

"Father, the Hour Has Come"

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[0 : 00] We have arrived at the last chapter of our study of the inner sanctuary.

! Jerry, it turns out, went through my Roman study, I guess some years ago, or study, not! Romans, study on the 17th chapter of John, and asked me about it the other day, and I said, well, it hadn't gotten any better, but I added a little bit here and there. You know, we all know this, but the Holy Bible is the Word of God, and in the original autograph, it is without error.

Now, we don't have any copies of those, but the copies we do have, stretching back in time, from like 900 AD to about 200 BC. Based on that, I tend to believe that even many of the translations today are very close to the original, and contain no substantial error than perhaps some grammar or punctuation. The Bible is the mind of Christ, and since it is the mind of Christ, every verse and every word is inspired and authoritative. And we could string a lot of other descriptives words onto that. As to inspiration and inerrancy. Every verse and word is equal. They're all inspired.

However, we cannot say that every verse and word are equal in application, the way we live our lives.

Let me give you an example of what I'm talking about. The following words are equally inspired, equally inerrant, one you'll be very familiar with. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

[2 : 43] And we understand that He gave His only begotten Son that He gave His only begotten Son that He gave His only begotten Son. And we understand that's the Word of God. That's the mind of Christ. That's the words of Christ. And we can apply all those words to that verse of Scripture. But there's another verse.

That was, of course, John 3.16. There's another verse in 1 Chronicles. Equally inspired, equally authoritative. At Parbar westward, four at the causeway, and two at Parbar.

That's right out of the Bible. I'm hoping Don will preach on that before he leaves. Mike Stark did.

I still don't know what he said. But both of those are equally inspired, but not equally applied to our daily walk with the Lord. Does that make sense?

We don't get up in the morning and meditate on at Parbar westward, four at the causeway, and two at Parbar. Where's that found?

[3 : 52] That's 1 Chronicles 26.18. Now, why do I say all that? Because this evening, we come to the 17th chapter of the book of John.

That book is referred to as the High Priestly Prayer. Some have called this the Inter-Trinitarian Prayer. This is the place, or even today, opening our Bibles, we can go and we can listen into a conversation by the Son of God directed to His Father, whom we know as God the Father.

And all of this, of course, is inspired and brought to us by God the Spirit who preserved these words so we see the Trinity in action.

All three are present. Now, let me say this, fellows. I've long maintained that when we come to this chapter, we are on holy ground.

I'm not suggesting it's more holy than other parts of the Bible, but I am suggesting it's holy ground. We approach this chapter much like Moses approached the burning bush and God told him, you're on holy ground.

[5 : 37] I think we do so with utmost reverence for God because God is speaking to God here.

God the Son is speaking to God the Father. And I would also like to point out that one of the subjects covered in this prayer is everyone in this room.

The Lord's going to mention every one of us. Not by name. It'd be too voluminous. But He's going to talk about believers down through the ages.

And when we come to this chapter, we do close out our study of the inner sanctuary and at the conclusion of this chapter, Jesus and His band of followers will journey to the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus will enter into intense prayer. So intense, He's going to bleed sweat drops of blood. He will be arrested and ultimately murdered on the cross.

[6 : 55] That's just mere hours away. So with reverence, we come now to John chapter 17. And for believers, this may be one of the most pivotal chapters in the entire Bible.

You know, sometimes I wake up at three in the morning and I go into my living room in the dark and I can think things like, I wonder what Jesus is doing right now.

You know? And then I remember the Bible gives us the answer. Hebrews 7.25, Therefore, He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, Him being Jesus, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

He today is in His intercessory ministry interceding for the believers that are on this planet. And do we need Jesus praying for us?

You bet. You bet. Well, the high priestly prayer of John 17 is the greatest biblical example of intercessory prayer we have.

[8 : 31] It is there He intercedes for His own, His disciples, the other followers, followers through the ages, down to our time. And beyond if we have a lot more time left.

