

# The Christian Arsenal

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## JOHN 17:1-26

There was a time when God had perfect fellowship with man. He walked with man. He talked with man.

There was no need for a mediator.

There was no need for a high priest.

There was no need for a bridge between God and man.

But man messed all that up. Man chose his own way. When Adam fell, all mankind fell. And when this happened man's spirit died and his fellowship with God was broken.

God later called out a people to be His own.

He gave these people the Law.

He instituted the priesthood to carry out all the ceremonies and rituals and sacrifices connected with the Law.

And down through the years, the high priests would offer the blood of animals to atone for the sins of the people.

But, all this merely pointed to the time when the Lord Jesus Christ would come and shed His blood for the sin of mankind. The writer of the **Book of Hebrews** has a lot to say about the priests of the Old Testament and the Lord Jesus Christ as our high priest now.

**Hebrews 7:23-28...**

This brings us to our lesson today. The entire chapter of **John 17** is a prayer. In fact, it is the longest recorded prayer voiced by our Lord Jesus.

It has been called the **High Priestly Prayer**, and it has also been called the **Lord's Prayer**. We commonly think of the prayer that begins "**Our Father, who art in Heaven...**" as the Lord's Prayer.

But, when you really think about this, I believe you'll agree that it should be called "**the model prayer**."

The disciples had come to Him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray."

So, He gave them a prayer that they should follow. But, contained in that prayer is the phrase, "**Forgive us our trespasses (or our sins or our debts)...**"

But, Jesus had no sin...Jesus had no debts...Jesus had no trespasses. He was simply teaching His disciples to pray as they had asked.

So, I believe **this** prayer should be called the Lord's Prayer. But, whether we call it the Lord's Prayer or the High Priestly Prayer, it is a **precious** prayer. And it reveals to us something of the communication that passed between the Lord Jesus on earth and the Father in Heaven.

The veil of the Temple is about to be drawn aside and we will be allowed to enter the holy place that before now only the high priest could enter.

**Let's look at this chapter with this in view and let's realize that we're standing on holy ground as we look and study this precious prayer!**

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This is a great passage of Scripture. It is indeed the high priestly intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ. His entire life was a life of prayer. He began His ministry on earth by prayer. He would often withdraw alone for prayer. He is our great Intercessor.

**He prays for you and He prays for me. If you forgot to pray this morning, He didn't. He prayed for you this morning. He prayed for you last night while you slept!**

Another thing about the prayer life of the Lord Jesus Christ. We can be certain that God answered His prayers exactly the way He prayed them. That may not be the case with us.

Sometimes, He must tell us "no."

Sometimes, He may accomplish what I ask, but in a totally different way or at a different time.

So, let's look at this wonderful passage of God's Word... Remember from **chapter 13** to **chapter 16**, we have what is commonly called the Upper Room Discourse. We've already mentioned several times that this discourse was the **last private teaching** by the Lord Jesus to His disciples.

Then, Jesus began to pray. And I believe it's interesting for us to know that this was the last thing Jesus did before He went to the Garden of Gethsemane.

This prayer is divided into three sections:

- 1) **verses 1-5**...Jesus prays for Himself.
- 2) **verses 6-19**...Jesus prays for His disciples.
- 3) **verses 20-26**...Jesus prays for you and me!

## **Verses 1-5...**

As we go through this prayer, keep this in mind:

**The disciples and we, as well, are about to be given the perfect example of intercessory prayer. And if you've ever wondered how you should intercede for someone...this is a good place to learn.**

"the hour has come"... what hour?

- the hour when Jesus would be made sin for you and me!
- the hour when His blood would atone for sin!
- the hour when prophecy would be fulfilled!
- the most important hour in the world!

Winston Churchill referred to the Battle of Britain as "Britain's finest hour"...but this hour Jesus has just referred would be **mankind's** finest hour.

I want us to see that the chief concern of our Lord Jesus is not that this cup pass from Him, though He did pray that...

His chief concern was that He had and would again glorify the Father and that now the Father would glorify Him.

"glorify" - to make full of honor; to magnify; to render glorious;  
to ascribe honor, to exalt; to hold in very high esteem

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Jesus had glorified the Father in all that He had done, but above all, Jesus glorified the Father through His holy, sinless life.

**Verse 2...**God had indeed given Jesus authority over all flesh (KJV); mankind (NAS); people, (NIV).

It doesn't matter which translation you have...He has authority over everything! He has authority over all the fish of the sea, and the beasts of the earth and the fowls of the air...and He has authority over all mankind, as well.

He could make this universe and every individual in it bow to Him.  
And one day, they will...but right now He has chosen to give a free will and choice to His creation.

However, Jesus says He gives eternal life to all **whom God gave to Him**.

Now, the extreme Calvinists will say, "SEE...God gave Jesus some and didn't give Him others...this proves that God has elected some to Heaven and some to Hell..." And I certainly don't want to get into this subject, or we'll never get through...

