

## Introduction

We have come to a chapter in John that is known as the High Priestly Prayer. Nowhere in the Gospel of John is Jesus referred to as a priest or a high priest. We do not find Jesus mentioned as a high priest in the New Testament until the book of Hebrews, where much is written about Jesus being the high priest. In Hebrews 2:17, we find that Jesus “had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.” In Hebrews 3, we are told, as holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, to “consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.”

(Heb 2:17) “Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”

(Heb 3:1) “Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession;”

In Hebrews 4, we are encouraged to do two things. First, we are to hold fast our confession, since we have a high priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses, since He was tempted in all things and was without sin. Second, we are encouraged to draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

(Heb 4:14–16) “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. {15} For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin. {16} Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

In Hebrews five, we read how the high priests taken from among men offered sacrifices for sins, first, for their own sins, and second, for the sins of the people. We find in Hebrews seven that Jesus is different from the high priests appointed from men, because Jesus was without sin. He is “holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens.” He did not need to daily offer up sacrifices for His own sins and then for the sins of the people. He made a one-time sacrifice, His own life, and because He was sinless, He made that sacrifice of Himself for others. We also see in Hebrews seven that Jesus holds His priesthood permanently, while the former high priests were prevented by death from holding it permanently.

(Heb 7:24–27) “but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. {25} Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. {26} For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; {27} who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the *sins* of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.”

We also find one more important thing about Jesus in Hebrews 7:25, that Jesus always lives to make intercession for those who draw near to God, and to save them. The work of the high priest was to offer sacrifices for himself and for others. He also interceded on behalf of others and then for himself. In our text, Jesus is interceding for Himself and for others, exactly what a priest does. What is Jesus still doing? He is seated at the right hand of the Father, and is still

interceding on our behalf. In Romans 8:34, Paul does not call Jesus the high priest, but he did write that Jesus is at the right hand of God and is interceding for us. That is what a priest does.

(Ro 8:34) “who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.”

During Jesus' earthly ministry, He was in the habit of rising early, while it was still dark, and going to a deserted place and praying, we do not have any record of what He prayed. Though He spent the night in prayer before or appointing the twelve apostles, we do not have any record of the words of His prayers. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He prayed aloud so that the people could hear Him pray, and that they would know that it was the Father working through Jesus to do this miracle.

When Jesus taught about the Model Prayer in Matthew 6 and Luke 11, He gave the topics that needed to be prayed, but it was not an actual prayer that He prayed. In John 17, our text today, we have the content of His prayer. This is a rare glimpse of how He interceded. Jesus offered prayers for Himself, which priests did before offering sacrifices for others. Then, Jesus offered prayers on behalf of others. He began by praying for His apostles, and then He prayed for all that would believe in Him because of the word of His disciples, the future believers. It is called the High Priestly Prayer because Jesus is the High Priest, and is in the presence of the Father, and interceding. What is Jesus still doing? He is at the right hand of the Father, still in the presence of God the Father, and is interceding.

We will look at Jesus' prayers for Himself. Second, we will look at the prayers that He offered up for His apostles. Third, we will look at the prayers offered up for the future believers.

### **Jesus' High Priestly Prayer**

1. Prayers for Himself
2. Prayers for His apostles
3. Prayers for future believers

(Jn 17:1–8) “Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, {2} even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. {3} This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. {4} I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. {5} Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. {6} “I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. {7} Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; {8} for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received *them* and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me.”

(Jn 17:9-16) “I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; {10} and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. {11} I am no longer in the world; and *yet* they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, *the name* which You have given Me, that they may be one even as *We are*. {12} While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled. {13} “But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in

themselves. {14} I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. {15} I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil *one*. {16} They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”

(Jn 17:17-19) “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. {18} As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. {19} For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.”