Jesus, at this very moment, is making intercession for every one of His elect. And you might be thinking, well, I don't need intercession right now, although I might need it tomorrow or the next day. but we always need Jesus interceding for us. I mean, for one reason, we're always violating the command of God.

Sometimes that upsets people until you read the great commandment to love God with all. And none of us have ever achieved that. We could just stop there.

There's a whole host of other things we can talk about. There's no believer in any age that ever achieved that. To remind me of that fact, I read often Romans 7.

[9 : 43] I'm trying to get to Romans 8. We love Him. We love Him partially. Some love Him more than others.

But who among us can claim this total, absolute love for the Lord? Therefore, we violate the great commandment.

Therefore, we need a Savior interceding for us. And that's what He does. He does. Ask most preachers and theologians the time when this intercession started, and they will tell you it started when Jesus entered heaven after the crucifixion.

Well, that would be wrong. Jesus began His intercessory ministry in John 17 and left the followers, the disciples, with a great expression of that intercessory ministry because He's going to be dead in a few hours.

now for a number of chapters, the Lord has been addressing the disciples and informing them of His approaching death. He's been preparing them for His crucifixion.

[10 : 58] He's been preparing them for the days that will follow that monumental event. He has clearly told His followers that He is going away.

He had to overcome Peter a little bit with that and other things. He told them that He's going to send the Spirit of God to be with them and to lead them and to instruct them.

But what about the Lord Jesus? Where will He be after He depart? He will be in heaven seated at the right hand of the Father making intercession for His church.

And I know you don't need this, but just remember, church is not brick and mortar. That's where the church meets corporately. But the church is people.

And He's going to make intercession until He returns for His church. Even so, come quickly. intercession started then, it's going on now.

[12 : 12] In our timeline, in the study of the Gospel of John, this portion, it is just prior to His arrest and murder. And there's so very much that we can say about this chapter.

First of all, it is a prayer. prayer. We know that Jesus prayed many times to the Father. The Bible tells us that He would go off to a solitary place, sometimes to a mountain and pray.

Sometimes He would pray all night, other times early in the morning. But it's sort of interesting that the Scriptures record very little of the actual prayers of the Lord.

What did He say? Of course, He usually was alone. We do know, though, some of the events over which the Lord prayed.

He prayed at His baptism. He prayed during His preaching tour on earth for some three and a half years. He prayed before feeding the 5,000.

[13:25] He prayed after feeding the 5,000. He prayed before feeding the 4,000. He prayed before Peter confessed Him as the Christ.

He prayed on the Mount of Transfiguration when He was transfigured. He prayed for children that were brought to Him. He prayed when the 70 missionaries returned to Him.

Sort of interesting, He prayed before giving the Lord's Prayer. He prayed for a prayer that He was getting ready to pray. He prayed before raising Lazarus from the dead.

He prayed at the Last Supper. He prayed that Peter would be strengthened. He prayed in Gethsemane. He prayed while hanging on the cross.

He prayed for the disciples on the road to Emmaus. And He prayed at His ascension back to heaven to name a few. And then we come to John chapter 17.

[14:38] And we have this magnificent prayer that lasts for some 26 verses. And again, theologians and particularly the older guys over the centuries have called this the beautiful inner Trinitarian conversation.

We don't have any input here. Peter is not going to interrupt this prayer. Peter was noted for that, wasn't he?

He's not going to interrupt. There's not going to be any disturbance as Jesus prays this prayer from Roman soldiers.

The temple police are not going to kick open the door. And the devil himself is silent. This prayer will go undisturbed between the son and the father.

And the marvelous truth is that here we are in the 21st century and we still get to listen in. to that prayer.

[16:06] The most marvelous prayer ever prayed. I've often said, say it again, that when we come to John chapter 17, we get to be the fly on the wall.

We're just stuck there on the wall and intently listening to what's going on. and again I want to say to you that when we come to this prayer, we're on holy ground.

This is our burning bush. We're in the presence of an awesome and holy trinity of God. God. And while the Holy Spirit may not be overtly present, He is there with the Father and with the Son.