But, I believe we'll see in just a very few minutes that these whom the Father gave were those who believed.

**Verse 4...**

God is always glorified. God is always honored when His purposes are accomplished! On the cross Jesus said, "It is finished!" That means our redemption was finished. That means He has done everything that was necessary.

**We can put a period there! We cannot add to what He has already done!**

Therefore, the gospel of salvation is not what God is asking you to do, but what God is telling you that He has already done for you. The question is, how do we respond to that?

**Verse 5...**

This verse demonstrates to us again the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

See, when Jesus came to earth He laid aside His glory...not His deity. He became a man and when He did this Paul tells us, He emptied Himself and took the form of a bondservant.

He did not empty Himself of His deity...He voluntarily laid aside His glory. **Why?** Because He came to earth to identify and relate to human beings. And folks could not have beheld Him in all His glory.

But, here Jesus asks the Father to glorify Him with that glory that He always had with Him...even before the world was.

By the way...the Bible tells us that God will not share His glory with another...yet, here we see Jesus saying that He had glory even before the world was...this is a good proof text for the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ!

And one day, we will be able to behold Him in all His glory...just like the song says!

**Verses 6-12...**

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Here Jesus turns His attention to His disciples. He lifts these men up in prayer. And the first thing Jesus does is tell the Father that He had manifested His **"name"** to these men.

In the Bible, "name" refers to "nature" or "character." "I have manifested Thy name" means "I have revealed Your nature...I have declared Your character"... One of the ministries of the Son was to declare the Father.

As we've said, Jesus didn't instantaneously reveal the Father, in a blaze of blinding glory, because His disciples could not have endured that kind of experience.

But, gradually, by His words and His deeds, He revealed to them the nature and the character of the Father.

In **Exodus 19**, we see that when Moses met with God on Mt. Sinai, the people could not approach the mountain because they could not behold the glory of God in all its fullness.

The emphasis of this section of this chapter is on the safety and security of these men. And Jesus is praying aloud so the disciples can understand that their security and safety doesn't depend on them...it depends on the character of their Heavenly Father.

And more than once in this passage, we see the Lord Jesus ask His Father to keep them.

We see Jesus saying that before they were His, they belonged to the Father. By virtue of creation, everything belongs to the Father, but Jesus says these men were given to Him by God

- because they have **received** His word...
- because they have **kept** His word...
- because they **believed Jesus came from God**...
- because they **believed He is who He claimed to be**...

We said a few moments ago that man has a free will. We cannot reconcile the sovereignty of God and the free will of man. Maybe there are those of you who understand this better than I do, but I truly believe it's something we have to take by faith. I know both exist.

And here we see that God gave these men to Jesus. But, at the same time we see that the men God gave to Jesus made the choice to

- receive His word
- and keep His word
- and believe Jesus was who He claimed to be...

Then, Jesus said that He asked on their behalf, not on behalf of the world. What does this mean? Some have gone so far as to say this means we should never pray for the lost.

I believe we have to look at this as we look at all Scripture... **in context.**

This doesn't mean Jesus didn't love the world. Of course, He loved the world. Very soon, He would be nailed to a Roman cross for the sins of the world.

But, here in the context of this precious prayer, Jesus is asking the Father to do some things for these to whom He has entrusted the good news. These men would carry the news of the gospel to the lost and dying world. And Jesus is undergirding them in prayer!

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Let's look at the different things Jesus mentioned specifically...

First, Jesus prayed that God would keep them in His name...**verse 11**...

**Proverbs 18:10:**

**"The name of the LORD is a strong tower, the righteous run to it and are safe."**

What does it mean to be kept in God's name?

Does it mean what the "name it and claim it" theology teaches? That we will have all that our hearts desire?

Does it mean what the "health and wealth" preachers teach? That God wants all His children to never be sick and to always have money?

**No! All of these men would die for the sake of the Gospel. Yet, Jesus is asking His heavenly Father to keep them. Does this mean God didn't answer His prayer? NO!!**

And I want to tell you this...

Even when we get sick to the point of death...we are still kept in the name of God.

Even if we are martyred for our faith...we are still kept in the name of God.

Even if we go far, far astray and have to be taken home early...we are still kept in the name of God.

This security...this "keeping power" means nothing can harm us that doesn't first find God's approval...and then, He will be there to see us through.

**Our salvation is secure. Our eternity is secure. And our salvation and eternity are secure because they don't depend upon us. They depend on God's name...His nature...His character!**

Listen...God gave us to Jesus! And Jesus prayed that God would keep us in His name. Paul said, "...He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Christ Jesus." God always finishes what He starts! Jesus said we are held in His hand and no one shall be able to snatch us out.

**But, what about Judas? Why did Jesus not keep Judas?**

Well, you can't keep what you never had, can you?

