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## LIFE IN HIS NAME

### THE FINAL HOUR OF PRAYER

John 17

What would you pray for if it was your last few hours of life? What would you ask for? What do you think? Obviously, don't say it out loud. I have a lot of different things going. I would imagine they would be pretty important to you. Wouldn't you agree? You realize, "Okay, my time is up. My hour is here. Let me pray." That's what's going on in Jesus' farewell discourse here. In fact, look at verse 1 of chapter 17. "When Jesus had spoken these words," (referring to his entire farewell discourse) "he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, 'Father, the hour has come...'"

That word "hour" is a special word in the gospel of John. Jesus is very aware of his timing. Do you remember when Jesus' mom came to Jesus in John chapter 2? This is the water into wine passage. "Jesus, they ran out of wine!" "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour hasn't arrived. It hasn't come yet. This is not the right hour, Mom. This is not the right timing." In chapter 7 and 8 they try to arrest Jesus twice, and it says this: "But his hour hadn't come yet." So he slips away, because it's not his time. But as he approaches chapter 17 here, as we see: "My hour has come." This is the end. He looks up to heaven and says, "Now that my hour is here, I'm going to pray."

He prays for three things. Now, this is packed and we are going to fly over it, so there's a lot I cannot cover. But the three main themes are: He prays for himself, he prays for his disciples, and then he prays for future believers. We are going to look at that. In the first five verses he prays for himself and he prays for our salvation. Then in verses 6 through 19 he prays for his disciples, he prays for protection. Then in the final remainder he prays for future believers and he prays for our unity. That's what we are going to cover: He prays for our salvation, our protection, and our unity. Let's look at this first point.

- I. Jesus prays in his final hour for our salvation.

Verse 1:

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. Verse 3, key to this book: And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom

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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.

A rich prayer: Glorify the Son, Father. Now, I just said that he prays for your salvation. You might look at that and say, “Well, not really. He prays for his glory, right?” But here’s what you need to know when you read through the gospel of John. When Jesus talks about being glorified, he is talking about dying for you. That’s what he means. We are now in the book of glory – the second half is called the book of glory. The glory of the gospel of John is that Jesus would be lifted up on the cross, and through his exaltation on the cross and then his death, resurrection, and ascension, being lifted back up to heaven – through that glorification he would save sinners from every nation, every tribe, every tongue. He would open up heaven for us. He would go to prepare a place for us through his death. He would open up a way for you and for me, that we could be swept up into his glory -- that we could experience, as he puts it in verse 3: eternal life.

Eternal life is one of the favorite phrases Jesus uses in the gospel of John. It’s the language of salvation. When we think about eternal life, often our minds instantly go to living forever. The word “eternal” should conjure that up, right? You know, “We’ve been there 10,000 years, bright, shining as sun; we’ve only just begun to sing God’s praise.” It’s going to go for another 10, and another 10, and another 10, and that is certainly true. God is eternal and we will live with him eternally.

But I want you to look closely at verse 3, because it’s not really directly in this moment speaking about how long we get to live. What does he say? He says, “This is eternal life, that they know you.” That they know God, that we know God through Jesus Christ. We know God. We know Jesus. He is going to be glorified on the cross so that you can know God. And not just know about God, like the facts in your bible, but that you could experience God.

The word “know” is a special word. It’s like husbands know their wives. There is an intimacy there. He is saying you can know, you can experience that. You will be swept up into the very life of God himself. God in you, and you in God -- he’s going to cover that through this book. There is a glory that we are swept up into, and it begins today and goes on forever. Eternal life is not simply something that happens later. It’s an experience of reality that spills into this present age and

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invades your life. It changes you from the inside out, now and forever and ever and ever. He says, “Father, glorify me. I’m ready.”

You might read it here and say, “You know what? Jesus, in the gospel of John in particular, but in all the gospels -- he is very resolved. He is always resolved to go to the cross.” But you might think there is no confliction right here. You are like, “He gets to get more glory, right? He gets to go back to heaven. This is awesome.” This was a hard prayer to pray. Flip to chapter 12, verse 23. Jesus has just done the triumphal entry. He rides in on the colt, the donkey. Everyone is praising him. All of a sudden, the Greeks, these non-Jewish people, walk up to him, and somehow in the divine calendar, he knew the time is up. This is the hour. Look at verse 23. Jesus answered them after the Greeks approached him: “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” Verse 27: “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name. Then a voice came from heaven: ‘I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.’”

