The High Priestly Prayer Of Jesus (Part 2) – John 17:6-19

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John 17:6-19. We're in the middle of Jesus' high priestly prayer, the night before he went to the cross. High priestly, because he's interceding on our behalf. Offering prayers and supplications to God the Father for his glory and our good.

And last week, in v1-5, we found that he prayed for himself; for his glory. Because he accomplished his glorious work to give us glorious life. A personal relationship with the triune God forever and ever.

Now, in v6-19, he prays for *us*. Lots of things for us. So we're going to take two weeks in this section, and then a fourth in v20-26. And as we do, I hope you continue to read it and think about it. Read it and apply it.

[6] "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. [7] Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. [8] For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you [in addition to everything he said]*; and they have believed that you sent me. [9] I am praying for them.* (ESV) Let's stop there.

When he says in v9 – *I am praying for them,* he's referring to believers.

Jesus prayed for believers (v6-19)

The thrust of this entire section. Believers then and believers now. Those in front of him and those who followed.

Including us. Because everything he says in these verses applies to us. Think of it! 2000 years ago, Jesus actually prayed for you. And me. Believers. Those he identifies in v6-8, six different ways.

Starting with . . .

– Those to whom he reveals the Father

That's the idea of manifesting his name in v6 – *"I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me.* His name, referring to the sacred label for who God is, what he said, and what he did. All his attributes, all his words, and all his work. A way of saying, "Father, I didn't just *mention* you, I revealed you."

Second, he prayed for . . .

– Those the Father gave him

"I have manifested your name [still in v6] *to the people whom you gave me out of the world.* Those the Father has chosen for himself, to be his people. His family. Chosen to be saved.

Third, he prayed for . . .

– Those who keep the faith

V6b – "*Yours they were, and you gave them to me* [he repeats himself]*, and they have kept your word."* As in, *God's* word, conveyed through Christ and his Apostles, to believe and keep believing. The faith once delivered. (Jude 3) They kept it, and Jesus prayed for them.

Including . . .

– Those who know the truth

[7] Now they know [because they keep the faith and believe] *that everything that you have given me is from you.* Which makes it true. True and truth. Because it's from *God*; the repository of all truth. Highlighting the fact that the more you believe and keep believing, the more *assured* you are of what you believe. *Assured* of the truth.

Fifth, he prayed for . . .

– Those who receive his word

[8] For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth [know for sure] *that I came from you.* He prayed for those who accept what he says as true. And accept *him* as true. The way, the truth, and the life. (14:3)

And last, he prayed for . . .

– Those who believe

V8c – *"I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me."*

Jesus prayed for believers. Described six different ways. And if that's you, he had you in mind. He prayed for us.

Then he says something completely unexpected. V9 again – *"I am praying for them."* [Period. Them and nobody else. And then, just to be clear, he says,] *"I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours."* He prayed for believers exclusively.

• **First and foremost (v9-10)**

I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me. Those who are saved. It couldn't be clearer.

And one of the *reasons* he prays so exclusively, one of three, is because we belong to God. I'm only praying *for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.* In other words, because we belong to the Father, and he's all about the Father, he's all about us.

Plus, we belong to Jesus as well. Second reason. V10 – *All mine are yours, and yours are mine.* Like a mom and dad think of their kids. They belong to both. Both parents. Except for the times when the girls were little, and as soon as I walked in the door Becky would say, "They're yours. I don't want to see 'em until dinner."

Fortunately God never says such a thing. Father or Son. We belong to both, and Jesus prays accordingly. First and foremost.

And third, Jesus is *glorified* in us. He prays for us because he's glorified in us. V10 again. *[10] All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them."* "I'm *exalted* in them. Magnified. Made much of."

No wonder he prays for us. No wonder we're at the top of his list. We belong to the Father who he's all about, we belong to the Son who's all about us, and the more we live for him the more we glorify him.

Now, does that mean he doesn't care about *unbelievers*? Doesn't *love* the world? *Never* prays for them? Not at all. He does and did. In the *last* part of his prayer. V20-26.

But his first love is the saints. His primary focus is believers. His main desire is for the church; to see the *church* flourish. And ours should be too. In our prayers.

