

A Praying Life
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John 17:1
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Please turn with me in your Bibles to John 17. This morning we move into this wonderful chapter, John 17, often called '*The High Priestly Prayer*' of Jesus. I think that is a good name for it because what we have here is Jesus praying for those that He will save as the High Priest would pray. The High Priest's role was essentially to pray and then to make a sacrifice. That's what he would do on the Day of Atonement, he would pray, and then offer the sacrifice. Well, Jesus is praying before He offers the sacrifice here in John 17.

It comes at the end of '*The Farewell Discourse*', which is a title for the words that John shares with us from Chapter 13 to Chapter 16, which are all a part of Jesus' last evening with His 12 disciples, and particularly the 11 after Judas has left. He gives this Farewell Discourse to them the night before His crucifixion. So it is in the shadow of the cross that He spends these hours pouring out His heart to them in teaching, 13-16, and then pouring out His heart to God in prayer in Chapter 17.

One of the Puritan preachers I read about recently, his name slips my mind, talked about the High Priestly Prayer as one of the highest points in all of Holy Scripture, akin to the Mount of Transfiguration, for in this prayer, captured by the apostle John, we see into the heart of the Savior in an unprecedented way. We see into His heart as He pours out His heart to His Father. We see into the inner workings of the Godhead in this chapter because we see the love relationship of the Father and Son in a more clear way than anywhere else. We see the glorious work of the Son of God in saving us from our sins. We see something of the mechanics of it in an unprecedented way in His prayer life that is laid before us in this chapter. The importance of prayer in the life of Christ, the necessity of prayer in His life and ministry.

We see in this chapter the astonishing reality that everything Jesus accomplished He accomplished through prayer. That is something that is a marvelous reality that we often miss because we know that the Gospel of John in particular, in the New Testament in general, teaches us the full deity of the Son of God. That Jesus is fully God, but what we see in John's Gospel also is how the God-Man, He is also very man of man. That is, He is a true man, and that His mission is to come and live a perfect, human life. A perfect, human life, and to offer up that perfect, human life of perfect righteousness to the Father so that He might be an

unblemished sacrifice. But more than that, not just that, so that He might give to all who believe in Him a perfect record of righteousness. He lives as man was intended to live from the beginning. This was how Adam was intended to live. Jesus lives this way. And what we see, though He is fully God, He lays aside His prerogatives of God, that is what Philippians 2:6 is talking about. Remember Philippians 2:5, the apostle says:

Philippians 2:5 ~ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

In Verse 6, he goes on to say:

Philippians 2:6-7 ~ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking upon Himself the form of a slave, and being made in the likeness of men.

The idea is that though He is fully God, He lays aside the prerogatives of God, the prerogatives of deity. When He comes and enters into the humiliation aspect of the atonement, where He leaves the glory of Heaven and becomes a man. He lays aside His prerogatives as God, and somehow, He continues to uphold the world by the word of His power. Yet in His human life, He lives a life of true humanity, a life of utter dependence upon the Father. He lives the same way that we are called to live, in utter dependence upon Him, and His finished work as the exalted King of glory, the Son of God.

But it is an astonishing reality that everything Jesus accomplished, He accomplished through prayer. He continually prayed, He lived a life of what 1 Thessalonians 5 says, pray without ceasing. He prayed without ceasing, and so the title of the message this morning I borrowed from Paul Miller's book. The title of the message is 'A Praying Life'. And this question I want us to ponder as we look at this, if it was indeed necessary, and it was, if it was indeed necessary for the perfect Son of God to live a life of constant, continual prayer, how can we not pray? How can we be so prayerless? 'A Praying Life'. Let's read John 17 together.

John 17:1-26 ~ 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. 9 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. 17 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.

20 “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.”

Let's pray together.

