

## THE GREAT INTERCESSORY PRAYER OF JESUS

John 17:1-26

Key verse 17:1

“After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.”

We give thanks to God who has shown us the work of the Holy Spirit in the previous lessons through Jesus' discourse in the Upper Room. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth who guides His disciples into all the truth. We thank God who brought back His servant and M. Sarah from the exploration and scouting mission trip for the M-Mission healthy and safe. The M-mission is a good and spacious land. Jesus concluded the discourse in the Upper Room with a prayer. This prayer is called the great intercessory prayer of Jesus. Jesus prayed for himself, for his disciples, and for the disciples of his disciples. Through the intercessory prayer, we can experience Jesus' life purpose of glorifying God. We can also learn Jesus' prayer and vision for his disciples and for the church. May God guide us to make Jesus' intercessory prayer our own prayer, so that we may live for the glory of God in all circumstances and live as the main characters for spiritual revival in Europe and for world mission.

### 1. Father, glorify your Son (15)

Let's look at verse 1a: "After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come." The Gospel of John is the Gospel of the hour of Jesus or the time of God. What was Jesus' hour? During his three-year ministry, Jesus performed various amazing healings and miracles, sometimes in front of large crowds. His disciples thought that he was the next King David who would restore the kingdom of Israel. But that was not Jesus' hour. But when Jesus was to die cruelly, forsaken and in pain on the cross for the sin of the world as the Passover Lamb of God, his hour had come. Humanly speaking, "the time" for Jesus was the most painful, sad and bitter time of his life. But

spiritually, "the time" was the time to accomplish God's work and glorify God.

As for Jesus, "the time" comes for every spiritual leader at some point. Many people are afraid of the hour. For them, "the time" is more like "D-day." But for God's children, "the time" is the best time to fulfill God's counsel and glorify God. Jim Eliot was also a very good example. We will hear about him today. Countless men and women of faith like Jim Eliot, Polycarp, and Jan Hus fulfilled God's will and glorified God in "the time." Our high school graduates have gone to school for 12 years. Now their time has come. Graduation is an opportunity for them to testify to the wonderful work that God began in them during their school years and thereby glorify God.

Let's look at verse 1b: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you." In the hour of temptation and impending suffering, Jesus could have been full of sadness, sense of loss, or anger. But how did Jesus pray in the time of impending suffering? In the time of rejection, condemnation and death pains, Jesus prayed to glorify God. Jesus did not pray to withdraw from the will of God, but he obeyed and fulfilled the will of God through obedience to the end, even to death on the cross. According to Jesus' prayer, "to glorify God" means to submit and surrender to the will of God.

Apostle Paul also lived with the life goal of glorifying God. When he was in prison in Rome, he wrote to the Philippians: "I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Phil. 1:20, 21) Because Paul lived with the life goal of glorifying God through life or

through death, God was able to fulfill through him his great plan of salvation for the Gentile mission, that the gospel would reach from Jerusalem to Rome and the whole world in just one generation. Through this time of rejection, persecution and death pains, God was glorified.

My parents, while devotedly serving the world mission by raising disciples for forty years, have experienced many misunderstandings, persecution and even condemnation. But they are not bitter, but live with the word of God: "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." Instead of retiring, they live unswervingly for raising global spiritual leaders among young students in Europe and for the mobilization of the Next Generation and for the M-mission because to them to live is Christ and to die is gain.

I once lived with the life goal of becoming a glorious clinic director. But through the Word of God from Ezra 7:10, the Holy Spirit worked mightily so that it became my life goal to glorify God in all circumstances by devoting my heart and priority on exploring, teaching, and doing God's Word. The Holy Spirit led me to the spiritual insight that Germany and Europe most urgently need outstanding Bible teachers and spiritual leaders, more than doctors or scientists. The Holy Spirit encourages me again and again to glorify God through His Word, through the pioneering work at medical school and through cooperating with my parents for the M-Mission. Thanks and praise be to the Lord that He is also guiding M. Pauline and Sh. Peter Ryu through His Holy Spirit, that they may challenge business mission for M-Mission and glorify God in this pandemic full of risks and uncertainties.

Jesus' prayer "Glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you" shows us what may be the highest goal of life for all of God's children. Our goal in life may be to glorify God by doing God's work, no matter what adverse situation we may face and no matter what the cost. God may lead us through the Holy Spirit to establish 10000 Bible study teams, spiritually mobilize the next generation through IBS, GLEF and master courses, and establish three mission base camps in the M-world. God raise up influential disciples of Jesus through our Bible study and next generation leaders in all faculties of Bonn University, Rhein-Sieg University, Koblenz University who pioneer 1,700 universities in Europe. May this continent be spiritually awakened and used once again as a missionary sending continent for the glory of God.

