

THE LORD'S PRAYER FOR HIMSELF

John 17:1-5

Intro: I hope you noticed I put up the Easter banners this week.

- Several years ago Judy told me they were supposed to go up right after Ash Wednesday--and I've tried to remember to do so.
- But since we don't plan our services around a liturgical calendar---which includes Lent---a time for penance before Easter---I seldom think of it until I see ashes on someone's forehead.
- Liturgical churches have highly structured services of seasonally prescribed readings---and the regular recitation of creedal statements and prayers.
- Including---of course---the Lord's Prayer.
- Since we are a non-liturgical church---it's not our custom to recite the Lord's Prayer on a regular basis.
- However---we are going to do so this morning.
- “Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.
Amen.”
- We call that the Lord's Prayer---and Jesus did say it.
- But it wasn't a prayer He offered.
- He was simply teaching us what to include in our prayers.
- It's a model prayer---an example of how we should pray.
- His prayer---the prayer most appropriately called the Lord's Prayer---is found in the 17th chapter of John.
- It's the longest recorded prayer of Jesus.
- It comes from the depths of His heart---and reveals what was on His mind during the hours before His death.
- It can be divided into three sections.
- The Lord's prayer for Himself.
- The Lord's prayer for the apostles.
- And the Lord's prayer for the church.

- This morning we are going to look at the Lord's prayer for Himself---which begins with a recognition of the fact that...

I. HIS HOUR HAD COME

John 17:1-2

- “These things Jesus spoke; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee,
- even as Thou gavest him authority over all mankind, that all whom Thou hast given Him, He may give eternal life.’”
- Jesus had been speaking to His disciples in the upper room.
- He now changes focus---and lifts His eyes to heaven.
- He is now speaking to His Father.
- He is praying---with His eyes open.
- We generally close them to shut out distractions---but Jesus looked up---at least on this occasion.
- In His mind's eye He was looking into the face of His Father---and He had a lot on His mind.
- His hour had come.
- It was time for Him to accomplish what He had come to earth to do.
- Earlier in His ministry He had indicated that His hour had not yet come.
- At the wedding in Cana---when His mother asked Him to do something miraculous---He said---“My hour has not yet come.”
- It wasn't time to reveal Himself as Savior of the world---but He did quietly resolve the problem.
- Later---when His brothers wanted Him to go into Jerusalem and make a name for Himself---He said---“My time is not yet at hand.”
- He did go into the city---but not with the fanfare His brothers wanted.
- Twice it was recorded that He escaped from His enemies---because His hour had not yet come.
- But now it was here.
- His hour had come.
- And He prayed---“Father, glorify Thy Son.”
- At first glance---that seems a bit strange.
- Why did He say that?
- What was it He was asking for?
- How did He expect God to glorify Him?
- Certainly He had already been glorified.

- On the Mount of Transfiguration His face shone like the sun---and His garments became white as light.
- Moses and Elijah appeared---and conversed with Him.
- Three of the disciples witnessed all of this---and were so overwhelmed that Peter suggested they build three tabernacles to honor them.
- But while he was still speaking a bright light overshadowed them---and a voice out of the cloud said---“This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him.”
- Choirs of angels had even heralded His birth.
- What more could He want?
- What could bring Him more glory than those events?
- He knew.
- And so did His Father.
- He would be glorified---beyond anything that had happened to Him on earth---through the cross.
- Through the cross He would demonstrate His willingness to do whatever was needed.
- Through the cross He would prove His love for us.
- Through the cross He would proclaim victory over the enemy ---and death itself.
- Through the cross Jesus would be glorified---and He was praying that God would allow Him to go through with their plan.
- He was asking God to let His Son to be crucified.
- Surely God didn’t want that to happen any more than did Jesus.
- But it was the only way for both of them to be seen in all their glory.
- Only through the death of His Son could God be glorified as a loving---merciful---heavenly Father who would do anything for His children.
- And only through His death---could Jesus become the Savior of mankind.
- God had already given Jesus the authority to offer eternal life to those given to Him---those who would accept the conditions set forth by God.
- And He was now requesting that they go through with their plan---and make it happen.
- Jesus had done everything that needed to be done up to this point.
- Now was the hour to finish what He had come to do.
- And Jesus knew it would be done.
- He knew the Father’s heart---and He knew His own---so He continued His prayer by viewing the next few days with such certainty that He could speak of them as if...