Our Father, as we come to Your word, we are reminded of our inadequacy, of our blindness, and continued need of the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit. Father, we ask that in Your light we might see light. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

‘A Praying Life’, Jesus lived a life of prayer, and accomplished all that He accomplished through the dependence and faith that prayer is, depending on the Father, and the power of the Spirit that the Father gave to Him to live as true man. I want us to consider this topic this morning under three points, which are really three questions. And the first question is: *When does Jesus pray?* The second is: *Where does Jesus pray?* And the third is: *Why does Jesus pray? When? Where? and Why?*

1) When Does Jesus Pray?:

So now first, *When does Jesus pray?* As we look at the text, and observe it, when does Jesus pray? There are really two sub-points here to answer the question: *When does He pray?* The context tells us that He prays immediately after His declaration of victory in John 16:33. So He prays first of all, immediately after His declaration of victory. Now we're going to see in a moment, that He prays immediately before the final battle. That is the contrast. He prays immediately after He declares victory, but immediately before the final battle.

A) Immediately after His Declaration of Victory:

So first of all, immediately after His declaration of victory. We look at the context, Verse 33 of Chapter 16. This is the end of what He'd been saying in the previous chapter. He says in Verse 33:

John 16:33 ~ These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.

Jesus spoke these things, and lifting His eyes to Heaven He said, do you see that? He goes right into prayer. John doesn't give us any indication that there is any time lapse. He'll often, in his Gospel, say something like, "After these things..." That tells you there is some time in between what happened in this chapter, and what happened in the next. In this case, there is no time-lapse indicator. The way the natural reading is, Jesus says, ***...but take courage; I have overcome the world.*** Then they see Him say that to Him. "Take courage, I've overcome the world." He lifts His eyes to Heaven and He begins to pray. How does that inform our understanding of this? He says, ***...I have overcome the world.*** That is a triumphant declaration of victory. We noted before the verb tense that is used there, and ***...I have overcome...*** is a tense that means completed action. The perfect tense, it is a completed action in past time, with ongoing implications, or ongoing results. ***...I have overcome...*** It is finished in a sense. He is saying, "I've already done it."

Now the battle is still to be, the main battle is still to be fought, but what He is saying is, it is such confidence and certainty. He is basically declaring, "The war is over. I have won the war." There is still a battle to be fought, but it is a matter of predetermined certainty. "There is no uncertainty in the battle that is about to happen, guys. So be of good cheer, I've overcome." He has absolute confidence in the sovereignty of God. He sees it, everything that has happened, that has brought Him to this moment, it is the perfect unfolding of God's eternal plan of salvation. He sees it is right here. This is the last step in the process and, "I have won, and have overcome, and I will overcome in this particular battle. So with certainty I can say that I have already won."

B) Immediately Before the Final Battle:

Now it is also said though immediately before the final battle because He immediately begins to pray about that battle. When it says, "Father, glorify Your Son," in Verse 1, and also in Verse 5 when He says:

John 17:5 ~ Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

He is thinking in terms of the return to the Father's presence, but He is also thinking of the path, to return is through the cross. You see this when you compare John 12:23 and following. That's where He says, "It's now time for the Son to be glorified." And He says, "Father, glorify Me. Glorify Your name," and He is talking about the cross, that the path to glory is through the cross. So He sees that that battle is imminent. "The hour has come," He says, back to John 17, "The hour has come, glorify Your Son." This hour that He has been talking about all throughout John's Gospel, the hour is finally here. This first miracle, His mother came to him and said, "They have no wine," and He said, "My hour has not yet come." In John 7 and John 8, you hear this refrain several times, the people want to kill Him, they want to grasp Him, they want to put Him to death, but His hour had not yet come. And now, "Definitively," Jesus says, "The hour *has* come." It is the hour of the cross.

So He is standing before the cross, and yet He knows the victory is won. So what does He do? He does what you and I would not instinctively do. If I know everything has happened that needs to happen, and it is just about victory time, I'm ready to celebrate, but what Jesus does is pray. He prays that it will happen, what He already knows is going to happen, and that is the lesson of the first point of when He prays. The sovereignty of God, and the sovereign plan of God does not negate our responsibility to pray. It is counterintuitive, we think because we reason as fools and sheep, and it seems good to us, honestly, because we are sheep, and we are foolish. That is not a complimentary analogy that we are sheep. We need a shepherd. We think that if God has already determined it, why pray? Even in reformed circles where we emphasize the sovereignty of God, this is a temptation. "I don't need to pray. It is already worked out." No, because it is already worked out, pray.

