

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

The title above would trigger to the vast majority of people who claim to be Christians the automatic words: “*Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done...*” That was the prayer Jesus taught His apostles when they asked Him, “Lord, teach us to pray.” (Luke 11:1-4; cf. Matt. 6:9-15). While that is a model that gives us ways to think through the various parts of prayer (addressing God, intercessions, thanksgivings, petitions), it is not the best inside look at Christ’s heart when He cried out in His own prayers. That is found in John 17 just hours before His arrest, trials and ultimate crucifixion.

John 17 reveals the inner workings of Christ’s mind and heart, for they are the Last Will and Testament of a Savior about to die for the human race. The passion is intense, and His love is immense.

### **JESUS PRAYS FOR HIMSELF** (vs. 1-5).

“Father” is used six times in this one prayer, revealing an intimacy between them. “Glorify” suggests a magnifying or high opinion of the Father toward the Son, and the Son toward the Father. God so trusted Jesus that He gave Him “all authority” over heaven and earth (cf. Matt. 28:18). Christ entire life and ministry was focused entirely on revealing His Father to the world and finishing this great work on the cross (“it is finished”). At the moment of death He desires to again be back in the presence of His Father. That was what He missed the most by this earthly sojourn.

### **JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS APOSTLES** (vs. 6-19)

Teach, teach, teach. Everything Jesus did once He began His ministry was to take those 12 men, along with the 70 other disciples (Lk. 10), and instruct them in the exact words God had given to Him. “*They are yours*” (v. 9) and “*I am glorified in them*” (v. 10) reveals how critical these apostles were to His plan of redemption. They had staked their entire mission on these common fishermen, tax collectors and zealots. Only if these twelve men stayed unified (“*that they may be one*”) would this plan succeed. Everything depended on these few Jewish men. God seemed to surely be taking a huge risk. But, He knew His men. They would not fail.

### **JESUS PRAYS FOR ALL FUTURE DISCIPLES** (vs. 20-26)

He finally prayed for “*those who will believe in Me through their word.*” From these apostles would come generation after generation of believers in the gospel they preached. This gospel began on Pentecost (Acts 2) and spread like wildfire to “every creature on earth” (Col. 1:5-6, 23). Down through the centuries men have read the writings of these apostles in the N.T. and been united in Christ. The heart and soul of this passionate prayer, uttered when His “hour” had finally come, was that all of His followers would be “*one*” so that the world would believe. This is not a unity based on compromise, but in doctrinal purity on all seven pillars of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3-6). Truth is what unites, not wishful thinking or man-made tolerance (17:17). May we fulfill Christ’s Last Will and Testament by being as close to “*one*” as the Father was with His Son. The task is now before us. We must not fail.

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