

Christ's Sevenfold Prayer for His Children
Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC
Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.
March 15, 2026

Text: John 17:1-26

Purpose: Jesus Christ prays for His disciples and those that will believe because of the word these disciples will bring.

Little Susie came home from school whining, "Mommy, I've got a stomachache."



"That's because your stomach is empty," her mother replied. "You'd feel better if you had something in it."

She gave Susie a snack and, sure enough, Susie felt better right away.

That evening when Daddy came home, he said he had a bad headache.

Susie perked up. "That's because it's empty," she said. "You'd feel better if you had something in it." ¹

Last week, we examined John chapter three where Nicodemus came to Jesus under the cover of darkness. He was searching for an answer concerning salvation.



Today, we fast forward to chapter 17 in the Book of John – part of the Upper Room discourse Jesus had with His disciples as they celebrated Passover. It was an evening they would never forget. Over the next few weeks, we will move through the Book of John as we approach Palm Sunday on March 29th and Resurrection Sunday on April 5th.

The Apostle John, the one known as the Beloved Disciple, recorded the events in the Upper Room in great detail. Towards the end of the supper, Jesus laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. He began to wash the disciples' feet. Jesus was providing for them the cleansing that only Jesus Christ can give. What Jesus demonstrated was an act of love and forgiveness.



One of the key words Jesus used during their time in the Upper Room was Love. Jesus said, *“If you love me, keep My commandments.”* (John 14:15)

Jesus give us the key for us to demonstrate our love for Jesus Christ by being obedient to His commandments.

Today, we turn our attention to Christ's prayer for his disciples in John 17. As they began their time together in the Upper Room, it is evident that the disciples were heartbroken with the news of Jesus' pending departure. In chapter 13 and 14 they asked several questions:

“Lord, where are you going?” (13:36)

“Lord, why can't I follow you?” (13:37)



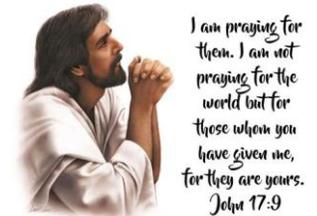
“Lord, we do not know where you are going?” (14:5)

“Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” (14:8)

“Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us and not the world?” (14:22)

“What is this that He says, ‘A little while’? We do not know what He is saying. (16:18)

All these questions indicate they do not understand what is about to transpire. Judas has already received a piece of bread from Jesus and has now left to do his dirty work of betrayal. Shortly the soldiers will come and take Jesus into custody while they were praying in a garden over the Kidron Valley.



Jesus' Prayer for His Children

Today we come to chapter seventeen of the book of John. It is one of the longest prayers of Jesus that we have in print. Oliver B. Green described this chapter as entering into holy ground. He compared it to Moses taking his shoes off as he approached the burning bush. Likewise, we too should reverence this chapter because Jesus is praying for you and me.

Imagine that - the creator of the world - the Son of God - the second part of the trinity - coming to earth from His royal position in heaven - willing to lay down His life for you and me – praying for us.

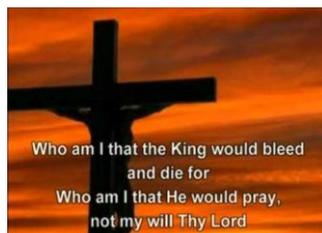
There is a song by Rusty Goodman written years ago, made popular by Elvis Presley that was also sung in the *Victor* at Tanglewood. I was blessed to see the *Victor* many times over the years. Every time Alan O’Neal sang this song, it touched me. The song was titled, “*Who am I?*”²

Who am I that a King would bleed
and die for?

Who am I that He would pray,
“Not my will, Thine Lord?”

The answer I may never know,
why He ever loved me so.

That to an old rugged cross, He would go, For who am I?



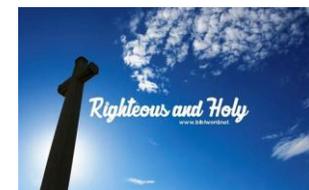
In chapter seventeen, Jesus refers to God in three different manners. In verse one, He speaks of God as His **Father**. In verse 11, Jesus speaks of God the **Holy Father**. In verse 25,

Jesus refers to God as the **Righteous Father**. Sometimes when we pray, we often get stuck on words we can use to describe God. Jesus gives us three different ways to address God, Father, Holy Father, and Righteous Father. There are several names listed in scripture for God that reflect the different characteristics of God. The Old Testament has many different characteristics of God.

- He is called *Elohim* in Genesis 1 which means “*God is the source.*”
- He is called *Adonai* in Genesis 15:2 which means “*Lord.*”

- He is called *Jehovah*, which is the Latinized form of the word “**YHWH**” first mentioned in Genesis 2:4. It was revealed to Moses in Exodus 3:14 as the name of the LORD. This name is the associated with the present tense verb of “**I AM**,” which means “*Self-Existent.*”
- He is called *Jehovah-Jireh*, the *Lord our Provider*.
- He is called *Jehovah-Raphe*, the *Lord our Healer*.
- He is called *Jehovah-Nissi*, the *Lord our Banner*.
- He is called *Jehovah-M’Kaddesh*, the *Lord who sanctifies*.
- He is called *Jehovah-Shalom*, the *Lord our Peace*.
- He is called *Jehovah-Rohi*, the *Lord our Shepherd*.
- He is called *Jehovah-Tsidkenu*, the *Lord our Righteousness*.
- He is called *Jehovah-Shammah*, the *Lord who is there*.