God has ordained means that He uses to accomplish His purposes, and He is ordained to use the prayers of His people, and without the prayers of His people, it will not happen. Now if you don't pray, somebody else will, because God will raise somebody else up to pray, but that is the way that it works in the plan of salvation. Human responsibility, and divine sovereignty, work hand-in-hand, and they are illustrated in the life of Jesus right here. Because He knows He is going to win, what does He do? He prays for victory. He doesn't take it for granted. I mean, He could have said, "Watch this, guys!" That's what we would have done, but He says, "Father, I need Your help right now. I need You to give Me the power to overcome, and to win this battle." So when does He pray? And let me give you an example, something you can read on your own.

Sometime this week, read Daniel 9 and see what Daniel does. This is again, Daniel is like Jesus, he is not like me. Daniel is reading in Jeremiah, Daniel has been in captivity for a long time. He was taken captive in 605 B.C. Remember the Babylonian exile? Daniel is a Hebrew, a Jew, and he is taken from his home in Jerusalem to Babylon, and he lives there for about 68 years, and he is having his quiet time one day, reading in Jeremiah, and he comes across Jeremiah 25:11, which says this: That the time of the exile will be 70 years. And he thinks, calculates, it has been 68 years. You know what I would have done? I would have started emailing, and texting, and calling, “Guys! It is almost over! Two years and it is over!” Isn’t that what you would think to do? Do you know what Daniel did? The next verse says, “So he set his heart to seek the Lord, and he sought the Lord with prayer, and fasting, and agonizing prayer. He prayed that God would do what God had decreed to do.” That is the way God works. When He is about to do something, He sets His people to praying. So we need to pray, and when we see something beginning to happen, it is not time to let up, it is time to pray harder. This is the way God works. Prayer really does make things happen. Now we pray because God has ordained that we pray, yes, but it doesn’t mean stop praying or, “I’m going to wait until God makes me pray.” No, pray because you know you are supposed to pray. Ask Him to help you as you pray, but pray. So when does Jesus pray? Immediately after His declaration of victory and immediately before the final battle.

2) Where Does Jesus Pray?

Now secondly, where does Jesus pray? Where does His High Priestly Prayer take place? We might be prone to think that it takes place in Gethsemane, and there are some scholars who even like to say it did, even though clearly the text says it did not take place in Gethsemane. Sometimes you’ll read a Bible commentary or something, and they are just being a little light and loose with the wording of the text. We can see clearly from the passage, if we read it carefully, this prayer happened before Jesus went to Gethsemane. Let me show you why we know that. John 18:1, right after He finishes praying in Verse 26 of Chapter 17, when He said:

John 17:26 ~ ...so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

Look what it says in Chapter 18.

John 18:1 ~ When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples.

So the prayer that He prays is before the prayers of Gethsemane. Now we know, from Matthew, Mark, and Luke, that Jesus had an extensive prayer time in the Garden of Gethsemane. When you put those three Gospel accounts together, in Mark 14, Matthew 26, and Luke 22, what you see is that Jesus prayed three times, He earnestly asked the Father that if there be any other way that the Father would take this cup from Him. That is the cross. “Is there any other way, Lord, to accomplish Your purpose of redeeming lost sinners? If there is any other way, please let it be that way. Nevertheless, not My will, but Your will be done.” So the prayer happens in Gethsemane, only minutes after the prayer in John 17. Now what does that tell us? It tells us that Jesus prays in John 17 for help as He faces the cross, and a few moments later He is going to pray for help as He faces the cross. What it means is He prayed continually for help as He faced the cross. It means that He lived a life of prayer. That leads us to *Why did Jesus Pray?*

3) Why Did Jesus Pray?