(Jn 17:20-26) “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; {21} that they may all be one; even as You, Father, *are* in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. {22} “The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; {23} I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. {24} Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. {25} “O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; {26} and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

### 1. Prayers for Himself (Jn 17:1-8)

Our text begins with “Jesus spoke these things.” John is referring to what Jesus has just told the disciples, that their mourning would turn to joy, that they would be praying to the Father, and that they would have peace in the tribulation. There are not verse and chapter divisions in the original text; these were added later. The chapter divisions came from Stephen Langton in AD 1228. The verse divisions were developed by Robert Estienne in AD 1551. The Geneva Bible was the first English Bible to include both chapter and verse numbers, and this was published in AD 1560. So, Jesus has been walking from the Upper Room to the Mount of Olives with His disciples, and talking to them about upcoming things to expect.

(Jn 17:1) “Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You,”

Then, Jesus turns His attention from the disciples and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and began praying. Many times when we say that we are going to pray, we ask people to bow their heads and close their eyes. However, Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven and began to pray. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He prayed out loud so that the people standing around could hear. Notice that He raised His eyes, and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me...”

(Jn 11:41–42) “So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. {42} I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me.”

In Psalm 121, the psalmist wrote, “I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; from where shall my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” It is perfectly fine to lift your eyes to the heavens when you pray to the Lord. Some people find that having their eyes closed helps them from being distracted by things going on. On the other hand, John Wimber, founder of the Vineyard, taught people to pray with their eyes open when praying for people to see what or how the Spirit was moving.

(Ps 121:1–2) “I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; from where shall my help come? {2} My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.”

In the natural, I like it when someone looks at me when they talk to me. When I was in prison ministry, I required the inmates to look at me when they talked with me. Many of them had poor self-images, so this was a challenge for them. I think that in the spiritual realm, God probably likes for us to look to Him when we speak with Him. The key takeaway is that when you pray, address your prayers and your focus on God.

Jesus began by saying, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You.” The hour that He referred to is the hour of His departure. It is the time for Him to be arrested, tried, condemned, mocked, beaten, scourged, and crucified. It is the time for Him to be put to death, and then to be raised from the dead. It is not the literal sixty minutes, but the time for His death and resurrection. Jesus' resurrection from the dead is how God was going to glorify Jesus, and through this, Jesus was going to glorify the Father. This first part of Jesus' prayer is about glory.

(Jn 17:1) “Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You,”

Then Jesus mentions that the Father had given Him authority over all flesh, and the authority to give eternal life to all those given to Him. Jesus used the authority that had been given to Him to glorify the Father.

(Jn 17:2) “even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.”

Then, Jesus defined eternal life, saying, “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” When we offer the gift of eternal life to someone when sharing the gospel, it is the opportunity to know God through Jesus Christ. It is the opportunity to have a relationship with God, and to know Him personally and intimately. It is the opportunity to stand in His presence forever.

(Jn 17:3) “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

Jesus said, “I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. No, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” Jesus accomplished or finished all the work that the Father had given Him to do. At the end of each of our lives, that is something that we all want to be able to say, “I glorified You by accomplishing the work which You have given me to do.”

(Jn 17:4-5) “I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. {5} Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”

Whatever your gifting or place in the body, be faithful and diligent about doing the things that God has called you to do. In my case, God has called me to study the word of God, apply it in my life, and then teach it to others. Someone recently said to me that I know enough that I don't need to study in more. That is not true at all. I know so little, and have much to learn. I want to keep studying, learning, applying the things I learn, and then teaching others. At the end of my

days I want to say, "I have accomplished the work which You have given me to do." And I want to hear the Father tell me, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

At the end of Paul's life, he wrote to Timothy, saying, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." What a great testimony, and example for all of us to follow.

(2 Ti 4:6-7) "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. {7} I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;"

At the end of Paul's letter to the Colossians, he gave an exhortation to Archippus, telling him to "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it." All of us must take heed, pay attention, and be diligent to fulfill and accomplish the work that has been assigned to us by God. Jesus glorified the Father by accomplishing the work which He had been given to do.

Having glorified God by accomplishing that work, Jesus asked the Father to glorify Him with the glory that He had before the world was. Before Jesus humbled Himself and took the form of a man, He was part of the Godhead, the trinity. He was the Word in the beginning. He was the One that created everything on earth. Earlier John wrote that nothing that has come into being apart from Him. Jesus was full of glory, and then laid all of that glory down to die for our sins so that we could have fellowship with God. Now, having finished His assignment, He was going back to the Father, and He asked the Father to glorify Him with the glory that He had before the world was.

