

The Inter-Trinitarian Prayer

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Date: 09 November 2011

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[0:00] We've got your Bibles this evening.

! We're going to be in the 17th chapter of John. John chapter 17. To say that this is an amazing portion of Scripture, I think, is an understatement.

I probably say that every time I start teaching. But John 17 is not only very special because of the information in it, and I've taught John 17 on a number of occasions.

It is packed literally with information. And I think it takes me probably 10 sessions to get through it all, maybe 15.

But the uniqueness of John 17 is that it is what the theologians call an inter-trinitarian prayer.

[1:23] The Father and the Son are carrying on a conversation. And what is recorded for us is the Son's words to the Father, and we get to listen in.

It's amazing. Hopefully you will, from now on, always read John 17 in a new light. We are the fly on the wall here.

Because we, you know, many times in Scripture it says that Jesus went off somewhere to pray.

Many times Jesus went off and met with the Father.

But the Bible never records what was said. I mean, I find myself saying, but what did He say? How did He pray? You know, what did He ask for? Well, here we have His prayer.

Now, this is called the High Priestly Prayer. And that's really kind of a misnomer. It's really the Lord's Prayer.

[2:37] And people say, well, wait a minute. The Lord's Prayer starts at our Father which art in heaven. No, that's really the disciples' prayer. So this is truly the Lord's Prayer, even though He is our High Priest.

This is the Lord's Prayer to His Father. And it is absolutely amazing. Let me begin there in verse 1. I'll move in a little bit from the beginning. Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You, even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.

This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

[3:57] Well, there's ten weeks we can spend. Here we have this amazing exchange. The Son talking to the Father.

And the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, grants us the privilege of listening in on this very important communication.

So we have the Trinity present. That's my point. The Godhead is there. And this prayer is ultimately about the salvation of God's people.

It's about our salvation. In the opening words of the prayer, which I've just read, the Lord makes four references in just those brief verses, four and a half verses, Jesus makes four references to the saving purposes of God.

And as we go through these this evening, keep in the forefront of your mind that these purposes are all designed to bring God glory.

[5:16] These are the four purposes and they are designed to glorify God. Well, what are the four purposes? Contained in those three verses, His right to offer eternal life, talking about Jesus, His right to offer eternal life, the relationship He offers sinners with Himself, the price of eternal life, and the worship and reverence He deserves for having granted eternal life to sinners.

In those opening verses of John 17, and I say that because Jonathan just walked in and now he knows where we're at. He does all this. Now the first thing we're going to look at this evening is His right to offer eternal life.

And I guess my whole adult life, and of course I got saved sort of late, 30 years old, but we often hear about the plan of salvation.

And one thing I've come to learn over the intervening years and decades is they're all different. It depends on who wrote them. You know, and everybody's got a little different bent on them.

My experience with the plans, the canned presentations, when they are described to us, and they're written by well-meaning people.

[6:50] I don't ever challenge that. But for me, they seem to fall woefully short of the biblical description of salvation.

Now, God the Father has a plan. He has a plan on how to save people. And we really need to get on board with His plan.

I'm going to be preaching on that actually if you want to come. It will be in January in the upper peninsula of Michigan. And you're welcome to come up there in the dead of winter. But that's one of the four messages I'm bringing.

But God the Father has a plan. What's the plan? Well, He, and that is God the Father, has granted authority, according to these verses, to God the Son over all flesh.

And that's a description or a word used to describe mankind, humanity. God the Father has given Jesus authority. He has ultimate authority.

[8:01] God the Son grants eternal life to each and every person that the Father has given Him.

Now, the truth is, and we know this from the Word of God, and we know this from experience, not everyone gets saved. I mean, it's just a fact of life.

Jesus spent more time talking about hell than He did talking about heaven. And He said, you know, He said, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will inherit the kingdom of God. He said, narrow is the way to eternal life and few that find it.

Broad is the road that leads to destruction. And I often hear people raise an objection, well, it's not fair. It is not fair for God to save some and not all.

Folks, that's not the mystery. The mystery is, why does God save any of us? There's the mystery.

Why did God save any of us? And in the manner that He did it, sent His only Son to die for the likes of you and me?

[9:15] Why is anyone saved? No one has ever come close to deserving salvation at the hand of a holy and just God. We deserve death and hell.