The fact that He is praying, and going to pray again shows us really that Jesus prays, and the answer to *Why does Jesus pray?* in a word—because He *needs* to pray. He prays because He needs to pray. Because even though He is fully God, He is laying aside His prerogatives as God, living a life of complete dependence upon the Father. Everything that He will accomplish, He will accomplish through the direction of the Father, and through the provision of the Father. Therefore, everything that He will accomplish must be accomplished through asking the Father. He prays because He needs to pray. And so when He mentioned to the disciples, ***...I have overcome the world.***” thinking about the battle again, the war again. “I have won the war,” in His humanity He is reminded again of the impending battle, and so He goes to the Father.

Haven’t you found yourself needing to pray again, and again, and again about the same things? I mean you have a prayer time where you lay something before the Lord that is really a concern in your life, and you feel like you left it there. You left it there. You had a time of prayer where the Lord helped you to see that He is the one who wants to bear your burdens, and you left it before Him. And God worked in your heart, and you surrendered to Him, and there was the sense in which you were able to say at the end of the time, “Not my will, but Your will be done.” But then a little bit later you find yourself anxious, and fretting.

Now Jesus was never sinfully anxious or fretting. The difference between Him and us is vast. He never sinned, but yet in His humanity He was tempted continually in every way just as we are, yet without sin. I mean, His life is a perfect life of submission and dependence on the Father. And there is a sense in which, we read earlier, in Hebrews 5:7-9, where Jesus prayed with loud crying and tears to the one able to save Him, and He was heard because of His piety, and He learned obedience of the things He suffered, and He was made perfect. What does it mean He was made perfect? It doesn't mean that He was made perfect in the way that we would think of naturally, sometimes in the way we use the English word. The Greek word for 'perfect' there in Hebrews 5:9 is the word 'teleios', which means 'complete'. And so His perfection, His perfection of obedience was the completion of the journey.

It is kind of like, maybe an analogy would be, if somebody is going to make a work of art. No work of art is truly perfect, so let's understand that, but just work with me for a second. If you had a painting of Rembrandt, or some other great artist, or a sculpture of Michelangelo, and you think about how much goes into the perfection of that work. Every perfect brush stroke, after brush stroke, or every perfect chiseling act, or sculpting, scraping act of the sculptor. Jesus' life was a perfect work of art, and yet it was not completed until it was completed. And He offered to God a perfect righteousness, and so His whole life was a war, a spiritual war in which Satan was trying to distract Him from the life of perfect humanity, perfect submission to the Father, perfect dependence upon the Father. This is illustrated in the temptations of Jesus. You see this. They are recorded for us in Matthew 4.

Now, it is interesting, first of all, when was Jesus tempted? When did the Father allow Him to be tempted like He was in those moments? After He had been praying for 40 days. Why did the Son of God need to pray for 40 days? Isn't that something that kind of works on you a little bit? It is because He is living as true man, and He is in a world that is trying to distract Him. He is fighting the forces of hell which are against Him, like no one else has ever had that experience, and He is clinging to the Father. After 40 days in prayer, and fasting, Satan comes to Him, and what does Satan say? "If You are the Son of God, turn these stones into bread."

What's he asking Him to do? He's asking Him to use His own power to pick up the prerogatives of deity and use them to provide for Himself. Do you see that? "If You are the Son of God, turn these stones into bread." "If You are who I know You are..." And Satan didn't say that. He's trying to bait Him as if He could. "If

You are the Son of God, turn these stones into bread” What does Jesus say? He quotes Scripture to him, because He had memorized Scripture, because the Man Christ Jesus had to memorize Scripture, and He did. He quotes to him from Deuteronomy, and He says:

Matthew 4:4 ~ But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’”

What is He saying? “I am the Son of Man as well as the Son of God. You know I’m the Son of God, Satan. I created you, but I am the Son of Man, and in My role as Man, I am living a life of dependence upon the Father. What I live upon is the word of God, the word of My Father. I will not take matters into My own hands. I will not live apart from dependent submission to My Father.” He wanted to tempt Him to provide for Himself, but He says, “No, I will wait on the provision of God My Father.”

