

**THE LORD'S PRAYER**  
**THE LORD'S PROMISE,**  
  
**THE LORD'S PROPHECY**  
**FULFILLED IN YOU, THE LORD'S PEOPLE**

Taken from John 17

For Himself, verses 1–5

For His disciples, verses 6–19

For His bride, verses 20–26

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# THE LORD'S PRAYER, PART ONE

## A PRAYER, A PROMISE AND A PROPHECY FOR YOU!

"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: 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 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 of 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; and I am glorified in them. 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, keep through 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 might 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 shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the 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,"  
John 17:1-19.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

### FIRST PART: THE INTERCESSOR

**W**e may well despair of doing justice to the deep thoughts of this prayer, which volumes would not exhaust. Who is worthy to speak or to write about such sacred words? We may be able to gain some glimpses of how great and sublime this prayer is by trying to gather the teaching here around three petitions of our Lord.

"Glorify," verses 1-5. "Keep," verse 11. "Sanctify," Verse 17.

In verses 1-5 Jesus Christ prays for Himself. And that He may be restored to pre-incarnate glory, but the prayer itself desires not so much that glory as affecting Himself, as His being fitted thereby for completing His work of manifesting the Father.

There are three main principles in these verses: THE PETITION, ITS PURPOSE, AND ITS GROUNDS. As to the first, the repetition of the request in verses 1-5, significant, especially if we note that in the former the language is impersonal, "Thy Son," and continues so till verse 4, where we have "I" and "Me" appearing. In verses 1-3, then the prayer rests upon the ideal relations of Father and Son, realized in

Jesus Christ, while in verses 4 and 5 the personal element is emphatically presented.

The two positions are in their scope identical. The "glorifying" in the former is more fully explained in the latter as being that which He possessed in that ineffable fellowship with the Father, not merely before incarnation, but before creation. In His manhood He possessed and manifested the "glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of GRACE and Truth," but that glory, lustrous though it was, was pale and humiliating compared with the light inaccessible, which shone around the Eternal Word in the bosom of the Father.

Yet He who prayed was the same Person who walked in the light before time was, and now in human flesh asked for what no more manhood could bear. The first form of the petition implies that such a partaking in uncreated glory of the Father is the natural prerogative of the One who was the "Son," while the second implies that it is the appropriate recompense of the earthly life and character of the man Jesus Christ.

The petition not only reveals the conscious divinity of the Son, but also His willing acceptance of the cross, for the glorifying sought is that reached through death, resurrection and ascension, and that introductory clause, "the hour is come," points to the impending sufferings as the first step in the answer to the petition.

The crucifixion is always thus treated in this Gospel, as being both the lowest humiliation and "the lifting up" of the Son. Here He is reaching out His hand, as it were, to draw His sufferers nearer. **So willingly and desiringly did this "Isaac" climb the mount of sacrifice.**

Both elements of the great saying in the epistle to the Hebrews are here, "For the joy that was set before Him. He endured the cross." **The purpose of the petition is the Son's glorifying of the Father. No taint of selfishness corrupted His prayer.** Not for Himself, but "for men," did He desire His glory. He sought return to that serene and lofty seat, and the elevation of His limited manhood to the throne, not because He was wearied of Earth

or impatient of weakness, sorrows, or limitations, **but that He might more fully manifest by that glory, the Father's Name. To make the Father known is to make the Father glorious, for He is all fair and lovely.**

That revelation of Divine perfection, majesty and sweetness, was the end of Christ's earthly life and is the end of His heavenly Divine activity. He needs to reassume the prerogatives of which He needed to divinely Himself, and both necessities have one end. He had lay aside His garments and assumed the form of a servant, that He might make God known, but, that revelation being complete, He must take His garments and sit down again, before He can go on to tell all the meaning of what He has "done unto us."

