

# John 17

by Robert F. Adcock

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*In John 17, Robert F. Adcock explores Jesus' prayer for His disciples, emphasizing unity, sanctification, and the joy of fulfilling God's will.*

**Duration:** 43:39

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:6, Matthew 28:19, John 17:9, John 17:21

**Topics:** "Prayer Life", "Unity In Christ"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of valuing communion and fellowship with God through prayer and reflection on the person of Jesus Christ. The speaker highlights the loneliness and sorrows that Jesus experienced during his time on earth, yet how God was glorified through his life. The sermon encourages listeners to recognize the voice of Jesus and approach his words with reverence and awe. The speaker also discusses the unity of believers and the power they have access to through Christ, urging them to delight in doing the will of God.

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## Transcript

Beautiful hymn. And I think when we think about something like that, I would like to tell you what I think about Jesus. He's wonderful.

And we sing so many songs that remind us of what's in our hearts about Him. He is wonderful. If you were here on Wednesday evening, we read from John 17.

And we just read part and considered part of this chapter. And I'd like to continue with that this evening. And I would like to set the scene by saying this.

John heard these words. He heard what our Lord Jesus Christ said in this prayer. I think I said something last week about how you recognize people's voices.

You recognize the person because you recognize the voice. I have no earthly idea what the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ was like. To even suggest that you listen to me read this and you seek as best you can to think that you are in John's position and these are the words that you heard the Lord Jesus pray.

In thinking about it today as I was reading this, I said, boy, you're standing on holy ground. Take the shoes off your feet. I mean, clear your mind, get your soul clear.

You're listening to the Son of God. He's praying. He's talking to his heavenly Father.

So I'd like to start by just reading the chapter again. It only takes about three or four minutes to read it. And having set the scene for that, you're hearing the voice of the Son of God.

It's very special. These words spake Jesus and lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hours come, glorify thy Son that thy Son also may glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self and with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. 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.

Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are thee. 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. I pray for them.

I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine, and all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee, Holy Father. I come to them, Holy Father, keep to thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are.

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

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. I pray not that thou should take them out of the world, but that thou should keep them from evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Need to pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, 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. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one.

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. 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 lovest me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not thee, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me, 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.

And shall we just look to the Lord again in a word of prayer. Our gracious Heavenly Father, we have read from the word of God that which our brother John recorded, what he heard he has written. I'm so thankful that we have these words before us.

These words are so precious and dear to the hearts of those that know the Lord Jesus Christ. These words have deep meaning and significance for us. Help us, we pray thee, to understand in that special way that will enlighten our souls and challenge us to a deeper devotion for our Lord Jesus Christ.

We would pray that what we have read will remind us that indeed he lovingly cares for us and desires communion and fellowship with us, just as he has enjoyed communion and fellowship with thee. O we thank thee for these words, and what we have said, Lord, we have said from our hearts. We truly feel that we are standing on holy ground, blessed to the end that each one of us might have our souls refreshed.

Grant, we pray thee, Lord, that our whole understanding of the mind and the will of God for the person of the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in what we have read will become precious and dear to our own hearts. This we ask in his precious name. Amen.

I'd like to give just a little review over what we looked at on Wednesday evening. As I said, these are words that John heard, and perhaps it was in one of those quiet times when the Lord drew aside. It could be in the garden.

I made mention of the fact that I wouldn't want to eavesdrop on you if you were praying. If you were closeted and you were making prayer, I wouldn't want to eavesdrop and listen to see what you were saying. As much as I'd like to hear and do like to hear others pray, it reveals so much that's in your heart and soul when you pray.

And you're not praying to be heard of men, but the prayer is directed heavenward. The words that you choose are those that the Spirit of God has drawn forth out of your soul. That's something that has deep meaning, and it's quite an experience, but it should be our experience every day.

I have heard people praying, and I did not intentionally try to overhear what they were saying in their prayer. It was a private thing, so I don't feel like that I was intruding upon their privacy. But you will say things when you're in a private encounter with God that ordinarily you would not say in a public way.

Men, when they pray publicly, are usually guarded in what they say. They want to be right, and they want to say the right thing, and they don't want to trip over words and things like that when they are praying publicly. Some insist that you must have the prayer written down if you're going to pray publicly.

