

The Three Prayers (Part 1)

by Ron Bailey

The sermon explores the significance of Jesus' prayers and His relationship with the Father, emphasizing the call to glorify God in all aspects of life.

Duration: 39:25

Topics: "Prayer Example"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that the current time is a unique and significant moment in history. God is working to bring about redemption, restoration, and recreation in this specific block of time. The speaker urges listeners to recognize that life is a continuous process and that things do not remain stationary. The sermon also highlights the importance of relationships, particularly abiding in Jesus and the promise of the Holy Spirit. The speaker references various Bible passages, including John 14, 16, and 17, to support these teachings.

Transcript

If Di and I have just spoken, just very briefly, just after tea, about what we were thinking of doing, and I have some things, so I said to Di that we can kind of lay a foundation for what we're going to do. It's a good idea to know what you're going to build, of course, before you start off with the foundation. But I'm going to go to a certain passage of Scripture, and for my sessions, I'm going to start here, first of all, in John chapter 12.

I've got some thoughts on my heart, and they've been there for a little while. I want to think about the Lord Jesus and his relationship with his Father, and the way that we find that expressed in three particular parts of the New Testament. I want to look at the three prayers of the Lord Jesus Christ, which really are around and across that kind of time zone.

So, I'm going to do the three prayers, and Di can be the Goldilocks. We'll kind of have a quick look, if you will, first of all at verse 15, because that will put you into the context that this is what we call Palm Sunday, which is the time when the Lord Jesus went into Jerusalem, and was acclaimed by all those who were there. Then, in verse 20, it says this, And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship the feast.

The same came, therefore, to Philip, which was a best saviour of Galilee, and desired him saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. I think I may have mentioned before, a long, long time ago, I was once a potential

Anglican clergyman, and I was going to go to a place called Oak Hill, that's what you may have known of. And Oak Hill, for many, many years, had a special, very simple pulpit, and let into the pulpit, there was no regular brass plate, so that only the preacher saw it.

And when you stood up, and you looked at this plate, and it just simply said, Sir, we would see Jesus. It's a great thing for a preacher to have in front of him, when he begins to preach. Sir, we would see Jesus.

Philip comes and tells Andrew, and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them saying, The hour is come that the Son of Man shall be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.

But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me.

And where I am there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour. Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father saved me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour.

Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven saying, I have both glorified it and will glorify it again. The people therefore that stood by and heard it said that it thundered.

Others said an angel spake to him. I won't go on. I'll just draw your attention before I move on to the next passage of Scripture I want to read.

So this phrase in verse 23, the hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. And then again in verse 27, now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father saved me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour. Now if you'll turn with me to John chapter 17.

We come to what I think one Bible scholar used to call the holiest holders of the Bible. This amazing chapter which is really the Lord's Prayer, the thing that we often call the Lord's Prayer. If it was ever designed or intended to be used was really a disciple's prayer.

And this is the Lord's Prayer. I'm just going to read the first little bit of it to start off with tonight. 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. Can you see how that connects up with what we were reading in John chapter 12? One of the things that intrigues me about this, and I can't give you slick answers but I just want to provoke you to think, is that here, this particular point in John chapter 17, I reckon it must be at the least five days from the passage that we read in chapter 12. If you think of Palm Sunday and now we've moved right up to kind of Thursday night, that's the pattern.

On Palm Sunday, to use that kind of calendar, Jesus said, the hour has come. And now, five days later, he says, the hour has come. What kind of hour is this that lasts for five days? The kind of hour that sometimes we preachers would like.

We'd like hours like that. I know there are some preachers and you kind of feel that they kind of work on that kind of a clock anyway. I remember hearing a story once, it was someone who went to a concert.

It wasn't really a story about a preacher but they went to a concert and they said, what was it like? And they said, it's one of those concerts that you, it started at seven o'clock, it went on for three hours and

when I looked at my watch it said 20 past. And occasionally you get kind of preachers a little bit like that and they kind of go on for three hours and you look at your watch and it says 20 past. Well I'm definitely not going to go on for three hours or five days.