What’s the second temptation? He takes Him to the pinnacle of the temple, and from the top of the temple, he says to Him, “If You are the Son of God, cast Yourself down from the pinnacle of the temple.” In other words, “Prove it, because it is written...” and Satan quotes Scripture. Isn’t that terrible? That just shows you how evil and conniving he is, and you’ve got to watch out, because he disguises himself as an angel of light. He says, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here, for it is written...” and he quotes from Psalm 91, “That He will give His angels charge concerning You, and they will bear You up in their hands lest You strike Your foot against a stone.”

What does Jesus say? “It is also written,” and He quotes from Deuteronomy again, and He says, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.” What was Satan tempting Him to do? Satan was tempting Him to take the initiative in the plan of salvation. He was tempting Him to force the Father’s hand. “Hey, cast Yourself down, because He’s promised He’s not going to let anything happen to You.” And Jesus says, “It’s not My place to force His hand. It’s not man’s place to put God to the test.” Do you see that? So in those two temptations, He says, “Listen, I will depend upon the provision of the Father, and I will submit to the direction of the Father.” Jesus lives a life of perfect dependence.

I mean, we see this in a number of ways. Let me just show you His prayer life. Turn to Luke 3:21. Luke highlights for us Jesus' prayer life, how often He prayed, and he tells us something that none of the other Gospel writers tell us about, His baptism in Luke 3:21.

Luke 3:21 ~ Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened,...

What he's saying is when He was baptized and came up out of the water, He was praying, and when He was praying, the Holy Spirit descended. He's praying. He's not just going through the steps He's supposed to go through without praying. He's living a life of prayer. Look with me at Luke 5:15. There we read:

Luke 5:15 ~ But the news about Him was spreading even farther, and large crowds were gathering to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses. 16 But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.

He felt the need to get alone by Himself, away from the distractions of people, and to pray. Now, if He felt the need to do that, how can we not? It's ridiculous, isn't it, our prayerlessness? I mean, this is something that the Lord has been convicting me about, especially over the last year and a half, is how little I've prayed. And it's insanity. When you really see it, it is complete insanity. We need to pray every moment about everything. We're foolish. We think that we can do things. We were talking about this in the Elders meeting the other night, how hard it is to remember that you need to pray. You start thinking you're adequate in certain areas to do things. You figure life out in certain ways. You know how to do your job, or you know how to do this particular task. I know how to do this. Your child comes with a question. "I know the answer to this question," and so you just go ahead and you do it. What are you supposed to do? You're supposed to be praying as you go. You're supposed to be clinging to God asking Him, even as your child comes with a question that you think you know the answer to, "Lord, help me even now to be a blessing to my child. Help me understand what's going on in their heart, because what I do when I'm just doing it in my own strength is I may actually accomplish the task, give the answer, or do the job a particular way, and I get it done, but what did I miss in the process? Was I really fruitful? No, I just got it done. I got the job done, but maybe I didn't get the job done the way I could have. I didn't get the job done by engaging the person that I was doing it with in the way that I could have had I been praying, had I been clinging to God.

How often are we barren in our lives because we're not praying? You have not because you ask not. So Jesus lived a life of prayer. You also see it in Luke 6:12.

Luke 6:12 ~ It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.

He wanted to pray so much that He went and He spent the whole night in prayer. He didn't go to sleep that night. Wow... Look at Luke 9:18.

Luke 9:18 ~ And it happened that while He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, "Who do the people say that I am?"

He's praying alone, and the disciples apparently come upon Him and He asks them, out of His prayer time, "Who do the people say that I am?" Luke tells us that that question and answer series where Peter then says, "You're the Christ, the Son of the living God," Matthew tells us, it started with Jesus' prayer time. He's praying, and the disciples come and they have this tremendous interchange. Remember how He says to Peter, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My father which is in heaven." I would suggest to you that the Father revealed it on the basis of the Son of God's prayer moments before. Because Jesus prayed, it happened.