THE GROUND OF THE PETITION IS TWOFOLD. Verses 2 and 3 represent the glory sought for, as the completion of the Son's mission and task. Already He had been endowed with "authority over all flesh," for the purpose of bestowing eternal life, and that **eternal life stands in the knowledge of God,** which is the same as the knowledge of Christ. The present gift to the Son and its purpose are thus precisely parallel with the further gift desired, and that is the necessary carrying out of this.

The authority and the office of the incarnate Christ demand the glory of, and consequent further manifestation, by the glorified Christ. **The life which He comes to give is a life which flows from the revelation that He makes of the Father, received, not as mere intellectual knowledge, but as loving acquaintance.**

The second ground for the petition is in verse 4, the actual perfect fulfillment by the Son of that mission. What untroubled consciousness of sinless obedience and transparent shining through His life of the Father's likeness and will He must have had, who could thus assert His complete realization of that Father's revealing purpose, as the ground of His deserving and desiring participation in the Divine glory. Surely such words are either the acme of self-righteousness or the self-revealing speech of the Son of God.

"These words spoke 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: 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 Earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was," verses 1-5.

Verse 1, Father. Verse 5, Father. Jesus Christ prayed to God the Father. **All our prayers are directed to God the Father, not the Lord Jesus Christ or God the Holy Spirit.** Jesus Christ prays to God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit prays to God the Father, and when we pray we address God our Father, **if He is our Father by faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour.**

Secondly, with verse 6, WE PASS TO THE MORE IMMEDIATE REFERENCE TO THE DISCIPLES, and the context from thence to verse 15 may be regarded as all clustered round the second petition.

Verse 11, "Keep." That central request is preceded and followed by considerations of the disciples' relation to Christ and to the world, which may be regarded as its grounds. The whole context preceding the petition may be summed up in two grounds for the prayer, the former set forth at length, and the latter summarily, the one being the genuine, though incomplete discipleship of the men for whom Christ prays, verses 6-10, and the latter their desolate condition without Jesus Christ, verse 11a. It is beautiful to see how our Lord here credits the disciples with genuine grasp of His teachings. He had shortly before had to say, "Have I been so long time with you and yet hast Thou not known Me?" And soon, "They all forsook Him and fled."

But beneath the misconception and inadequate apprehension there lived faith and love and He saw "the full corn in the ear," when only the "green blade" was visible, pushing itself above the surface. We may take comfort from

this generous estimate of imperfect disciples. If He did not tend instead of quenching "dimly burning wicks," where would He have "lights in the world?"

Verse 6 lays down the beginning of discipleship as three-fold: CHRIST'S ACT IN REVEALING, THE FATHER'S IN GIVING MEN TO JESUS CHRIST, AND MEN'S IN KEEPING THE FATHER'S WORD. "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." "Thy Word" is the whole revelation by Christ, which is, as this Gospel so often repeats, "not His own, but the Father's."

These three facts underlying discipleship are pleas for the petition to follow, for unless the feeble disciples are "kept" in the Name, as in a fortress, Christ's work of revelation is neutralized, the Father's gift to Him made of none effect and the incipient disciples will not "keep" His Word. The plea is, in effect, "Forsake not the works of Thine own hands," and, like all Christ's prayers, it has a promise in its depths, since **God does not begin what He will not finish.** And it has a warning, too, that **we cannot keep ourselves unless a stronger hand keeps us.**

Verses 7 and 8 carry on the portraiture of discipleship and thence draw fresh pleas. "Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are of 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."

**The blessed result of accepting Christ's revelation is a knowledge, built on happy experience, and like the acquaintance of mind with mind, soul with soul, issuing in the firm conviction that Christ's words and deeds are from God the Father.** Why does He say, "All things whatsoever Thou hast given Me," instead of simply "that I have or declare?" It is probably the natural expression of His consciousness, the lowly utterance of His obedience **claiming nothing as His own, and yet claiming all,** while the subsequent

clauses "are of Thee," expresses the disciples' conviction.

