

DATE: March 31, 2009

TEXT: John 17: 20-26

TITLE: "The Real Lord's Prayer IV"



Throughout this Lenten Season we have been studying John chapter 17. This entire chapter takes place at the end of the Passover feast in the Upper Room. Jesus, immediately after this prayer will leave the upper room and travel to the Garden of Gethsemane where he will be arrested. Within 12 hours Jesus will be crucified. We have looked at this prayer and seen the nature of Christ. We have looked at this prayer and seen the prayers of thanksgiving. This morning I want to look at the prayer and see the prayers of petition.

Remember this fact.... Jesus is specifically praying for you and for me. *Verse 20 of our text says this...*

**"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,**

We understand that is you and me. We are the believers of the message of Christ. He is praying for you and for me. I want to share 4 specific prayers of petition Jesus asks the Father.

**Petition # 1** Jesus prays for our protection. I will read *verse 11 and verse 15*

**I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one..... 15My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.**

I remember when my children were very young, they were afraid of thunderstorms. When there was rumbling in the night they were unable to sleep. We had a strict rule that we would never bring the kids to sleep in our beds... but we would go into their bedroom and lay with them until they would fall asleep. When we were with them, no matter how bad the storm raged outside, they would relax and fall asleep. They felt protected by their parents.

We too are protected by our heavenly Father. He protects us by the power of His name.

*Psalm 73: 26 gives this wonderful promise*

**My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever**

Isn't this text so very true. Indeed, our flesh fails. Indeed, our organs fail.... but God is our strength and God is the full portion that we need.

The illustration I gave about the thunderstorms and my kids breaks down on one major point.... Thunder is not a real danger to my kids... but we, as Christians, truly are in danger. Last

Thursday ABC had a discussion concerning the existence of Satan. I did not watch it all. I was at a Session meeting and I already know the answer. Jesus teaches us about the existence of Satan. *1 Peter 5:8 teaches this truth*

**Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. 8Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.**

I love the commands of this text...

**Cast all your anxiety on him  
Be self-controlled and alert  
Resist him,  
standing firm in the faith,**

As Christians we are in a battle. It is a battle that, if we rely upon the protection of God, we are sure to win... but it is a battle. How does Satan tempt Christians? This could be a sermon series on it's own... but let me speak from my experience. For Christians, Satan is subtle and sneaky. Rarely does Satan directly attack Christians.... I believe he does directly attack non-Christians driving them deeper into sin... but for us we can expect subtle attacks that we are almost unaware of. Let me list some attacks that came to my mind

1. Keeping Christians immature in faith. Whispering in our ears... "you don't really need church every week" "you don't really need to study the bible...it's too confusing anyway." "You

don't really need to share your faith with your neighbors... you wouldn't know what to say anyway."

2. Tempting Christians in areas of weakness. Again in subtle ways. "Of course you need financial security so work in any job, for as many hours as you can at any cost... and certainly don't give too much away." "Of course you should pursue pleasure... God wants you to be happy...eat that extra food..... be with that boyfriend or girlfriend....play that extra hour on the computer."

3. Associate with people who will not help you in you faith. Satan says "God want you to love everyone.. So be close friends with anyone.... don't worry when they lead you down paths that god would not want you to go down... you won't go too far and can always come back."

4. Compromise the truth of God's Word. Hear these whisperings.. "Scripture can be a guide to your life.. Just don't get carried away." "Remember the Bible was written 2 to 3000 years ago.. Times change." "Everyone has their own interpretation of the bible.. No one really understands it." "Just live a good life and everything will be ok."

The point is this... know that you are being attacked. Think for yourself... where am I

being attacked by Satan. Everyone here will have an answer. Be aware of the attack and rely

upon the protection of Jesus in your life. Jesus specifically prays for our protection.

**Petition # 2** Jesus prays for our joy *verse 13 of John 17 states this...*

**"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.**

Note this truth.. The joy that Jesus is praying for is internal joy... it is "within" us. It is not external joy.

I heard this story this week... I don't know if it was true. A hotel was hosting two

conventions. One of the conventions was for shoe salesman. The other convention was for a group of ministers. They had ordered the same meals with one difference.. The shoe salesman were to be served a desert called “Watermelon delight.” This is watermelon soaked in vodka. Somehow the kitchen got the desserts mixed up at the Watermelon Delight was served to the ministers. When the hotel manager realized his mistake he rushed to the kitchen and asked the servers if there were any complaints. The servers said “No, we didn’t hear any complaints... but we were wondering why the guests were all putting the watermelon seed in their pockets.”

I don’t know if this has a lot to do with the sermon... but I liked the story. We are not to pursue external joy... the Lord prays for our internal joy. That is joy that does not depend upon our circumstances. Two to three weeks ago we saw that the basis of Jesus’ joy was the fact that he was going home. Jesus is praying that we too have the same joy. That is his prayer for you and for me.

**Petition # 3** Jesus specifically prays for our sanctification. *John 17: 17-19 states...*

**Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. 18As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified**

What does it mean to be sanctified? It means to be ‘set apart’ for God. A sanctuary is a room set apart for God. We as Christians need to be set apart for the purposes of God. How are we sanctified? I have good news... our text gives us the answer to this question. We are sanctified by the truth. There are two aspects of truth that we must follow to be sanctified.

First, we must know the truth. **It is impossible to do right unless you know what is**

**right.** *Hosea 4: 6 states...*

**my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.**

*2 Peter 1:3 states...*

**3His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge**

The promises of God are given to us. Because we are given this knowledge we can (1.)

Participate in the divine nature and we can (2.) Escape the corruption in the world. What

lessons. Truth given by God... not acquired by massive education effort... given by God... and

then we can have the divine nature. Wow!

But there is a second aspect of truth and knowledge that we must understand. Knowledge is not something we just understand... it is something we do. In Genesis it says “**Adam knew Eve and conceived Cain.**” As you might guess,, more than head knowledge was involved. In the bible knowledge means intimate relationship. It means actions based on truth.

Jesus is praying for our sanctification. He is praying that our understanding of truth will grow and he is praying that our intimacy of relationship will grow. Be sure of this... Jesus wants mature followers. He does not want us to remain in spiritual infancy or spiritual childhood or even spiritual adolescence... Jesus wants mature Christian followers. He is praying that you and I grow in our faith.

**Petition # 4** Jesus is praying in this final prayer for Christian unity. *John 17: 20,21*

**"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.**

The church of Jesus Christ is called to be unified as Christ is unified with the heavenly Father. Why? Because this is what the world sees. Truthfully, I believe this is one of the great failings of the church. Let me say this... I don't mind that there are different denominations...

there is plenty of room for differences of opinions in the Church and still be Christians.... but the problem is the differences drift into hatred and dislike.

Even on the local level. My prayer is that New Bedford Church will be unified. That does not mean we have differences of opinions. We do. We will. We have political differences. We have economic views that are different. We have theological differences. That's O.K. I am not all knowing. I am no infallible in my understanding of scripture. But I do believe this... we are a family. We are one in Christ. As long as we have surrendered our lives to Jesus Christ (and I know we have)...as long as we seek truth from God's word (and I believe we do)... we are one in Christ no matter how many disagreements we have. Let us be unified in Christ.

Those are the petitions of our Lord. He is praying for us.... specifically he is praying...

1. For his protection to be upon us. To protect us from the attacks of Satan
2. For the joy that he desires to give us. His internal, eternal joy.
3. For Sanctification. That we would become more and more like Christ
4. For unity that we may truly be one in Christ.

AMEN