

David W. Long, Pastor
Reformed Presbyterian Church
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#93

"The Focus of Prayer: God's People"

John 17:6-12

Introduction

I've got a T-shirt I like to wear around that says *The Old Block*. At first glance it doesn't make a lot of sense. But on the days that Katie wears her companion shirt it does. Her shirt says *A Chip Off*. We use that phrase to describe a child who is like their parent. We could phrase it in more biblical terms to say that a child is the glory of his or her father or mother. Proverbs 17:6 says *Grandchildren are the crown of old men, And the glory of sons is their fathers*.

Last week we were talking about how the word *glory* is used to describe the essence of something or someone. Sometimes the Bible uses the idea of *glory* to communicate what is critically important to someone. So the glory of a king is said to be lots of people (a strong thriving kingdom). The glory of a materialist is his wealth. The glory of a young man is his strength. In other words the Bible calls the thing that most identifies you as your glory. What is your glory?

So when Jesus starts out this high priestly prayer expressing a desire for His glory to be displayed, we naturally wonder how that might happen. Today, as we move forward in the prayer we find that one way for the glory of God to be manifested is for Christ's glory to be demonstrated in the lives of His people. We have no innate glory like God does. We have glory only in so much as we reflect glory. But we can pray for ourselves and for

other Christians that we would reflect His glory. That's what we will see as we continue our study of John 17. We are to pray for the glory of God to be manifested in and through our lives.

[John 17:6-12]

Last week we talked about how this great prayer of Jesus can teach us much about what is on the heart of Jesus, what He values and thinks and feels. Prayers are a window into the heart. And as we have seen, most of the prayer is about people. He prays a little about Himself, but mostly He prays for others and how His purpose and work will affect them. This prayer can be a good tool to teach us how to pray. So today, let's see if we can learn something about what we should pray for ourselves and other Christians.

I. We should pray about our identity as one of God's people.

It's important to notice that Jesus is not praying for everyone in this prayer. He is quite clear and specific. He is praying for those who belong to Him. He's praying for the lives of those who have or will believe in Him. Verse 9 says *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.* So right away we realize that Jesus has a particular love and concern for certain people. And in this passage He helps us see what defines the people of God. How are we defined – how are you thought of by Christ (if you are a Christian)?

1. Man or woman of God. We use this phrase often in Christian circles. *He's a real man of God.* What we mean is, when you look at that person, you readily identify him with God. He

reflects well upon God. You can see that that person belongs to God.

And this is what was on Jesus' mind as He prayed for His people. Look at verse 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.* When Jesus thinks about you, He thinks in terms of you belonging to Him.

Historically, if you were a “man of Rome” or a “man of Athens” or “one of Alexander’s men” or “one of Arthur’s men” that told everyone around you something about you. Or if you want a modern illustration from pop culture, if you are a Jedi knight, everybody knows what that means. If you are identified with a place or a leader or a group, then you share that group’s principles, commitments, outlook, etc.

Do you think of yourself in the same way? Jesus thinks of you as belonging to Him. How do you view yourself? Do you consider your life to be 100% his? Paul said in I Corinthians 6:19, 20 *do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.* If you are a Christian, then Jesus sees you as a *man of God* or a *woman of God*.

2. Man or woman of the Word. At the end of verse 6 and then in verse 8 we read *they have kept Your word . . . for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them . . .* Jesus states this as fact – in spite of their many doubts, questions, misunderstandings, and confusion about the words of Christ. (*Surely, you will not die! Show us the Father. How do we know where you are going?*) When Jesus thinks about His own, He thinks about people who love His Word – people

who receive it with joy and are eager to obey it. This is our identity. The Bible doesn't recognize someone who claims to belong to Christ and yet has no interest in His Word.

Remember what Jesus taught about the centrality of the Word to a Christian? *Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? "Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. "But the one who has heard and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.* Jesus considers you to be a man or woman of His Word.