I forget which Puritan it was. It actually wasn't a Puritan. It was Augustine back before the Puritans. Augustine noted the power of prayer. He said, "If it were not for Stephen..." Remember Stephen the first martyr? "If it was not for Stephen's prayer, 'Father, forgive them,...' " He prayed for those who were persecuting and murdering him. "If it were not for Stephen's prayer, we would not have half of the New Testament," because who was standing there a part of the people that Stephen prayed for? It was Saul of Tarsus. Stephen's prayer moved the hand of God, and the electing purpose of God, and God saved Saul. That's the power of prayer. He prays because He needs to pray.

Luke 9:28 ~ Some eight days after these sayings, He took along Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray.

The transfiguration, the revelation of His glory, why does it happen? It happens because Jesus is praying for it.

Luke 11:1 ~ It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray...”

They see Him praying and they want to pray like He prays. His life was a life of prayer. It wasn't a show. This prayer in John 17 isn't just a teaching time. Have you ever realized when you're praying, that you're really just more concerned about the people that you're around. I have to wrestle with that. Especially as a minister, I think I'm supposed to carry the leadership here. This has got to sound good. That's a dangerous thing, isn't it? The issue is we're talking with God. We're communing with the Father. That's what matters, and really that is so far above the importance of what's happening down here, that it pales in comparison. “Your love for Me must make your love for others seem as hate.” So that's the focus in prayer. It ought to be.

Jesus lived a praying life. He prayed because He needed two things from the Father. We said it already, but I wanted you to see how it's emphasized in John's Gospel. He prayed because He needed to pray. He prayed because He needed two things, at least these two things, and we see this in John's Gospel. He needed the Father's direction. He prayed because He needed the Father's direction. In the economy of salvation, the plan was for the Son to come and live as true Man, and He needed the Father's moment-by-moment direction of His life. He was not doing His own thing. This is clear in John's Gospel. Look with me at John 5:19. Let me remind you of something before we read this.

Remember what Jesus says in John 15 when He's talking about abiding in the vine? What does it mean to abide in the vine? And He says, “Abide in Me, for apart from Me you can do nothing.” Remember that? What can we do apart from Him? Nothing. We don't accomplish anything of eternal value unless we're abiding in Him, communing with Him, praying to Him, seeking Him. We can do nothing. It's astonishing. Remember those three words—can do nothing. Look with me at John 5:19.

John 5:19 ~ Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, 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.”

Do you see that? He's looking to the Father for direction, and what He sees the Father doing, He knows that's what He's supposed to do. He's continually seeking to commune with the Father. "Father, what now? What am I to do now? What am I to say now? Where am I to go now?" Look at Verse 30. It brackets this section.

John 5:30 ~ "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

Twice He says, "I can do nothing apart from the direction of the Father. This is the way that I have come." This is one of the reasons—what you have here in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ is you see the subordination of the Son of God, the functional subordination. That is that He submits to the will of the Father. He does not do His own thing. He submits to the will of the Father. He depends upon the provision of the Father. I'll come back to that in a minute about the subordination. He needs the Father's direction, and He also needs the Father's provision, John 14:10. There as He's talking to the disciples in the upper room, the farewell discourse earlier this evening before the prayer of John 17, He says:

John 14:10 ~ Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.

It's the Father that does the works. Do you see that? And even John 11, one of His prayers that's recorded in John's Gospel is John 11:41 and John 11:42, before the miracle, the seventh climactic miracle recorded in John's Gospel, the raising of Lazarus. We read in Verse 41 that:

John 11:41 ~ ...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." 43 When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth."

Do you see that? He heals Lazarus after He says, "Father I thank You that You have heard Me." He prayed to the Father for the miracle, and now He does the miracle. And what He's showing us is, "Every time I do a miracle like that, it's because I've prayed to the Father, and He has provided the power to do the miracle. So the provision, He needs the Father's provision. He needs the Father's direction.

In fact, back to John 17, it's interesting to note the prevalence. You may have noticed as we were reading the chapter, how often the words *give* or *given* or *gave* are recorded in that prayer. Seventeen times you have that particular word. The Greek word is δίδωμι (didómi) and it means to give. And what you have is there are three times that Jesus says He gives something to us. In Verse 2, He gives eternal life, but He only gives eternal life because the Father first of all gave Him authority. Look at Verse 2:

John 17:2 ~ even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.

