

"Are We The Answer to His Prayer?"

Video of Jesus Prays: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0qPsXmBTkg>

"I'm praying for you." When someone says those words to you, Do you have a sense of peace wash over your soul. Do you immediately know that the person who speaks those words cares deeply for you? Are you touched by the kind words and heartfelt concern? Do these words in essence say to you - **"I love you."**

What if you heard Christ say, "I'm praying for you"? How would you respond emotionally and spiritually? Throughout the prayer in today's Gospel reading He is saying exactly those words to you. And, he continues to pray for us today. Jesus said, "I pray for those who will believe in me" (v. 20). That would be you and me!

Jesus prayed just before His betrayal and arrest in the Garden. He knew that his death was imminent, and yet, you and I were on his mind. How is that for undeserved love? With the world crashing down around him in chaos and death knocking on His door, Christ intercedes before God for you and me. How is that for undying compassion?

As I reflected on Jesus Prayer for All Believers, I wondered – have I ever experienced a prayer like this in my lifetime? The Lord responded in love reminding me of a time of prayer alongside a close friend and brother. He and his wife lost a child after suffering a miscarriage a few months into her pregnancy. I remember in the days that followed reaching back out to see how I could love my brother in his time of loss and grief. We came together to talk about this tragedy in his life. When I offered to pray for him. I was surprised as He said, "I would like to open our time of prayer, would be ok?" What followed could only have been Spirit-led.

He prayed, "Lord, I want to give you thanks for bringing my child into your Kingdom. I am grateful that he did not have to suffer in this world as I have. You took my child from the comfort of his mother's womb to your loving arms. You've allowed him to only experience love in his lifetime and never have to confront the battles of this world.

Lord, I pray that through this experience I can glorify you. I pray you can use me to comfort my wife and give her strength to see Your love as we struggle with this loss. I pray that you give us a unity of spirit and unity of heart as to the right timing to try again to begin our family. Lord may our extended family see the love of Christ in us as we walk with you in our suffering and in doing so, see Your presence and Your glory in our lives. May you transform the hearts of our family members who do not know you to trust in you with our loss. May they see in Your timing Your promises fulfilled in our lives."

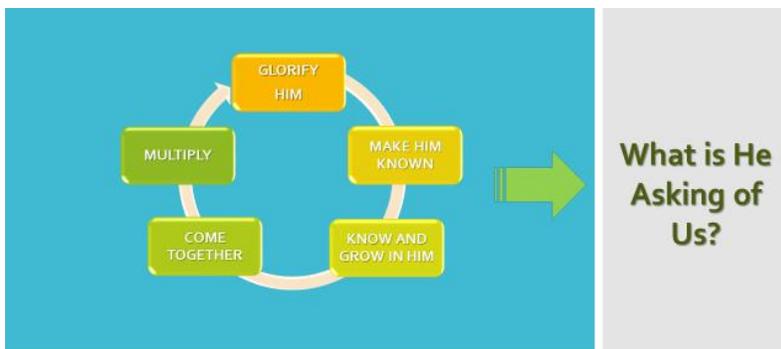
In that moment through the tears, I remember thinking Lord that prayer could only have come from you. That prayer could only have come from someone who knew you, desired to glorify you, wanted to make you known to others. This prayer could only have come from someone who was walking hand in hand with you and seeking a unity of spirit in His love for you and love for others outweighed his own suffering. I thought to myself, this is a true disciple – this young man would be the answer to Christ’s prayer.

So, I ask you, as I ask myself, are we the answer to His prayer as well?

If we look more closely at the prayer of Christ to intercede for us and as our advocate on our behalf, would we say we are a reflection of what Christ had hoped for when he prayed for us? To answer that question best, we have to understand more fully, what exactly His prayer was for us. As I read the John 17 passage more closely and scanned the commentaries for insights, the Lord highlighted five clear points as Christ’s deepest desires: Glorification, Manifestation, Sanctification, Unification and Replication.



These are big words to consider but simple in their understanding. So let me make it simple for us: Christ prayed that we would (1) Glorify the Father, (2) Make Him Known, (3) Know and Grow in Him, (4) Come Together in Unity for Him, and (4) Multiply in Sharing Him.



Glorify the Father and Make Him Known

Jesus opens the prayer by giving God the Glory. He tells us that this glory comes when we complete the work that God has given us to do in this world. Our end is not in this world, instead our end comes in the glory of the presence of the Father just as it was for Christ. The word glory reflects magnificence, splendor, and radiance as we give praise and honor. Christ lived to reveal and glorify God the Father in all he did.

Jesus prays for us all to do the same. He calls us to represent God in our every day work and roles in life just as He did. Christ prays in verse 4, **"I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do."** We, too, can glorify God through our actions in our daily lives and in this world. In verse 10, Christ says that glory comes to God through us as His followers. When we bring the Lord into our daily journey in the course of our everyday conversations, we glorify Him. When we humbly complete the work given us and give the Lord credit for outcomes that result, we give Him the glory!

In all we do, Christ simply prays that we will make Him known. In verse 11, Christ asks the Holy Father to protect His disciples by the power of His name so that we may be one as the Father and Son are one. Jesus calls us to manifest His name. We are to live out the character of Christ in all we do. Each person around us should see the character of Christ as we go about our everyday activities. We should reach out to others with the love and grace that Christ has given us to share through the Holy Spirit.

