

JOHN 17:1-26

JESUS PRAYS FOR US!

“[Jesus] lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

“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. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. 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. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And 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. While 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. But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I 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. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 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. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 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. 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. O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. 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.”¹

Robert Murray McCheyne wrote, “If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million of enemies. Yet the distance makes no difference; He is praying for me.”² That is a powerful affirmation for each Child of God. As a Christian, would you conduct your life differently if you knew that Jesus was praying for you? Would you live more boldly if you heard Jesus praying for you? Jesus is praying for you!

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible: English Standard Version**. Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers, 2001. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

² Robert Murray McCheyne and Andrew A. Bonar, **Memoir and Remains of the Rev. Robert Murray McCheyne** (Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier, Edinburgh, London 1894) 158

McCheyne was correct—Jesus is praying for us. Though we may not hear Him as He prays, we are assured that He does pray for us; and that knowledge should encourage each of us. Some messages write themselves, requiring little effort on the part of the preacher. God’s Spirit points out the obvious from the text and the preacher is forced to hurry if he will keep up with what the Spirit is revealing through the text. Something like that happened as I studied this particular prayer which Jesus, acting as our High Priest, offered on behalf of His disciples. All that was necessary was that the preacher point to the obvious, allowing the Spirit of God to apply what Jesus has said to the heart of each listener.

As Jesus prays for His people, what does He ask of the Father? Perhaps we cannot say with certainty what the Master requests for each one specifically, but we are standing on solid ground when we say that we know how Jesus prays. We know the types of requests He makes on behalf of each one who follows Him. We know this, because we have a record of a prayer He offered up to the Father immediately before His Passion. Studying Jesus’ prayer will be a source of hope and encouragement for each follower of the Master. Join me, then, in a study of Jesus as He prays for us. The record of His prayer is found in the seventeenth chapter of John’s Gospel.

WHEN JESUS PRAYS — “I am praying for [those whom You gave Me]. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you” [**JOHN 17:8-10a**].

As He prayed, Jesus said, “I am praying for [those whom you gave me out of the world].” Jesus prays for those whom the Father has entrusted to Him for His oversight. This is not merely a statement that in this one instance Jesus was praying for those who are given to Him, He prays for His own even now. In a subsequent letter, John has written, “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” [**1 JOHN 2:1**]. We are told that the Son of God, Jesus the righteous, stands as an advocate for His own. Before the Father’s throne, our Great Saviour pleads for us.

Nor is this the only time that we learn that Jesus prays for those who follow Him. The Apostle writes, “Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us” [**ROMANS 8:34**].

In a later missive sent to Timothy, the Apostle wrote, “There is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time” [**1 TIMOTHY 2:5, 6**].

Allow me to point to one other instance of revelation of Jesus’ prayer ministry for His own. “[Jesus] is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them” [**HEBREWS 7:25**].

Jesus is our Advocate; He is making intercession for us. He is our mediator. This is the work that Jesus is now performing on behalf of each one who belongs to Him. If only each follower of the Christ could grasp this truth, that Jesus prays for us, what an impact it could have on the conduct of our lives. But what does Jesus ask the Father for each of us.

JESUS PRAYS FOR UNITY — “Holy Father, keep [those whom You gave Me] in your name, which you have given me, that *they may be one, even as we are one*. While 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” [**JOHN 17:10b-12**].

JOHN 17:1-26
JESUS PRAYS FOR US

In this same prayer, the Master repeated this plea for unity among His followers. Jesus prayed, “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 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. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 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” [JOHN 17:20-23].

This plea fit with an earlier affirmation from the Master. You will recall that He testified to the religious leaders, “I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So, there will be one flock, one shepherd” [JOHN 10:14-16]. Clearly, unity in the Faith, unity growing out of loving one another deeply from the heart is of supreme importance to the Master.

As I read the New Testament Letters and the words of the Master that are recorded in the Gospels, I am struck by the constant plea for unity, for harmony, as the necessary ingredient for successful church life. Tragically, some churches are more noted for what they are against than noted for what they are for. Within too many churches are found people who exalt their own interests above the interest of their fellow members. Each of us need to hear again the words of the Apostle. “By the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another” [ROMANS 12:3-5]. Some people simply need to leave the assembly since they can’t be placated no matter what.

Paul urged Christians, “Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight” [ROMANS 12:16]. He followed this with a pray for the saints to live in harmony with one another. “May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” [ROMANS 15:5, 6].

It is difficult, perhaps impossible for many of us, to move beyond culture. Yet, within the Assembly of the Righteous, we are taught that here, in the Congregation of the Living God, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” [GALATIANS 3:28].