But the reason I want to draw your attention to this is because I think sometimes we make a rod for our own back. We create struggles for ourselves because we think in man-made units and we think of an hour. And you'll get people who say well I was born again on July the 27th in 1958 or whatever it was.

What does that mean? And I could give you a date when I was conscious of me myself responding to the Lord. But you know there are so many things that we want to tie down as an event which actually biblically are a process. They are an event but it's a five-day event.

It might be a five-year event and it doesn't matter. In God's eyes it's one hour. It's a single unit of time in which God is doing something.

Now the reason I've said this here is because you'll see that Jesus prays about being glorified. Now what do you think he means when he talks about being glorified? Is it Jesus glorified when he's on the cross or is it Jesus glorified when he is raised from the dead or is it Jesus glorified when he is ascended on high into the Father's right hand? Well it's actually all one unit that we're working at. It's all one unit.

Now it can be helpful sometimes. I don't want to get too technical. It can be helpful to divide things up so that you can understand them.

Sometimes it's a good thing to stop something in its tracks so that you can look at it carefully as long as you realise that it's got to be put back on the tracks and allowed to run if it's really going to work. One of the things that I think Bible teaching can do is that it can sometimes kind of work like those amazing kind of strobe lights that they use for timing the ignition or used to do I think with cars, this sort of thing. I can remember the first time I saw my father use one of these things and I was absolutely fascinated with it.

This light that shines that beams at a fixed period of time so that it actually looks as though this wheel that's spinning around is stationary. Now the wheel isn't stationary. Keep your fingers out of it.

The wheel is not stationary. It's only the appearance of stationary. And quite often what we can do with Bible truth is that we can look at something and it's like a strobe light.

You can make it stand still for a little bit to give us time to look at it. You need to understand that in life things don't stand still if we look at them. It's a process.

It goes on. There was something here that the Lord was doing and it's all one unit. He's going to glorify His Father.

He's going to be glorified as the Son. He's going to do the thing that He came to do and it's all one unit of time. Do you remember in the book of Revelation, same author John, he writes on one occasion and he gives a little cameo and he speaks of the Son that is born from the woman and is caught up to the throne of God.

Do you remember that, that little phrase? And you realise that that's half a verse I think in Revelation. You realise in a half a verse you've got the whole wonder of the Incarnation, His whole life upon the earth, His 30 hidden years, His three years of public ministry, the cross, His death, the resurrection, His ascension to

the throne. It's all in half a verse.

All in half a verse. Sometimes we need to be free from trying to tie things down into man-made units. That's what I'm saying.

This is one glorious unit. It's interesting as well, and this again is just a little kind of technicality, but John loves verbs. John loves verbs.

In fact he prefers verbs to nouns. This isn't a grammar lesson, but let me tell you that John never uses the word knowledge. He uses the word knowing.

Now that's significant because knowledge is a fixed amount of something and you can say I've got it or I haven't got it, but knowing is a process and John is interested in processes. He's not interested in benchmarks so that you can say yeah tick that one off and tick that one off. He's interested in process.

Do you know for example the word faith, John doesn't use it in his Gospel. He uses believing. You see faith is an object.

You can say I've got it or I haven't got it. Believing is a process. Do you know that really the very best word to describe God's people is actually, not Christian, but believers.

Believers. The believing ones. The ones who are in the process of believing.

Not just the ones who have believed at a point in time so that they can write it down and say on this date, at this year, this is what happened, but believers are people who go on believing. So that at any point of your life, if you look at their life, you'll find that they're believing. They're believers.

It's like Blackpool rock. It doesn't matter where you chop it through, it'll say Blackpool and it doesn't matter what part of the believer's life you stop it at. Wherever the strobe light speeds it, you'll see that he's a believer.

His instinct is to trust God. It's not just one great big enormous step of faith is taken at some point. It's actually a whole process.

It's been a whole walk of step after step after step where he's continued to be a believer looking to the Lord. Now I'm not saying that God doesn't want to bring events into our lives. I'm not saying that.

