

How Jesus Prays for Us

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[0 : 00] And as we keep those words open before us, let's pray for his help now. Let's pray. Our Father, how we thank you that this precious prayer of your Son, the Lord Jesus, is kept for us in your Word, the Bible.

We thank you for these words. And Father, as we turn our hearts to consider them, we pray that you would open our hearts. Lord, we know that we are not capable of understanding and taking to heart what you say unless you work in us by your Spirit, illuminating us, Lord, as to what you've said, Lord, making us new by your Holy Spirit.

And so we pray, please, that you would, that you would open up these glorious truths to us and that we might walk in them and live in them and grasp them, Lord, as you desire for us to do.

And so we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, I wonder whether you have ever had a prayer partner or whether you have a prayer partner now, someone with whom you share your heart and who knows your struggles, your needs, perhaps your sins, and who prays for you in those things.

Someone who's committed to praying for you, who lets you know that they are praying for you.

Someone, perhaps, who you set aside time and pray with for each other.

[1 : 38] And that is a brilliant thing. And it's something that should be going on in a church. But this morning, what John wants us to see in his gospel is not that that should be going on in our church, but that it is going on in our church.

That if you didn't know before, that you would know today that you do have a prayer partner. That if your trust is in the Lord Jesus, that he is praying for you.

That he does know how to pray for you. And his heart is set on praying for you. In fact, he has prayed for you before ever you were born.

And before even the world began, he prayed for you. We've come to the end of Jesus' farewell to his first followers on the night before he died.

And if you glance down, as we just read from verse 1, it says this. After Jesus had said this, he looked towards heaven and prayed. And it would be so easy for us, wouldn't it, at the end of this time, to look back at all that Jesus has said over the past three weeks and say, right, right, now that's what I have to go and do.

[3 : 01] I have to kind of work hard at those things. And in a sense, well, of course, that is what Jesus wants. That's why he said it. He's taught us how to believe in him while he is not here.

And so if we go on with our lives and we leave his words on the page where we found them, well, we will be in real spiritual danger. From a world that hates and a devil that prowls and a heart that is full of snares and full of sin.

All this I've told you, says Jesus, so you will not fall away. So these words are for us to live. Believe in him for eternal life. Love one another as he has loved us.

Love him by keeping his commands. Live in him as he lives in us. Trust in his promise of the Holy Spirit.

Pray to the Father anything in his name. He does want us, brothers and sisters, to live those things. But, but, here is what is wonderful about how Jesus finishes this night, this last night before he dies with his followers in chapter 17, that Jesus not only teaches us, but prays for us to have that life, eternal life.

[4 : 36] Jesus not only teaches us how to believe in him, but he secures for us and gives us all that we need to believe in him through his powerful prayers.

So then, what does Jesus pray to secure eternal life for you now and forever? Well, firstly, he prayed on earth, Father, glorify your Son.

Glorify your Son. See that there in verse 1? Jesus prayed, Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.

Now, on first reading, that might sound like a strange thing to pray for us. If I said to you, I'm praying for you, I'm praying that God would glorify me and give me glory.

You'd be right to ask, what sort of prayer is that? That prayer would not only be unbelievably selfish, but completely useless. You know, how would my glory help you in your sins and needs and struggles?

[5 : 50] Well, it wouldn't. But it wouldn't because I am not the Christ. See, the difference is that Christ's glory is wrapped up completely with our greatest good.

Because for him to be glorified is for us to gain eternal life. How does that work? Well, we're going to kind of follow the threads back, back, back to the point where Christ's glory and our eternal good are tied together.

Because Jesus asked the Father to glorify him in verse 2. Because, or for, he says, you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all that you have given him.

So John told us way back in chapter 3, this, the Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. God has put the history and the destiny of this world squarely.

He's rested it on Jesus' shoulders. But within that cosmic rule that Jesus has over everything, time and space and everything in it, God gave to his Son a kingdom of his very own, a chosen people, and charged him not to lose them, but to come into the world and save them.

[7 : 22] But when did that happen? When did the Father give this gift to his Son? Well, when is sort of the wrong word. Because the Father gave that gift to his Son, verse 5, in the glory I had with you before the world began, before time, before space, before the beginning, God loved his Son and gave him those who he was to come and save.

And the Son promised his Father to glorify him by coming to save us. Jesus says that's what he's now done. Mission accomplished, verse 4.

I've brought you glory on earth by finishing the work he gave me to do. And so he prays this prayer, glorify your Son that he might glorify ye.

And we sometimes call that, that pact, that promise, the covenant of redemption. A father and son conspiring together with the Holy Spirit before the beginning of the world to save a kingdom, a chosen people.

