



The Doctrine of Prayer

Notable Gospel Prayers and Their Lessons

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Jesus is who prayed all of the prayers that are recorded in the gospels except for two (Luke 2:29-32 and Luke 18:10-13).
- B. There are only a handful of prayers recorded but the Lord Jesus was oft in prayer and spent much time apart from the crowds in prayer.
- C. Most of the recorded prayers are very short but they are beneficial for us to study, for these are the prayers that God wanted recorded in his written word.

II. JESUS THANKS THE FATHER UPON THE JOYOUS RETURN OF THE SEVENTY

A. The setting described

- 1. The first recorded prayer in the gospels comes after Jesus appointed seventy other disciples and sent them to preach in different cities. “After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.” (Luke 10:1)
- 2. Some time had passed and these seventy returned to the Lord with joy due to their success for Jesus: “And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.” (Luke 10:17)
- 3. Jesus acknowledged their power and also corrected their misdirected joy away from their power to their eternal condition: “Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:20)
- 4. And according to verse 21, it was in that same hour that Jesus prayed to the Father because of the seventy.

B. The prayer recorded

- 1. **Mt 11:25** At that time Jesus answered and said, **I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.**
- 2. **Lu 10:21** In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, **I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.**



C. The lessons from the prayer

1. Jesus rejoiced with the seventy which led him to thank the Father.
 - a. The first part of Luke 10:17 states “And the seventy returned again with joy”.
 - b. The joy of these disciples impacted the heart of the Lord and caused him to also rejoice, “In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit” (Luke 10:21a).
 - c. The commandment of Romans 12:15 is exemplified for us by the Lord Jesus. We are to “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.”
 - d. The Lord’s rejoicing was not artificially reciprocated but was sincere. So should we be sincerely moved by the joy and weeping of others.
2. Jesus only offered the Father thanks and praise in this prayer.
 - a. As has already been stated, prayer should not always include making request. We should offer God praise and thanksgiving without desiring anything from him.
 - b. This quick prayer by Jesus was simply to thank and praise the Father for his wisdom and goodness. We should not be so focused on what we can receive from God but what sacrifices of praise we can give to God.
3. This prayer was from his heart.
 - a. As stated just above, this prayer was sincere and from the Lord’s heart. Again, the verse says, “In that hour Jesus rejoiced **in spirit**”.
 - b. The Lord’s rejoicing and subsequent prayer was from his heart, or spirit, as the passage says. Jesus would not offer the Father insincere praise but true worship in spirit (Consider John 4:24 and Luke 6:45).
4. The prayer was simple and short.
 - a. Jesus did not unnecessarily lengthen this prayer by adding filler words. He said what he needed to say and that was sufficient.
 - b. We often think that we must say much to adequately thank and praise the Lord and so we draw out our prayers but we do not need to do so.
 - c. The Father is praised and glorified through simple and direct prayers from the heart.



III. JESUS PRAYS IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSAMANE

A. The prayer recorded

1. From Matthew's Gospel

- a. **Mt 26:39** And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, **O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.**
- b. **Mt 26:42** He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, **O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.**
- c. **Mt 26:44** And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

2. From Mark's Gospel

- a. **Mr 14:35** And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.
36 And he said, **Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.**

3. From Luke's Gospel

- a. **Lu 22:41** And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,
42 Saying, **Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.**
43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.
44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.
45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow,

B. The lessons from the prayer

1. The Lord prayed to the Father in great sorrow.

- a. According to the scripture, Jesus:
 - (1) Was "sorrowful and very heavy" (Matthew 26:37).
 - (2) Was "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matthew 26:38).
 - (3) Was "sore amazed" and "very heavy" (Mark 14:33).
 - (4) Was "in an agony" (Luke 22:44).
- b. Jesus's response with all his sorrow, agony, and heaviness of heart, was to bring it before the Father in prayer.



- c. Jesus knew that the only one truly able to do anything to help him was the Father and that the Father was the only one to whom he was truly able to bear all his heart.
 - d. We know that the Bible tells us to cast all our cares upon the Father (1 Peter 5:7) but do we really grasp the beauty of this and practice it in prayer?
 - e. The Father cares for us and desires us to bring all our heartache to him yet don't we often fail to cast our care upon him and express our hearts to him.
 - f. Jesus did not share the depths of his sorrow and agony with his disciples but went to the one who loved him more than any other.
2. The Lord presented his request but submitted to the will of the Father.
- a. Jesus prayed and presented his request, that the cup may pass from him, but he ended each time in prayer requesting the Father's will to be done even if it was not the same as his own desire.
 - b. We need to understand that there will be times that we make request of the Father and it is not according to his will. He may not grant us these requests and in order for us not to be bitter toward him, we must always agree with his will in our lives.
 - c. Jesus had a desire but more than his own desire he wanted the will of the Father to be done for he knew that the Father's will was best.
 - d. If we make request of the Lord and also pray for his will and he does not give us what we requested then we must understand that his will was what was best for our lives. We should thank him for doing his will in our lives and it should be our desire that he does so.
3. Jesus spent a lengthy time in prayer.
- a. Jesus had gone "a stone's cast" (Luke 22:41) beyond his disciples to pray and he expected the disciples to also be praying.
 - b. When Jesus rejoined his disciples after this first session in prayer, he found them asleep and said unto Peter, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" (Matthew 26:40).
 - c. According to this, it seems that the Lord had just spent the last hour in prayer with the Father. He had a great burden that necessitated a fervency in prayer.
 - d. There are times in our lives where we really need to get ahold of the Father and need him to do something for us. Then is when we must spend much time on our knees before the Father, just like Jesus.