(Jn 17:5) "Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was."

One of the works that Jesus did was to manifest the Father's name to those in the world that the Father had given to Him. It was not the only work that He did, but this covers many things. All of the signs that Jesus did were done to manifest the Father's name in the world. These works showed that He was the Messiah, and had been sent by the Father. Jesus said that they have kept His word, and they know that everything that the Father had given to Him were from the Father. The disciples had received the words that Jesus had spoken to them from the Father. The disciples truly understood that Jesus had come from the Father, and believed that the Father had sent Him.

(Jn 17:6-8) "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. {7} Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; {8} for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received *them* and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me."

## 2. Prayers for His apostles

After praying for the Father to give Him the glory that He had before coming to the earth, He began to intercede for those that had received Jesus and knew that He had been sent by the Father. Jesus prays two things for them. First, He prayed that the Father would keep them in His name. Second, He prayed that the Father would sanctify the apostles in the truth.

a. **Keep them in Your name** (Jn 17:9-16)

The first thing that Jesus prays for the eleven apostles was for the Father to keep them in His name. Jesus begins by saying, "I ask on their behalf, not on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours." Jesus said that all things that were His belong to the Father, and everything the Father has are His. They are One in all respects. Jesus said that He had been glorified in the disciples.

(Jn 17:9-10) "I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; {10} and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them."

Why does Jesus need to pray for the Father to keep them? Jesus said, "I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are" Jesus has been with the disciples, watching over them and keeping them, but now He is leaving, and will not be with them. While He is gone, He is asking the Father to keep them. This is a very short interval of time that Jesus is asking the Father to keep them. It is while He is being arrested, tried, condemned, crucified, and buried. Earlier, Jesus had said that He would come back, and He and the Father would be in them. But until the Holy Spirit comes, and they are in the disciples, He asks the Father to keep them.

(Jn 17:11) "I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are."

While Jesus was with them, He kept them in the name that the Father had given Him, which is Jesus. He guarded them, and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, that is Judas Iscariot, and that was so that the Scripture would be fulfilled. But now Jesus will not be with them, and He asks the Father to keep, watch over, protect, and guard them.

(Jn 17:12) "While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled."

Why does the Father need to keep them? He needs to keep them because Jesus gave them the Word, and because of that, the world has hated them. They were not of the world, just as Jesus was not of the world, and so the world hates them. Jesus said that He was not asking the Father to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.

(Jn 17:13-16) "But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. {14} I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. {15} I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. {16} They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

There is a spiritual battle, and Jesus knows that Satan will try to destroy them. In John 10:10, Jesus said that the thief has come to steal, kill, and destroy. In 1 Peter 5:8, God tells us to be of sober spirit and to be on the alert because our adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. That is what the evil one tries to do; he tries to kill, steal, destroy, and devour; so Jesus asks the Father to keep and guard them.

(Jn 10:10) "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly."

(1 Pe 5:8) "Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."

**b. Sanctify them in the truth (Jn 17:17-19)**

The second thing that Jesus prays for the apostles is that the Father would sanctify them in the truth. The Greek word that is translated as sanctified is *hagiazō* (Strong's G37), which comes from *hagios* (Strong's G40), which means to make holy, purify, or consecrate. Jesus is going to be arrested, condemned, and go to the cross in a few hours. By His blood being shed for the sins of the world, those who receive Him are sanctified, made holy, and set apart for the work He has called them to do. We call that positional sanctification. Their sins have been washed away and they are now holy and pure. The Greek word that is translated as saints is *hagios* (Strong's G40), because believers have been made holy by Christ's payment for our sins. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians, "He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." That is the positional sanctification that believers have.

(Jn 17:17-19) "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth."