I'm not saying that God doesn't want to give you a specific blessing. I'm just saying be careful that you don't kind of measure your life with these man-made units. Okay.

Let's go back briefly then to John chapter 12. This hour that the Lord Jesus speaks of. You may remember, if you know John's gospel, that on two, maybe three occasions I can think of, at least a couple of occasions, it speaks of the hour.

For example, when Jesus was at the wedding at Cana of Galilee in John chapter 2 and Mary says they need wine and Jesus said, what's that to do with me? My hour is not yet come. A little bit later on, I think it's somewhere around about chapter 7, there's a time when the temple guards were sent out to arrest Jesus and it says they couldn't arrest him because his hour was not yet come. And yet at this point in time here when these Greeks want to see him, he immediately says, this is it.

This is it. There's something, there's a bell that chimes, there's something that he hears in his spirit. This is it now.

This is the beginning of a unit of time, we'll call it a process, but actually it's one block of time and in this one block of time God will effect redemption. In this one block of time he will do what he's had to do. In this one block of time he will lay the foundation for recreation, for redemption, for restoration.

But everything is, it should have been in this one single block of time. It's almost as though it's at the corner of the world's history, at the corner of the universe's history. This block of time, this hour has changed time and eternity.

Nothing will ever be the same again because of this hour, because of this period of time in which he did certain things. And one of the things I want to touch on here, and I'll just touch on it now for tonight, is this amazing way in which there is this consciousness of his relationship with his father. I think we've probably said this before, that John's gospel is really all about relationships.

It's all your favourite verses about being in me and I in you and the father's in me and I'm in him. This is all John's gospel. In fact, if you'll turn with me to John chapter one, I'll just draw your attention to just a particular way in which John expresses something.

This is John chapter one and verse 14, and it's speaking of Jesus as the word here, and it says the word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory. See, we're still on the theme of glory. We beheld his glory, the glory as of an only begotten of the father, my author's vision says.

It's really a Greek word para, which means by the side of. He sees and he says, what we saw in Jesus is the unique glory of an only begotten son by the side of his father. What they saw in the whole of his life, if you like, was two persons in perfect harmony, would never expand between them.

Perfect accord, perfect fellowship, perfect harmony every step of the way. It reminds me of the story of Abraham and Isaac way back in the Old Testament in Genesis chapter 22, I think it is, and it tells the story of how God spoke to Abraham and told him that he was to offer Isaac, and then twice in the little story as it unfolds it says, and the two of them went together, Abraham and Isaac, and the two of them went together. It wasn't Abraham imposing something on Isaac, the two of them went together.

And our salvation wasn't effected by the father imposing something upon the son, the two of them went together. And in the whole of John's gospel, it more than in any other part of the scripture, you'll see the two of them go together, the father and the son in perfect harmony. If you, we won't go into that, there's several places you could dip into John and find that, but if you come to, back to John chapter 12, and we'll, I think we'll certainly touch on this a little bit later on and go a little bit deeper with it.

John chapter 12 verse 28, so verse 27, he says, now is my soul troubled. Because he has heard this striking of the bell, because he knows this unit of time has begun, he immediately begins to think forward to all that this unit of time is going to contain. Inevitably it's going to contain the cross, and even just the thought of it, you've got to think, what shall I say? Remember how Paul says, what shall we say? He says that a few times.

What shall we say? What shall I say? It's very important what you say. Very important. I remember reading a little snippet of something from Martin Lowe Jones many, many years ago, and he said something like this, he said, the trouble with Christians is that they don't talk to themselves enough, and they listen to

themselves far too often.

Now if you can catch up with that, that's a bit quick isn't it for the first night. We need to talk to ourselves, we need to speak to ourselves, we need to speak out truth. What shall I say? Not what I think, not how are my deliberations coming out, what shall I say? You see when you speak something you give it a substance, you give it the materiality which is quite different from just a thought that's passed through your mind.

What shall I say? My soul is troubled, what shall I say? Father save me from this hour. That isn't his prayer, that's his thought. He's just simply sticking out an idea for the benefit of the disciples.