II. HIS WORK WAS DONE.

John 17:3-4

- ““And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.
- ‘I glorify Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do.’”
- Jesus had come to give us eternal life.
- But what exactly is eternal life?
- Is eternal life just living forever?
- I hope not.
- Years ago I saw a movie about a man who couldn’t die.
- He outlived everyone---and suffered everlasting pain and loss because of it.
- We’re not intended to live here---forever.
- We’ve been created for something more.
- Nor are we to simply live somewhere else---forever.
- Unless God ultimately extinguishes those in hell---and there is some Biblical evidence that He may do so---everyone will exist forever.
- If that’s the case---some will exist for all eternity cut off from God and everything that is good---and beautiful---and loving.
- That’s not eternal life.
- That’s eternal death.
- The eternal life Jesus spoke of is more than a life that goes on and on.
- It’s the kind of life---the quality of life---that God desires for those who love Him.
- Quality of life arguments on earth can be very subjective---and lead down a slippery slope where life is devalued.
- But with regard to eternal life---it’s a valid way to think.
- Jesus said He came to give us life---and life more abundantly.
- And God wants us to experience life in all its fullness---eternally---in His presence
- That is eternal life.
- And that’s what Jesus was talking about.
- ““And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.”
- Eternal life is to know God.
- It is to live in His presence---forever.
- The word used here for “to know” was also used when speaking of the sexual union between a husband and wife.
- So that gives us some idea of the intimate relationship that is being pictured.
- Eternal life is knowing God---intimately---forever.

- It's fellowshiping with Him---communing with Him---truly being with Him.
- And it's knowing His Son Jesus Christ---who was sent to earth to make that eternal relationship possible.
- Jesus had done everything that needed to be done up to that point.
- He had come to earth as a man.
- He had lived among us as a man---and experienced all that we experience---so He could understand us fully.
- And He had revealed God to us.
- He had taught us about the Father---and had shown us the Father.
- To see Him---was to see His Father.
- To know Him---was to know God.
- For three years He had been laying the foundation for that eternal relationship.
- Now it was time to pay the price required to make it possible.
- And Jesus looks at it as if it has already been accomplished.
- The course had been set.
- The decision made.
- There was no turning back.
- He had brought glory to His Father while living on earth.
- Now He would bring glory to His Father by dying on earth.
- And once that was behind Him---He would be ready to return to His Father---knowing that...

III. HIS FATHER WAS WAITING John 17:5

- ““And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.””
- Jesus is looking beyond the cross here---even beyond the resurrection.
- He is here looking to His ascension.
- At His ascension it would be perfectly clear that Jesus had come from the Father in heaven---and was returning to Him.
- While the apostles were watching---Jesus would be lifted up---a cloud would receive Him out of their sight---and angels would tell them that Jesus was being taken up into heaven.
- In that glorious return to heaven---both the Father and the Son would be glorified.
- His being lifted up would demonstrate that they both had a hand in the salvation made possible by His time on earth.

- That time---however---was about to end.
- It was time for Jesus to return the His rightful place at the Father's side.
- He had willingly given up His heavenly glory to come to earth.
- But He was ready to go home.
- The Apostle Paul actually tells us what our Lord gave up to come to earth---as well as what He gained by coming.
- He does so in a beautiful passage of Scripture that pretty well sums it all up.
- “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,
- who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,
- but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men.
- And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
- Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
- that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth,
- and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:5-11)
- Jesus' prayer for Himself was indeed answered.
- Both He and His Father were glorified by His death---His resurrection---and His ascension into heaven.
- Something that at first appeared to be anything but glorious---became the most glorious event of all time.
- The Lord's prayer for Himself was answered.
- I trust that you realize---however---that even that portion of His prayer that is focused on Himself---is not really on Him.
- The focus is on us.
- We are the ones for whom He left the realms of glory.
- We are the ones who have been given eternal life.
- And we are the ones who now bring Him glory.
- We do so by accepting Him as our Savior---by serving Him as our Lord---and by praising Him for what He's done.
- In fact---you can be an answer to Jesus' prayer today.
- Let's stand together---and give Him---and His Father---the glory they deserve.