Let's look at verse 2: "For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him." This verse establishes why the Son of God, Jesus, should be glorified. When Jesus was glorified through His suffering and death on the cross, He was given power to give eternal life to all those who believe in Him. Unlike the powers of this world, it was not power at the expense of others, but a spiritual authority of God that came through total submission and self-surrender to the will of God.

Let us look at verse 3: "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." What is eternal life? And why is it crucial to have eternal life? Eternal life is not an infinite continuation of earthly life, for example, through some technical or medical achievement. Nor is it a vague idea of life after death, e.g., that one lives on in the memory of men or in abstract ideas of rebirth in another form. Jesus defines eternal life here as knowing God as the only true God and Jesus as the Son of God. Eternal life does not come through medicine or philosophy, but through faith in Jesus, the Son of God.

Nicodemus studied the Scriptures and in addition mathematics, astronomy, history, politics and much more. He became a rabbi and even a member of the High Council. But although he was so learned and successful, he could not have eternal life. That is why he said, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he then go again into his mother's womb and be born?" (Jn 3:4) Jesus helped him to know God and the Son of God, Jesus, and thereby have eternal life by giving him one of the most beautiful verses in the Bible, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

Apostle Paul was also once a Pharisee who called himself "Saul" i.e. "the Great". In his eyes, Christians who believed in Jesus Christ, who died on the cross, looked like fools. In his deepest heart, however, he was in despair: "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! " (Rom 7:24, 25) He found eternal life in the knowledge of Jesus, whom he once persecuted to the death. He later testified, again to the Philippians: "But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake

of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ [...] I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead." (Phil 3:7, 8a, 10, 11)

To know Jesus here does not mean theoretical or theological knowledge, but a personal relationship and deep attachment to Jesus, like a vine and branch relationship. To know Jesus means a life relationship, namely the power of his resurrection, the fellowship in Jesus' suffering, and the conformity in his death as well as in the resurrection. Nowadays, many young people and students want to make the world a better place through a innovative idea or product by creating a startup or a movement like Fridays for Future. But most important is the knowledge of Jesus Christ. By knowing Jesus Christ, we have eternal life. A young woman was so beautiful and successful. But she could not rejoice even though she looked at the beautiful blue sky. But when she recognized Christ by accepting Jesus as her true object of worship and unconditionally surrendered her life to God's guidance, she became the most beautiful and happy woman under heaven and an influential mother of faith for the next generation. Let's pray for the intellectual young people and students on campus that through Bible study they will know Jesus as the Son of God and have eternal life.

Let's look at verse 4 and 5: "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began." Jesus completed God's work of world salvation that God had given him to do. To accomplish God's mission, Jesus bore unbearable suffering and pain. Praise and thanks be to Jesus who, in the midst of His unbearable afflictions and sufferings, bore the cross of mission to the end, thus completing God's world salvation work for our salvation. God may bless us to follow this example of Jesus so that we can be a blessing to this godless world and glorify God through our whole life to the end.

Apostle Paul was God's chosen instrument for the mission amongst the Gentiles. He suffered unimaginable opposition and persecution, hunger and thirst, abandonment, and hostility. But

he fought with confidence in the victory to fulfill this mission to the end, even to the point of martyrdom. He wrote to his spiritual son Timothy, "For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." (2 Tim. 4:6-8)

It is God's grace that we may fulfill God's mission by faith to the end. A missionary family went and goes through difficulties of many kinds. But they pray without giving up for the pioneering work of the philosophical faculty. God may bless the faithful faith struggle of this family with Romans 16:3,4 to the end. God may give you joy to give birth to a spiritual offspring like Philip Melancthon among the students of the philosophical faculty.

## 2. Sanctify them in the truth (6-19)

In the second part of his intercessory prayer, Jesus prayed for his disciples. Verses 6-8 summarize his disciple-making ministry. When Jesus lived on earth, his most important work was the disciple-making ministry. What was Jesus' disciple-making ministry? Jesus' disciple-making ministry was to reveal God to those whom God gave to him by giving them the words of God. For example, Jesus gave Peter the word from John 1:42: "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter)." Jesus had many listeners, but the characteristic of Jesus' disciples was that they kept and accepted Jesus' word. When the disciples kept and accepted Jesus' words, they understood and believed that Jesus is the Son of God. Later, Peter betrayed Jesus three times and ran away. But he came back to Jesus and became the rock of the church for the early Christians, encouraging them as the royal priesthood to proclaim Jesus Christ in all circumstances.