(2 Co 5:21) "He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

In Romans 10:9-10, God tells us that if we confess with our mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved. Our righteousness is a result of believing and our salvation is a result of confessing Jesus as Lord. Going to church does not make you sanctified. Giving money does not sanctify you. We are made righteous by believing that Jesus was raised from the dead and confessing Jesus as the Lord of our lives. The church is comprised of people that have placed their faith in Christ and have confessed Him to be their Lord. They have been sanctified, and are now referred to as saints. That is not the sanctification that Jesus is praying.

(Rom 10:9-10) "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; {10} for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

Jesus is praying for what we call progressive sanctification, which is a process by which our lives are transformed and we become more holy. Jesus is asking the Father to make the disciples holy and pure, and this is with the truth. Jesus clarifies for us what is truth, saying, "Your word is truth." Even though a believer has been declared righteous, his lifestyle, attitudes, words, and habits are not always holy, and may not reflect Christ. When a believer comes to Christ, he comes with sinful habits, attitudes, and lifestyles. God tells us that we are not to be conformed to these world patterns, but are called to renew our minds and be transformed.

How are our minds renewed? They are renewed with the word of God: truth. We have to fill our minds with truth. That process of becoming more Christ-like in our attitude, thoughts, words, and actions is progressive sanctification. This is the sanctification that Jesus is asking the Father to do in the disciples.

(Rom 12:1–2) “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. {2} And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

I have found that memorizing scriptures that deal with the areas in our life that God is working on has been very beneficial. If I was dealing with anxiety, I memorized verses that dealt with anxiety. Solomon wrote that anxiety in the heart of a man weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad. Based on that verse, when I sensed anxiety in my heart, I spoke good words to myself. Good words would certainly include scriptures, but it also included other encouraging thoughts. I liked what Cameron Young said after he won the 2026 PGA Tour Players Championship. He was tied for the lead with one hole left to play, and the eighteenth hole is a very difficult driving hole, with water all the way down the left side. He said to himself, “Hit the best shot of your life,” and that is exactly what he did. He hit a drive that was 375 yards long, the longest ever recorded on that hole, and that shot won the tournament for him. A good word makes an anxious heart glad.

(Pr 12:25) “Anxiety in a man’s heart weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad.”

Another passage that I memorized was Philippians 4:6-8. God tells us not to be anxious about anything. Instead, we are to pray with thanksgiving, and let our requests be known. We are also to let our minds dwell on things that are true, honorable, pure, lovely, of good repute, excellent, and worthy of praise. God’s promise when we do this that He will guard our hearts and our minds with His peace, which surpasses our understanding.

(Php 4:6–8) “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. {7} And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. {8} Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.”

If someone was dealing with low self-esteem, I would encourage them to renew their mind with verses that deal with who they are in Christ. In Ephesians, we learn that we are His workmanship created in Him for good works, that we should walk in. In 2 Corinthians, we learn we are a new creation. In Psalms 139, we learn that we are fearfully and wonderfully made, and that God knows the days ordained for us when there was not yet one. In Romans we learn that there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. We also learn that we are the children of God and heirs of God. In 1 John 3, we learn about how great a love the Father has given to us, and that we are children of God. These are truths that renew our minds and sanctify us.

(Eph 2:10) “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

(2 Co 5:17) “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”

(Ps 139:14–16) “I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. {15} My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, *and* skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; {16}

Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written The days that were ordained *for me*, when as yet there was not one of them.”

(Ro 8:1) “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

(Ro 8:15–17) “For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” {16} The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, {17} and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*.”

(1 Jn 3:1) “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.”

Jesus prayed that His apostles would be sanctified because He was sending them into the world with a mission; we call it the Great Commission. We are to be His witnesses, and to make disciples, teaching them to observe God’s commandments. Just as Jesus was sent into the world, He is now sending them into the world. Jesus sanctified Himself for us, and He was us to be sanctified for the work He has for us to do. When Jesus sanctified Himself, He did not need to make Himself holy; He was already holy and sinless. Jesus devoted, dedicated, and set Himself apart for the work that the Father sent Him to do. Jesus prays for His eleven apostles to be made pure and holy, and to be set apart for the work He has called them to do.

