

NEW SERIES: "The REAL Lord's Prayer"

Jesus Prays for Himself

John 17:1-5

Big Idea – Jesus came to do the Heavenly Father's work.

Here we have the greatest prayer ever prayed on earth and the greatest prayer recorded anywhere in Scripture. We are privileged to listen in as God the Son converses with His Father just as He is about to give His life as a ransom for sinners!

This prayer makes it clear that Jesus was and is the Overcomer. He was not a "victim"; He was and is the Victor! "Be of good cheer," He had encouraged His disciples; "I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

The word "world" is used 19 times in this prayer, so it is easy to see the connection between the prayer and John 16:33. As we understand and apply the truths in this profound prayer, it will enable us to be overcomers too. The progression of thought in this prayer is not difficult to discover. Jesus first prayed for Himself and told the Father that His work on earth had been finished (John 17:1-5). Then He prayed for His disciples, that the Father would keep them and sanctify them (John 17:6-19). He closed His prayer by praying for you and me and the whole church, that we might be unified in Him and one day share His glory (John 17:20-26).

Why did Jesus pray this prayer? Certainly He was preparing Himself for the sufferings that lay ahead. As He contemplated the glory that the Father promised Him, He would receive new strength for His sacrifice (Heb. 12:1-3).

But He also had His disciples in mind (John 17:13). What an encouragement this prayer should have been to them! He prayed about their security, their joy, their unity, and their future glory! He also prayed it for us today, so that we would know all that He has done for us and given to us, and all that He will do for us when we get to heaven.

1. What "hour had come" – vs. 1

(John 2:4; 7:6,8,30; 8:20, 59; 12:23, 27)

"Father, the hour is come," reminds us of the many times in John's Gospel when "the hour" is mentioned, beginning at John 2:4. Jesus had lived on a "divine timetable" while on earth and He knew He was in the will of the Father.

Psalms 31:15 says, "My times are in Thy hand"

2. What is "glorification?" vs. 1

(John 2:11; 11:40 John 12:23-25; 13:31-32)

The word glory is used eight times in this prayer, so it is an important theme. He glorified the Father in His miracles (John 2:11; 11:40) but He brought the greatest glory to the Father through His sufferings and death (see John 12:23-25; 13:31-32).

3. What is eternal life? – vs. 3

(John 17:3; 3:16; 5:24; 10:27, 28; 14:6-11; Romans 6:23; 10:9, 10, 13; Ephesians 2:8,9)

It is knowing God personally. Not just knowing about Him but having a personal relationship with Him through faith in Jesus Christ. We cannot know the Father apart from the Son (John 14:6-11). It is not enough simply to "believe in God"; this will never save a lost soul from eternal hell. James 2:19 says, "The devils [demons] also believe, and tremble". Our Lord's debate with the Jewish leaders (John 8:12ff) makes it clear that people may be devoutly religious and still not know God. Eternal life is not something we earn by works or deserve; it is a gift we receive by admitting we are sinners, repenting, and believing on Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone.

4. What was the work that Jesus finished? – vs. 4

(John 19:30; 10:17,18; Hebrews 9:24-28; 10:11-18)

Jesus anticipated His return to heaven when He said, "I have finished the work which You gave Me to do" (John 17:4). This "work" included His messages and miracles on earth (John 5:17-19), the training of the disciples for future service, but most of all, His sacrifice on the cross (Heb. 9:24-28; 10:11-18).

It is on the basis of this "finished work" that we as believers have the gift of eternal life (John 17:2-3). The word give is used in one form or another in this prayer at least 17 times. Seven times Jesus states that believers are the Father's gift to His Son (John 17:2, 6, 9, 11-12, 24). We are accustomed to thinking of Jesus as the Father's love gift to us (John 3:16), but the Lord affirms that believers are the Father's "love gift" to His beloved Son!

5. What glory did Jesus have before the world was? – vs. 5

(John 1:1; 12:23-25; 13:31,32; Philippians 2:6-11)

Jesus asked that His pre-incarnate glory be given to Him again, so that the Son might glorify the Father in His return to heaven.

Down from His Glory

Down from His glory, ever-living story,

Our Lord and Savior came and Jesus was His name;
Born in a manger, to His own a stranger;
A man of Sorrows, truth and agony.

O how I love Him, how I adore Him
My breath my sunshine, my All in All,
The great Creator became my Savior
And all God's fullness dwells forever in Him