We all know that. We are all under the sins of death, the whole human race. Paul many times said, dead in trespasses and sins. We're under the sentence of death.

We're under that sentence because of inherited sins we got from our original parents. They poisoned the wellhead of the human race and everything that's flowed out of there has been tainted with sin.

And people say, well, that's not very fair. I wasn't there. Yeah, you were. You were in their DNA.

You were there. But let's say, well, okay, well, I don't want to go on inherited sins. And then let me ask you this.

Have you ever committed one sin? Just one. And if you have, and I would wager that you have, although I don't know you all that well, everyone in here that well, as I know some of you, but then you are fallen and your one sin was sufficient to plunge the entire human race into fallenness, just as Adam's sin did.

[10:29] Just as Adam's sin did. And we always speak of it as Adam's sin. People say, well, that's not fair either. Eve did it well. She's under Adam's authority. He didn't stop. I used to say, well, Adam was in another county, you know, farming.

And my wife points out that the Bible says, and Adam who was with her also ate. He was right there. He was right there. Something we need to keep in mind though, and that is, God is under no obligation to save anyone from among Adam's race.

But He does so through His Son and our Savior. He has chosen to do so. Now, how does God save a sinner?

Well, He does it through the authority He has vested in His Son through the cross. Everything hinges on the cross and the blood that was shed on the cross.

I cannot overstate that, beloved. I cannot overstate it. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.

[11:43] And sometimes people object to that. And I like what Dr. Mervais said. Look, we're labor. Take it up with management. We're labor. We're here to give out the Word.

But without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness. And anyone who is not covered by the everlasting blood of the Lamb do not enjoy the salvation bestowed by grace upon the people of God.

They're outside of that. Now, in His deity, Christ was, of course, aware of all this as we come to the hour of the inner Trinitarian prayer.

and I say that, why is this particular hour important? He is only a day or two from crucifixion.

He's ready to go to Calvary. He can see that as God, of course, very clearly. He already is feeling the whip and the scourging and all that.

[12:50] He is a mere hours from the crucifixion. And let me say this, you know, last words are important words. I remember the last words my dad had to me.

Last words are important words. And we tend to remember last words. You know, we read books on the last words of famous people. And essentially these are Christ's last words to us.

So he's at the closing hour of his life on earth. He is the creator of God. He has all power. He could have called down legions of angels and a legion in the Roman world of 6,000 Roman soldiers.

And he told Peter, I can call down legions plural of angels. Come down here and put a stop to this. But instead he submitted to his captors.

And he allowed himself to be nailed to a cross by evil men. He allowed this to happen in spite of the fact that he had total control over the very men who were putting him to death.

[14:09] Now I hasten to add something. They were not puppets. They were doing what they wanted to do. God didn't force Judas to betray our Savior.

He wanted to betray him. That's why he's responsible. That's why these guys are all responsible. And here they are. These men are putting him to death. And while they were killing him, he was providing them with oxygen to breathe.

Jeremiah said he holds our very breath in his hands, gravity to remain in place on the earth, and all the other benefits we receive as humans. I'm going to write a song someday.

He made the tree that he was crucified on. I'm working on that. Jesus Christ has been granted the absolute authority to grant eternal life to those whom the Father has given him.

great commentary by a guy by the name of Andreas Kostenberg. Jesus, Son of Man, who is about to be glorified and will thus fulfill his earthly mission, here anticipates his exalted authoritative position subsequent to his crucifixion and resurrection.

[15:29] The authority enables him to bestow eternal life on all those whom God has given to him. God's granting of authority to Jesus marks the beginning of a new era.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus including the authority to judge. So we see the Father bestowing upon the Son, hours before the crucifixion, all authority.

The Lord has authority over all creation. Elsewhere we learn, and I think it's Colossians and some other places, that it is the power of Christ who holds everything together.

He's holding it all together with the power of his words. I would say to you that's down to the subatomic particles. Physicists can't understand why electrons don't fly off into space.

Well we know why. He's holding it all together. Now when it comes to redemption, the Lord Jesus has the absolute authority to grant eternal life to those individuals who have been chosen for him by the Father.

[16:42] Now only those whom the Father has given him will receive eternal life. This is very upsetting to people who do not understand the elective purpose of God and the people who are raised to believe that salvation is ultimately a work of mankind and not a work of God's sovereign will.