Go back to chapter 17. “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son...” Do you see the connection with the cross there? When Jesus first prays that prayer, when he realizes his time is up, his first thought is: “What should I pray? ‘Father, save me from this hour’?” It’s like the Garden of Gethsemane. They are almost there, and we know, not from John’s gospel but from the others, that he is sweating drops of blood. Because there is part of him that knows from eternity past, and that’s what he says here. This was the plan before the ages began, before the foundation of the world, to save you. But in the moment, in 32 A.D., Jesus of Nazareth, the human part of him, looks to the cross: “Isn’t there another way?”

“What should I pray? Save me from this hour?” No. Because if the Father had saved him in that hour, he couldn’t save you in your hour. So Jesus embraces it in this prayer. We see the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane, the confliction in chapter 12, but right here he embraces it fully. He says, “Father, it’s time. I’m ready. Glorify me. I’m ready to be lifted up. And when I am lifted up, I will draw them to myself. And when I am ascended at your right hand, I will give eternal life to everyone we have chosen. It will happen.” The first thing he prays for is your salvation.

Secondly, and this is our longest and densest section, he prays for our protection.

- II. Jesus prays in his final hour for our protection.

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In verse 6 he says to the 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. 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.

He is talking there about the disciples’ conversion, that they received the word. But really, this applies to all of us, right? Everyone that comes to Christ – we receive his words and we embrace them. Look where his prayer turns in verse 9: “I am praying for them.” “I am praying for those who receive the word, those that know that I came from you. I am praying for them.” He is very clear. “I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.” He is praying for believers here. He is saying, “I’m not praying for the whole world. I’m praying for those who believe in me.” Do you believe in him? He is praying for you.

Verse 10:

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, (look at this) keep them in your name, (Holy Father, keep them, protect them, 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. Notice this: I have guarded them (I protected them), and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction (the son of perdition), 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 (set them apart) 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 (I set myself apart), that they also may be sanctified (set apart) in truth.

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Jesus is praying for you, for your protection. There's a lot in there, but here's what he says. He says, "I have chosen you out of the world. I have saved you out of the world, and I am praying that you will be protected. I have guarded you." He is praying to the Father: "Now that I'm not here, Father, you are going to guard them." And we know that the Father and Jesus are one. He says in chapter 10: "No one can snatch them out of my hand. No one can snatch them out of the Father's hand." He is saying, "Father, here is the handoff. I am leaving. But by the Holy Spirit that we're going to send, we are going to keep protecting them and not one of them is going to be lost."

In John 10 Jesus said, "All my sheep hear my voice. I give them eternal life and they will never, never, not one of them will ever perish." He even clarifies here, because he is talking to the 11 -- Judas is out. He says, "Listen, Judas is no exception. This was planned before the ages began. Everybody that I chose, everybody that comes to me, everybody will make it. Everybody will be protected. I will keep them in your name. You keep them in your name and you keep them from the evil one, Father. Why? So that they might be set apart and sent into the world as my witnesses."

Jesus says, "I'm leaving this world, but they're not. They are in the world, and Father, I need you to keep them protected from worldliness, protected from the devil, protected from Satan." If you are here in Christ, Jesus has prayed a prayer of protection over you that will never fail. Do you know that? That if you are in Christ, you are protected. You are protected. Your faith is protected, and it will make it. This is what we often call the perseverance of the saints. You are going to make it! You know why? It's not because you have a really strong grip. It's not. It's because before the foundation of the world, the Father and Son said, "We are going to save you and we are never going to let you go. I am going to call you out of the world and I am going to share my glory with you in eternity future, from eternity past, and I am going to send them into the world, just as I was sent into the world, to be a witness to the world about the love and the light and the life of God found in Jesus Christ. I will protect them through every trial, through every tribulation, through every onslaught of the devil. They are protected and I will lose not one of them. Not one!" He won't lose you. He will protect you.

But I want to be clear. This is what this verse doesn't mean. It doesn't mean that you never have to face attack. There is a popular teaching in American theology. It goes like this: No Christian will ever have to go through tribulation. We get to get out of here before it ever happens. We are not

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big on end-times here, so if that's your position, that's fine. But I don't believe that's the thrust of scripture here. In fact, look at the end of chapter 16. It says: "In this world you will have tribulation." Our hope is not that we won't have tribulation, but look how it finishes. "But take heart; I have overcome the world." We will survive through tribulation no matter what.

We have brothers and sisters in the Middle East right now. They are losing their heads for Jesus and they will make it and Jesus will not lose one of them. And if persecution comes to Florida or the U.S., we have to be ready, church. Our hope isn't that we get to get around tribulation, but that Jesus has overcome it. He has prayed for your protection and your faith will stand no matter what. Your grip is weak. His is strong. It's strong and he won't let you go. He has prayed for you. Sometimes my prayers don't work. When Jesus prays, it's going to happen. Jesus prays for your protection.