And in every age, down through the centuries, the elect of God have listened to this most holy conversation. It was the English Puritan Thomas Watson who said, a man cannot live unless he takes a breath, nor can the soul unless it breathes forth its desires to God.

In other words, enters into prayer. For the true believer, prayer and believing are synonymous. We do one to live physically, we do one to live spiritually.

[17:40] prayer. And interestingly, the Bible both commands prayer, but indicates the willingness of God's people to be in prayer.

To be in prayer. If we are conscientious in our study of this great prayer, we're going to realize some things.

That this prayer itself encompasses the great themes of redemptive history. That's really what this prayer is about.

This prayer takes us from election, and none of us were there when that happened, were we? To regeneration,!

To revelation, to illumination, to justification, to sanctification, to preservation, to glorification.

[18:40] it is in this greatest of prayers that the Spirit of God will escort us into the Holy of Holies, to the very throne of God the Father.

Again, we're on holy ground. I can't say that enough. This isn't like any prayer in the Bible. there's some good ones.

But this is different. And one thing we see at the outset is the timing of the prayer. This prayer comes in the midst of Jesus comforting his disciples just before his death.

And that's really kind of ironic because I said this a few weeks ago in here. Jesus knew what he was getting ready to go through in the minutest of details.

The disciples should have been comforting him. He told them, I'm going to Jerusalem, I'm going to be handed over to the unbelievers, I'm going to be scourged and mocked, held to a cross and

crucified.

[19 : 59] They should have been comforting Jesus instead of saying, what's going to happen to us? Who among us is the greatest? You know? So this is a time of great comfort Jesus is pouring out to his followers when in fact they should be comforting him.

And then we come to the very first part of verse 1, which is as far as we'll get tonight. Jesus spoke these things. What things did he speak?

All those things in the upper room we've been studying. All those things we've been studying in chapter 13, 14, 15, 16. He spoke those things and then he stopped.

He actually stopped last Monday night in here. He stopped. Listen to what the scripture says. Jesus spoke these things and lifting up his eyes to heaven he said, Father, the hour has come.

Wow. that can grip you if you allow it. The hour has come. The hour that he's known for eternity would one day arrive.

[21 : 34] And it's arrived. So this time that Jesus spent in the upper room with the disciples is drawing to a close.

Soon they will be on the streets of Jerusalem making their way to the garden. Those previous hours were filled with Jesus serving and comforting and instructing his followers.

And we've taken weeks and months to look at those. The disciples were anxious. The evening began with foot washing as the Lord humbled himself and washed even the feet of Judas whom he knew was going to betray him.

Even then the betrayal was in motion. He told the disciples that he was about to die.

And Peter didn't like that, did he? Peter, the strongest of the band and maybe the weakest at the same time, told the Lord, you're not going to die.

[22 : 58] And not only was he going to die, but in the process Peter would deny him repeatedly. Peter didn't believe that was even possible, but it happened.

I'm always moved at the arrest of Judas when the Lord told one of you he was going to betray me and every one of them said, is it I, Lord? And if I had been there, men, I would have asked that question.

Is it I, Lord? I would have asked that. It is no wonder that the disciples were afraid and dismayed at the information and what lay ahead for Jesus in them.

So the Lord comforts them by describing heaven and that they would each be living there with him in a short while, not not that night, but in a few years.

And we know that of the eleven true disciples, all were martyred save one, John. And I don't know if living out your life on Patmos is maybe that's worse than being martyred.

[24 : 20] I've been to the Aegean Sea. But the Lord brings them comfort. He gave to them the promise that he was going to send another.

That the Holy Spirit would come and minister to and through them. That he was not going to leave them as orphans. I've been dismayed reviewing a lot of material for a future series of lessons on some of the extreme charismatic and guys trying to make trees walk and cats bark and we can do anything.

The guys are getting wealthy off of it. But Jesus also told them the world is going to hate you. That's not exactly comforting is it?

The world is going to hate you. But he explained the world is going to hate you based on their hatred of him. He started saying me but I don't want to point it this way.