Judas never belonged to Jesus! Judas is not an example of someone who was a believer but who lost his salvation. Judas is an example of someone who **pretended** to have salvation. Judas, like all lost men, made his own tragic choice.

J. C. Ryle:

**"Let us understand that the ruin of those who are lost** is not because Christ was not willing to save them, nor even because they wanted to be saved but could not be saved...but because they would not come to Christ.

Let it be a settled principle: **Man's salvation is wholly of God.  
Man's ruin is wholly of himself."**

The other thing that Jesus prayed specifically in **verse 11** is that they would be **one**.

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Jesus knew that very soon He would leave these men.  
And He knew the world would turn in full force upon them.  
And He knew that Satan would love to bring divisiveness in their midst.  
**And He asked the Father to make them one, even as He and the Father are one.**

But, Jesus isn't through praying for them.

## **Verses 13-19...**

Let me ask you...why would the world hate these disciples?

Well, back in **chapter 15** Jesus told His disciples that they were not of this world. He told them the world hates **Him**. And He told them that because **He** chose them out of the world the world would hate **them**.

**The world hated the disciples because they stood for all the things Jesus stood for.  
And if we stand for what Jesus stood for...if we stand against what Jesus stood against, the world will hate us, too!**

The plain and simple fact is this...

we are not **of** this world. We must live **in** the world, but we don't have to live **like** it!

We've been called to a higher calling. Our citizenship is in God's kingdom.

**The question is - can the world look at us and tell that we're different?**

And Jesus asks the Father to keep the disciples from the evil one. Greater is He who is in the Christian that he who is in this world.

## **Verses 17...**

"sanctify"...set apart...the disciples were set apart because Jesus was set apart.

Don't you long for folks to see that we are **set apart** in the truth of God's Word? Not for the purpose of being puffed up with the knowledge of facts...spiritual pride...self-righteousness...**but because we have a fresh and clear glimpse of our Lord Jesus!**

Then Jesus said He is the One sending the disciples into the world!

How do you think the disciples felt when they heard Jesus say this? Do you think they really understood this sending out? Or the consequences of it?

I believe if they had understood all of it, they might have fled the scene long before they actually did.

Well, now Jesus turns His attention to those believers who would come later.

## **Verses 20-23...**

The Lord Jesus had prayed for His disciples to be one, and now He prays for us to be one. And of course, we can look around us and see that all members of His body do not attend the same church. We have doctrinal differences.

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But, those of us who have truly given our lives to the Lord Jesus Christ have been placed into His body. We are **all** members of the body of Jesus Christ.

And although we may not agree on all points, we can still love each other and support each other and live together in harmony.

**One old Puritan preacher said this in stating that discord and division should not be a part of the body of Christ. He said that we should expect wolves to attack the lambs, but we shouldn't expect the lambs to attack each other.**

Warren Wiersbe said this:

"There is every reason why believers should love one another and live in unity. We trust the same Savior and share the same glory.

We will one day enjoy the same heaven! We belong to the same Father and seek to do the same work, witnessing to a lost world that Jesus Christ alone saves from sin.

We believe the same truth, even though we may have different views of minor doctrinal matters; and we follow the same example that Jesus set for His people, to live a holy life.

Yes, believers do have their differences; but we have much more in common, and this should encourage us to love one another and promote true spiritual unity."

## **Verse 24...**

Jesus says,

"Father, I laid aside My glory when I came to earth. These folks here and those to come won't be able to behold My glory if they can't come where I am going.

In Your house, Father, are many mansions. I want these whom You have given to Me to come to the place I will prepare for them."

**It's an incredible thing to me that His love for us is so great that on the evening before His crucifixion, He was concerned for you and me!!**

## **Verses 25-26...**

The wealth of love that God had invested in Jesus, He has now invested in you and me.

That's the nature of love, you know.

It reaches out...it multiplies...it gives...it's passed on...it is inexhaustible!

That's perfect love! But, you know, we don't always love like that, do we? It's hard for you and me to love everyone. The easy thing is for us to let folks all around us pass by us every day and never share the love of Christ with them.

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And that's why Jesus prayed this way. He knew us. He knew it would be difficult. He knew we don't really have what it takes. So, He prayed that **He** would be **in** us and then **His** love would be **our** love.

And that's how you and I can love those around us who are not so loveable.

That's how we can show Jesus to them.

That's how we can share Jesus with them.

That's how we can lead them to a saving knowledge of Him.

Jesus asked the Father for this to happen in our lives...and if it doesn't, it's not **His** fault, it's **ours**.

**What a High Priest we have!**

**What a prayer!**

**What an example of intercession!**

**What an expression of love!**

We said earlier the veil had been drawn aside. We've been inside the holy place...That veil that was drawn aside momentarily closes again, but soon it will be torn asunder...from top to bottom!