“You gave Him authority and You gave Him the elect, and now He gives them eternal life.” Do you see that? It starts with the Father giving. Look with me at Verse 8. What does Jesus do? He gives us the word of God. Look what He says in Verse 8:

John 17:8 ~ for the words which You gave Me I have given to them;

The Father gives Him the words; He gives us the words. Verse 22:

John 17:22 ~ The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;

See, the Father gives Jesus glory and He gives it to us. The Father gives Jesus the word, and He gives it to us. The Father gives Jesus authority, and He gives us life. So it's clear that Jesus is praying because this is the plan of salvation, that He's to live a life of dependent prayer as the God-Man. His determination is to live a perfect human life.

Now, this is where I said a moment ago that this sometimes trips people up. This is what trips up people like the Jehovah's Witnesses. They get tripped up by this, the idea that the Bible does teach the subordination of the Son, that is, the submission of the Son. It teaches the functional subordination, that there is functional subordination within the Trinity, that is, that the Son submits to the Father. The Father sends the Son with the Father's authority. It teaches that the Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son, that the Father and the Son send the Spirit, so that the Spirit then is submitting to the Father and the Son.

The problem is the Jehovah's Witnesses as Arians before them in the 4th Century—there's nothing new under the sun. Satan just recycles heresy after heresy. The

Arians before them took this and stumbled at it, because they didn't take it in context. When you take the fact that there is functional subordination—it's clearly taught in John's Gospel. I mentioned that I've had a Jehovah's Witness that came to my house maybe half a dozen times. Even after he knew I was a pastor, he kept coming, as he was thinking he was really trying to bag a good one. So he kept coming. He was a very nice older gentleman. We had some conversations, and finally we just had to break it off, because he was not willing to submit to the word of God. I kept showing him from the word of God, "What do you do with this?" and he basically said, "Listen." He took me to Matthew and he showed me a verse in Matthew 25, where basically they misinterpret it to say that only certain people know how to interpret the Bible. "And apparently you're not one of them, Ty." That's what he was saying. So therefore all that I was saying didn't count even though I'm looking at the Scripture. I was showing him in John's Gospel. I said, "Listen, read John's Gospel. I'll read John's Gospel. Let's get together and talk about it." And he said, "Every time I read John's Gospel, I'm more convinced that Jesus is not fully God."

I said, "Well, you're just reading half of John's Gospel, and you're reading it through that lying..." I don't think I said that. I didn't say it that boldly. That's what I was thinking. "You're reading it through that lying lens of Russell and Jehovah's Witness theology. If you read it openly and honestly, what you see is you do see functional subordination." You see Jesus can do nothing on His own initiative, but you also see if you read John 1:1-4, that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. You see that through the Word, all things came into being that have come into being. You see in Verse 18 that the Word that becomes flesh is called the only begotten God (John 1:18), and you see twenty times Jesus used this astonishing phrase in John *Ego eimi*, that is, "I am." He says, "I am," seven times with a predicate. "I am the bread of life. I am the Light of the world. I am the gate. I am the Good Shepherd. I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am the resurrection and the life. I am the true vine." But He also says it a number of times without a predicate, in which He says, "Before Abraham was, I am." We know we can interpret that correctly through Isaiah and Exodus 3, that Jesus is making a claim to full deity in every one of those statements.

So what we see is that the true God, the God of glory, the second Person of the Trinity, who is equal to the Father in power and glory, and who is fully Yahweh, fully Jehovah, is also living a life of true humanity, submitted to the Father so that He might redeem, He might be a near Kinsman to us, and be a Kinsman Redeemer. He's come all the way down to live a life in our shoes, as it were, that He could be