In like fashion, our Lord, in verse 8, declares that "His Words," in their manifestness, contrast verse 6, "Thy Words," were all received by Him from the Father, and accepted by the disciples, with the result that **they came as before "to know," by inward acquaintance with Him as a Person, and so to have the Divinity of His Person certified by experience and further came to "believe" that God had sent Him, which was a conviction arrived at by faith.**

**So knowledge, which is personal experience and acquaintance, and faith, which rises to the heights of the Father's purpose, comes from the humble acceptance of Christ declaring the Father's Name.** First faith, then knowledge, and then a fuller faith built on it, and that faith in its turn passing into knowledge, verse 25. These are the blessings belonging to the growth of the discipleship, and are discerned by the loving eye of Jesus Christ in very imperfect followers. "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."

In verse 9 Jesus Christ assumes the great office of Intercessor. The Lord's prayer is an intercessory prayer. "I pray for them." "I pray not for the world." "But for them which Thou hast given Me, for they are Mine."

"I pray for them," is not so much prayer as His solemn **presentation of Himself before the Father as the High Priest of His people.** It marks an epoch in His work. The task of bringing God to man is substantially complete. **That of bringing men by supplication to God is now to begin.** It is the revelation of the permanent office of the departed Lord.

Moses on the mount held up the rod and Israel prevailed. Exodus 17:9, "And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand."

The limitation of this prayer to the disciples applies only to the special occasion, and has no bearing on the sweep of His redeeming purpose or His desire of His compassionate heart. The reasons for His intercession follow in verses 9-11a.

The disciples are the Father's, and continue so even when "given" to Christ, in accordance with the community of possession, which oneness of nature and perfection of love establish between the Father and the Son. **God cannot but care for those who are His. The Son cannot but pray for those who are His.** Their having recognized Him for what He was binds Him to pray for them. He is glorified in His disciples, and if we show forth His character, He will be our Advocate.

**The last reason for His prayer is the loneliness of the disciples and their exposure in the world without Him.** His departure impelled Him to intercede, both as being leaving them defenseless and as being an entrance into the heavenly state of communion with the Father.

Verses 10, 11, "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, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are."

In the petition itself, observe the invocation "Holy Father," with special reference to the **prayer for preservation from the corruption of the world. God's holiness if the pledge that He will make us holy,** since He is "Father" as well.

Observe the substance of the request, that the disciples should be kept, as in a fortress, within the enclosing circle of the Name which God has given to Jesus Christ. **This Name is the manifestation of the Divine essence.** It was given to Jesus Christ inasmuch as He, "the Word," had from the beginning the office of revealing God, and that which was spoken of the angel of the covenant is true in highest reality in Jesus Christ.

"My Name is in Him." "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe." Notice the issue of this keeping, namely, THE UNITY OF THE BELIEVERS. The depths of that saying are beyond us, but we can at least see thus far, that **the true bond of unity is the Name in which all who are one are kept, that the**

**pattern of the true unity of believers is the ineffable union of Father and Son, which is oneness of will and character, along with distinctiveness of Persons, and that therefore this purpose goes far deeper than outward unity of organization.**

Then follow other pleas, which are principally drawn from Christ's relation to the disciples, NOW ENDING, whereas the former ones where chiefly deduces from the disciples relation to Him. HE CAN NO MORE DO WHAT HE HAS DONE, AND COMMITS IT TO THE FATHER. HAPPY ARE WE IF WE CAN LEAVE OUR UNFINISHED TASKS TO BE TAKEN UP BY GOD, AND TRUST THOSE WHOM WE LEAVE UNDEFENDED TO BE SHIELDED BY HIM.

"I kept" is, in the Greek, expressive of continuous, repeated action, while "I guarded," gives the single issue of the many acts of keeping. **Jesus Christ keeps His disciples now as He did then, by sedulous, patient, reiterated acts, so that they are safe from evil.** But note where He kept them, "in Thy Name." **That is our place of safety, a sure defense and inexpugnable fortress.** One indeed was lost, but that was not any slur on Christ's keeping, but resulted from his own evil nature, as being a "son of loss," if we may so preserve the affinity of the words in the Greek, and from the Divine decree from old. **Sharply defined and closely united are the two apparent contradictories of man's free choice of destruction and God's foreknowledge.** Christ saw them in harmony, and we shall do so one day.