Again, the Apostle prayed for unity, appending the rationale for his prayer. “I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” [EPHESIANS 4:1-6].

Indeed, unity is essential if we will witness the answer to the prayer Jesus offered up on our behalf. Christians who reveal the answer to the Master’s prayer will make the effort to live in harmony with their fellow believers. The assembly that is blessed with such conscientious people will reveal an enviable unity, a willingness seen in the members to live humbly with one another; they will “Outdo one another in showing honour” [ROMANS 12:10b].

JESUS PRAYS FOR OUR JOY — “These things I speak in the world, that *they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves*. I 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” [JOHN 17:13, 14]. The Master seeks joy for His people. We may seek happiness, but Jesus seeks joy for us. There is a vast difference between joy and happiness. Happiness speaks of our situation at a given time. The word “happy” is derived from the Middle English word “hap,” which implied that one was favoured by fortune. Joy, on the other hand, speaks of a settled condition that is unrelated to circumstances. “Happy” speaks of fortune; “joy” speaks of pleasure or delight.

We should not imagine that God expects His people to be happy idiots. The joy that Christ seeks for His people is His joy. Earlier, preparing His disciples for His exodus, Jesus said, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full” [JOHN 15:1-11].

The joy of Christ becomes our joy, and the joy of Christ is intimately entwined with bearing fruit, with keeping the commandments that the Master has delivered to His disciples. Jesus told a parable about the Kingdom of Heaven that demonstrates what I’m speaking about. “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field” [MATTHEW 13:44]. When one has discovered the treasure of life in the Beloved Son, that becomes the major focus for anyone. Joy impels us to serve.

Among the things Jesus taught His disciples while preparing them for His exodus was this truth. “‘A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again, a little while, and you will see me.’ So, some of his disciples said to one another, ‘What is this that he says to us, “A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me;” and, “because I am going to the Father?”’ So, they were saying, ‘What does he mean by “a little while?”’ We do not know what he is talking about.’ Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, ‘Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, “A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me?”’ Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. So also, you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full” [JOHN 16:16-24].

JESUS PRAYS FOR OUR PROTECTION — “I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you *keep them from the evil one*. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world” [JOHN 17:15]. Christ saved us and appointed us to labour in this world. It is always humbling to see the Master’s commission to His earliest disciples. Jesus said, “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next” [MATTHEW 10:16-23a].

Jesus knew that His people would live in the midst of vicious wolves. Encouraging the elders of Ephesus for what would be his final opportunity to speak with them, the Apostle to the Gentiles warned them, “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them” [ACTS 20:28-30].

It would not be solely from the pagans that the people of God could expect attack; the Faith would be assailed by some supposed to be fellow Christians. The elders were warned that from among those purporting to be spokesmen of Christ, there would be men whom Paul described as “fierce wolves” who would not spare the flock. These creatures would be dangerous beyond degree, for they would wreak havoc among the flocks of the Lord.

Just because the Saviour prayed for us, and just because we know that He prays for us, does not mean there is no danger. There is very real danger that we face. When I served in the Outer Mission District of San Francisco, among the members of the church in which I laboured was a somewhat eccentric lady I knew as Mrs. Baker. Mrs. Baker was a completed Jew; she had put her faith in Jesus as the Messiah. She was quite serious about her walk before the Lord.

On one occasion, I offered her a ride home following a service. Lynda and the girls sat in the back seat and Mrs. Baker took her place in the front passenger seat. As I started the car and moved to put it in gear, Mrs. Baker shouted out, “Don’t move! I need to pray.” She immediately launched into a prayer for God’s protection as we drove the streets of the city. When she voiced the final “Amen,” she intoned, “Okay, you can go now.”

Somewhat chagrined, I put the Plymouth into gear and began to pull away from the curb. Mrs. Baker began a commentary. “Brother Stark, you’re doing God’s work. Satan will attack you and do you harm if he can. You cannot take a chance with that guy. You have to ask God’s protection with every task.” With that, she was silent. She had said what she meant to say, and as was characteristic to her, she would say no more.

Of course, Mrs. Baker was right. I’ve never forgotten her intense and serious demeanour as she sought the Master’s protection. There are no mundane acts for the child of God. As a follower of the Christ, I am a target. And though Jesus prays for me, I am responsible to seek His protection in the matters of this life. This is precisely the reason that Jesus taught His followers to pray,

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
 on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
 as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from evil.”

[MATTHEW 6:9-13]

The final request Christians are taught to make of the Father is for deliverance from temptation and deliverance from evil, deliverance from the evil one. We must not allow ourselves to be ignorant of the fact that “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one” [1 JOHN 5:19b].

