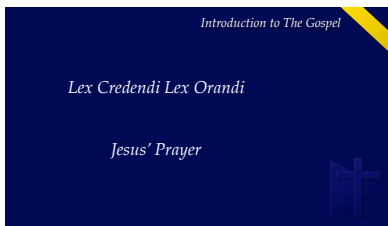


The LORD's Prayer

Prepared May 2020
Ascension Tide

Introduction



Every now and then I recite an ancient Latin phrase that underlies how prayer is viewed in Anglican Christianity: *Lex credendi Lex orandi*. = The law of faith is the law of prayer. In other words, when we pray with integrity as we really are, we will pray out the faith we hold.

So when you hear a person genuinely at prayer you will hear what they really believe. The person praying out loud reveals their faith and it rings genuine. *Lex credendi Lex orandi* Saying 'Amen' to that is spiritual unity.

This morning's Gospel reading is Jesus at prayer.

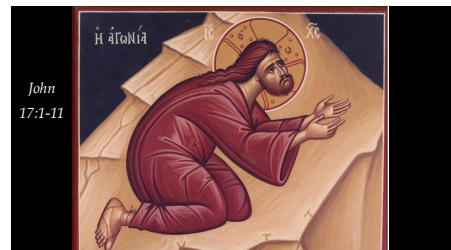
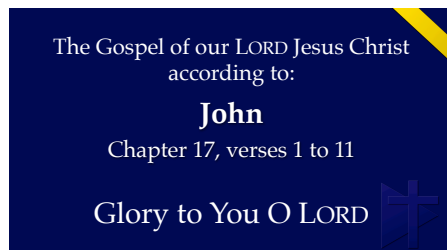
It's commonly referred to as 'The High Priestly Prayer of Jesus.'

In my mind it's this prayer that could better have been called 'The Lord's Prayer' because it really is; The Lord's Prayer as he offered to his Father at a dramatic point in his life's ministry and mission. The 'Our Father' was the prayer he taught his disciples to pray.

The lectionary for today only set the first 11 verses of John chapter 17 to be read. This is not even half of this great prayer. So I asked the reader to bring us the full prayer, 26 verses.

What I suggest you do is listen for and note the specific prayers Jesus prays.

So get your pencil and pad out to note what you hear in the Lord Jesus' prayer at the end of his ministry as he is nears his departure. This is the prayer of someone who cares deeply for his friends and wants to fulfill his Father's desire for his life in them.

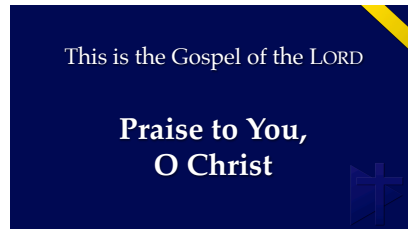


John 17.1-26 ESV

The High Priestly Prayer

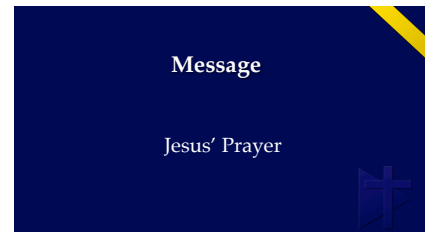
17 When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ²since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. ⁵And now, **Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.** ⁶"I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. ⁸For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. **Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.** ¹²While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, **that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.** ¹⁴I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but **that you keep them from the evil one.** ¹⁶They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷**Sanctify them in**

the truth; your word is truth.¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.
²⁰“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word,²¹ that they may all be one, just 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 have sent me.²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one,²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.²⁴ Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.²⁵ O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me.²⁶ I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”



Development.

So before we consider what Jesus prayed for - as you have noted. In his prayer Jesus paints a picture of the situation at hand. We will recognize it:



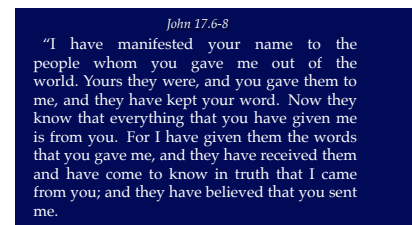
Jesus had come from the glory as shared with the Father and was now about to return to the glory of who he was in God.