Of Jesus. The fact that the world hates Jesus. The world and the devil can't get to the Lord. But he tries to get to the Lord's people.

[25 : 54] And though the world would hate them they are going to receive strength and encouragement from the indwelling spirit. Jesus used the imagery of the vine and the vine dresser to describe their vital connection to him and through him to the father.

they would draw all spiritual strength from the vine and through them the Lord would produce much fruit. And we studied that in John 15 and remember the branch even out here in the world branches never produce fruit.

The fruit comes from the vine from the roots into the branch church. Jesus also revealed to them that they had not chosen him.

I had a very interesting discussion in this church years ago way before dawn. Minister at the time preached on that passage you did not choose me I chose you.

And as we were filing out that day he turned to me and he said what was preached today is not true. He said Jesus didn't choose me I chose him.

[27 : 24] And if I hadn't chose him I wouldn't be saved. He had chosen them. And he's still in that business guys.

Still true today about every believer though it really repulses a lot of people in the church today. That very thought.

That very thought. Jesus told them they would weep over his death. They would weep over his departure but that one day their grief would be turned to joy.

Probably the most disturbing thing in all of this was Jesus perceived failure hard to string those two words together. Jesus failure to live up to the disciples pre-kassim notions of what the Messiah was supposed to accomplish.

He did not fit their idea of the Messiah. He was supposed to come and overthrow the Roman Empire. Kick them out.

[28 : 44] Kill them. Kill them all. Establish his kingdom on earth. Put his throne in the rebuilt temple at Jerusalem.

And by the way, make 11 thrones for us. And we'll tell you where we want to sit. We'll handle the seating arrangements.

That was their messianic view. And now he tells them, I'm going away. By way of death. Of course, we know that was more than Judas could handle.

He concluded that Jesus was not the Messiah, not worthy to be followed, but worthy to be turned over. I always hate it when Hollywood, and Hollywood has made some good movies on the Lord, but they always paint Judas as just a little manipulated.

And he really didn't mean to do what he did. That's not the Judas of the Bible. He knew exactly what he was doing.

[29 : 59] I'm going to rid Israel of the charlatan. Here, I put three years in with him, and now I'm not going to be in his inner circle.

So we learned in our opening verse this evening that Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven. And I think that was a way of acknowledging that God's throne was in heaven above.

love. You know, we might contrast that with what I think is maybe the second greatest prayer I've ever prayed.

The tax collector who could not lift his eyes toward heaven, but beat his breast for the burden of sin that he carried.

Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner. That is the closest, by the way, you'll ever come to a sinner's prayer in the Bible.

[31 : 04] I hear that thrown out there all the time. That's the closest we have of a sinner's prayer.

Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner. And we can't escape the fact that when Jesus spoke, he referred to God as my Father.

That was revolutionary. This was unthinkable in that culture. Way too familiar. It's unthinkable in many cultures today.

I've been all over the Muslim world. They never refer to God or Allah as Father. I've had vigorous discussions with a dear brother, not a brother in Christ, but a fellow human.

You can probably tell his religion from his name, Abdul-Hakim Janna. Wouldn't be hard to figure that out. Moroccan. We've had he would be in the liberal wing of Islam.

I asked Hakeem one day, where are the guys that flew into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon? He said, they're in hell. Where else could they be? He believes that.

[32 : 28] But in talking to him, he was appalled that I would refer to God as Father. He said, we can't do that. Way too familiar. Way too familiar.

that was a form of address considered way too familiar for the holiness God, the holiness of God, the great holy God of the universe.

But we see Jesus praying to his Father. And I think that is a great example of both his submission to the Father, and he submitted to the Father on earth, but also his equality with the Father.

You know, I guess only Mike knew my dad on earth. I never feared my dad. I bet you never feared yours. A couple of times I was a little tense with mine and yours.

But I never feared my dad. I never feared my parents calling me in at night. You know, I was just playing just a few blocks over here on Queenstown. Austin knows where that is.