What shall I say? Father save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour. This hour is the whole purpose of the incarnation.

This hour is the whole purpose of so much that God intends to do. I came for this hour. You know it says in the book of Hebrews that when Jesus came into the world there's this testimony of his spirit, lo I come to do thy will O God.

That was his disposition through the whole of his life. As a toddler that was his disposition, as a five year old, a six year old, as a young teen that was his disposition to do those things that pleased the Father. But there was a time when this willingness to please the Father is amazingly focused and concentrated in this one hour.

And in this one hour he will do the will of God and change everything forever. And he came to this hour for this purpose. And then he prayed this.

Father, notice how instinctively in the midst of, he's looking forward to the pain, to the separation, to all the consequences of what the cross will be and yet his instinct in the midst of all this is not to think of his own suffering, not to think of his own pain, of his own cost. His instinct is Father, glorify thy name. Remember how Paul talks about glorifying God whether it's by life or by death.

That's Paul saying the bottom line is that we glorify God. The bottom line is not that we survive or that we're better this week than we were last week. The bottom line is that we glorify God.

Are you sure I've told you this story? I've told it often. It's one of my favourite stories about C.T. Studd who was in Africa and trusting God for the supply of all his needs and sometimes the supply was abundant and sometimes it wasn't quite so abundant. And on one occasion there was a young man who went out to work with him, I think he was a dentist, and because he'd gone to work with him he took on the same kind of pattern of life as C.T. Studd and suffered the ups and downs and the ebbs and flows of supplies and all the rest of it.

And then one day in absolute frustration he stopped C.T. Studd and he said, this is ridiculous, we've got to live. And C.T. Studd said, not necessarily. But what's the bottom line? Is the bottom line survival or is the bottom line, Father glorify thy name.

You see for Jesus the one thing that mattered was that his Father's name should be glorified. If we go on in the next couple of days, we'll come into John chapter 17 and you'll see that Jesus says to them, I've manifested to them your name. I've shown them what you're like.

That's what he's really saying. And now he's saying, Father glorify thy name. Let your character be seen in all its fullness.

Me, unextendable. Whether I survive, whether I don't survive, whether it's wonderful, whether it's not wonderful, secondary. What matters is that your name is glorified.

And it comes from this Father, this instinctive lifting of his heart to his Father. And I think we get sufficient clues from the rest of the scriptures to understand that when Jesus spoke with his Father, he usually called him Abba. Now Abba doesn't mean Daddy, if you've been told that, that's not the whole truth.

It does mean, it is the word that's spoken in tremendous intimacy of fellowship between Father and Son, but there's dignity with it. Daddy does not do justice to this word, but it's a word which knows no barriers. It's a word of immediacy where the Son can speak to the Father in a unique way that nobody else can.

And it's here, it rises, Father glorify thy name. Do you remember how the Lord Jesus, when they said to him, teach us to pray? Notice if you're pedantic and fussy, that they didn't say, teach us how to pray. That's what we think they said, but they didn't say that.

There's all kinds of manuals that teach you how to pray, but we really need to be taught to pray. They said to him, teach us to pray, and he said, well here's some words, use these words, Our Father. Can you see how all prayer has to come out of relationship? When someone in ancient times was coming to a kingdom, had a great petition, they'd usually start off with some, the first ten minutes would be all the titles that the king had.

You know, great and glorious, Osnapper and all the rest of it, and may his tents increase and his tribes increase and his tents stay up, and it just goes on and on and on and on. These things that they, and he's the master of the whole earth and everyone bows to him, and it just goes on and on and on and on. And these are people coming to a king and thinking that by flattery they'll get the attention of the king and then be able to slip in their petition.

And Jesus says, when you pray, cut to the chase. Father, Father. This is where it comes from, it comes from relationship.

And I want to talk about that relationship. Let's just go very briefly, I'm only going to spend a little time longer in John chapter 17 now. These chapters are amazing, aren't they? Chapter 13 and 14 and 15.