Now if that idea is kind of new to you or you're struggling to know how to handle that, it is very big. Just glance down these verses with me and just see that I'm not making that up, okay?

[8 : 48] Have a look there at verse 6 where Jesus prays, I've revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours, you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word.

Well then, verse 9, I'm not praying for the world, he says, but for those you have given me for they are yours. Or at the end of his prayer, verse 24, and just let these words sink in.

Father, Jesus prays, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you love me before the creation of the world.

Who is Jesus praying for? For those the Father gave him in the glory they shared before time began that they might be with him in the glory that they will share forever.

In this prayer, we are kind of overhearing a conversation that began before the beginning of time, which explains partly, doesn't it? Why it's so hard for us to take in. Because we're stepping in halfway through a conversation naturally.

[10 : 08] Okay, this is bigger than we can really get our heads around. And so our heads might feel full, but what I hope more than anything is that our hearts feel full and overflowing because of the vastness and the hugeness of what Jesus is praying, God's promise and plan to save those who would come to him and believe for eternal life.

He's loved us, brothers and sisters, with an everlasting love. From before the beginning of time, he loved you. To beyond the end of time, he will love you.

And we receive that love of God because Jesus came and kept his promise. because he came. He kept his promise. This is what Jesus is praying for us. Jesus is saying to the Father, okay, I've done my bit of the plan. So now it's time for you, Father, to do what you promised, which is glorify your Son.

And he's praying that for us because his glory is our ultimate good. For how will Jesus be glorified? How will Jesus be lifted up in this gospel?

[11 : 30] He has said he would be lifted up on a cross. And the hour of his glory would be the hour of his death. His return to glory will take him through his death, into the grave, through his resurrection, and back to the glory he had with the Father before the world began.

See, that is why ultimately Jesus is praying, Father, glorify me. He is praying that his death will do what God promised him it would do.

That his death would clear our debt before him. That his death would turn away his wrath against our sin. That his death would pay for our every failing.

That his death would rescue us fully and finally for eternal life. So that we will be with him in his glory.

That is why he prays this prayer. For me and ye that his death would work. Now perhaps that's left you a bit breathless.

[12 : 41] And it really should take our breath away. But if nothing else, friends, this prayer and the beautiful relationship that it shows us between Father and Son to us.

Well, it presses on us that eternal life is not really something that we get so much as someone that we know. What does Jesus say in verse 3?

He says, Now this is eternal life but they know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you've sent. I don't know how you maybe picture or imagine eternal life.

Perhaps something that's coming maybe way down the line. Maybe the world that we all want a perfect life in it to be free from sin to be free from suffering to be free from death.

But Jesus is saying that eternal life it is the gift but it is also the giver. Eternal life is not so much a what as a who because eternal life is knowing God himself through his son.

[13 : 53] It's resting our lives on that eternal bond between Father and Son and Spirit by resting our faith on Jesus' death and resurrection.

That is where we receive eternal life. that is eternal life. That is where we receive the everlasting love of God for us is in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

And folks when does that eternal life start? Well it is not at the end of your life. Jesus is saying eternal life began for you the minute you trusted in Jesus.

Well to put it really simply really simply Christianity is a relationship. It is a relationship. It's not so much a religion it's not rules it's not a right way to live a relationship with God through Jesus.

And Jesus says if you have that if you have that today you have everything eternal life there is nothing that you could want for if you are in relationship with the true and living God through him that is what he holds out to you today.

[15 : 17] You do not have to wait brothers and sisters for eternal life if you have Jesus because it is here now in him that is his gift that is what Jesus prayed would be yours when he prayed to the father please glorify your son.

He goes on secondly to pray please keep your people keep your people okay so in effect Jesus has prayed for us to become Christians well now he prays for us to stay Christians holy father verse 11 protect them by the power of your name the name you gave me so that they may be one as we are one protect them that's Jesus second prayer now if you've been with us in the upper room with Jesus these last few weeks you'll know how we need that prayer the disciples have been confused heartbroken troubled haven't they weak we are sinful and we will be tempted and persecuted says Jesus by the powers of darkness and by our sin and by the world that we live in it is not easy to follow Jesus and if you're a Christian here I don't need to tell you that because you live it every day you know the struggle you know the pressure you know what is in you how wonderful is it then to hear Jesus our Lord pray for us that God would keep us faithful to the very end that he prays for us that we would persevere and keep going with him you just notice that in the run up to that request in verse 11

