

Twenty-One Days With John

Day 17 – John 17

Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, sanctify our lives. Make Your name holy among us. Open our eyes to Your Kingdom. Open our hearts to Your will. Give us our daily needs and contentment to receive Your gifts with thanksgiving. Forgive us, and as we forgive, help us to forgive others as You forgive us. Lead us in Your righteousness. Do not lead us astray. Keep us steadfast when we are tested. For to You be all glory, honor and praise—forever and ever! Amen.

Meditation:

Prayer. It is such an *essential* and *central* part of our daily walk of faith.

One of Jesus' main ministry emphases was prayer. "Pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). Jesus' "Sermon On The Mount," if nothing else, is an unmatched catalog of essential Christian attitudes and disciplines...including prayer. He we find Jesus teaching us what attitudes to have when we pray, how to pray, whom to pray for...even what words to pray...including the prayer of all prayers, The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:1ff).

What do you think did people request most from Jesus? Miracles? I think it was prayer. They wanted Jesus to pray for them and their needs. They wanted to be sure the Father heard their prayers. When Jesus served as their prayer Mediator, they were assured that God would hear their prayer. Do you recall the time when parents brought little children to Jesus, they asked Jesus to pray for them (Matthew 19:13)? How about the numerous times those who were sick or in need prayed, "Lord, have mercy on me"?

Pray was what Jesus did each day. Everyday Jesus went by Himself to pray (cf. Mark 6:46 et al). Sometimes, He spent an entire night in prayer (Luke 6:12). His was a life of prayer. The disciples must have been moved by Jesus' life of prayer. They probably were in awe, wondering, "How can He do that! That's amazing!" Desiring to imitate their Lord they asked, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

The most amazing thing about Jesus' prayers, however, were that they weren't just for Himself. He prayed for others, regularly and passionately, as their High Priest. When they prayed to Jesus, they could be sure that He would take their prayers to His Father in Heaven. They *would* be heard. They *would* be blessed.

John 17 contains Jesus' "High Priestly Prayer." Jesus' longest recorded prayer, it occurred just before His arrest in John 18. It contains Jesus' last reflection on His ministry and His final requests for Himself, His disciples and the world. Having finished this prayer, the next recorded prayer of Jesus are His words on the cross.

On one hand, there is nothing really special about this prayer. In it, Jesus mentioned the things He no doubt routinely prayed throughout His ministry: His relationship with His heavenly Father, for His disciples and, of course, for Himself. Note how Jesus even used some of the same phrases, themes and ideas that He used in the Lord's Prayer.

On the other hand, Jesus' High Priestly Prayer is the *sine qua non* of all prayers. What makes this High Priestly Prayer so special? It is not the just words that make this prayer special. This prayer is special the pray-er of this prayer is Jesus, the Great High Priest (cf. Heb 4:14). As the Great High Priest, Jesus' prayer is a mediation between God and man. Jesus, the Great High Priest, understood the longing of God's people for God's mercy and strength. Jesus, the Great High Priest, the Prophesied One, the Messianic Chosen One, our Prophet, Priest and King, had an unquenchable passion and concern for God's people. That, ultimately, is what made Jesus' prayer special: *Himself*.

Twenty-One Days With John

Day 17 – John 17

In His prayer regarding His Father, one can certainly see Jesus doing what high priests do. As the greatest High Priest, He prayed for *Himself, His disciples* and for *others*.

In 17:1ff, Jesus, as High Priest, specifically on behalf of Himself. Preparing for His death, this prayer was Jesus' epitaph of faithfulness and resolve to do His Father's will...even unto death on the cross. Note how extensively Jesus pleaded to His Father regarding *every* aspect of His relationship with His Father in Heaven. Note how Jesus' prayer captured and expressed the very essence of His ministry. He described how He had done everything His Father had called Him to do. He declared that He had finished the word He was sent to do...*all* to glorify His Father.

In 17:5ff, Jesus, as High Priest, prayed specifically on behalf of His disciples. Note Jesus' extensive efforts to care for them. Note just how diligently he had led them. Note, as John did, *how much* He loved them, prayed for them and cared for them. Most importantly, note how His love for them was demonstrated His urgent plea that His Father would "keep them safe" from Satan (17:12) and "sanctify" them by His word of Truth (17:17).

In John 17:21ff., Jesus, as High Priest, prayed *for all believers*. Note how Jesus' prayer overflows with the Great Commission. Note how Jesus recognized that His only purpose—His only, *exclusive* purpose—was to save the world. He prayed that all would believe the disciples' message (17:20). He prayed that the world would know the Father through Jesus (17:23). He prayed that, through His work, that the Father would be glorified, the world would believe, and they would be one.

Remember Thomas' and Philip's plea "Where are You going?" in John 14? Jesus took their prayer and make it His, praying that His disciples would be where "I am" (17:24). The faithful High Priest to the end, Jesus went between His Father and His disciples, and taking their prayer *directly* to His Father.

Jesus, is our Great High Priest as well. He takes our needs, our wants, our cares, our hurts and our deepest prayers before His Father. He prays that we would continue to believe in Him so that we might be one in Him as He is one in us (cf. I Corinthians 12:12-13, et al!).

Prayer:

Lord, You are our Great High Priest. You hear our prayers and mediate them before the Father. Open Your ears to our prayers for help, for strength, for health and for well-being. Most of all, sent the Spirit of Truth so that our hearts might be open to the comfort of Your Word. Keep us in faith, that we might be one in You as You are in us. Worthy are You, O Christ, God's High Priest sent for us. To You be all glory, honor and praise forever and ever, Amen!

Thomas F. Fischer

Copyright 2008
Thomas F. Fischer All Rights Reserved