So at the end of 14 you've got, in verse 31, sorry I've taken you back a bit, in chapter 14 and verse 31, you've got an interesting little verse where it says, and that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. And then he says, arise, let it go hence. And obviously this is the point now where they get up and they leave the upper room and they start their journey towards the garden of Gethsemane.

So in between the end of chapter 14 and other things that we'll come across in other places in Gethsemane, they've taken a journey, traditionally John Mark's house where the upper room was, was in the west of Jerusalem. So they've walked through all the streets, they've probably walked past the temple. Some people think they may even have walked through the temple courts.

If they did, it's very significant because the temple during Herod's time was a magnificent thing. It really ought to have been the eighth wonder of the world. It was magnificent.

It was absolutely magnificent. It's coated in gold, the central shrine. And in front of the central shrine there were pillars and then there was what they sometimes called a crown, a kind of a frieze that went around the top.

And from the frieze there hung in solid gold a vine. And the clusters of grapes on the vine were as tall as a man. It was magnificent.

It was supposed to be a representation of the congregation of Israel, what you might have called the church of Jehovah, that it was joined together, it was full of life. You know there's something about a vine that it's just amazing in the abundance of its fruitfulness, if it's growing properly that is. And this was the symbol that the Jews had around the temple.

It was a symbol of what Israel was supposed to be. Israel was supposed to be a vine. It was supposed to be a vine that was full, heavy with fruit, ready for the master to come and take it.

Maybe they did walk through the temple courtyards. Maybe as they walked and their eyes looked at the vine, Jesus' eyes looked at the vine too and he said to his disciples, I am the vine, the true vine. That's the way that it's actually spoken.

Your AV says, I am the true vine. It's literally, I am the vine, the true one. I'm the vine, the real one.

This is being shadowed and tightened. We're now talking about a substance, I am the vine, the true one. And you know that this vine is all about relationships again.

It's all about abiding in him, remaining in him. It's all about relationships. And then you go through with this the promise of the Spirit in 14 and chapter 16.

And then you come to chapter 17. Where was he when this happened? If you look at chapter 18, you'll see why I'm struggling with it. In chapter 18 of verse 1 it says, When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Kidron, where was a garden into which he entered with his disciples.

So chapter 18 of verse 1 is where they come into Gethsemane. Chapter 14 and verse 31 is where they leave the upper room. And in the midst, in the gap in the middle, we really don't know where they were.

We only know that they must have walked through the streets of Jerusalem and almost certainly passed by certainly, if not through the temple courtyard. So you get to chapter 17. These words spoke Jesus and lifted up his eyes to heaven and says, Father, there it is again, the hour has come.

Glorify thy son, that thy son also may glorify thee. And 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 eternal life, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

I don't know whether you've ever noticed anything about those first two verses. He never uses the word me. He refers to himself in chapter verse 1 as the son, and in verse 2 he refers to himself as Jesus Christ.

It's not actually until you get to verse 5 that he says me. Why is that? Well I have no doubt in my own mind that part of the reason the Lord prayed this prayer in the way that he did was to instruct the disciples who were there. It wasn't a performance, it wasn't a theatrical thing, but he did it in a particular way so that they could see truth.

And you'll see again he's conscious of relationship. In verse 1, father and son. That's a very powerful thing.

Father and son. In ancient times a son, and certainly an only begotten son or the first son, would be the one who would carry on, let's keep it simple, who would carry on the father's business. That's what he would do.

He would be the one who would train with the father, the one who had been instructed by the father, the one who had been commissioned by the father, the one who when the father was not there would carry on doing the father's will. That's why they had this system of a double portion being given to the eldest son. And I think I've said this to you before, is well I had seven children and we had three boys and four girls.

And if we had divided my kind of vast inheritance along Hebrew lines it would have been something like this. On my death my wealth would have been divided into four equal parts. Three sons, four equal parts.

The youngest son would have had one part, the middle son would have had one part, the eldest son would have had a double portion and four sisters and his mother to look after. That's why he was given the double portion. He was given the double portion so that he could carry on the father's care of the family.