Jesus here is praying for true genuine believers this is not people on the fringes this is the twelve apostles however much or little they've grasped those first followers in the room do know God and his son verse 6 he prays I've revealed ye to those you gave me out of the world they were yours you gave them to me and they've obeyed your word now they know that everything you've given me comes from you for I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them they know with certainty that I come from you and they believe that you sent me so there's just no doubt in Jesus mind is there that the guys with him in that room that night have eternal life that they really do know God and there's no doubt that Jesus is praying these prayers for them just that very next verse 9 I

pray for them I'm not praying for the world but those you have given me so perhaps we're kind of wondering well if God has given them to Jesus and

Jesus is not going to lose anyone that the father has given him then why pray this prayer isn't it a foregone conclusion that these people will make it to the end is this just a kind of redundant prayer that Jesus prays well no it's quite the opposite this prayer is why we cannot lose our salvation this prayer is why true believers will make it to the end because Jesus prayed that we would around the same time in Luke's gospel Jesus says to Simon Peter Simon Simon behold Satan demanded to have you that he might sift you like wheat but I have prayed for you I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail why did Peter not fall away from

Jesus because Jesus prayed that he wouldn't and so it is settled Peter did of course fall away for a time but Jesus says when you have turned back when you've turned back not if when you've turned back then strengthen your brothers Jesus keeps his people to the end and friends we need to get this into our blood stream that nothing with God is kind of an automatic on and off switch none of it is an impersonal formula in a spreadsheet that grace plus faith equals heaven or something or dry dusty words on a page Jesus prayer tells us that everything in our relationship with God is buried in his own living beating hearts Jesus is why any of this is true how is it that believers will be kept to the end and our faith won't fail well to put it differently why is it that you are a

[20 : 28] Christian today not because somebody told you from a pulpit or because you read it in a book or because you feel like that but because Jesus prayed that you would be Jesus prayed that you would be he is why anything that God promises us or says of us can be true of us we will be shaken and hurt and tempted we will stumble perhaps perhaps some of us will fall away for a time but I have prayed for you says Jesus that your faith may not fail and that is enough brothers and sisters for God to keep us forever faithful so what does Jesus pray for us then to keep us Christians well firstly protect them by the power of your name now what is in a name read that word lots of times in the

Bible what is God's name about well your name stands for who you are that's why it's so kind of hurtful when somebody forgets your name or gets your name wrong you feel that they don't really know you they don't really get you well that's God's name here God's name stands for all that he is and so Jesus is asking the father to kind of apply his whole being and everything that he is to protecting us and keeping us God spares no expense to keep you faithful to him and that is protection worth having forget the safety deposit box if God himself in all his being is keeping you guarding your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus then you are safe for eternity you do not have to doubt if your faith is in him secondly he prays for our unity so all the way through this prayer protect them so that they may be one as we are one

I asked you a minute ago why are you a Christian here today well here's another question why is our church here today why are we still here together we haven't all fallen out or split or separated off into different cliques and factions and groups why is that because Jesus prayed that we wouldn't that we might be one as he and the father and the spirit are one he personally holds our church together and so it follows doesn't it that our unity here at Bon Accord our unity as Christians in the world it depends on our closeness to Jesus you know I've really and we have as well big up church suite and we're doing true friendship in our midweek meetings we're going to hear more about that and I stand by that those things will help us grow together as a body but here's the condition of course those things will only help us to grow together as a body if we as a body are growing closer to Jesus because he he keeps us united thirdly how does he keep us well he prays that we would be sanctified or set apart verse 17 sanctify them in the truth your word is truth sanctify is just a word that means to be set apart as holy it's due with being holy and so finally Jesus is saying we keep going and he keeps us going by keeping us growing we keep growing in holiness as Christians we have been set apart remember Jesus spoke about the vine

Jesus said I am the vine and you are the branches and that we bear fruit as we grow in him and in that picture Jesus said remember the father is the gardener who prunes the branches so that they would bear more fruits and I don't think that we can hear too many times can we that our holiness and our obedience as Christians is not a question of us kind of trying harder to squeeze out a bit more fruits rather it's a question of us resting in and living in and abiding in Jesus and as we grow in him the father will tend us and the spirit will grow in us fruit that honors and glorifies him and we will grow in holiness and obedience to him in our lives not because we're trying hard but because we're resting heavy on Jesus Christ so that is what Christ prays for us isn't it that the father would sanctify

us that he would prune us keep us in Jesus and so that we would be kept by God to the very end so he prays this doesn't he for our protection for our unity for our sanctification that we would be kept and notice that none of those prayers has to do with changing our circumstances in fact Jesus actually prays that he's not asking for that in verse 15

