
Church in Campbell Weekly News

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LIFE-STUDY OF JOHN MESSAGE THIRTY-EIGHT LIFE'S PRAYER

In this message we come to the profound prayer uttered by the Lord in John 17. This prayer is the completing prayer of the Lord's message given in chapters fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen. If we read John 14 through 17 carefully, we shall realize that these four chapters have a very specific flavor in utterance and composition. This flavor is altogether different from the other chapters in the Bible. Although the whole Bible undoubtedly is God-breathed, these four chapters have a special taste, a special flavor, that no one can imitate. This flavor is not only holy but divine. No human being can utter something that is so divine. The flavor of these chapters is special, impressive, and unique because it is absolutely divine. The person who composed these chapters must have been divine. No human could have written something like this. No human being could say, "Father, glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You." Only the Son of God could utter such words.

Although you may not understand these chapters, if you are in the spirit as you read them, you will sense the divine flavor. This is the divine speaking, the divine utterance, and the divine flow with the divine flavor. I am confirmed in my belief that the Bible is the Word of God. Who besides God could have composed these four chapters? Could John, a fisherman from Galilee, utter such things? It is impossible. If we gather together two hundred men with Ph.D.'s, they would not have the substance to compose a writing with such a flavor. How we must worship the Lord for these four chapters! We must worship Him for the message He gave before His death, and we must worship Him for His concluding prayer.

In order to understand the meaning of His prayer, we must remember the central thought of the message given by the Lord in the previous three chapters. The central thought of that message is rich, deep, and profound. The first aspect of this central thought is that the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, was sent by the Father to be among us. Then He was transfigured from the flesh into the Spirit that He might be able to come into us. In other words, He was transfigured into the Holy Spirit, and He comes into us as the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit comes into us, He comes as the Spirit of reality to make the Lord Jesus real to us in every respect. By doing this, the Lord brings us into the Father and brings the Father into us. This is the mingling of divinity with humanity. Included in this mingling is the mutual abode. We become the abode to the Triune God, and the Triune God becomes the abode to us. We can abide in

the Triune God, and the Triune God can abide in us. This is the central thought of the profound and glorious message given by the Lord in these three chapters. After giving that message, the Lord offered a closing prayer.

What is the subject, the central thought, of this prayer? Although the subject of this prayer depends very much upon the central thought of the preceding message, it is still difficult to discover what this subject is. I spent much time on John 17 without having any idea about the meaning of this prayer. When I was young, I heard that the Lord's prayer in this chapter was for oneness. But oneness, or the unity among the Lord's disciples, is not the subject. Oneness is on the surface. Something deeper and more profound lies beneath the surface, and it is not easy for us to dig it out. John 17 is a deep chapter, and it is difficult to fathom it. How we thank the Lord that gradually, little by little, He has shown us the real meaning, the true significance, the central thought, of His prayer in this chapter.

I. THE SON TO BE GLORIFIED THAT THE FATHER MAY BE GLORIFIED

The basic concept of the Lord's prayer in John 17 is glorification. In verse 1 the Lord said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You." This is the subject, the central point, of this prayer. If we see the main points of the three previous chapters, we shall be able to understand what it means to have the Son glorified that the Father may be glorified. The Father is to glorify the Son so that the Son may glorify the Father. This is a mutual glorification between the Son and the Father. If the Father will glorify the Son, then the Son will glorify the Father.

As a prayer that follows a message conveys the main point of the message, so the Lord's concluding prayer covers the main point of the message He gave in the preceding three chapters. Keep this in mind, for it will help you to understand this prayer. The main point of the Lord's message in John 14 through 16 was that the Son may be glorified so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. In what way is the Father to be glorified in the Son? Through the organism of the vine tree. As we have seen, the organism of the vine tree is for the propagating and spreading of life, that is, for the multiplication and reproduction of life, and also for the expression of the Triune God. When the Triune God is propagated, multiplied, and expressed through this organism, the Son is glorified, and in the Son's glorification the Father is

glorified also. Thus, the Lord prayed that He, the Son, would be glorified so that the Father also might be glorified.