JESUS PRAYS FOR OUR HOLINESS — “*Sanctify them in the truth*; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth” [JOHN 17:16-19]. We don’t speak of holiness as we ought to speak in this day. We don’t expect much of those who profess the Name of Christ, and we are seldom disappointed. However, the fact that the Master prayed that we would be holy, sanctified in the truth, holy through being saturated with the Word of God, lends strength to the knowledge that Jesus expects His people to be holy.

I’m not speaking of a faux piety that you can strap on when going out to the daily grind; I’m talking about holiness that reveals you have walked with the Master, listening to Him as He speaks through the Word and imbibing deeply from the wells of salvation. I’m talking about holiness that is witnessed by those who know you. As a boy, I was impressed by an old cobbler in our town, Windy Phillips. I never knew his name, only calling him by the title that was commonly used for him, Windy.

I never saw Windy without a big smile on his face, even when he was tormented by others. He was vocal in his praise of the Lord. His right foot would hit the ground and he would say, “Glory.” His left foot would hit the ground and he would shout, “Hallelujah.” Literally, as Windy walked down the street, you could hear him coming because you would hear, “Glory!” “Hallelujah!” He attended a Fire Baptized Holiness Church in our little town, and he was excited by the things of God.

As a young boy, I joined others in making fun of Windy; I ashamed of that now. When I became a follower of the Son of God, I wasn’t quite as vocal as Windy had been, but I began to understand that it was essential that I praise God. It is not your place to tell me not to shout or leap for joy in the knowledge that my sins are forgiven, and that God is working in my life to reveal His power and glory. I find it hard to restrain my tongue when I think of God’s goodness to me. I want to live to honour Him and I don’t mind telling others that He has been good to me.

Here’s the point—Jesus asked that His followers would be made holy in the truth as He was holy in the truth. Jesus expects that we will thoroughly saturate our lives with the Word and that saturation will be reflected in every situation. Let me give you an example of how that works out in life by asking you to remember the temptation Jesus experienced in the desert.

JOHN 17:1-26
JESUS PRAYS FOR US

After Jesus was baptised, He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness [see **LUKE 4:1-13**]. There, He fasted for forty days. As I've said in other messages, while forgoing food, I am confident that the Master was feasting on the Word, meditating on what was written.³ He gave the Word, and yet He fed on the Word. Jesus was sanctified in the truth, which is the Word that He gave. The devil came to Him and tempted Jesus. "You're hungry, turn these stones into bread. I know you're the Son of God, so that should be difficult for you." The Master's response shows what it is to be sanctified in the truth. He turned to the Word and reminded the devil, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone."

Again, the devil tried by offering power and glory. All the Master needed to do would be worship the devil and he could have it all! Jesus again answered through applying the Word:

"You shall worship the Lord your God,
and him only shall you serve."

[LUKE 4:8]

In the final temptation at that time, the devil attempted to seduce the Master into implementing a shortcut to reigning as the King of Glory. Again, as was true of every other time, the Master turned to the Word which He had given, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test" [**LUKE 4:12**].

To be sanctified in the truth is to be so thoroughly imbued by the Word of God that it guides every choice. To be sanctified in the Word is to seize the truth of the Psalmist, who said,

"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path."

[PSALM 119:105]

Each follower of the Christ must train herself or himself to think biblically, asking "What does the Word say concerning the matter I am now facing?" With time, as we focus on seeking what pleases God, our decisions will become almost automatic.

God expects nothing less of His people than that they should be a holy people, revealing the perfection of His work in their lives. While that perfection will be fully revealed at the coming of the Lord Jesus, we are to strive for holiness now. This is the clear message Peter delivered to the people of God, when he wrote, "Preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.' And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God" [**1 PETER 1:13-21**].

³ Michael Stark, "Are You Insulting God in Worship?" (Sermon), February 25, 2018, <http://newbeginningsbaptist.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Matthew-04.10-Are-You-Insulting-God-in-Worship.pdf>

JOHN 17:1-26
JESUS PRAYS FOR US

Paul has taught the people of God, those who have learned Christ, “to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” [EPHESIANS 4:22-24].

JESUS PRAYS FOR US TO BE EFFECTIVE IN EVANGELISM — “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 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*. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that *they may be one even as we are one*, 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” [JOHN 17:20-23].

