

Praying for His Disciples

Series: Ten Messages from John 17

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I have often said that consistent prayer is a challenge for me. I recognized that again several months ago and I started praying through the psalms. Each morning I open up the next psalm (as I write I am on Psa.107) and put the words of the psalm into my own words, and then I pray more specifically for people and things going on in my life. This helps my prayers not to go stale.

I commend to you the prayer lives of the great men and women of the Bible (All The Prayers of the Bible by Herbert Lockyer). Study their prayers. See their hearts. Imitate their words.

Text: "I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them." (17:9-10)

Observations from this passage:

- What strikes me is that Jesus spent very little time in this prayer praying about himself. It was he who was facing a cruel death on a cross. Yet, his focus was on his followers. Could it be that we would do better in handling the problems of life if we spent more time focused on others?
- "Pray" is in the present indicative. What does the present indicative mean? The Greek present tense indicates continued action, something that happens continually or repeatedly, or something that is in the process of happening. ... The Greeks use the present tense to express this kind of continued action,
 - For Jesus prayer for his disciples was a continual action.
 - Paul had a similar practice:
 - Phil.1:3-4, "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy..."
 - 1 Thess.1:2, "We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers."
- The word Jesus uses for prayer here means to ask, interrogate, inquire of, request, beseech, or beg.
- Literally Jesus was praying prayers that concerned his apostles. He was inquiring of His Father about them.

- I assume that Jesus knew each of his apostles (the shepherd knows his sheep) and knew what each one needed. If not, Jesus would ask the Father what each one needed.
- Do you think Jesus prayed specifically for each apostle? What do you think he was asking the Father to do for them along the way?
- Why not pray for the world?
 - Perhaps it doesn't mean "never prayed for the world" but currently not praying for the world. The focus of this prayer is followers.
 - Recognizing the difference between the world and God's people. This gets pretty blurry these days.
 - The world is the field and we are the ones who work the field.
 - The world is to be evangelized and we are to do the evangelizing.
 - There are times we should pray for the world.
 - "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for all people..." (1 Tim.2:1) Because God wants all people to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. (2:4)
- The focus of prayer goes back to the ones given to Jesus by God (We saw this in 17:2 where Jesus is given authority to give eternal life to those God gave to him.)
 - Just as Jesus had a special place in God's heart, so do all who follow Jesus. God loves those who love His Son.
- What about me? Who do I pray for? What do I pray or inquire of God concerning them? Am I involved enough in the life of a fellow disciple to make them a priority in prayer? I believe this is why it is so important to be involved in discipling relationships. It is a way for us to get so involved in each other's lives that we can pray specifically and intelligently for one another.