God's eternal purpose, His ultimate intention, is to manifest, to express, Himself. As I have pointed out several times in the past, glorification simply means manifestation. To be glorified is to be manifested and expressed. For example, electricity that is not manifested is hidden. Before a lamp is switched on, the electricity is hidden within the lamp. But when the lamp is turned on, the electricity is manifested and expressed. Likewise, it is God's intention to manifest and express Himself. As the electricity is glorified when it is manifested, so God is glorified when He is manifested.

In creation God created man in His own image (Gen. 1:26). Image denotes some sort of expression. Without a certain kind of image, God could never be expressed. Hence, the image is the very expression of God. God's intention in creating man in His own image was that He might be expressed. The Lord Jesus is God who became incarnated as a man for the purpose of declaring the invisible God. John 1:18 says that no one has ever seen God but that the Son has declared Him. God is unseen and invisible. No one except the Son of God has ever seen Him. Now, in His incarnation, the Son has declared Him. To declare God means to express God. The Lord Jesus is the very image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15), which means that He is the very expression of the invisible God.

The best illustration of glorification is the blossoming of a flower. A carnation seed, for example, is sown into the earth. After it grows up out of the earth, it blossoms. This blossoming is the glorification of the carnation seed. The carnation seed contains the life element and the life shape of the carnation flower. The style, color, and beauty of the flower are all contained in a little carnation seed, but no one can see this style, color, and beauty until the seed grows out of the earth and blossoms. The blossom is the glory of the seed. The blossoming is the glorification of the seed, for it is by blossoming that the seed is glorified, that is, expressed.

When Jesus Christ came in the flesh, He was like that little carnation seed. In Him, that is, in His human form, His human shell, were all the beauty and shape of the divine life. All the colorful aspects of the divine life were concealed and confined in that little Nazarene. One day, He was sown into the earth. After He died, He grew up and blossomed in His resurrection. In His resurrection, the beauty, form, style, color, and riches of life were released and expressed. That was the glorification of the Son. Since all that God the Father is has been embodied in the Son, when the Son is glorified, the Father is also glorified in the Son's glorification.

After the Lord became flesh, He expressed God to some extent, but the glory of God, the glory of all His attributes, was hidden in His flesh. The glory of all God's fullness was covered, being clothed by His flesh. Thus, the Lord told His disciples that He had to die and be resurrected. The word *die* is not a pleasant word to us. However, it is not bad for a seed to be put into the earth and die. It is good because the glory and beauty of the flower that are hidden in the seed are released by its death. The colorful beauty and the rich glory are released through death and resurrection. This is glorification. After the Lord told His disciples about His impending death and resurrection, He offered a prayer to the Father, praying that the Father would glorify the Son that all the glory hidden within Him might be manifested through His death and resurrection. To glorify the Son means to bring forth all the glory hidden within His flesh, to release by means of death and resurrection all the divine glory concealed within the flesh of the Son.

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Burdens for Church Prayers

- Pray for the blending and one accord among the saints.
- Pray for the English-speaking testimony and gospel preaching on West Valley College campus.
- May the Lord raise up many brothers to bear the testimony together.
- Pray for the burden to raise up next generation for building up of the body of Christ.
- Pray for YP that they will be companions with one another to pursue the Lord together.
- For GOW training: Vital groups be raised up, attending prayer meeting, prophesying on Lord's day by daily enjoying His word and pursue the truth.

Announcement

- Morning Revival: 2012 Memorial Day Conference Message #1.
- Gospel of John Reading Schedule: S.7:1-9. M.7:10-24, T.7:25-36, W.7:37-52, Th.7:53-8:11, F. 8:12-27, S.8:28-44.
- Tuesday (7/25) prayer meeting at meeting hall.
- 7/22 parents fellowship 12:45pm after Lord's day meeting.
- GOW 6th term training registration: register with the brothers in small group to be trained by His grace and practice steadfastly unto Zion.
- Chinese scholar training in NJ, 7/27-8/3. Continuing training in Fremont 8/2-8/5. Deadline:7/22.
- **Labor Day conference, at Burlingame Hyatt Labor Day conference right away.** The dates are Friday (8/31) and Saturday (9/1) nights. Dead line: 7/29. The link is: <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/NorCalLD2012>
- SST celebration meeting, at San Francisco meeting hall, on Friday, July 27th, starting at 5:30pm.