I was reading this morning in preparation for my January trip and most people go around thinking God has done everything he possibly can to get us saved and now he's wringing his hands hoping someone will take advantage of it.

Well that's not the biblical explanation of salvation. It's just not. Some worry about those who come to Christ and are turned away because they're not the elect.

Let me tell you something. If someone comes to Christ genuinely wanting to be saved what's going to happen? They're going to be saved.

He never turns them away. He never turns them away. Spurgeon said our problem is we think that salvation we have erected bars on the church windows and locks on the doors and Jesus in here with us keeping everybody out.

[18:01] The doors have been flung open and he's yelling out here at Highway 75, come all ye who are weary and heavy laden, I'll give you rest. Come. Come. That's the Christ of the Bible.

I was talking to a young man not long ago and he said I'm worried that I'm not one of the elect. I said well then you're one of the elect. People that aren't elect don't worry about it.

We do know from Scripture that no one seeks God on their own. Why? They're dead. Dead and trespassed and sinned.

God has to wake them up. God wakes us up. And then he draws, the Father draws and the Spirit draws to Christ.

No one seeks on their own. Paul made that very clear in Romans chapter 3 verses 10 to 18. That would be a good read tonight. The eternal theme of the Bible is Christ is the only source of eternal life seeking and saving those whom the Father has given him.

[19:07] He came to seek and to save the lost. Now we know that Jesus has all authority. That was made very clear during the incarnation.

And he manifested his divine authority in some of the following ways. He shielded his Shekinah, except for a few occasions.

But he did manifest his authority. We're concentrating on authority. He did it through his teachings, through his healings, through his exorcisms, casting out demons, through the other miracles.

By the way, do you know that demons were by and large the only ones that acknowledged him as the Messiah? Demons. Through the miracles, by claiming the right to violate Jewish tradition, that was huge.

By cleansing the temple, forgiving sins, only God can forgive sins, Christ forgave sins. Offering salvation in his name, no other name under heaven by which you can be saved.

[20:20] Receiving worship, people worshipped him, they fell down and worshipped him. I mean, when people fell down at Peter's feet, he stopped them. When John fell down at the feet of an angel, he stopped him.

And then the next chapter, John did it again. Same angel, same angel stopped him again and said, don't do this. But Jesus never prevented people from worshipping him. And then judging the world. It was on these points that Christ clashed with the Jewish authorities. They knew that only God can do such things. No one else could do those things I've read off to you.

And they're right. That's true. Where they failed in their understanding is that Christ is God in human flesh. He took upon himself human flesh and pitched his tent with us in the Greek language.

He is the exact image. The exact representation of the invisible God. Of the invisible God.

[21:26] Well, the Jewish folks were angered by Christ and by his claims. And they began early on to plot his death. And they carried out the plan right on schedule.

Not their schedule, his schedule. Because he has all authority. Now, even the death of Christ was under the absolute authority of the Lord.

He said to us, I lay down my life. He did it at the appointed time. No one took his life. But he laid it down.

You remember when he said, I must go to Jerusalem. I'm turning to Jerusalem. And Peter said, you're not going there. Well, he gave him a rebuke, didn't he? Get behind me, Satan. I've got a destiny in Jerusalem.

On Calvary. At the right moment, he laid down his life, and at the right moment, he took it up again. He took it up again. He had the absolute authority to do all of this.

[22:33] The Father gave him absolute authority on earth, and would receive him back into heaven, and seat him at his right hand, position, which is the position of power and authority.

That's what the right hand of the Father is all about. People get upset. They say, you know, the gospel is too exclusive. Well, let me say this about that.

The gospel is exclusive. It's very exclusive. It is only through Christ and his death on the cross that eternal life can be granted to undeserving humans.

Because of the cross, Jesus is still the way, the truth, and the life. And no one can come to the Father but through him.

From time to time I have people say, look, I believe in God. I pray to God. I embrace God. But I don't anything do with Jesus. He's just a man. You know, I hate to be the one to tell you this, but those prayers are bouncing off your ceiling tiles and that's it.

[23 : 46] They're not going anywhere. Jesus has all authority including the right, the authority to offer eternal life.

Well, the relationship he offers to sinners with himself is the next category. he offers a relationship to sinners. Verse 3, this is eternal life that they may know you, the only true God, Jesus is speaking, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

This is eternal life that they may know you, the only true God, he's talking to the Father, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. Eternal life comes to those who know the one true God.

