

"The Prayer Life of Jesus"

Although Jesus was the Son of God, He knew the importance of regular, private prayer. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we're examining the prayer life of Jesus Christ.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The Scriptures not only teach us what is true, they also teach us how to live. From the example of Jesus Christ, we know how to treat people, how to remain close to God, how to overcome Satan and temptation, and how to bless others. Paul could say in 1 Corinthians 11 and verse 1, "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ." Oh, Christ is worthy of following. We'd love to hear from you, we want to be a part of your life each week.

The Lord Jesus had been with the Father in heaven from all eternity past. John 1 and verse 1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." When the Word became flesh and lived as a human, He knew He would need the fellowship and strength of the Father in heaven. And so He prayed continually to the Father and kept the Father in His heart. Jesus wouldn't do anything but what His Father said to do. His time alone with the Father kept Him spiritually strong, and your time alone with the Father can keep you spiritually strong too.

Prayer was not a hobby or a pastime with Jesus; it was a priority. He needed His Father in heaven, and so do you. Jesus frequently prayed before speaking, acting, and making decisions. And Jesus could say in John 6:38, "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." Jesus knew who He was and why He came to this earth. When we realize that we have been created by God and our purpose is to love and to serve Him, we too will want to have a regular, private fellowship with our heavenly Father.

Now we offer this study, The Prayer Life of Jesus free! If you'd like a printed copy and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have programs and free materials on our website, www.searchtv.org. You can also see us on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song, read from John 17:24 to 26, and examine what we can do to keep God alive in our hearts.

Our reading today comes from the gospel according to John, chapter 17 verses 24 to 26. And they are the ending of the longest recorded pray we have of Jesus found in the gospel of John. He prays,

Father, I desire that they (His disciples) 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. "O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; 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."

What a marvelous prayer of our Lord Jesus. Let's pray together. Oh Father help us to know the love that You have shown to Your son Jesus and that You show to us each day. And help us to love You fully and to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

Prayer for Jews was a normal practice of everyday life. The Jews had set prayers in the synagogue, giving thanks before meals, and saying of personal prayers in the morning, in the afternoon and at the time of sacrifice in the temple, and in the evening. Though much in His day-to-day life is not mentioned in Scripture, the four Gospel accounts say much about the prayer life of Jesus Christ. And so we're going to look at His prayer life as an encouragement to draw closer to our Father in heaven.

Luke 3:21 to 22 says, "Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, 'You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.'" Now Jesus was baptized to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3 and verse 15), and the Father blessed Him openly.

Mark 1:35 says that, "In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there." Now Jesus started His day with the Father, because He knew how the day started would set the tone for the rest of the day. Luke 5:16 informs us that, "Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray." He needed to focus on His Father, and He wanted no distractions.

Luke 6 verses 12 and 13 tells about Jesus choosing the 12 apostles: "It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles." Jesus took His people seriously and named twelve chosen men to take the gospel to the world. Jesus prays to God about people and even intercedes for me and you.

In Matthew 19 verses 13 to 14, that passage reminds us that even little children mattered to Jesus: "Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, 'Let the (little) children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.'" It was customary, in those days, for religious leaders to bless and pray for little children.

Matthew 14 verses 19 to 21 tells us that Jesus praying before miraculously feeding the multitude: "Ordering the people to sit down on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food, and breaking the loaves He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds, and they all ate and were satisfied. (You see) They picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve full baskets. There were about five thousand men who ate, besides women and children." And Jesus thanked God for the loaves and fishes. Oh, He knew where all blessings come from.

John 17 records the longest prayer of Jesus Christ, only 26 verses. And it took place after the Passover and before Gethsemane. Jesus recognized that He would be glorified and have authority over all flesh. He said in verse 3, "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." People would come to know the true God by the words that He gave His followers. And Jesus asked the Holy Father to keep His followers so they would not perish. Jesus gave them His word and proclaimed "Your word is truth." He wanted His people to be one as they believed.

He prayed in verses 20 to 21, "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; 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." He wanted the world to know that the Father "sent Me and loved them, even as You (that is the Father) have loved Me." Such a prayer humbles me, that God could love me like He loved Jesus. The Lord Jesus ended His prayer to the Father that "the love with which You loved Me (speaking Jesus speaking) may be in them, and I in

them.” Jesus wanted the love of the Father toward Himself to be in us. Truth, unity, and love were at the heart of His prayer.

From the time that Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane to the time that He died, Jesus was praying to the Father. Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane for the Father’s will to be done (Matthew 26 and Mark 14 and Luke 22 all mention that) and He prayed with loud crying (Hebrews 5 and verse 7)

Jesus prayed for those who were crucifying Him while they were putting nails through His hands and feet and lifting up His cross. Luke 23:33 to 34 reports, “And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus was said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ And they cast lots to divide his garments.” Can you imagine how the soldiers must have felt while they were executing Him? He was more concerned about their sins and their souls than He was about His hands and feet.