This is what sons do, they carry on the father's will. So you've got it here. Here he is, some people call this the will, the last will and testament of Jesus, this particular chapter.

Here he is, he's thinking of the father and the son. He's talking about himself but he's thinking about father and son in a particular relationship. You know that, and now we come right to the edge of what God has revealed to us so we can't go beyond it, but we believe, we teach, we believe the Bible teaches us that God's son is father, son and spirit, one God in three persons.

We are orthodox Trinitarians in that sense. I'm sure that that isn't the only relationship within the Godhead. On another occasion it speaks of the father, the word and the spirit.

Now he was the word before he was the word incarnate. When he was the word incarnate he became Jesus because at that point the father had spoken forth the word, he'd sent the word and the word was going to fulfil the purpose of the one who'd spoken it. So in verse two, verse three he refers to the father as being, or God as being the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

In this particular verse, here in verse three, he's conscious of himself as the apostle, the one that the father has sent, the one that the father has commissioned. In the first verse he's conscious of the relationship, father and son, now he's conscious of the mission, he's conscious of what his father has sent him. It's a little theme that keeps on coming through John's Gospel, he's the one that the father has sent, the one that the father has sent.

And then here we come to this little bit and he says in verse four, I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. What do you think about that? How can he say he's finished the work that the father gave him to do? We need to understand that time is our prison that we are trapped in here on earth and we can only understand things in straight lines and the before and the now and the tomorrow. But in God things don't, aren't always seen like that, they don't need to be seen like that.

It's almost in this thing as though he prays this prayer from the perspective of the one who has fulfilled the hour, the whole hour. And he's asking that the father will glorify him with the glory that he had before the

world was. He's finished it, in his heart it's finished, it's done.

Later on he refers to here back to the will, he says in verse 24, Father I will that they also whom thou hast given me. You know you normally only, you write a will before you die. But you usually write a will kind of in the past.

What sense to write it in? You see I come from a part of the country where funerals are fascinating events as you kind of come from big families. My parents were both from big families and I can remember as a child these intriguing ceremonies that went on every now and again when an uncle would vanish and you'd get this ceremony of everybody kind of jamming together in a little terraced type house with wonderful great platefuls of ham and a big row over who got the drop. It's just that my life is punctuated with these kind of things.

But wills are like this and a will says I bequeath this, I bequeath this, I bequeath this. Now the will can't have any effect until the person is dead. What you've got here is Jesus bequeathing things.

You've got him declaring his will, Father I will also that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am that they may behold my glory. There's a story that George knows better than I do so he'll tell you more detail than I can tell you. But during the time of the Covenanters in Scotland there was an occasion when a young woman was arrested.

She was going to one of these things that they call a conventicle, an illegal meeting held out in the open air. And she had a bible under her cloak and the Redcoats caught her and they wanted to know where she was going and she didn't know what to say. She didn't want to tell a lie, she didn't want to tell the truth and get her brothers and sisters arrested.

And I think God gave her this simple solution and she said, please don't hinder me, our elder brother has died and we're going to read the will. Here's the will. This is the will.

This is the last will and testimony of Jesus. He's done it. I've given this to them, I've done this, I've finished this.

It's absolutely settled. He's not to go through all the pain of it yet but it's absolutely settled. It's finished.

He's done that that he came to do. This is an amazing prayer. It's a prayer of supreme faith and commitment.

I'm going to stop here and give Guy some time. Maybe we could just pray just very briefly before we do. So as we bow our heads and lift our hearts, what rises instinctively from our hearts? Father.

Father. In contemplation of the most unbelievable horror that anyone could ever even imagine, still arises from the heart, Father. The bottom line, Father, glorify thy name.

Lord, we thank you that you have revealed yourself in increasing measure to us and we want the whole world to know how wonderful you are. And to that end, Lord, we give ourselves to you and we say, whether it's by life or by death, be glorified. Father, glorify thy name.

In another sense, Lord, we take up this very prayer for our conference and say, after all our plans and thinkings and packing and journeys, Father, thou hast come, glorifying yourself.

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