

## 67. Jesus Prayed for All Believers

In our last topic, we saw that we want to show our physical and spiritual children how the Word of God can transform their lives as they learn to yield to the Holy Spirit moment by moment. The result of such transformation and yielding to the Holy Spirit will give them strength to speak the Word of God with boldness and live holy lives. In our topic today, we see that, as Jesus came to the conclusion, of His prayer, He prayed for all believers.

After praying for Himself and for His disciples, Jesus then began to pray for all who would one day believe in Him. This means at the very time that Jesus was just minutes from being betrayed, condemned and crucified that He thought about you and me and prayed for us. John 17:20-23 says, “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.” We see that Jesus focused on one thing as He prayed for us.

Here, we see one of the ways that Jesus chose to show His love for us. He thought about us instead of just Himself at the very time that He was facing death. This part of the prayer is for all who would believe as a result of the disciples and those who followed them sharing the Word of God throughout the world. We see that the prayer of Jesus for us is that we would all be one as the Father and Christ are one. This unity became an actual fact when the Holy Spirit came to indwell the life of each believer on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:46 says, “So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.” Here, we see that the early church was of one accord.

However, Ephesians 4:1-3 says, “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” In this verse, we see that certain attitudes are necessary for us to keep the unity of the Spirit. Four attitudes are mentioned in these verses that help to make it possible to keep that unity in a local church. First, the word translated “lowliness” means *to have a humble opinion of one’s self*. James 4:10 says, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.” When we have a humble attitude toward God and submit to Him, He will give us a humble attitude toward others.

Second, the word translated “gentleness” means *to be gentle or mild*. 2 Timothy 2:25 says, “In humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth.” In this verse, the word is translated “humility” and shows that gentleness is the result of humility. Titus 3:2 uses the word when that verse says, “To speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.” Here, the word is also translated “humility”.

Third, the word translated “longsuffering” means *patient endurance or perseverance*. Paul said

that Christ provided us with a pattern so that we would know how to show longsuffering by the way that Christ ministered to him. In 1 Timothy 1:16, we read, “However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.” Paul wrote in Colossians 3:12-13, “Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*.” In these verses, we see that we are to put on longsuffering because that is not our natural human response. Instead, it is only possible for us to show longsuffering as we depend on the strength of the Holy Spirit.

Fourth, the word translated “bearing with” means *to hold up or to help a person stand firm*. This word is used in Colossians 3:13 and is quoted in the previous paragraph. The word is also used in 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4 where we read, “We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure.” In this verse, the word is translated “endure.” As Christians, we want to show other Christians how to maintain the unity that we have in Christ by learning to practice these in our relationship with one another.

Jesus prayed that all Christians would reflect the glory that the Father has given to Him by oneness in the body of Christ. Jesus then prayed that we would be made perfect in one. The word translated “perfect” means *to be made complete or brought to an end*. John used this word several times in the book of 1 John. In 1 John 2:5, we read, “But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.” Then, 1 John 4:12-13 says, “No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.” Then, 1 John 4:17-18 says, “Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.” In these verses, we see that oneness is the result of Christians learning to be obedient to the Word of God through the power of the Holy Spirit so that this perfect love casts out fear in our lives. Then, we can act in love instead of fear.

Jesus went on to pray in John 17:24-26, “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare *it*, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” In addition to Jesus praying that we would all be one, we see that Jesus also prayed that we will one day be with Jesus where He is so that we can behold the glory that the Father has given to Jesus.

We will have the opportunity to behold that glory once we are taken to heaven. This means that we will also have the opportunity to see that glory throughout eternity. This is the glory that

existed in eternity past and will exist in eternity future. In this prayer, Jesus talked about the relationship of the Father and Jesus in eternity past when Jesus said, “For You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” However, we will do more than just behold that glory. 2 Corinthians 3:16-18 tell us what happened when we became Christians. Those verses say, “Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.” We see that as we are being transformed into the image of the Lord while we are here on this earth our lives begin to reflect the glory of Jesus to the world around us.

This is greatly needed in the world because the world has not known the Father. The word translated “known” means *to understand or to have knowledge of*. This is the same word that Paul used in Philippians 3:10 where he wrote, “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” Paul had a great desire to understand Jesus fully. In contrast, we see that Jesus said that the people of the world have no desire to understand Jesus fully. Jesus had told the Pharisees and other religious leaders in John 8:44, “You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.” Most of the people of the world cannot know God because of the fact that the devil is still their father.

Jesus had been fully faithful to the Father and had made known the name of the Father to the people. True knowledge of God must be revealed by God because 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.” Here, we see that the natural person (any person without spiritual life) totally lacks spiritual discernment. Jesus made it clear that He had revealed the Father to those who had true faith and that He would continue to reveal the Father to all future believers.

Jesus said that this truth would cause all future believers to realize the love that the Father had for Jesus can be in the lives of believers as we learn to take root in Him. In Ephesians 3:17-18, Paul prayed, “That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” Jesus wants every Christian to know and have the love that the Father has for the Son dwelling in each of our lives. This will give us that peace and assurance that Jesus is living in our lives. Truly, Jesus was thinking of us as He prayed to the Father and prayed for us. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that Jesus loved us so much that He thought about us at the very time that the cross was just hours away. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand this love.