
I would like to invite you pray with me. Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on us. Melt us, mold us, fill us, and use us. Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on us. Amen.

We talk about prayer. We study about prayer. We know the importance of prayer. The church often says that we are to pray, and yet not so often the church teaches us to pray. So, today we will learn how to pray through the greatest person of prayer—JESUS in the gospel John chapter 17 and Matthew chapter 6.

When we come to the gospel John chapter 17, Jesus is just a few hours away from the arrest, trial, and crucifixion. As he prayed that night, his prayer focused on four great themes that we will consider this morning.

First, Jesus’ prayer had an upward focus (verse 1, 4). He began his prayer by expressing a desire to glorify the Father (v. 1, 4 *The Father’s Glory*). The entire ministry of Jesus on earth had revolved around a single purpose. That purpose was to reveal God to men (John 14:9; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3). There is no exception of revealing God in his prayer. Jesus reveals God even in his prayer with an upward focus by remembering and acknowledging God.

In verses 1 through 5, **Jesus turns the focus of his prayer inward** and prays for the mission to which he has been called. He prays for himself who will do God’s work! He prayed for the assistance (v. 1). The hour for which Jesus came into this world has finally arrived. Jesus came to this world for one purpose, and that purpose was to die for sin (John 18:37). Now, the time has arrived. Jesus is about to be betrayed, arrested, tried and crucified. His prayer is for the Father to aid him in these last hours of his life, so that he might accomplish the task for which he came.

At this moment, I would like to encourage you to think of the purpose of your life. What is the purpose of your life? Like Jesus did, pray for the assistance to accomplish the mission of your life.

Now, **Jesus turns his focus outward** and prays for his disciples. In this section, Jesus prayed for the *preservation* of his disciples (v. 6-19). Jesus knew that the disciples would not be able to maintain their relationship with God without God’s help in this world.

Let's review how Jesus prayed so far. **His prayer had an upward focus, an inward focus, and an outward focus.**

Lastly, Jesus turns his attention to those who would receive him down through the ages. **Jesus' prayer had a forward focus** (v. 20-26). Think of this: On the eve of the crucifixion, with the weight of the sins in the world beginning to press down upon his shoulders, Jesus took time to pray for you and me! I don't know about you, but that thrills my heart!

- He prayed for our harmony (v. 21-23). Jesus prayed that we get along in front of the world. You and I know that a lack of unity in the church is a bad witness in the world! You and I also know that we will have two opinions when we have two people. Having 100 people means having 100 opinions. The secret of the harmony in the community more than two people is being able to disagree without being disagreeable! In other words, everything we do must be done with a view to maintaining unity within the body of Christ—the church!
- Jesus also prayed for our “homegoing” (v. 24). Jesus says that his will is for all of his followers to be with him in his heavenly home. Being his followers means to believe in him as Lord and Savior. If you are not sure about his Lordship over your life, please speak to one of the pastors. We are more than happy to assist you.
- Jesus prayed for our hearts (v. 25-26). As Jesus brought his prayer to a close, he took a minute to pray that we would be filled with his love. He desires that his people be characterized by a life of love. This kind of Love is God's demand for his children (1 Cor. 13:1-8). In fact, Jesus declared that our mutual love would be a sign to the world that we are his followers (John 13:35).

Now, we've got the instruction on how to pray...pray upward, inward, outward, and forward... Let's me pray the Lord's Prayer as the model of prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

Sunny- Prayer; God- Jonathan

Sunny: *Our Father Who Art In Heaven.*
God: Yes?

Sunny: Don't interrupt me. I'm praying.
God: But -- you called ME!
Sunny: Called you? No, I didn't call you. I'm praying.
Our Father who art in Heaven.
God: There -- you did it again!
Sunny: Did what?
God: Called ME. You said, "Our Father who art in Heaven." Well, here I am. What's on your mind?
Sunny: Who are you?
God: I am God....the one you called.
Sunny: Oh.....but I didn't mean anything by that. I was, you know, just saying my prayers for the day. I always say the Lord's Prayer. It makes me feel good, kind of like fulfilling a duty.
God: Well, all right. Go on.

Sunny: Okay, *Hallowed be thy name....*
God: Hold it right there. What do you mean by that?
Sunny: By what?
God: By "Hallowed be thy name?"
Sunny: It means, it means....I don't know what it means. How in the world should I know? It's just a part of the prayer. By the way, what does it mean?
God: It means honored, holy, wonderful.

