



DATE: March 33, 2009

TEXT; John 17: 13-26

TITLE: The Real Lords Prayer III

I am continuing this morning looking at this prayer of Jesus in the Upper Room immediately before his arrest, trial and crucifixion. For the past two weeks we have used this prayer to reveal insights into Jesus himself. This week and next week we will look at what he actually prays.

Jesus is our example of prayer. Again and again in his ministry Jesus withdraws himself from the disciples and goes for a time of prayer. Jesus teaches us the importance of prayer. Jesus teaches us how to pray. One of the ways to remember the different aspects of prayer is to remember the acrostic A-C-T-S

A Adoration
C Confession
T Thanksgiving
S Supplication (requests)

I do believe every day our prayers should include all of these aspects. Begin with adoration..... praise God for who he is and what he is doing. Move to confession. Recognize the sins and struggles you have in your life. Move to thanksgiving. Praise God for the blessing he has given you... and then... and only then... move on to supplication... your prayer requests.

Richard Pratt was one of my professors at RTS. He has written a book entitled Pray with your Eyes Open. Allow me to share a lesson he writes...

The look of a servant is an intense focus on the Master. Instead of centering on God, most Christians only glance occasionally in His direction. In a prayer lasting ten minutes, we will usually spend less than sixty seconds focusing primarily on God. Apart from a few phrases now and then (e.g. “Our Father” “In his name we pray”), we could as easily be wishing on a star as praying to God.

This neglect of God reveals a basic misunderstanding about prayer. We often treat prayer like a spiritual shopping list. We walk into God’s General Store, give a perfunctory nod in his direction, and then proceed to the real reason we came– the grocery list. We spend the bulk of our time listing one request after another, and God Himself takes a second place. In fact, this habit of ignoring suggests that we would prefer to find Him absent from the store so that we would not have to bother with Him at all.

Please notice in the prayer of Jesus the focus of the prayer is three fold. First he focuses on God Himself. Praying for the glory of God to be revealed. Second, he focuses on the disciples in the room with him. And Finally, he focuses on the his followers that will result in the ministry of the disciples.... that is you and me. He does not pray for himself. It’s O.K. to pray for ourselves... Jesus in the prayer in the Garden a few minutes later... does indeed pray for himself and strength to face the ordeal. But the focus of this prayer.... in not on himself.

What I want to do for the rest of this prayer is look at our Lord’s prayers of Thanksgiving.

Next week we will look at his prayers of Supplication. I will share three facts that brings us

thanksgiving. These are facts that are true regardless on the circumstances of life. Remember....

Jesus was facing a difficult, painful death. He was aware of this fact... and he spends a great deal of time in thanksgiving.

Lesson # 1 As Christians we can be thankful because we have truth. *John 17: 6-8*

I have 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. 7Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. 8For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.

Jesus has given us the truth that comes from the Heavenly Father. I believe this prayer is a prediction of what will occur in a few hours. Remember in a few hours Jesus will be on trial before Pilate. Pilate directly questions Jesus.. Listen to this dialogue...

You are a king, then!" said Pilate.

Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

"What is truth?" Pilate asked. With this he went out again to the Jews and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him

We know the end result of this dialogue. Pilate knew Jesus was innocent.... but because he had no foundation of truth in his life he chose to follow the path of least resistance, which was to condemn Jesus to death. In many, many ways I believe the plight of Pilate is the situation of most

people today.

I have been asked why I have chosen a path of accepting scripture as the absolute truth.

Honestly, it is not the common path in Christianity today. The common path is to say that scripture is a guide to truth. We see this even in the vows that we require our elders, deacons and ministers to say when they are ordained. Question # 3 is this...

Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the church universal and God's word for you?

This is what I would call nice sounding, very open ended, wishy washy language. No where does it say scripture is truth. No where does it say the bible, in and of themselves, is authoritative.... it is only authoritative based on the Holy Spirit. It is only God Word... for you.... possibly not for another person.

The question is this... why do I believe it is essential to believe the Bible is truth? If the Bible is not true than the revelation of God and of Jesus is uncertain. In other words, if the Bible is not true we can not truly know who God is or who Jesus is... therefore anyone is able to create an image of God for themselves. When then what happens is every person creates an image of God

and of Jesus that they are comfortable with and fits their philosophy of life. This is idolatry.