Know and Grow in Him and Become Sanctified

Christ prays in John 17:17 that God sanctify us by His truth found in His word. Our journey towards holiness in our character and our action begins with knowing Him intimately. To do so, we must have a personal relationship with Christ that carries us through the battles of this world and into eternity with the Lord. In verse 3, Christ states emphatically that eternal life comes from knowing the Father and the Son as the only true God.

Christ prays for our sanctification that we grow to be more like Him as we become His true disciples. In verses 6-11, Christ asks God to keep us, His followers, in the world. Recognizing that true spiritual growth comes when we face the trials the world brings our way by living out the truth of His Word in our response to these challenges. Knowing what we will face, Christ prays for our protection from Satan and spiritual warfare in our day-to-day activities.

He stresses the importance of meditating and grounding ourselves in His Word to think and act more like Jesus in all we do. God's Word brings to light our sinfulness, convicts us of the need to be transformed, motivates us to confess, and reconciles us to a renewed relationship with the Lord that guides back to an ongoing path of righteousness in all we do.

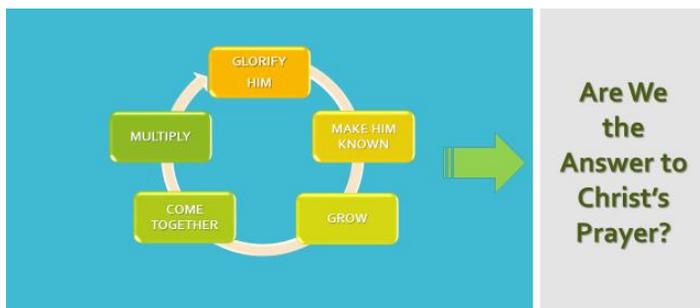
Come Together in Unity for Him

Jesus yearned for His disciples to act in unity in pursuing the Lord together and serve as a powerful witness to the world. He prays in verses 21-22 that all believers would be one so the world would see God's love lived out in their daily interactions and serve as a powerful witness to His glory. We can have our strongest impact on the world when we come together in fellowship as body to share the Gospel and invest in the lives of others together.

We can help each other by building up one another, honoring each other's unique gifts, encouraging one another, serving together with one another just as Christ and the Father were one in their love for us. Just as Jesus acted on our behalf by going to cross and sacrificing His life for our sin, we too should sacrifice our selfish desires to work together to reach the world for Christ.

Multiply in Sharing Him

Jesus stresses in the closing of His prayer that He is not simply praying for His immediate disciples that are walking with Him in His lifetime. More so, He is praying that the full experience of Christ's joy falls upon all future believers. Each of us is to go in the Spirit to reach the community. Christ's desire was to reach out through us in love and compassion to all future generations. In doing so, we are to draw on Him alone for strength, guidance, perseverance and power to let the world know that the Father sent His Son to the world so that all may experience His eternal love in its fullness.



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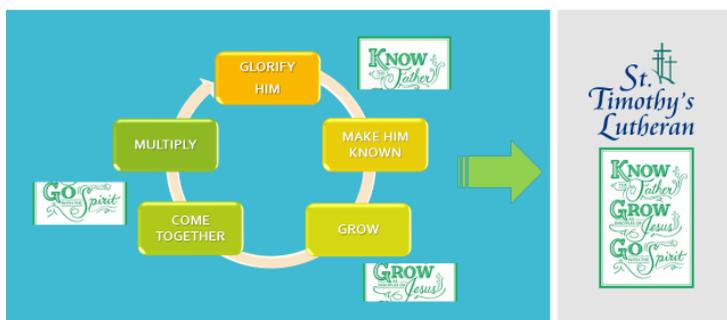
So, in closing I ask you again - are we the answer to His prayer?

At St. Timothy's, we profess to be a faith community committed to worshiping God and working through the power of the Holy Spirit to transform people into disciples of Jesus Christ. We have a stated mission to equip and empower people to have an eternal impact in the lives of others, locally and globally, for the Lord Jesus Christ.

One of the gifts the Lord has given us in Christ's Church is the heritage that belongs to us as God's people. We are part of a family begun and given meaning by the life and work and command of Jesus Christ. What we teach and believe today about God and about faith and about life, what we understand today about who God is, and how God works, and where our life on this earth is going, is the same as the early followers taught and believed. We are a body unified by His Word.

As publicly stated on our website "our heritage was not the result of a plan that went haywire and had to be resolved. Our heritage was the plan of God from the beginning of time. His plan was to redeem the world in Christ Jesus."

Our vision is for each of us within the congregation to know the Father, grow as Disciples of Christ, and to go with Spirit into the world. From a congregational perspective, we clearly have the desire to be the answer to His prayer.



So I challenge you, how are you doing personally? If Christ were praying for you today, would He count you among the future believers that are an answer to His prayer? Are you daily seeking to glorify Him and make His Name known? Are you engaging in daily time in His Word to know Him intimately, allowing Him to transform you? Are you coming together with others to grow in Him and become more like Him in your daily actions? Are you seeking ways to serve with others in unity to reach the outside community? Lastly, are you asking God to use you to reach others for the sake of the Gospel – sharing not only the Good news but your lives as well.

Like the young man, who moved beyond the tragic loss of a child, to be the answer to Christ's prayer, are you willing to let go of the excuses that life's battles can bring? Are you willing to trust the Lord to be the power and glory to use you mightily so that His will be done here on earth as it is in heaven?

Let us pray...