Sunny: Hey, that makes sense. I never thought about what 'hallowed' meant before. Thanks, God. Let me continue my prayer.
God: Ok.
Sunny: *Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.*
God: Do you really mean that?
Sunny: Sure, why not?
God: What are you doing about it?
Sunny: Doing? Ummm....well, I guess nothing. I just think that it would be nice if you got control over everything down here like you have up there. We're kinda in a mess down here, you know.
God: Yes, I know; but, have I got control over you?
Sunny: Well, I go to church.
God: That isn't what I asked you. What about your bad temper? You've really got a problem there, you know. And then there's the way you

spend your money—all on yourself. And what about the kind of books you read?

Sunny: **Wait a minute! Stop picking on me! You suppose to be a nice God. I'm just as good as some of those people at church!**

God: Excuse ME. I thought you were praying for my will to be done. If that is to happen, it will have to start with the ones who are praying for it. Like you—for example.

Sunny: **Oh.... all right. I guess I do have some hang-ups. Now that you mention it, I could probably name some others.**

God: So could I.

Sunny: **I haven't thought about it very much until now, but I really would like to cut out some of those things. I would like to be really free.**

God: Good. Now we're getting somewhere. We'll work together—you and ME. I'm proud of You.

Sunny: **Look, Lord, if you don't mind, I need to finish up here. This is taking a lot longer than it usually does. After this prayer, I need to wrap up the worship service with a blessing within an hour. If I don't, you may not have people coming here to worship you next Sunday. Can you help me out by letting me go on praying?**

God: Ok. Go on...

Sunny: **Where am I? Ummm.... Ok.... Here it goes....*Give us this day, our daily bread.***

God: You need to cut out the bread. You're overweight as it is.

Sunny: **Hey, wait a minute! What is this? Here I was doing my religious duty, and all of a sudden you break in and remind me of all my hang-ups.**

God: Praying is a dangerous thing. You just might get what you ask for. Remember, you called ME—and here I am. It's too late to stop now. Keep praying. *[pause for a moment....wait for Sunny to start again...but Sunny is not starting to pray...]* Well, go on.

Sunny: **I'm scared.**

God: Scared? Of what?

Sunny: **I know what you'll say.**

God: Try ME.

Sunny: ***Ok. Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.***

God: What about Grace?

Sunny: **See? I knew it! I knew you would bring her up! She told lies about me, and spread rumors. She never paid back the money she owes me. I've sworn to get even with her!**

God: But -- your prayer -- What about your prayer?

Sunny: **I didn't mean it.**

God: Well, at least you're honest. But, it's quite a load carrying around all that bitterness and resentment, isn't it?

Sunny: **Yes, but I'll feel better as soon as I get even with her. Boy, have I got some plans for her? She'll wish she had never been born.**

God: No, you won't feel any better. You'll feel worse. Revenge isn't sweet. You know how unhappy you are -- Well, I can change that.

Sunny: **You can? How?**

God: Forgive Grace. Then, I'll forgive you; And the hate and the sin, will be Grace's problem -- not yours. You will have settled the problem as far as you are concerned.

Sunny: **Oh, you're right. You always are. And more than I want to get even with her, I want to be right with You....[sigh]... All right. I forgive her.**

God: There now! Wonderful! How do you feel?

Sunny: **Hummmm. Well, not bad. Not bad at all! In fact, I feel pretty great! You know, I don't think I'll go to bed uptight tonight. I haven't been getting much rest, you know.**

God: Yeah, I know. But, you're not through with your prayer, are you? Go on.

Sunny: **Oh, all right. *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.***

God: Good! Good! I'll do that. Just don't put yourself in a place where you can be tempted.

Sunny: **What do you mean by that?**

God: You know what I mean.

Sunny: **Yeah. I know.**

God: Okay. Go ahead. Finish your prayer.

Sunny: ***For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.***

God: Do you know what would bring me glory? What would really make me happy?

Sunny: No, but I would like to know. I want to please you now. I've really made a mess of things. I want to follow you truly. I can see now how great that would be. So, tell me... How do I make you happy?

God: YOU just did.

May the Spirit of God encourage and guide you this morning to pray upward, inward, outward, and forward. Amen.