It seems like it's a rather common thing among brethren, as we call ourselves. We do not write our prayers down. We usually, out of the heart, just offer a prayer, knowing what we have in mind when we pray.

Prayer is a wonderful thing, and the Lord leads us, I believe, as we have read this and listened to it. He gives us a beautiful pattern for prayer. This is his farewell prayer.

He has spoken to the disciples. This is his farewell sermon that we've just read, if you've been reading through the Gospel of John. And now we have this prayer, and indeed it has a sobering effect upon you.

I think this is truly the Lord's prayer. We go back and we look at Matthew 6 and we read the many refer to as the Lord's prayer. That was in response to what the disciples said when they said, Teach us to pray.

Teach us to pray. Now, what they had heard from him, and I'm thinking this is not the only time they heard him pray. Teach us to pray.

I want to pray the way you pray. I want to stay focused. I want to have my thoughts gathered together in such a way that as I speak to God, I don't say anything foolish.

Do you remember the book that circulated among us? I think it was Lehman Strauss that wrote that book, All the Foolish Things That People Say in Prayer. He had recorded all these things. If the Spirit of God is in control when we pray, we'll say the right thing.

I'm positive of this. It will arrive in the presence of God perfect, because if he has to edit, if he has to change anything, he can do it. I'm so glad he does that.

Even the things that we say when we're preaching and teaching the Word of God, so often we may say something and somebody may call it to your mind and say, Do you know what you said? What are you referring to? They tell you and you say, I said that? I don't even believe that myself. So we are vulnerable when it comes to sometimes speaking. Little wonder that the Word of God tells us to be careful in your choice of words and not be quick to speak, because most of us would have to confess, I've said a lot of foolish things in my life.

And to be reminded that all those words are going to be gathered up and one day we're going to have to get an account for what we said. I want to be careful what I say. I want to be careful in the choice of words and those thoughts that come into this little mind of mine.

This is the Lord's prayer, and we've read it. And to what degree we understand it and appropriate it and make it something precious and dear to our own heart is just dependent upon how much attention we'll give to it. I can only share a few thoughts.

Last week, I think we started out, our Lord lifted his eyes up to heaven. He turned toward the place that he left to come down into this world that we live in. Father, the hours come, and if you remember, we dwelt a little upon that.

He and the Father only knew about that hour, that hour. And you know what we're talking about. For this reason came I into the world to fulfill what took place when he hung upon a cross.

And he that knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. That hour, oh, that's a special hour. It seems like that even history would tell us that all things are dated from the time that this wonderful, glorious person, the Son of God, came into the world.

Everything before he came is dated as before Christ, B.C. And everything that has happened since he died upon that cross, after his death upon that cross. So there is some recognition that there is something very special about this person. I'd like to tell you what I think about Jesus, what he means to me.

Believers should rejoice in having an opportunity to tell others about the Lord Jesus Christ. Father, the hour has come, and the Father knew all about this hour, the Lord Jesus knew all about this hour. But you know, it had to come into his mind, and I know it must have.

He knew that in that hour, fellowship with the Father would be broken. And we know when that happened, because he said, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And you know, that sends pains into our

hearts and souls. Oh, the Father, in that hour in which the Son of God felt the wrath and the judgment of his Holy Father upon him for our sin and the payment, the penalty that had to be paid to save poor wretches like us, poor sinners.

Oh, this is so special. The Father knew all about his Son. He knew what he would experience.

He knew what had to take place. You know, when I read about something like this, I think I mentioned this on Wednesday evening, some people only think in terms of prayer as asking favors from God. Brother and sister, I trust it will have more meaning than that for each one of us.

Prayer can be that time of fellowship and communion with our God, not just asking for favors. My soul is lifted up to the God who loved me and provided a Savior for me. It's when I want my heart and soul occupied with him and him alone and all that he is and all that he has done for you and for me.

We personalize it just as much as we want to, but it should be special. Not like someone says I was invited to a prayer meeting. Come, let's go to the prayer meeting.