4. Jesus had faith in the Father's ability to grant his request.
 - a. When Jesus prayed, he expressed his unwavering faith in the Father's ability to do all things, including grant his request.
 - b. In Mark 14:36 he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee".
 - c. Jesus had faith that the Father could remove the cup from him but this did not necessarily mean that the Father would do so.
 - d. The truth was that if removing the cup from Jesus was the Father's will, Jesus knew the Father absolutely could.
 - e. When we pray, we must have faith in who God is and believe what the Bible says about him and that if our request aligns with his will that then he will give us what we request.
 - f. This is a stark difference to the charismatic, name it and claim it, notion, which teaches that the Lord will give you whatever you request if you just have enough faith to believe it will be yours.

IV. THE LORD'S PRAYER

A. The prayer recorded

1. **Joh 17:1 (KJV)** These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, **Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:**
 - 2** As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.
 - 3** And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.
 - 4** I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.
 - 5** And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.
 - 6** I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.
 - 7** Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.
 - 8** For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.
 - 9** I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.
 - 10** And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.
 - 11** And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they



may be one, as we *are*.

12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it*: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

B. The lessons from the prayer

1. Jesus commends the work and plan of the Father.

- a. Jesus opens this prayer by requesting the Father to glorify the Son so that the Son may glorify the Father (John 17:1).
- b. Then he proceeded to highlight the plan of salvation that the Father and the Son designed prior to the beginning of the world (John 17:2-3).
- c. The Father knew the details but Jesus still mentioned them and gave credit to the Father.
- d. When we detail the Father's workings in and around our lives, we are praising him and crediting him for the power and authority he has.



2. Jesus gave justification for the Father to glorify the Son.
 - a. The Lord reiterates his request in verse five, to be glorified with the Father with the glory he previously held.
 - b. It seems that verses four, six, seven, and eight are an explanation of why the Son should be glorified or a summary of the work that the Son has completed that the Father sent him to do.
 - c. Jesus was faithful to do all that the Father had given him so that he could say, “I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” (John 17:4)
 - d. We might think that recounting all the good work we have done for God to God is boasting or prideful but would anyone dare say that this was the heart of Jesus when he was praying?
 - e. There is nothing prideful about explaining or giving account to the Father of our work for him if done with the right heart.
3. Jesus made intercession for others.
 - a. Jesus prayed for the believers that were alive at that time.
 - (1) In verse nine, Jesus began to pray for those believers that were alive at that time, “I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me”. Note – See even the clarification Jesus ensures to give in his prayer, “I pray not for the world”.
 - (2) Jesus was departing from those believers’ presence and returning to the Father but he loved them and needed the Father to help them in his absence.
 - (3) The Lord’s greatest desire and request for those believers was “that they may be one, as we are” (John 17:11).
 - (4) Another desire of Jesus’s was that “they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.” (John 17:13).
 - (5) He also requested of the Father “that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.” (John 17:15).
 - (6) Lastly, he prayed for the Father to “Sanctify them through thy truth” (John 17:17).
 - (7) Unity, joy, protection from evil, and sanctification are the requests that Jesus made for these believers. Three out of the four are for their spiritual needs and the other is for their physical.
 - (8) Jesus took the time to consider others and their needs and come before the Father to help those believers in prayer. We must do the same.



- b. Jesus prayed for people yet to be born that would believe on him.
 - (1) In verse 20, Jesus began to pray, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;”.
 - (2) That is, Jesus prayed for all future Christians, people who were not born and still are to be born!
 - (3) The fact that Jesus prayed for people in the future indicates a level of thoughtfulness and consideration in prayer. Jesus considered and anticipated continuing results from his ministry and therefore made request for things far beyond.
 - (4) Sometimes, we are reactive in our prayers or only considering the immediate future when we pray. It would do us well to take some thought and consider ahead regarding potential outcomes and pray for them.

- 4. Jesus showed reverence toward the Father.
 - a. Three times in this prayer did Jesus address the Father using a descriptive word or phrase to show reverence.
 - (1) “the only true God” (John 17:3)
 - (2) “Holy Father” (John 17:11)
 - (3) “O righteous Father” (John 17:25)
 - b. These three words or phrases qualify attributes about God and give him praise and reverence.
 - c. How we address someone can show our attitude toward them. In this case, Jesus’ attitude was one of reverence for who God is.

- 5. Jesus had a personal relationship with the Father.
 - a. There are four times in this prayer where Jesus addresses the Father but with just calling him “Father” or “O Father” (John 17:1, 5, 21, and 24).
 - b. So, while Jesus did show the Father reverence, he also had an intimate and personal relationship with the Father and was able to simply address him as such.
 - c. While we need to have a godly fear and reverence of the Father, we also need to understand that we are his children and he is our loving heavenly father.
 - d. How we address God, should indicate we have reverence and fear of him as well as a close personal relationship with him.