A woman once said to her Bible teacher, "Don't try to lead me to faith. It will never happen that I believe in Jesus!" Later she said, "I can't believe in creation because I come from an unbelieving family." But a servant of God gave her God's word from Genesis 1:1. She kept the word and

accepted it. Since then, God has been writing history of faith through her for the glory of God.

We sometimes think that serving young students spiritually is the most difficult task in the world. We are quick to think that they would be too hopeless and unchangeable, and that our work for them would be of no use. Jesus' disciple-making ministry sometimes looked like that, too. But at the end of his life, Jesus testified that he had accomplished the disciple-making ministry in these men. In the face of death, he saw the hope and vision of God through his disciples and prayed for them. We may also consider our task as Bible teachers and disciple makers as the most glorious and rewarding task one can ever get. God may lead us to give the words of God to the young people especially in this pandemic year so that the next Generation and the young people on campus may come to know Jesus and grow to be disciples of Jesus and global spiritual leaders for this generation. God may bless Sh. Christoph's prayer for the students of Koblenz University and for his family members and plant the words of God and faith in Jesus Christ in the heart of his family members through his resurrection faith.

Let's look at verses 11 and 12: "I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name--the name you gave me--so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled." So what were Jesus' prayer requests for his disciples? First, Jesus prayed for His disciples that they might be "one," that is, that they might remain in the steadfast love relationship with God and also with one another in all circumstances. Jesus experienced the departure and betrayal of Judas. This was very painful for Jesus and for all the disciples. But Jesus did not consider the departure and betrayal of Judas as his personal failure or as a problem of his discipleship method, but he saw the fulfillment of Scripture.

A young man was facing a serious challenge. He could have denied the work of the Holy Spirit and very easily taken the path of least resistance. But he decided to remain one with the grace of Jesus' calling, even though he experienced many misunderstandings, pains and attacks for doing so. When he decided before

God to remain one with God's will in the midst of suffering and pain, the Holy Spirit worked and is working in him that he grew up to be one of the heroes of faith for this generation in love relationship with Jesus and be used as a great spiritual influence for the next generation.

In verses 17 and 18, Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world." Jesus' second prayer request for his disciples was that God would keep them from evil and that God would sanctify them through the truth. Jesus was sent by God as the first missionary to this world. In the same way, Jesus also sent his disciples into the world. Jesus knew that his disciples in the world were exposed to the world's temptations and attacks day by day, and that they themselves also still carried many worldly thoughts and desires in their hearts. But Jesus had confidence that they would be sanctified by the truth, namely by the Word of God. This means that through the Word of God, they will continue to grow as God's holy people and royal priesthood, proclaiming the praises of God in every situation.

Our next generation, starting from me, are not of the world but in the world and have to deal with it. But through the Word of God, they have been and will be sanctified. Through the study of the Word of God on a daily basis, through early morning prayer, Bible study, writing and sharing personal testimonies, spiritual fellowship, master courses on spiritual leadership, IBS and GLEF, they can overcome the zeitgeist of godless humanism and relativism and grow in this sinful world as holy stumps and as the light and salt of the world and as global spiritual leaders for the spiritual revival of this continent.

God may strengthen us to pray as mediators for the Next Generation and for the students on campus and to prepare the concrete environment, e.g. through the Master Courses and GLEF, that they may be one with God through early morning prayer, be sanctified by the Word of God and be used as God's spiritual army for the rebuilding of the broken spiritual walls and for the spiritual revival in Europe.

Let us look at verses 20:21: "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

From verse 20 to the end of the chapter, Jesus prayed for His disciples and for their disciples, that is, for all believers. Jesus had confidence that many people would believe in him through the words of his disciples, that they would know God and not perish but have eternal life. Jesus' heart is the world mission that no human being will be lost. The catalysts of world mission are his disciples who preach and teach Jesus' word.

What was Jesus' prayer request for believers? First, Jesus prayed for those who would believe in Him through His disciples to be one. They can be one with God and with Jesus by living for the glorification of God, that is, for the world mission. Then the world will know Jesus, the Son of God and the love of God (23). Lastly, Jesus prayed that all believers may see His glory and share with Him in His glory (24). Jesus will make known to his disciples the name of God so that they will be filled with the love of God (25.26).

Today, through Jesus' intercessory prayer, we have come to know his clear goal in life, to glorify God. May God guide us to live for the glorification of God in this year 2021 especially in the time of challenge and pandemic, allowing us to do and accomplish the work of God for the pioneering work, for the mobilization of the Next Generation, for the rebuilding of the spiritual walls and spiritual revival, and for the M-mission until the end. God may encourage us to intercede with the high priestly prayer for this generation so that the young people on campus may be sanctified by the truth of God's Word and they may be used as global spiritual leaders for world mission.