3. Man or woman of Faith. The thing that set the disciples apart from others was that they believed what Jesus said. They trusted Him. Their faith was in Christ. Look at verse 7, 8. *Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; 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.***

When you pray, these are things you can pray for yourselves. These are important topics for prayer. That you would understand that you belong to Christ. Pray about your commitment and identification as one of Jesus' men. Pray that you would grow in your love for His Word. Pray that your faith would be strengthened and that you would believe and trust the promises of God. All of these things have to do with your Identity in Christ. And of course, you can pray about these things, not only in

regard to yourself, but for others who know Jesus as well.

We should pray about our identity as one of God's people.

II. We should pray about staying in His name.

Of everything Jesus prays about in this section, this is the only request that He makes. Verse 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.*

The Name of God is more than a title or identification word for God. He has many names and each one reflects something about His identity, His essence, and His being. He is Elohim, the creator and sovereign one. He is Yahweh, the Covenant personal God who saves us. He is Jehovah Jirah, the God who heals. Adonai, our Lord and Master. He is El-Shaddai, God Almighty. Jehovah Shalom, the God of Peace. And so on.

In verse 6 Jesus says that He manifested God's name to them. In other words, for a Christian, Jesus has shown us the Father. This was the very thing Thomas was asking about back in John 14. *Jesus, show us the Father and it will be enough for us.* If you remember back to the very first chapter of John, we were told in verse 18 that *no one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.* And here in this very chapter we are studying this morning, Jesus explained that eternal life is knowing God.

So what does it mean to be and stay in somebody's name. We know what it means in

marriage. We've got a couple of weddings coming up yet this year. When Emma takes the name Rosenbarger; and when Megan takes the name Morton, there is will be deep and beautiful symbolism in that. If you have taken someone else's name. Or if you have given your name to someone else, what have you done? Have you not committed yourself to such a close union with that person that one name comes to represent both of you?

We are known as Christians. We have Christ's name as our identity because we are one with Him. If you look at the end of verse 11 you'll see this is exactly what Jesus is intending. *Keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are.*

How were Jesus and the Father one?

- They were one in desire and purpose and will. So in John 5:19 Jesus said, *The Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.* And in verse 30 *I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*
- They were one in their relationship and fellowship. Not only were they one in terms of the Godhead – what we call their ontological union. But also they were one in their fellowship. Their economic union. (Not money.) Jesus was in constant communion with His Father in heaven.

As so for us to be kept *in His name* means that we are to be one with the Father. Our minds and wills and actions are to always be His. And our union and fellowship with Him is to be deep and abiding and personal.

So, we should pray about our identity as one of God's people. We should pray about staying in His name.

III. We should pray about reflecting His glory.

Go back up to verse 5 and look at Jesus' request. *Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.* Jesus is asking that His glory be restored to Him like it was before. And so it begs the question, *was the glory of Christ seen while He was here on earth?* Verse 5 seems to imply that it was not. Philippians 2 also indicates that His glory was hidden. He *emptied Himself and appeared as a man.*

Now we know that Jesus was still God. His nature was not changed. But the brilliance of His glory was laid aside for a short while. Here He is praying for it to return – a prayer that would be answered after His ascension.

But also consider this about the glory of Christ. His glory was seen while He was here on earth through His works and through His people. Remember John 1:14 – *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.* Remember His first miracle at the wedding in Cana. *This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.*

Here's where our prayers should be shaped by the glory of God. Our character and our actions and our being should reveal something of the glory of God. As He lives in us, we glorify God. *You have been bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies . . . Let your light so shine before men*

that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven . . . Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do all to the glory of God.

How should you pray? You should pray that your life becomes a beacon for God's glory. This is what Jesus does with His disciples. Verse 10 – *all things that are mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them.*

As your prayers deepen; as Jesus teaches you to pray, would you begin to pray more earnestly about these things?

1. Your identity in Christ. That you would more and more know His mind and reflect His image.

2. Your honoring of His name. That you would walk in deep fellowship with Him. That every day you would live in His presence and enjoy Him.

3. Your life as a vessel for His glory. That what you do and how you do it would demonstrate that Christ lives in and through you.

These are things Jesus has and is praying for you. If you want to pray according to His will, pray for these things.