suffering. Commission and enabled me. Put your seal of ownership on me so that I can now fulfill your heart's desire and give life to this whole nation of people in your name. Then your goodness will be seen and your praise proclaimed.*

In a much greater and deeper sense that is what we see Jesus doing here.

But what Jesus does here in this prayer goes way beyond what a mere agent could ever do because Jesus is God Himself. That's why He uses this word "Glorify".

You see the Jews knew about Glory. Back in the OT they had a special term for it. They called it the Shekinah of God. It was the visible manifestation of God power and majesty. When they travelled through the wilderness they would set up the tabernacle or tent Temple. And Moses would go there to meet with God. And when God came this great cloud would rest upon the tabernacle and that was the visible manifestation that God was with them. That was the Glory.

Then Jesus was born. The Son of God in human flesh. And as He ministered on earth He did miraculous works that set Him apart from all others. And John the Apostle and close friend wrote of Jesus in John 1:14

***<sup>14</sup> The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.***

The visible manifestation of God's power and majesty was obvious in the life of Jesus. Indeed Jesus reminds the Father of this in His prayer for He says in John 17:4

***<sup>4</sup> I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.***

But as He prayed Jesus well knew that there was a greater manifestation of God's power still to come. A greater manifestation of glory that would exalt Jesus as The Son Who excelled in such Glory before the world began.

And that visible manifestation which Jesus asked for would happen through the passion of the cross and the triumph of the resurrection. There the Glory of God would be visibly expressed in a way that this world had never seen before. And so it was!!

The Glory was expressed in the darkness that covered the land as they crucified Him. In the tearing of that great curtain in the Temple from top to bottom. In the earthquake that released the bodies of holy people who were raised to life and after Jesus' resurrection went into Jerusalem and appeared to many. In the words of Jesus to the dying thief—today you shall be with me in paradise. In our Lord's final cry, "It is finished" and "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit". In the cry of that centurion who said, Surely He was the Son of God. In the Angel's pronouncement, "He is not here He is risen". And especially in every sinner that has found in Christ Jesus forgiveness and reconciliation to the Father which is eternal life.

That was the glory Jesus prayed for, but not for Himself we notice. He prayed that the Glory would be manifested through Him on the cross so that what He achieved there—the victory over death and sin that He gained for us—the power and the freedom and the eternal life won for us through His death and resurrection. Would be seen as a manifestation of the power of God. That it would be seen as the achievement of the Father and that all praise and glory would be given to Him.

It is surely here that we are given the greatest lesson in prayer by our Saviour. For suddenly we realize that the whole aim of His prayer was that His Father's plan and purpose for this world would come to fruition through His suffering and death, and that The Father would then receive all the praise for saving this world and its people from the power of evil.

He could have asked for so many things for Himself, but He didn't. He asked for that which would bring honour and praise to His Father.

So what about our prayers? We are encouraged to pray for many things including ourselves but surely our first prayer too, should be like this prayer of Jesus.

Where we don't ask God to make things easy for us or to keep us from pain and suffering as a priority. But we ask Him to so reveal the outworking of His power in our lives to others—to show that something extra we have as

Christians when life isn't fair and when things go wrong and we suffer. His peace evident in us when stresses come. His perseverance enabling us to go the extra mile. His love, patience, forgiveness when such is beyond our own inclination.

To do all this and more so that others will be drawn to Him through our lives, discover Him as their God, and That God Almighty—Father, Son and Holy Spirit, will receive all the Praise and Glory, Power and Honour.

This morning are you willing to pray such a prayer? To ask God to manifest His glory through your life and to do whatever It takes to use you to touch lives for Him? It's not an easy prayer to pray, but remember that God is faithful. He will give you all you need to overcome in His name. And it is only when we have the courage to pray such a prayer as the Saviour's prayer, will we become the force in the world for God, for the Gospel, for our Lord, that He wants us to be.

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**Above all Powers 75**

Communion

Introduce Just Prayer and talk about the most glorious thing God has ever done.

**Here I am to Worship 72**

**All heaven declares 78**

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**We've a story to tell to the Nations** verses 1&4 400 Baptist Hymnal

Announcements and Offering

Bible reading Romans 12:1-5

**Jesus God's Righteousness Revealed 45**

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