So make sure. *Jesus* prayed for believers first and foremost, so . . .

Make sure you do too

Make sure *you* pray for the church first and foremost. Your brothers and sisters in Christ. Not only because they belong to God, and he's glorified in them, but that's who *Jesus* prays for.

Not that we should leave the world *out* of our prayers. Or turn a blind eye to them. Perish the thought. We ought to be burdened for them as well. Pray for them as well. Especially those in the world who have yet to *believe*.

But not at the expense of the church. Don't neglect the church. Don't forget the saints. Don't *reverse* your loves. Pray for the believers first and foremost. Just like Jesus.

And when you do, pray the same *things* he prayed. At the very least. Two of which are found in v11.

After saying he's glorified in us, he says in v11 – *And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you.* His heart was already home. *I am no longer in the world*. His heart was already home and his body was soon to follow. Which amplified his concern for us even more.

Saying in v11b – *Holy Father* [a unique term of reverence and respect]*, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.*

The first thing he prays is *keep them in your name*. A prayer . . .

• That God would preserve our faith (v11b)

How good is that? Jesus actually prayed that God would preserve our devotion to him. Preserve our allegiance to him. Our connection with him. *Keep them in your name.*

His name, once again representing *who* he is and *all* that he is, in his power and glory and saving grace. Power and glory and salvation that was entrusted to Christ as well. Did you see it?

Keep them in your name [Jesus said]*, which you have given me*. (11b) He's not talking about his name, the name "Jesus," he's talking about the Father's name. Yahweh. Which has been "given" to Jesus, in that the attributes it represents are shared by him. The attributes of power, and glory, and salvation.

But the point is that God the Father would exercise his powers of preservation and keep us close. Preserve our *belief*. Ensure our commitment. Seal our faith. And bind our wandering hearts to his. *"Holy Father, keep them in your name."*

Thank God for that. Thank God for such a prayer. Because coming from the heart of Jesus, you know God will answer. You know God will do it. It's certain.

Does he give us the responsibility to persevere as well? *Persevere* in our faith? Absolutely. It's a drum he pounds throughout John's Gospel. Believe and keep believing.

And praise God, by his power and authority, his name, he ensures that we will. He *preserves* us in our perseverance. He *preserves* us in our faith.

– Just like Jesus preserved the Disciples

That's the next verse. He prayed that God would preserve *us*, just like he preserved the Disciples. *[12] While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me.* [*I* preserved them, he said.] *I have guarded them* [spiritually]*, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.*

The *son of destruction* referring to Judas. Or *son of perdition* as it's often translated. Son of hell. Son of damnation. Referring to his destiny and destruction for all eternity.

But I also think it's a reference to his destructive *efforts*. To make a buck by *betraying* Jesus. And thereby destroy the Disciples as well. Destroy their faith.

But Jesus preserved them. Just like he prayed for God to preserve us.

And he succeeded with everybody . . .

– Except for Judas

Everybody except for one. V12b – *I have guarded them* [protected and preserved them]*, and not one of them has been lost* [lost to condemnation] *except the son of destruction.* And why? *That the Scripture might be fulfilled.* (12c) Several scriptures in fact.

Like the one he just quoted at The Last Supper a few hours earlier. (13:18) **Psalm 41:9** – *Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.* Jesus preserved every Disciple except for Judas, because of *that*. Because God wrote a book. God spoke. Which means it *had* to happen. It's part of Scripture.

So too the Scripture *Peter* quoted. A short time after Jesus' ascension. Saying in **Acts 1:16, 20** – *[16] "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. . . . [20] "For it is written in the Book of Psalms, "'May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it'; and "'Let another take his office.'* From Psalm 69:25 and 109:8.

Part of Scripture that it is, from the Holy Spirit himself, it had to happen. Judas *had* to be lost. Otherwise God's not God. His word isn't true. Or certain.

All of which means, the Bible is supreme. Even in the life of Jesus. Even Jesus considered this the lamp to his feet and light to his path. (Psalm 119:105) His path even to the point of death. Because the word of the Lord stands. What the Bible says, goes.