Then the flow of the prayer recurs to former thoughts. Going away so soon, He yearned to leave them sharers of His own emotions in the prospect of His departure to the Father, and therefore He had admitted them and us to hear the sacred outpouring of His desires. If we lay to heart the blessed revelations of this disclosure of Christ's mind, and followed Him with faithful gaze as He ascends to the Father, and realized our share in that triumph, our empty vessels would be filled by some of that same joy which was His. **Earthly joy can never be full. Christian joy should never be anything less than full.**

Verse 12, "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." Verse 13, "And now come I to Thee: and these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves." Verse 14, "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." Verse 15, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

HERE FOLLOWS A FINAL GLANCE AT THE DISCIPLES RELATION TO THE WORLD, to which they are alien because they are of kindred to Him. This is the ground for the repetition of the prayer, "keep," with the difference that formerly, it was "Keep in My Name," and now it is "Keep from the evil." It is good first to gaze at our defense, the "munitions of rocks" where we lie safely, and then we can venture to face the thought of the "evil" from which that keeps us, whether it be personal or abstract.

THIRDLY, VERSES 16-19 GIVE THE FINAL PETITION FROM THE IMMEDIATE CIRCLE OF DISCIPLES, INCLUDING ITS GROUNDS. Verse 16, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." The position of alienation from the world in which the disciples stand by reason of their assimilation to Jesus Christ is repeated here. It was the reason for the former prayer, "keep." It is the reason for the new petition, "sanctify."

"Sanctify them through Thy Truth: Thy Word is Truth." **Set them apart through the Truth, the Word of God.** Keeping comes first, and then sanctifying, or set apartness. **Security from evil, the Evil One, is given that we may be wholly devoted to the service of the Lord.** The evil of the world, Satan and his COSMOS system, is the great hindrance to that, **causes us to lose our experiential set apartness unto the Lord.** The likeness of Jesus Christ, the filling of the Holy Spirit, the production of Jesus Christ in us, is the great ground of hope that we shall be truly consecrated, sanctified, set apart.

We are **kept** "in the Name." We are **consecrated** "in the Truth," which is the revelation made by Jesus Christ, and in a very deep sense is Himself. That Truth is, as it were, the element in which the believer lives, the Word, and by abiding in which his real consecration is possible.

**Christ's prayer for us should be our aim and deepest desire for ourselves, and His declaration of the condition of its fulfillment should prescribe our firm adhesion to, and constant abiding in, the Truth as revealed and embodied in Him, as the only means by which we can attain the consecration** which is at once, as the closing verses of the passage tell us, **the means by which we can fulfill the purpose for which we are sent into the world, and the path on which we reach complete assimilation to His perfect self-surrender.**

**All Christians are sent into the world by Jesus Christ, as Jesus Christ was sent by God the Father.** We have the charge to glorify Him. We have the presence of the Sender with us, the sent. We are inspired by God the Holy Spirit. We cannot do His work without that entire consecration which shall copy His devotion to the Father and eager swiftness to do His will.

How can such ennobling and exalted consecration be ours? There is only one way. **He has "consecrated Himself," and by union with Him through faith, our selfishness may be subdued, and the Spirit of Christ may dwell in our hearts, to make us "living sacrifices, consecrated and acceptable to God."** Then shall we be truly sanctified, set apart, consecrated, and then only we can say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

That is the end of Christ's consecration of Himself, the prayer which He prayed for His disciples and should be the aim which every disciple earnestly pursues.

#### SUMMARY

Verses 1-5, Christ prays for Himself.

That He might be glorified.

That He might glorify the Father.

That He gives eternal life to men.

That He might have the glory He had before the world was.

Verses 6-19, Christ prays for the disciples.

Verse 20-26, Christ prays for us.