Well, I would, but I can't think of anything I need. Oh, brother, isn't that sad? Can't think of anything I need. Oh, do we value as we should value communion and fellowship with our God? Do we spend time in prayer? Do we spend time occupied with what he is and what he has done for us? And think upon the person of his beloved son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Glorify thy son that thy son also may glorify thee. That was a lonely walk through this world for 30-some years, man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and yet God was glorified in that life. To glorify, to display the splendor of God, the beauty and the wonder of our God, his greatness, his power, everything that can come to your mind as far as greatness is concerned.

It belongs to God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, he fulfilled that so perfectly. You know, these are the things that we need to know experientially. It's not just something we know when we hear someone preach about it or talk about it, but if it's going to be real to us, you have to experience it.

And you have to learn to find that time when you can be quiet and be with him and talk to him and have him speak to you. He walks with me, and he talks with me along life's pathway. Do we know through our own experience of fellowship and communion with him how precious it can be to draw nigh unto God? Scripture reminds us, draw nigh unto God, and he draws nigh unto thee.

Isn't it wonderful that he recognizes when we want to draw nigh unto him? He doesn't run away. He's far more concerned about it than we are. Oh, my child just called me.

He wants to share with me what's in his heart, and he draws nigh, and he listens, and we are assured that he is indeed pleased. God is glorified as we glorify him. I have glorified thee on the earth.

I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And we've heard that a lot of times, haven't we? He finished the work that God gave him to do, did it perfectly. Not one thing was left undone that was entrusted to the care of the Lord Jesus.

How he so ably handled the disciples and all of those that were entrusted into his care, those that indeed became a part of his life through those 33 years. I pray for them. I pray not for the world that was mentioned last Wednesday night.

He sought special blessing for you and me, and not for the world. I pray not for the world. Special blessings are for those that deserve those blessings, those that can appreciate those blessings.

They wouldn't be prized by ungodly people. Aren't we told in Scripture not to cast our pearls before swine? You may have witnessed to someone out of the depths of your soul in trying and seeking with all that you had within you to make the person of Christ real to them as the Savior of the world. And that's painful.

But think about how our Lord feels about it. The ungodly have no true appreciation for the things of God. And that's sad.

We're saddened by that. And as we think about what we were considering last week, I think we close somewhere along this point where he has prayed that his own in this world, that they would escape contact with sin and defilement to the point that it would render them incapable of communion and fellowship with God. That's what we read into those lines.

And my mind went back to that prayer that is called the Lord's Prayer. Deliver us from temptation and help us and deliver us from the hands of the evil one. So we have here again the thought that as one of God's dear children goes astray, as he wanders somewhere out of that realm of fellowship and communion with God, he desires that they be restored.

Oh, how carefully he watches over us. The fellowship and communion between the beloved Son of God and those that claim to know him. He pleaded with God that we might be kept from sin.

And God forbid that we would grieve the Spirit of God by giving place to sin in our lives. I don't believe a child of God can quench the Spirit of God. I know an unsaved person can, but I've always had a problem with that.

How could I quench the mighty power of the Spirit of God in bringing conviction into my soul of sin and righteousness and judgment? But I can grieve God. I can grieve the Holy Spirit. I can grieve the Son of God.

I can grieve my Heavenly Father any time I give place to sin in my life. And that would carry us back to that psalm that we quote so often, Psalm 66, verse 18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear me.

Boy, that strikes just like a burning iron into my heart. Oh, I can't give place to this. I cannot be a part of this thing.

It will rob me of fellowship and communion with my God. And I can't stand the thought of that. And I will not, by the grace of God, I will not do that.

And I think the thing that bothers us sometimes is it is so easy to sin. Don't we say that we can sin in thought and word and deed? So easy. But we're to be on guard.

We're to be strong in the Lord. We're to put on the whole armor of God that we might be able to stand in that evil day. As we move into the part that I think tonight is about where we left off, I'm thinking about there is woven into this that this is at least the way I interpret it.

Looking forward in time, our Lord thinks of a day of victory and triumph over all of the forces of evil. I think he's fully aware of what was accomplished in what he did upon the cross. I know he is.