the last Adam, to inaugurate a new humanity, because there is one mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. But when you put it all together, what you see is this glorious reality that He is fully God and fully Man, and that functional subordination does not mean inequality of being. This is where they get it all wrong. And it's breathtaking how foolish it is, because just look at life. For life to work properly, there has to be functional subordination. This is one of the things that Satan wants to do, and this is why anarchy is such an evil and ugly thing. God works through authority (Romans 13). He's ordained every governing authority. The king is in the hand of the Lord (Proverbs 21:1). Well, the idea is when you submit to a king, you submit to someone who is functionally above you, but they're not metaphysically above you. That is, they're functionally, positionally above you, but being-wise, they're equal. That's what the Bible is teaching. It teaches that in the home. The reason the husband is the head of the wife is because he is the head. He is the authority. The wife is to submit to her husband, yes. 1 Corinthians 11:3 says the Father is the head of Christ. Christ is the head of man. A husband is the head of a wife. And the analogy is that in the same way that the Father is the head of Christ, the husband is the head of his wife. There's real authority there. There really is, and yet it's an authority that is in the context of absolute metaphysical equality.

That's why we have in other things in the Scriptures that say things like, "Grant honor to your wife as a joint heir of the grace of life." Though she's the weaker vessel, grant her honor. Esteem her. Honor her. Or even more powerfully, love her as Christ loved the church. Give yourself sacrificially to make her beautiful. Pour out your life for her. That's what you see in the beauty of the inner workings of the Trinity. The Father is in authority over the Son, but look at how the Father glories in the Son and lifts up the Son. The Son humbles Himself in obedience. I quoted from Philippians 2 earlier, where it talks about how He did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but He took upon Himself the form of a servant, emptied Himself, taking upon Himself the form of a slave, and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself, to death, even the death of the cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted Him. Because Jesus submitted fully, what has God done? God has exalted Him highly and given Him a Name that is above every other name. The Father says, "Look at My Son." That's equality of being, and the glory that the Father gives to the Son, the Son gives to the Father. But there must be an authority structure.

So the Jehovah's Witnesses miss half of the Gospel of John, and therefore, they are headed to hell, because they deny the Son. In John's Gospel 5, He says it's the Father's will that the Son would be honored. Verse 23:

John 5:23 ~ so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father.

That is the will of the Father, to honor the Son even as you honor the Father. So you can't say the Father is Yahweh and not say the Son is Yahweh, or you're not honoring the Son. We need to pray for them and we need to keep sharing with them, and ask them to keep reading their Bible. But Jesus truly does pray, and that's what we're seeing in this passage. He prays because man needs to pray.

That's why He taught the parable in Luke 18, and He says man ought always to pray and not to faint. We ought to pray all the time. We're going to faint. The implication is you're going to faint if you don't pray. When you look at your life, you say, "Well, I'm doing alright." Well, if you look at your life correctly, you're not. You're not doing what you think you're doing. You're not making the difference that you think you're making if you're not really praying as you ought.

I can speak from experience. Even as a pastor going through the motions and preaching, and teaching, if I'm not praying as I ought, I'm not making the difference that I could be making. God still uses us in spite of ourselves, but if we're not praying, we do not have the full blessing that we would have. We're living as paupers when we have the riches of Heaven at our disposal if we just ask. That's what God calls us to do.

Isn't it amazing that we have a God who was so intent to save us that He was willing to enter into the full experience of our humanity, and then to offer Himself as a sacrifice for sinners, to take upon Himself the wrath of the Father for our sins, so that every sin is paid in full, and then to give us a perfect record of righteousness? That's the Gospel.

When you believe that He died in your place and He rose again from the dead, and you cry out to Him in repentance, turning from your sin and believing in Him, you become a child of God forever. And that transaction that has happened is perfectly just. It's not a winking at sin. It's not a pardoning of sin. It is the full payment of sin, offered by a perfect Savior. And when we understand that, we have access to God because of that, then why aren't we using it? May God help us do that.

Let's pray together...

Father, how grateful we are that You are a God who saves and who brings to Yourself through the blood of Your Son. We pray that You would work in the hearts of each person here to make us people who walk just as Jesus walked, that we

might walk in dependence upon Him, abiding in Him, clinging to Him, to His perfect righteousness and His perfect atonement. And what a joy it is to know that He prayed for us the night before He died, and that He prays for us even now in Heaven. We pray these things in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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