(Jn 17:18-19) “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. {19} For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.”

### 3. Prayers for future believers

Jesus prayed for Himself, that He would be glorified. Second, He prayed for the eleven apostles that have been with Him. He prays for the Father to keep them and protect them. He also prayed that they would be sanctified for the work that He is sending them to do. Now, Jesus expands His prayer circle to include all those that believe in Christ through their word. That includes you and I, and everyone that became a Christian through their words and work.

(Jn 17:20) “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;”

What does Jesus pray for all believers? He prays for unity. He prayed that “they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.” There are many advantages and benefits to unity, but Jesus hones in on one particular one, “that the world may believe that You sent Me.” Unity in the church is a witness to the world that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus wants the world to know that He and the Father are one, and that He was sent by the Father to die for our sins, so that we could have fellowship with God. Jesus focuses on this truth, because He wants the world to know that He is the Messiah, and that He died for the sins of the world, so that all could be saved. That is His heart’s desire.

(Jn 17:21) “that they may all be one; even as You, Father, *are* in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.”

Earlier in John 13:34-35, Jesus gave a new commandment, that we love one another. Then He said, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." Love is another witness to the world, and people will know that we are Jesus' disciples when we have love for one another. Again, this is God's heartbeat, that by our love for one another people will be saved.

(Jn 13:34-35) "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. {35} By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

The miracles and works that John included in the Gospel of John were written so that people would believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God, and that believing, they would have life in His name. Our unity, our love, and the written testimony of the works of Jesus are all ways to convince people to believe in Jesus, and have eternal life.

(Jn 20:31) "but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."

Then, Jesus said that the glory that the Father had given to Jesus, He has given to them. The purpose of His glory was so that the church could be in unity, just as He and the Father are in unity.

(Jn 17:22-23) "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; {23} I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me."

In Ephesians 4, Paul exhorted the church to be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Then he gave some things that believers have in common. He said "there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all." Believers have very much in common, and the focus should be on preserving the unity of the Spirit.

(Eph 4:3-6) "being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. {4} *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; {5} one Lord, one faith, one baptism, {6} one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all."

Next, Jesus told the Father that His desire was for those that the Father had given Him would be where He was, so that they may see His glory which the Father had given Him. His disciples, and in particular, Peter, James, and John had been with Him at the transfiguration. They had seen some of His glory, but nothing compared to the glory that He had before the foundation of the world. Jesus wanted them to see that glory.

(Jn 17:24) "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world."

Jesus finished by praying for the love of the Father would be in them, and that He would be in them. He prayed, "O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

(Jn 17:25-26) “O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; {26} and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

## Conclusion and Applications

Jesus began His High Priestly Prayer by praying that the Father would glorify Him with the glory that He had before the world was created. Second, He interceded for His eleven remaining apostles. He prayed that the Father would keep them, and that the Father would sanctify them. Then, Jesus expanded His prayers to include everyone that would come afterwards, believing in their words. He prayed that they would have unity, see His glory, and have the love of the Father.

There are many applications that can be made from Jesus' prayer. The first application pertains to the priesthood of the believer. Jesus is the High Priest, but we are also priests. We are not the High Priests, but believers are priests. As priests, we are to be offering sacrifices and prayers to God. In Revelation 1:6, God tells us that He has made us a kingdom of priests. In 1 Pet 2:9, we are called a royal priesthood. In 1 Pet 2:5, we are called living stones, being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices. In Hebrews 13:15-16, we are exhorted to continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, and to give thanks to the His name. In Romans 12:1, we are to offer up our lives as living and holy sacrifices. As priests, we are to intercede for ourselves and others, just as Jesus did. We are to be a house of prayer.

(Re 1:6) “and He has made us *to be* a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

(1 Pe 2:9) “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;”

(1 Pe 2:5) “you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

(Ro 12:1) “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship.”

(Heb 13:15–16) “Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. {16} And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

Our second application is to follow the example of Jesus, who glorified God by accomplishing the work that the Father had given Him. Each of us have been given a unique spiritual gift. God has made each of us to be a different part of the body, with different gifts and abilities. We need to know, develop, and use our gifts to accomplish the works that He has prepared for us to do.