And that word meaning to know there has a much deeper meaning in the Greek language than in English. To know in English, a verb in English, is to have intellectual knowledge.

Intellectual knowledge. the verb to know in Greek is to be in an intimate love relationship where there is eternal commitment.

[25 : 11] Wow. There was no accident that the New Testament was written in Greek, nor is it any accident that the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, the two most expressive languages, human languages in the universe.

That relationship is totally dependent upon the Lord Jesus Christ whom the Father sent to be the Savior of the world.

Now, in this sense, the essence of eternal life is to participate by grace in the life of Christ. It says, this is eternal life.

Having the life of Christ in us means we can also have peace, hope, assurance, love, joy, and a host of other things.

And a host of other things. You know, when it gets really, really dark and dim, remember who's in you. It's indeed Christ is in you.

[26 : 14] Remember. Guys at work, we have all kinds of turmoil. Don't read everything you read in the newspaper, but we have all kinds of turmoil. And someone said, how do you stay calm?

And I have one answer. I've read the end of the book. I know how it's going to come out. We can read the end of the book. We tend to think of eternal life in terms of quantity.

It's a long time. Eternal life. Eternal life is more related to quality. life. It is much more than living forever, whatever that is.

Because you know, there's no time in heaven. I used to use this example with Mike. When we get there, we're not going to be able to say, hey, next Thursday, why don't we get together and we'll get a softball game. There's not going to be a next Thursday.

It's now. It's right then. But it's quality. It is more than living forever. it is enjoying the presence of the Holy Creator God in all His fullness.

[27 : 25] And Paul went there. He paid the visit. He said, I can't talk about it. I can't write about it. I can't do it. Man can't express it the way it really is.

Because eternal life is given in terms of quality, guess what? Start enjoying it now. Start enjoying it now.

You do not enter into eternal life in the strictest sense when you die. That's just a change of address. We enter into eternal life at the moment God saves us and gifts us with His life which by definition is eternal.

that's when you entered into eternal life. And I trust you are all believers in here. I can't imagine you staying around if you weren't listening to me. But we're in eternal life.

We're just going to change addresses. And this eternal life, this relationship is made possible by and through the Lord Jesus Christ exclusively.

[28 : 38] exclusively. Well, there's another point that the Lord makes here in verse 4, and that is the price of eternal life.

I glorified you on the earth having accomplished the work which you have given me to do. One thing really jumped out at me at that.

That's past tense. The cross is still future. 24 to 48 hours away, but so sure, down to the minutest details, was it going to happen that he speaks in the past tense.

If people were to be saved, Jesus had to leave heaven, come to this earth, die, and be resurrected. That's the plan. And by the way, that plan was hatched before the universe was created, before the foundation of the world.

[29:40] We've had people along the way, and when I'm dear saint, with the Lord, and he said, I'm worried about all my future sins.

And I said to him, and many of you will smile because you know what I'm talking about, Lloyd, when Jesus died, all your sins were future. He died 2,000 years ago. Of course he has the ability to die for future sins.

We'd all be lost if he didn't. Jesus came to earth, he died, and he was resurrected. That is how he could save those whom the Father had given him.

And he came and perfectly accomplished all that the Father gave him to do. He didn't leave anything out. They didn't have a debriefing when Jesus got to the throne room.

the cross was an accomplishment. And I tell people the cross actually the very best that God could offer and the very worst that man could offer met.

[30:51] Right there. They met in space-time history. And it was the cross. It was an accomplishment. It was done perfectly and during that terrible act, Christ was bringing glory to the Father.

He was redeeming a people for his namesake. God was in total sovereign control of all the events leading up to during and after the cross.

What did he tell Pilate? You would have no power over me were it not granted to you from above. none. The disciples came to realize this finally and it gave them great comfort during their earthly ministry.

Once they were filled with the Holy Spirit they came to realize these things. The price was high. The price of eternal life was the death of God's Son, our Savior.

Savior. We should never speak of our salvation in arrogant or flippant terms. Please never say it is what I have done. This is what I have done.

[32:08] I and me and all that. It is what Christ has done for us. He was the willing and perfect sin bearer. And that should compel us to even greater obedience.

When we realize what he has done for us, the price he has paid, you were purchased at a great price. And then we have the worship and reverence which he deserves.