I know he must know. He paid the penalty for our sin. He knows that all of the forces of evil, that evil one, that deceiver, that liar, that one that would damn the souls of men and lead them on pathways so that they would never know God, he knows that all those forces and their power was broken.

And that as believers tonight, we have access to that power because greater is he that lives in you than he that is in this world. We're more than conquerors through him that loved us and gave himself for it. These things speak I in the world that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

It was sheer joy for the Son of God to do the will of the Father. I believe that's what the thought came to my mind. Hebrews 12, 2. He counted it all joy to do the will of the Father.

When you delight in doing the will of God, when you discover the mind and the will of God, does it delight your soul to say, I am doing what God wants me to do? I'm so happy about this. I've got joy in my soul because it's bringing joy to him. And that's what our blessed Savior could say.

The joy of just doing that good and perfect will of God. Brother and sister, could we ask for anything better? I tell you, that's performing up to the standard that I think God expects from us if we truly love him. And the Lord says, if you love me, you will keep my commandments.

So how wonderful it is to be reminded that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I gave them your word, Lord. I have given them thy word.

The world hated them. The world didn't appreciate the Son of God. It doesn't appreciate God's people.

We're a nuisance in the world today. I heard a man say not long ago, I wish all them church people would shut up. I just wish they would shut up.

They bother me. I have to say this, and I say it because I think it's true, but that man's a fool. He really is a fool.

I haven't told him that, but that's the way I feel about it. The 15th verse says, I pray not that thou should take them out of the world. Have you ever listened to Eddie Arnold sing that song, Stop the World, I Want to Get Off? Well, I think sometimes God's people say in their hearts, I'd like to go home to be with the Lord.

Relieve me of all of this, all of this heart sorrow that I feel, all this suffering that I have to endure because I'm trying with the help of the Spirit of God to be loyal to what you have called me to do. And yet the sorrow is so deep. It's so painful.

It's so hard. Take me home. Take me home.

I've heard someone say that's the talk of a coward because I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. He wants us to be victorious for him. That's what he wants.

Oh, but that thou should keep them from evil. Lead us not into temptation, but again, deliver us from evil. Sanctify them through thy truth.

Oh, to be made holy. You know, I've heard people talk about someone they knew, and they characterized that person, and I heard it from this very platform that our brother T. Ernest Wilson, people that were in his presence and knew something about him felt like they had been in the presence of God. And you know,

when I thought about that later, I wouldn't mind if somebody thought that about me.

I think it's pretty remote. That's the way I feel about myself. I think that's the way we all feel.

But isn't it wonderful to know someone and detect in that person such a spirit of holiness, something that you recognize as true sanctification, separated in your heart, your mind and your soul from the things of this world. And with your mind fixed upon things that are above, your mind and soul fixed upon the person of Christ, the Son of God, the lover of your soul. It all is accomplished, he says.

Sanctify them through thy truth. Brother and sister, we can't get away from the value of the word of God. Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God.

You just can't get away from it. I heard this this week. This man was speaking and it was on BBN.

You may have heard it. He said, it's so sad to meet someone that is uneducated, is not able to read a word. He said, I'm thinking about someone and I'm endeavoring to help that person to learn to read with one view, that they would be able to read the word of God.

He said, that was so sad to me. It was so depressing to me. But he said, you know, there's something even sadder than that.

I was waiting to see what he said. And the thought didn't come to my mind until he said it. And that is somebody that's well-educated, that can read and read anything, and they won't read the word of God.

He said, that's something sad. That man that can't read, that's one thing. That's that.

But someone that can read the word of God, someone that claims to be a believer in our Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God, is able to take the word of God and make it living and real in his heart and soul, and he won't read it. He won't read it. And we don't know it.

Come as any surprise that the Apostle Paul said, I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren. An ignorant brother or an ignorant sister, ignorant of the mind and the will of God, is a sad thing to happen to any believer. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

We've been commissioned, brother, sister, you know, to be commissioned. We are entrusted with the responsibility of doing something. I can remember when I was commissioned to be a second lieutenant in the Air Force, the United States Air Force.

Man, I thought that was great. They even called us gentlemen. He is a gentleman.

Not necessarily so. Some of us were just bums, really. But we had reached a point where we were commissioned as officers, an officer and a gentleman.