We find in God justice, love, mercy, and forgiveness. But there is another side of God we often do not discuss. It is the **Holiness of God**. We could spend our entire time here this morning discussing the Holiness of God, and not even scratch the surface of the depths of this thought. We need to see God as pure, without sin, and realize no sin can even enter the presence of God.



We sometimes fail to discuss the **Righteousness of God**. Everything the Lord God does is just and true. There is not one thing we can accuse God of. Job in his self-appointed righteousness complained about God. Yet, God took Job to the “woodshed” and straightened him out.

Today, people mock God and laugh in His face. You hear His name so carelessly used and I cringe when I hear it used in that manner. One day, God will let His justice fall. One day, the opportunity to receive Christ will be closed. While you have breath in your lungs, and words in your mouth, you should confess Jesus as your Lord and Savior. It is only because of His great patience and mercy that He holds back judgment.

If you have your bible, I invite you to turn to chapter seventeen and I want you to underline a few words or phrases in this text.

The Sevenfold Prayer

1. *That they might be kept through His name.* (Verse 11)

There is no other name under heaven where by men must be saved. Those that have accepted Christ have the assurance that they are kept by Christ. The poem in the bulletin reaffirms that truth. ***Because He lives, We Too Shall Live.*** “That in Christ we are eternal and in Him we will live again.” We are kept by Christ. I can think of no better security.

2. *That they might have His joy in themselves.* (Verse 13)

Jesus desires to give you His peace and His joy. There is no greater joy in life than to have peace and joy in our hearts. Jesus’ blessing to us is satisfaction in your life. The source of this only comes through a relationship with Jesus. You can try to find joy in a bottle, find joy in your vocation, find joy in yielding to the pleasures of the world, but you will never find true peace and joy unless you come to Christ.



3. *That they might be sanctified.* (Verse 17-19)

This word sanctified is one that often scares Baptists. Yet Jesus wants us to be sanctified. It means to be made clean and ready for use. When we come to Christ, we need to come to Christ just as we are – dirt and all. Jesus does the cleansing, not us. We become sanctified by the truth of God’s word and living according to what Jesus taught us. As we study it, and learn from it, and apply it to our lives, God cleanses us.

4. *That they might all be one.* (Verse 21-22)

Jesus wants us to be unified in our relationships with one another. Where there is division and dissension, there is no unity. Jesus wants us to enter into that kind of unity of purpose and spirit with Him.

Jesus emphasizes the unity between God and Jesus. He wants us to be at one with them. “*That they also may be one in Us.*” (v. 21)

5. *That they might be a blessing to others.* (Verse 20)

This verse identifies you and me. Jesus was praying for His disciples. He desired unity and joy for them, but He also knew in the future that others would come to accept the truth about Jesus. One day these disciples would span the known world and tell others about Jesus. The message has been passed from generation to generation, person to person, and here we are today.

Jesus wants us to be carriers of this good news. He wants us to be a blessing to others.

6. *That they might possess the Father's love. (Verse 26)*

Have you ever heard someone say, “That person is full of the Devil!” I have! Jesus is stating that those that love Him should be filled with the love of God. If we are a child of God, a believer in Jesus Christ, shouldn't our daily walk reflect who we belong to? Should we gossip and talk bad about others? Should we continually repeat something over and over to others that only tarnishes another person's character and reputation? Why do we talk about others and say things about them that we would not say to their face – only to harm them by our words? Should we walk around uncaring and ignoring the needs around us? NO. We need to reflect who we belong to. If we possess the Father's love, we would be about the Father's business.

7. *That they might behold His Glory. (Verse 24)*

Jesus' last petition in this prayer was that one day, they would behold Jesus' glory. Jesus is seated at the right hand of God the Father who is arrayed in splendor and beauty.

Have you ever seen the train on a bride's dress? Some of them are long and beautiful. They take up the entire isle of the church. The scripture says that Jesus' majesty fills the whole earth.



One day, you and I will have the opportunity to see Jesus face-to-face, in all His glory.

Jesus' sevenfold prayer was for you and me. “Oh! What a Saviour!”

The last part of that song “Who am I?” says this:

He came to me; when I could not come
to where Jesus was, He came to me.
That is why He died, on Calvary,
When I could not come to where He
was, He came to me.



Oh, what a Saviour, oh, hallelujah!
His heart was broken on Calvary.
His hands were nail scarred,
His side was riven;
He gave His life's blood,
He gave his life's blood, for even me.
Oh, what a Saviour.

During this season of lent, let us remember what Jesus did for us. He brought us restoration with God. He paid the penalty of our sin. He took our place of punishment there upon the cross of Calvary. Oh, what a Savior!



Maybe you have never stepped up and accepted the forgiveness offered by Jesus. Maybe you have just assumed that since you were basically a good person, lived a good life, that maybe God would accept you on that basis. I hate to tell you, but God only looks at what you have done with His Son. If you accept Him as your Savior, ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and turn from them, then he will accept you fully. He will come in and wash you “Whiter than Snow.”

Maybe you would like to come and join this family of believers by way of transfer of your church membership. We want to affirm you in whatever decision you would like to make this morning and welcome you as Christ welcomes you. Come to Him now. He waits for you.

LET US PRAY

Notes:

¹ Mikey's Funnies, A Sick Funny, Feb. 28, 2022, forwarded by Gretchen Patti

² Song by Rusty Goodman, arranged by Lari Goss. Sung annually in "The Victor" at Tanglewood Church, Kinston, NC