Finally, Jesus prays for our unity.

III. Jesus prays in his final hour for our unity.

"I do not ask for these only," referring to the 11, and by extension believers. Look at this: "But also for those who will believe in me through their word..." He is saying that just as the apostles go out and preach the gospel and people get saved, and then those people preach the gospel and more people get saved, he is praying for those who will believe through the word that comes to them. That's everybody here, by the way, and everybody who will ever come to believe in Jesus. Alright? This is an inclusive prayer that is directed towards all believers throughout all time.

...that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, (why?) 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, (he is praying for our unity) 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."

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He prays for our salvation, for our protection, and here he prays for our unity. He says, “Father, I pray that they may be one. I pray that they may be perfectly one. Just as you and I, Father, are one in purpose, I pray that they would be one in purpose, that they would be united. Just as I do everything the Father says, I pray that they would work together, just as we have worked together, Father, to accomplish this purpose. I pray that that would happen throughout the Church for everybody who comes to believe in me, that they may be one, perfectly one, as we are one and swept up into the love that we have -- that they have that love with each other and they have that love with God. And the glory that I want to share with them – I pray that they will have that glory together forever in heaven as one.” As one.

I have some alarming news to some of us here this morning. There are no Baptist sections in heaven, or Presbyterian, or Calvary Chapel, or non-denominational, or Catholic, or Eastern Orthodox. There aren't different sections in the Father's house. Here's a secret: We actually are one. We are! We are one! He has prayed for it and the reality is that in heaven, everyone who gets there who has been part of this group, that before eternity past into the future – wherever there are true believers, wherever there are people who have been called by Jesus -- they are our brothers and sisters. They are! We are one family. We belong to him. We need to act like that, church, right? He has prayed for our unity. We need to be united.

I see this verse applied and sometimes misapplied in multiple ways. The first is that we only apply it in our local church. It is an important way to apply it, by the way. We need to be one, Riverside, right? If we are fighting, if we are divided, it doesn't benefit the world. They don't see that Jesus was sent from the Father when they see churches fighting, right? So if you are here, but you are not with us, you've got to get with us, right? This is your church. We've got to be one. Like the Father and the Son are one, we've got to be one. We've got to get together. Whatever is dividing you, whatever is holding you back, we've got to be one.

But sometimes it's only applied that way. And what I see happening is that a tribalism kicks in, where every little tribe is super tight-knit, but then they are throwing grenades over at the other tribe. It becomes almost like a cult -- this group is tight but they don't talk to any other believers. They look at them like they're probably not even saved, right? Like, “I don't know about those guys. They don't believe exactly everything the same way that we do or use the same bible translation!” No.

## Life In His Name – The Final Hour Of Prayer

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By the way, the bible wasn't written in English originally, alright? Hate to burst your bubble. Greek and Hebrew, alright? We are one. Riverside, as a church, we need to act that way and believe that way -- and as a community of South Florida. That's one of the reasons I'm so proud of Brian and the Church United movement, because he is driving the unity movement.

So, you know what? Denominations? They're just the way human beings organize our structures. But really, in the end, we are all one. Jesus has prayed for it, and it is the reality. The more that we realize it and recognize it, the more people will know that Jesus came from God. And the more that we split up and divide and fight and leave, the more people say, "I'm not so sure about Jesus. His followers can't even love each other, let alone the world." We have to love each other, and love the other churches in this area. Love the churches around the world. We are a family. We are one.

Jesus prays for our salvation, that he would be glorified and embrace the cross. He prays for your protection. He is not going to lose you. He is going to keep you in his name and keep you from the evil one. And he prays for our unity, that we would be perfectly one as he and the Father are one, and share that glory.

Look at verse 24 again. "Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me." Verse 24 is very clear. Jesus shares his heart with the Father. He says, "Father, this is what I want. I want them to be with me." That's an amazing thought, that Jesus wants you to be with him, and me to be with him. If you're on Jesus' team, you've got the better end of the deal. Jesus wants you to be with him.

I want to speak to those here today who say, "I'm not sure I've embraced this yet. I'm not sure that I have eternal life, that these realities that Jesus prayed for, that I've received them." I want to know, and I know Jesus wants to know, that you have received them and that you will be with him. Because it's clear that there are those in the world that he doesn't pray for that won't be. And there are those that the Father has given him that will come.

If that's you, if you hear his voice this morning, he says this: "I was glorified, I was lifted up, that I might give you eternal life, that you would know him, that you would know God the Father through him." Today can be the day where you know that you've received the gift of eternal life. Jesus died for your sins and he rose from the dead to share his love and his glory and his forgiveness and everlasting life with you. And it won't have to start one day in the future. It can start today.