And that wasn't always true, and you know all about that. But we were entrusted with certain responsibility, and they did have a high standard set for us. Needless to say, that standard sometimes is completely ignored.

But in this case, we have a person, our Lord Jesus Christ. He recognizes that we are commissioned of him to glorify God in our lives, glorify the Father. You know, we know people that we call having given, have the gift of an evangelist.

Have you ever won a soul to the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you ever been directly involved in taking the scriptures and opening the scriptures and having some person's eyes open spiritually and they said, I see, I see, I trust Christ as my Savior? I'll tell you, that's a glorious experience. If you've never had it happen, work on it. Work on it.

Work on it. We need to be evangelists. And one of the brothers says, you know, I'm going to spread the word, even if I have to talk about it.

You can spread the word with your life. He says, I'm going to spread the word, even if I have to talk about it, I'm going to spread it. I think that life part about it is absolutely necessary.

If all those flaws in our lives are what they say, they are not going to believe much we say. You know all about that. So we are commissioned to glorify God.

And indeed, there is no higher calling than to be entrusted with that responsibility to handle the word of God and show somebody how to step out of death into life and be born again and become a child of God. It's a wonderful experience. And the clock says right here, and they've taken the one down in the back.

So now I could say, hey, I didn't know. Oh yeah, but you do know. And you've been here long enough already.

When we read in these scriptures and as we close this thoughts about the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ, his thoughts about us being one body. And when you read in verses 20 and 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. You know, if there's real true grace in our hearts as believers, there can be true unity manifest in our lives, because we recognize that what I've got, you've got it too.

Hey, I haven't curbed the market on this. God's grace that abounds toward me, it abounds toward you too. Don't you think sometimes we only think in terms of ourselves the whole body, the whole body of Christ is what we're talking about.

And you can't get any closer than that. For they are one body in Christ. We are one body.

One body. Many members, many members function in the doing things and involved, and what we want to do is unify those efforts so it is for God's glory. How wonderful that is.

That's a wonderful thought in itself. What a wonderful, wonderful statement that is. God loves all of us, those that are chosen in him before the foundations of the world, this unspeakable grace, abounding in grace.

And here our blessed Lord, Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am. How would you like to be that a night, brother, sister? That's what he prayed. I'd like for them to be with me where I am.

Isn't that wonderful? Oh, that they might be with me where I am. For I have declared unto them thy name, and I will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them. You can't dwell too much upon this union that we have in the body of Christ.

We're one in Christ. He is the center. Right in this room this morning when we sat around this communion table and we broke bread and we drank of that cup, boy, we were expressing that oneness, that union.

We're in Christ. He is the center. He is the center.

He is that unspeakable gift. He is that indescribable one that has come into the world. And he's our Savior.

He's our Lord. You know, we should be humbled by all of this. I mean, not just speak the word and say, I'm humbled by all this, Lord.

I really am. I'm humbled by it. It does.

It has a sobering effect upon us when we consider these things, and that's good for us. Don't get any inflated ideas about how great you are or how great I am. Remember one great one, and that's him.

He is the one, the preeminent one, and God wants him to have the preeminent place in every one of our lives. You read this prayer over, take you three or four minutes, listen and see if you hear his voice. It's a wonderful experience to hear the voice of God speak to your soul.

And not one of us in this room can say, that's not possible for me. Oh, but it is. Oh, but it is.

It just depends upon how much you want that to happen. I said this before, the lady that said, I wouldn't want to be filled with the Spirit of God. I might do something foolish.

I want to cry when I hear somebody say that. You be sure of this, if you're filled with the Spirit of God, you will want all of God you can get. And you will draw nigh unto him and he will draw nigh unto you.

And the fellowship and communion that you enjoy will be worth it all. Our gracious Heavenly Father, we thank thee for the time spent together this evening. O Grant, we pray thee, Lord, that we heard your voice speak to us, that the Spirit of God has moved in our hearts and souls, and we have benefited from drawing nigh unto thee, Lord.

And may the love of God so permeate the hearts of every person that names Christ in this room tonight, that we will truly glorify thee in our lives. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we ask this. Amen.

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