You might wonder how Jesus was able to remain on the cross, bearing our sins. Oh He could have called twelve legions of angels to protect Him, but He didn’t. He bore the punishment for hours and stayed there until He died. He endured the terrible pain, the shame, the darkness, and the mockery of the Jews and Romans. How was Jesus able to endure the cross with the pain, the mockery of those standing nearby, and the sins of the whole world laid upon Him? Well, 1 Peter 2 verses 21 to 24 gives us an answer, “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but (He) continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.” Jesus went with a purpose to the cross, and the Father heard His prayers.

Throughout His time on the cross Jesus entrusted Himself to the Father. He was praying. When you go through the hardest times of your life, do not hesitate to pray to the Father. The Father wants to hear from you. Matthew 27:45 to 46 says, “Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” No doubt through His pain, Jesus felt very much alone. God was punishing Him for the sins that you and I committed. And though He felt forsaken at that moment, Jesus knew something profound.

He knew that what He was enduring was not the whole story. Matthew 27:46 is actually a quotation of Psalm 22:1, a psalm of David that points to the Messiah. It begins with a feeling of abandonment, yes, because of all those who opposing Him were encompassing Him. And so He’s calling out for help from God, yes; but He knows the prophecies of Psalm 22, Jesus does, that God rules over the nations and is righteous. Yes, there is a cross that will take His life; but in a few days God would raise Him up victorious over death. He knew that God would seat Him at His right hand. Hebrews 12 verses 2 and 3 tells us to look “to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him (verse 3) who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.”

The last words of Jesus before He died were in a prayer. Jesus prayed just before He breathed His last, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit” (Luke 23 verse 46). This too is a quotation from Psalm 31 verse 5. Solomon described death in Ecclesiastes 12 and verse 7, “and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.” This prayer reminds us this life is not all there is.

That our spirits live on. And this is why He could say to the thief in Luke 23:43, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise." Yes Jesus lived on, and so shall we.

Jesus is now in heaven. But you know what? He's praying for us. How and why is He praying in heaven? Well first He is interceding for us. Romans 8:33 and 34 says, "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us." The Lord Jesus is appealing to the Father on our behalf, praying for God to help us in troubled times. Hebrews 7:25 speaks about how He prays for our forgiveness and salvation: "Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." Intercession is the act of intervening between differing parties, particularly the act of praying to God on behalf of another person.

Second, the Lord Jesus is our Mediator. 1 Timothy 2 verses 5 and 6 says, "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time." Now since He is the sinless guilt offering, yes a guilt offering, for our sins, He can approach God on behalf of our sins. Mediation means to stand between or intercede between two or more parties. And when used in a biblical sense, one of the parties is usually the Lord God. You see Christ is the ultimate mediator.

Third, as a mediator and intercessor, the Lord Jesus is advocating for us before the Father. The apostle John wrote in 1 John 2:1 to 2, "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." An Advocate is one who pleads another's cause, who helps another by defending or comforting him. And Jesus is the atoning sacrifice who continually pleads with the Father to forgive Christians when we sin. The sinless one is defending us before the Father, so that we might be saved.

For me, one of the most touching pictures in Scripture comes from the Lord's loving patience with Peter who said he would never desert the Lord but would die for Him. We know how Peter denied the Lord three times. And the Lord Jesus said to Peter in Luke 22:31 to 32, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." The Lord prayed for Peter by name. People matter to Jesus. He may even have prayed for you by name. If the Lord thinks so highly to pray for you, do you love Him enough and pray that His will be done?

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're so thankful that our Lord Jesus taught us how to pray. And also taught us to keep on praying. Help us Heavenly Father to show our love to You and to devote ourselves to You and to have fellowship with You in prayer. And to do Your will. This is our prayer today in the name of Jesus, Amen.

The more I know about Jesus, the more I love Him. To hear Him pour out His heart to the Father in heaven about you and me helps me to see His priorities. He wants us to be glorified and given eternal life, because we believed the words that He gave to the apostles and that we have now in Scripture. His word is truth! You can believe it. He wanted to unite His people, but He wanted to make them one with Him and with the Father, by believing the truth of His words. You can't be one with the Father or one with Jesus, unless you're willing to believe the truth of His words and follow Him.

Sadly, many who call themselves Christians aren't perfected in unity with God and with each other because they follow human councils and traditions that came centuries later. They believe and practice things never imagined in the New Testament. We must look first and foremost to the words of Jesus

and His apostles to truly follow the Lord. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7 and verse 21 that, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter." Don't deceive yourself that it doesn't matter what you believe or practice. If you do, you'll be rejected

To become a Christian place your faith in Jesus Christ. Believe what He teaches. Believe that He died for your sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day. Repent of your sins and turn your heart to righteousness. Confess Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God. Be baptized, that is immersed in water, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2 and verse 38). This is what they did in the beginning and what you should do today. Become a Christian. Become one.

We hope our study on, The Prayer Life of Jesus, has caused you to improve your prayer life. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy, send your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's a schedule of our programs and a map of churches in your area at www.searchtv.org. Now SEARCH is on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry" and like the programs. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now we're not asking for money. We want you to draw close to God.

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