Jesus had come to be the One through whom God gave Life Eternal to all those whom the Father gave to him.

He acknowledges that the Father gave him people to bring God's life to - as God's Son could do. If you have received new life from God it's because the Father brought you to his Son by whom he does that.

The Father's purpose in this is that Jesus the Son manifests or realizes in human being what is held in the name of God. This name had long been revealed to Israel but in the Son it was made visible to humanity. Jesus prays it this way to His Father:

“I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.⁷ Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you.⁸ For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.



A big point to note in this is that when Jesus came into the world, the Father gave him people to care for and transform while he was in the world. Jesus is now about to leave them in the world. Jesus had created an outpost of heaven where Life Eternal had been planted and he was leaving. It's like leaving your children early in their life.

The surrounding world of unredeemed humanity is hostile to God and Jesus is leaving his friends there. So now as he is about to leave via the Cross, Resurrection and Ascension what does Jesus pray? What is his *Lex orandi Lex credendi*?

I found the first prayer request in v5.

⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

This is Jesus praying for himself. He wants to come home and share his Father's glory and presence. This is both for reasons of God's desire as referred to later. It's the heart of Jesus for his Father. Trinity Sunday is two weeks away and this is its inner dynamic of love, unity and shared life.

I then counted 8 prayers for the friends he was leaving behind to live what they had received from God through Jesus.

¹¹ Holy Father, keep them in your name,

This prayer is for a purpose: that they may be one, even as we are one. A first reference to unity.

The human tendency is to make a name for oneself. It's the way of the flesh. God gives his name to his people for them to stand under, to honour together, to hold sacred. The name of the Lord is a strong and mighty tower. Those who stand in the name of God will be one. Jesus knows this unity and desires it for his friends.

My #3 is an implied prayer in v 13.

¹³ that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

Jesus wants us to know the joy he is full of.

My #4 is very clear:

¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.

This is part of the reason I doubt some versions of Rapture Theory that look like heli-evac rescues because Jesus prays for his friends to stand in the world as it really is, not flee it. But evil is a real threat.

#5 marks another great blessing with a prayer in v.17.

¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

God has given us his name, God has given us his word -or message- now manifested in Jesus. God's name and word have the power to make holy, to sanctify. Jesus prays his friends be holy in his Word.

From now it's as if the prayer sharpens to its point of focus. My #6 is v.21:

²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us

That is so simple and yet so beyond us achieving alone. Jesus prays that his friends may be in unity to then share the unity of Jesus and his Father.

This prayer is then echoed with some purposes and outcomes, my #7 in v.23

... **that they may become perfectly one**, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

This prayer is not just for now but in v.24 stretches into eternity: #8

I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me

Jesus wants his friends to see all there is to see of the relationship shared between Father and Son.

Jesus is covering many angles in this prayer and draws it all into this final request: #9.

that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

He asked that all be marinated in the love of God as Jesus knows it and that what God has given them - i.e. to us from Jesus- may be in us too.

Did anyone note another prayer? #10, #11 or #12?

Conclusion

So as the end of his mission in the world approaches, Jesus prays a prayer for himself and at least 8 prayers for his friends to be in the Father's will.

A few weeks ago I spoke about a passage that set out what the first church prioritized as something to consider in pared back times such as life under lockdown. Acts 2.42:

⁴²And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

That looks like an answer to Jesus' prayer. People took word and unity in Christ seriously before taking to communion and prayer.

If we are people who love God and the One by whom we become Sons and Daughters of God, I suggest you go back and ask how may these prayers of Jesus for us are being or may be fulfilled within you and among us?

Then we may register all the church related things that seem important to us that Jesus never prayed for.

Whatever you come up with you realize that being in tune with Jesus's prayer for us is the way he calls, empowers and encourages us in.

This is the heart-felt prayer of the Lord for us. Through it we know his heart for us and it's good, right and holy. Might we say 'Amen' to that prayer?