- If you do not like a Jesus that condemns sin... create a Jesus that accepts any action
- If you do not like a Jesus who uphold the sanctify of marriage.... create a Jesus that says “just love each other.”
- If you do not like a Jesus who demands that He be Lord of your life.... create a Jesus that just wants to be believed in
- If yo do not like a God who can be a harsh judge... create a God who never judges anyone.
- if you do not like a Jesus that teaches the reality of hell... create a Jesus that never teaches abut hell
- if you do not like a Jesus that demands obedience in every area of life.... create a Jesus that is just interested in the “spiritual” areas of life.

Let me be clear... there are aspects of God and of Jesus that I do not like. At times I believe

He is to harsh. I intellectually understand his judgement of world... but I do not like it. I do not like

the story in scripture that Jesus marched into the temple and turned over the table of the money

changers and whipped them out of the temple... but I believe he did it... and it reveals a truth about

Him. Truthfully, I could go on and on.... there are many, many stories in the Bible I do not like...

but I accept them as truth because I do not have the right to selectively choose stories abut God that

fit my comfort level.

Praise be to God.... we are given truth. That is what Jesus is praying in this final prayer. He

has revealed the truth given to him by God the Father, to you and to me.

We don't have to create our own god. We don't have to figure out what may be pleasing to

God and what may not be pleasing to God... we have truth. We don't have to pretend that we are good ... we are not good...that is a basic truth of scripture..... because of our love for Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Praise our Lord Jesus.

The world pretends that God owes them His love and eternal presence... we know the truth... God owes us nothing.... he gives us His grace... undeserved grace. Praise be to God! Jesus begins his thanksgiving in this prayer by a recognition of the truth given to us by God.... we too should begin our prayers in the same way. Praise you Lord Jesus that you said **“Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”** and you have revealed yourself to your children. We praise God because he has revealed his truth.

Lesson # 2 We praise God because we know we are living in a temporary location and we have a permanent home awaiting us. *John 17: 13, -16 states...*

I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. 14I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. 15My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.

I made this point somewhat last week so I am going to only touch this point. We need to

note Jesus is saying we must expect the world to hate and reject us. In other words we are living in occupied territory. *Corrie Ten Boom* was a Christian living in Nazi Germany. Allow me to quote from her book The Hiding Place.

“Would you be willing to take a Jewish mother and her baby into your home? Color drained from the man’s face. He took a step back from me. “Miss ten Boom! I do hope you’re not involved with any of this illegal concealment... it’s just not safe! Think of your father!” I pulled the coverlet back from the baby’s face. The man bent forward, his hand in spite of himself reaching for the tiny fist curled round the blanket. For a moment I saw compassion and fear struggle on his face. Then he straightened. “No. Definitely not. We could lose our lives for that Jewish child!”

Unseen by either of us, Father had appeared in the doorway. **“Give the child to me, Corrie,” he said.**

Father held the baby close, his white beard brushing its cheek, looking into the little face with eyes as blue and innocent as the baby’s..... “you say we could lose our lives for this child. I would consider that the greatest honor that could come to my family.”

We know from her book that indeed that father did lose his life in a Nazi Concentration camp for hiding this family. In a sense we are all like Corrie ten Boom. We live in occupied territory.

Jesus understood this. Look at this prayer.... he is thanking God that we are not of this world. He is thanking God that we have an eternal home in His presence. Praise be to God.

Finally lesson # 3 We thank God because those who walk with Jesus are under His special care. *John 17:9*

9I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours

Jesus provides special care for his children. I remember teaching Adam to ride a bike. We were at Seneca Hills for a week. I took his bike and took his training wheels off. We went to the top of a small hill on grass. I put him on the bike and said "pedal." He pedaled.... but I never let go. Then I let go for a foot or two. Back up the hill... let go for 2-3 feet. Back up. Let go for 3-5 feet. Back up let go for 4 - 6 feet. After about 10 times up and down this hill... Adam could ride... and I could collapse in exhaustion. Why did I do this? He was my son... of course we do this for our children.

We are the children of God. Jesus cares for his children. He prays for us. He empowers us with His Holy Spirit. He cares for us in a special way. Praise be to God!

We begin our time of prayer with a time of Thanks giving. We praise Him that we are given the truth. We praise Him that we are in a foreign land but have a homeland awaiting us. We praise

Him that as we walk on this earth we have His special care.

AMEN