(1 Pe 4:10) “As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

Our third application is to be sanctified in the truth. Jesus has sanctified us positionally, but we are involved in renewing our minds and being transformed by the word of God. This is a lifelong process of renewing our minds and becoming more Christlike in our thoughts, words, attitudes, and actions. We must read the word, meditate on the word, study the word, and apply the word. We must look intently and be doers of the word, not just hearers of the word. As the Holy Spirit identifies areas in your life that you need to grow in, find and meditate on the scriptures that address these areas. (Ro 12:2, Eph 4:23-24, Jas 1:22-25)

Our fourth application is to promote and maintain unity. There should be unity in the family. There should be unity in the church family. On a broader level, there should be unity in the body of Christ. We will not all agree on every single thing, but we have the essential doctrines in common, so focus on the essential doctrines. Paul's letter to the Philippians has excellent applications. We are to maintain the same love. We are to do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit. We are to have a humility of mind, and regard others as more important. We are not to merely look out for our own interests, but are to also look out for the interests of others. If we root out selfishness and pride, we will have more success in maintaining unity. (Php 1:27, 2:1-5)

### **Closing Prayer**

Father God, thank You for the work that You have done and are doing in our lives. Thank You for sanctifying us, declaring us holy ones, saints. Thank You for being faithful to complete that work in us, and continuing to make our thoughts, words, and actions holy, and to more like You. Thank You for giving us the Scriptures, so that we can be sanctified in truth. Help us to fill our minds with Your truth, and to renew our minds. Thank You for keeping us and protecting us from the evil one. Help us to be sober and alert. Help us to stay in the shadow of the Almighty. Father, help us to maintain the unity of the Spirit. Help us to live selfless lives, looking out for the needs of others, and not just our own needs. Help us to consider others as more important than ourselves. Help us to be one with you, and one with one another. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

### **Discussion Questions**

- How many of you consider yourselves as priests? Is that part of your identity that you identify with?
- As priests, what are some things that priests today are called to do?
- What is an area that God has been sanctifying you in? How did you know that He was working on this area of your life? What are things that you have done to cooperate with the work He is doing in your life? What has been the result of your efforts?
- What role do others around you play in your sanctification?
- What are ways that we can help one another to be sanctified?
- How does God tell men to sanctify their wives?
- We are in a spiritual battle. What are some principles that Paul tells us to do in Ephesians 6 to protect ourselves?
- What does Peter tell us to do since Satan is like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour?
- Jesus prayed for unity among believers. What are some reasons that the church is not united?
- What are some things that we can do to promote unity in the church?
- What are some things that we can do to promote unity within the greater body of Christ?
- In trying to promote and maintain unity, what role do our convictions of God's principles play in what we do?

## **Jesus' High Priestly Prayer**

**Introduction** (Heb 2:17, 3:1, 4:14-16, 7:24-27, Ro 8:34, Jn 17:1-26)

1. **Prayers for Himself** (Jn 17:1-8, Jn 11:41-42, Ps 121:1-2, 2 Ti 4:6-7)
  
2. **Prayers for His apostles**
  - a. **Keep them in Your name** (Jn 17:9-16, 10:10, 1 Pe 5:8)
  
  - b. **Sanctify them in the truth** (Jn 17:17-19, 2 Co 5:21, Ro 10:9-10, 12:1-2, Pr 12:25, Php 4:6-8, Eph 2:10, 2 Co 5:17, Ps 139:14-16, Ro 8:1, 8:15-17, 1 Jn 3:1)
  
3. **Prayers for future believers** (Jn 17:20-26, 13:34-35, 20:31, Eph 4:3-6)

**Conclusion and Applications** (Re 1:6, 1 Pet 2:9, 2:5, He 13:15-16, 1 Pe 4:10, Ro 12:1, Ro 12:2, Eph 4:23-24, Jas 1:22-25, Php 1:27, 2:1-5)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.