Our Lord’s prayer that was offered at that time anticipated that His disciples would in turn disciple others. He prayed for those who had been with Him for three and one-half years, and He also prayed for those who would follow in the train of the Apostles—Jesus prayed for the followers of Christ even to this day! If Jesus prayed for all disciples throughout this Church Age at the time of the prayer in our text, should it be surprising to believe that He prays for us now? Should we be surprised that discipling others looms large in the Master’s will for His people?

It is significant that Jesus’ final admonition for all who would follow Him was that they disciple others. Discipleship—turning others to faith in the Risen Saviour, incorporating them into the fellowship of the assembly and instructing them in the truths of the Kingdom—was central to the Master’s heart. The Risen Saviour charged His disciples, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” [MATTHEW 28:19-20a]. We rightly recognise this charge as “The Great Commission.” The Risen Saviour gave His life that others might live. Responsibility for relaying this message rests on individual Christians working as individuals and in concert with other believers gathered in faith communities.

Immediately before ascending into the Glory, Jesus charged those who were gathered on a hill outside of Jerusalem, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” [ACTS 1:8]. Telling others of the salvation that is offered in Christ as Lord is incumbent upon each Christian. If I am not telling others of the life that is offered in Christ the Lord, I am disobedient to His last work. He prayed that we would be effective in evangelism. He promised to be present with us as we evangelised. He charged us with the responsibility to evangelise.

The Master has left us here to honour Him through discipling others. If all we do is soak up the blessings of salvation without sharing with others, we dishonour Him, and we misappropriate the salvation we claim to have received. If we are not telling others of Christ the Lord, we are inviting divine judgement. Why should the Lord bless us with intimacy if we are not doing what He commanded? Why would we expect answer to our own prayers when we are disobedient to His command? Don’t say that we are unable to tell others of the Christ! Jesus prayed that we would do so; and if the Master asked something, the Father does it! You may recall that Martha confessed when she was pleading that Jesus would raise her brother, Lazarus, “I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you” [JOHN 11:22]. Then, as He prayed before Lazarus’ tomb, The Master confessed to the Father, “I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me” [JOHN 11:42].

JESUS PRAYS FOR US TO SEE HIS GLORY — “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.* O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. 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” [JOHN 17:24-26].

Jesus has redeemed us so that He might be glorified in our salvation. That is astonishing. I have often mentioned the words recorded in Paul’s Second Letter to the Christians of Salonica. There, the Apostle has written, “We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. Therefore, we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring.

“This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed” [2 THESSALONIANS 1:3-10].

Take note of the reason Paul says Jesus is coming again. To be sure, He is coming to reign. To be certain, He will judge the wicked of this earth. Those who have refused to receive Him as Master over life will be shut out from His presence for all eternity. However, one great reason for the return of the Christ is to permit Him to be glorified in His saints and to be marvelled at among all who have believed. Don’t pass by that truth too quickly. Jesus will return to be glorified in His saints.

Take a good look at the people sharing this service with you. They look rather normal to your eyes. However, at the return of Christ, these who have believed the Son of God will be radiant in beauty. They will shine as the stars in the heavens. They will be robed in white garments that no man made. They will be clothed with the glory of the Living God. These magnificent creatures will beggar the brilliance of the sun and Christ will be glorified in them! We will marvel at His presence.

We think we know the Lord now, but we don’t know as we shall know; and on that day we will see Him as He is. Isn’t that what John has promised? “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is” [1 JOHN 3:1-2].

Now I’ve spoken to Christians, reminding them of how Jesus prays for us. Some of you are outside the precincts of grace; you are under condemnation and in need of salvation. You will know no peace until you know the Saviour. My invitation to you is to hear this Good News that Jesus, the Son of God, died because of your sin. He took your guilt upon Himself, and you no longer need to labour under sentence of eternal death. The invitation of the Living God is an invitation to life as you believe in the Son of God, receiving Him as Master over your life. As the Apostle has said, “The Word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.” What word?

JOHN 17:1-26
JESUS PRAYS FOR US

“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame, since there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, because the same Lord of all richly blesses all who call on him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” [**ROMANS 10:9-13 CSB**].

Without apology, I am labouring to see people saved. I’m working hard to see people set free from sin and brought into the Kingdom of God. Salvation is granted when a lost person turns to the Saviour, asking Him to assume the rule over life and save them. This is my prayer for you, if you are one of those individuals who is now under divine sentence. If you would be set free from condemnation and be accepted into God’s Family, heed the call of the Master. Believe that Jesus, the Son of God, died because of your sin and that He rose from the dead. Believing that He now lives and that He receives all who come to Him in faith, ask Him to receive you and to take control over your life. The Living God has promised; He will do what He has promised. Believe Him today. Amen.