[33 : 37] I never, you know, when the skies opened, we're not going to fear are we? Father's going to call us home. Israel had developed a remote view of God.

Israel had become very distant from God. God. They even made up names for him because they were so afraid they might take his name in vain.

They might violate one of the commandments and take the name of the Lord God in vain. They even made up names so they wouldn't speak the sacred name of God.

And then Jesus comes along and he calls God his father and they wanted to stone him to death. that one movie, Jesus of Nazareth by Franco Zeffirelli, Nicodemus does handle that pretty well in the Sanhedrin.

He said, you know, it doesn't seem like any of you are willing to consider maybe Jesus is the Messiah. And I saw another movie at that poignant moment and there's no scriptural proof of this, but I can believe it would have happened because in another movie when they said that, one of the other members of the Sanhedrin looked at him and said, do you think God would send the Messiah without consulting the high priest?

[35 : 15] The short answer to that is yes, he would do that. And the longer answer is yes, he would do that. He would do that. Israel had developed this real remote view of God.

And they were not going to use his name for fear of taking in vain. But we see Jesus calling God his Father. He was in this intimate fellowship with him.

By the way, the same fellowship every believer can share with the Father because of Christ, because of what he's done to bring us to the Father. Father. But the point I'm making is for the next several weeks until probably second week of May, we're going to study the intimate conversation between the son that the son has with his father.

one final point, another important point to be made. On the one hand, the Lord was clearly making himself equal with God.

After all, he claimed to be the very son of God. But on the other hand, he's demonstrating his distinctness. How do we know that? He wasn't praying to himself.

[36 : 42] He's praying to the father. That has theological implications. The son is equal to the father, yet distinct.

He is equal in essence. He even shares with the father his eternal glory, but he is more than a mere shadow or manifestation of the father.

Jesus is a distinct person within the Godhead. So by calling God his father, Jesus here underscores the reality of the Trinity, the one true God.

Several times in John's gospel, we hear the words that Jesus' time had not yet come. He says that over and over. My time has not yet come. He passed through the midst.

They wanted to throw him off the mountaintop. They wanted to stone him. His time hadn't come. And now he says the hour has come. It's arrived.

[37 : 46] His ministry on earth is drawing to a close. He is on the brink of death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. The culminating event of redemptive history, the most important history in the universe has reached its zenith.

death. The plans made by the Godhead, eons in the past, are now coming to fruition. The hour has come in which the Son of God, the Son of Man, will offer himself as the only perfect and atoning sacrificial lamb for sin.

There's no other name, no other person that can do that. The time of God's wrath toward all mankind was drawing to a close.

The certificate of death by which each one of us deserves hell would be nailed to the cross. He who knew no sin would become sin so that those of us who believe could and would become the very righteousness of God.

Satan, as prophesied in Genesis 3.15, would soon receive a fatal blow to the head.

[39 : 10] All of the Old Testament prophecies of the death of the Messiah would be fulfilled in the next few hours. The shadows of the Old Testament sacrificial system would give way to the one true sacrifice of the Christ.

The veil that separated the people from the Holy of Holies would be rent from top to bottom just at the moment when Jesus' flesh was rent on the cross.

And now redeemed mankind would enjoy unfettered access to God. Unthinkable. Christ was about to defeat sin and death and Satan and hell and redeem a people for his name's sake.

People say, why does God need to save people? I hear people say, well, you know, it's lonely in heaven. Let me tell you, we're secondary.

God is calling out a people to worship his son for eternity. That's why he saves us. To worship and praise his name and his person for eternity.

[40 : 30] There's where salvation comes from. Christ is about to defeat sin and death and Satan and hell and he's redeeming those who are going to worship him forever.

The hour of great suffering has come but he can look beyond that to the eternity of great victory.

And so the hour that all the atoms in the universe had waited for as the universe groans for the return of its creator it's come and as he entered into this hour the Lord Jesus God in human flesh lifted his head toward heaven told the father the hour has come and then he proceeds to intercede for his disciples to pray for them and all who would believe after them.