Verse 5. He says to this, Now Father, glorify me together with yourself with the glory which I had with you before the world was.

We cannot plumb the depths of the glory. that he had with the Father before the world was created. I have actually heard people say God made humans because he was bored or he just needed to be loved.

He needed compassion. He even there was the Trinity. They had each other. They were complete. He had glory.

[33:18] Now John caught a glimpse of that glory in the book of Revelation. The beloved disciple saw Jesus in glory and fell at his feet as dead.

He did that experience before with Peter and James on the Mount of Transfiguration. Passed out. Talked to the Roman soldiers when they came into the garden and said, Jesus said, whom seek you?

He said, Jesus of Nazareth. Your Bible says, I am he. What he said was, I am. He went right back to the burning bush when he spoke to Moses. He said, I am.

And they all passed out. I'm going to run into the guys that made Mel Gibson that made the Passion. He said, why did you leave that out? That should have been in there.

They passed out. So we have Jesus accomplishing the great work of redemption. The Lord Jesus deserves full reverence worship.

[34:20] We are setting that on Monday night. He deserved worship on this earth during the incarnation. He didn't receive a lot of it, but he deserved it.

And he deserves worship now that he has returned to his rightful throne in heaven. And as I told the Monday night guys, if you got any confusion, someone said, do we worship the Father, the Son, or the Spirit?

And the answer is yes. yes, that's the Godhead. The three are one. He deserves worship now that he has returned to his rightful throne in heaven.

Now, we cannot comprehend the glory that the triune God receives in heaven. Created angels who cry out day and night, holy, holy, holy, surround them.

Holy is the Father, holy is the Son, holy is the Spirit. God is thrice holy. Even the seraphim, and it's interesting, in the Hebrew language, they are called burning angels, burning holy angels.

[35 : 31] That's interesting language. They are on fire, but not consumed. We had a little example of that on earth one time, didn't we? Burning bush. But these angels are said to be just, and it's really being near the glory of Christ, the Shekinah, but they appear to be on fire, but they're not consumed.

What do they do? They hide their eyes with a set of their wings from the supreme holiness of the Godhead. They hide their eyes.

They fly around and declare the holiness of the Lord. Jesus today shares again in the glory He had with the Father for eternity.

Now, He came to earth and He had to shield that. Can you imagine if He hadn't shielded that? He wouldn't have got anything done. Everybody would have been fallen at His feet. Everyone would have been passing out.

Tombs would have been opening up and the dead would have been coming out. He shielded it for a time, but it peaked through a few times. So the seraphim are declaring the thrice holy God of heaven.

[36 : 43] In the incarnation, the Lord Jesus, Lord Himself, and in humility, He came to serve. What an amazing concept.

He said, the greatest among you will be your servant. I made a comment like that once, Jim, at Phillips, and I said, well, you know, we were talking about leadership, and one of Charlie Bowerman stabbed me, and I said, well, you know, the greatest leader that ever lived said, the greatest among you will be your servant.

And everybody looked at me like I was out of my mind. I didn't get very far. He was for a time equal to men and lower than angels.

He put Himself in that position by His authority. But His ascension changed all that. Everything changed when He ascended. And I love how Paul describes it.

For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, of those that are in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

[38 : 13] Philippians chapter 2 verse 9 to 11 There is a day approaching. Personally, I think it's very near. I will tell you this, it's a lot closer today than it was yesterday.

And tomorrow gets here, it's going to be a lot closer than right now. There's a day approaching when every knee is going to bow.

Every knee. Saddam Hussein will bow. Hitler's going to bow. Every knee is going to bow. Now, the beauty and the majesty of it all is this.

You and I don't have to wait for that day to come. We don't have to sit around and just say, come quickly Lord, so I can bow.

We have the privilege and the power to bow before our God and Savior now. We can do it in this lifetime. We have the privilege to come to Him as His child, as children.

[39 : 29] Hebrews 4.16 said that we may come boldly with confidence into the throne room, not flippantly, but boldly there to receive grace and mercy.

We can go into the throne room. In the mind of God, we live in the throne room. That's a difficult concept, I know. But we can bow before Him and even now, tonight, we can confess Jesus Christ as Lord.

to the glory of God the Father. So don't think you have to wait for some appointed time in the future. We have the privilege and the power to do all that now.