Including God's promise to never leave us or forsake us. (Heb 13:5) And his promise to complete the good work in us. (Phil 1:6) And return for us. *He who calls you is faithful, he will surely do it.* (1 Thess 5:24)

Talk about reasons to believe. Reasons for faith.

And Jesus prayed, recorded in the Scriptures, that God would preserve it. *Holy Father, <u>keep</u> them in your name.* Preserve their faith. A certainty.

So whatever you do . . .

Make sure you <u>keep</u> *it*

Make sure you *keep* the faith that God preserves. As in, apply it. Exercise it. Use it. Adhere to it. Cultivate it.

Not that you can lose it, but squander it. Not that you'll renounce it if you truly have it, but waste it. And take it for granted. Piddle with it. Bring shame to it.

And what a travesty that would be! What a missed opportunity. What a dishonor. To have God awaken faith in you, and preserve it for all eternity, only to see you take it for granted and presume on him.

Make sure you treasure your faith. Make sure you cling to it. Make sure you stretch it and exercise it. Increase it and strengthen it. Live it and keep it. Make sure.

That's the first of his two prayers in v11.

The other is . . .

- **That we would be <u>unified</u> (v11c)**

Jesus prayed that we would be unified. *[11b] Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, <u>that they may be one, even as we are one</u>.* That they would be unified, *we* would be unified, just like he and the Father are unified. *Even as*.

It's a prayer for our supernatural oneness. Our divine harmony. Our loving fellowship. Our close partnership. That we would be of one heart and one mind. Not just some of the time, but all the time. Not just when we feel like it, but when we don't. That's his prayer. Preserve their faith *that they may be one.*

So once again . . .

Make sure you <u>are</u>

Make sure you're unified. Make sure you're an ongoing *answer* to his prayer, instead of an ongoing agony. An ongoing heartache. After all, it's not just anybody praying, it's Jesus! Son of the living God! So make sure.

Make sure you're *one* with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Especially those with whom you worship. Those with whom you learn. Those with whom you grow. And minister. And serve. Out with "Lone Ranger Christianity" and in with unity.

Which means at least five things:

1. Make sure you're **connected**. If we're going to be unified, we have to be connected. As in part of a *ministry* of the church; part of a discipleship group. And, part of a service team. Instead of floating about on the periphery, not wanting to get too close, not wanting to be too known; make sure you're part of the core. Unity starts with being connected.

2. Make sure you're **here**. Every week. And every mid-week if called for. Dependable and faithful. Regular and devoted. No presence, or attendance; no oneness. Watching at home doesn't cut it. Listening in your car doesn't do it. That's like living apart from your *spouse* and thinking you're one. Make sure you're here.

3. Make sure you're **agreeable**.

If we're going to be unified, we have to be agreeable. Out with "Gregory Grumpy-pants" and in with "Anthony Agreeable." Instead of going about with an air of suspicion, cultivate an attitude of assent. A heart that says yes. A desire to get on board. And be on the same page.

Instead of looking for things wrong, rejoice in what's right. Instead of complaining, or murmuring, be at peace. Because if you're not agreeable, you're not unified. You're not one.

4. Make sure you're **supportive**. Unified means supportive. Even when there are things you're not very excited about. Things you might disagree with. Things you would do differently. Instead of *stewing* in your frustrations, and letting a bitter root take hold, take it to the Lord in prayer. Instead of talking to everybody you shouldn't, talk to somebody you should. Or let it go. Unity means support.

5. Make sure you're **invested**. Time, talent, treasure; effort; thoughts; prayers; everything. Make sure you're all in and go all out. Because *where your treasure is* [the treasure of your attention, and investment, and life]*, there will your heart be also.* (Luke 12:34) And if your *heart's* here, unity will follow.

Five ways to make sure we're one. Supernaturally one. In loving fellowship and close partnership. Just like the Father and Son.

Summary

And just like Jesus prayed. So whatever you do, make sure you're part of the answer.

<u>Prayer</u> – Father, in your kindness lead us to repentance. Forgive us for taking each other for granted. Forgive us for failing to pray. Forgive us for wasting our faith. Forgive us for living in the shadows. And forgive us for a lack of unity. Make us one, as you are one.

You Are Loved