I do not ask that you take them out of the world he's not asking the father for a change in our situation but in our security he's praying that in the world that we live in now in the situations that you are in and in the things that you face on a day to day and a week by week basis that God would keep you in him and I suspect that that is very deeply encouraging for us to hear because Jesus is praying for us to be kept where we are how often do we pray that God would change something in our lives or change our circumstances or that the hard things would be taken away and they don't go away and our lives don't change in the way that we want and we wonder don't we has God heard me and does he care about me and how can he leave me in this well this chapter suggests that perhaps he's doing that because Jesus is praying something different for you not that your situation would change but that you would be kept through it so don't lose heart brothers and sisters if you find yourself in a tough spot that is why Jesus lets us overhear this prayer says I say these things while I'm still in the world so that you may have the full measure of my joy within you what joy it is for us to know that in everything that we face in life he is praying for us to reach the end in glory he is praying that God would keep us through it see what does Jesus want for you more than anything in the world more than the perfect life well he wants this again verse 24

[28 : 35] Jesus says I want those you have given me to be where I am and to see my glory the glory you've given me because you loved me before the creation of the world brothers and sisters what Jesus wants more than anything for you is that you would be with him in glory and he will make sure of it he will not let you go until you are there with him in his glory Robert Marnett Shane famously said 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 and we could add to that couldn't we time it makes no difference either because Jesus prayed these prayers for you 2,000 years ago for all those who would believe in him through the apostles message and to think and to know that he prayed these prayers for me and you and for our church family here that he committed us to his father's eternal care as he prayed he knew our names he saw our faces and he prayed that the father would keep us could we not face anything knowing that does that thought not lift our hearts to hear him say each morning

I have prayed that your faith would not fail and to tell ourselves every evening he is praying for me that is a deep deep well of joy for us brothers and sisters knowing that he prays for us and how he prays for you that God would keep you in all circumstances of your life safe in him which brings us to Jesus third and final prayer request briefly just now he prays please show the world so Jesus has prayed that we would have become Christians he's prayed that God would keep us Christians and finally he prays for the world outside others to become Christians to you he prays from verse 21 may they also be in us so that the world may believe that you've sent me prays again verse 23 that we might have complete unity because then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you loved me

Jesus prays that the world would see and know and believe in him for eternal life now as ever in this gospel the world isn't speaking about quantity but quality Jesus isn't speaking about every person on planet earth but rather a world that at heart has turned away from him remember he was in the world writes John and though the world was made through him the world did not recognize him so here is Jesus the night before he died praying for people who have turned against him and betrayed him and wronged him that they would finally come to know and see and believe in him and have eternal life people like me and you we don't know who that will be we do not know who the father has given to his son but we do know do we not that the son wants for people who don't know him to know him we do know that there are people in our world that Jesus wants to be with him in his glory who today don't believe in him isn't that exciting and if that is his priority for the world well so it should be ours notice his prayer is for us that the world might know him through us that we might be one in him so that the world might believe that we might be united around his throne that others might know him it's not Jesus praying that people would know him kind of somehow some way Jesus is praying here for our witness our witness as a church as his people so that through us people in the world would come to know and see and trust him and if he has prayed that for us brothers and sisters let that be our prayer to you please father show my friends show my neighbors

show my family show the people I work with Jesus and please show them through me my life my words my church my love my love for him perhaps you really struggle with that with speaking about your faith in Jesus perhaps you worry about letting people know even that you follow him to call yourself a Christian well if that's you this is such a great place to start isn't it pray just start praying pray with Jesus that the world would come to know him through you that God would give you opportunities that he would show people who it is that you love and serve and follow through your daily life and words pray for his help pray for him to reveal the father and know in no uncertain terms that as you pray that prayer there is someone praying for you

Jesus Christ he wants ye and the world to know that he has loved ye that his love might be in ye and that your joy might be full let's praise him as we pray together let's pray how he ever intercedeth watches over us from his throne Lord Jesus how we praise ye that ye who came in love in humility into this world to seek and save the lost not to be served but to serve Lord you who gave your life as a ransom for many you who rose in glory and are ascended to the right hand of the father that ye today pray for us

[35 : 31] Lord Jesus how we praise ye for your grace and mercy for your never failing love for your steadfast protection father we pray that we would know each day as we wake and as we lie down lord as we go about our work as we face difficulty Lord that we would know and remember that Jesus prays for us Lord that we would rest the whole weight of our confidence on him on his glory on his death and resurrection on his prayers and father that we would never take for granted what you give us that we would never think that a switch has been flicked in our favor but rather that your every blessing and your every grace and every gift would lead us back to Christ with praise for he is the one who keeps us and he is the one whose face we will see for all eternity keep us we pray we ask in Jesus name amen