

John 17:2 – 26

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~ Our Spiritual Safari began considering the Lord's Prayer in the last leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God; and the "Lord's Prayer" is only found in this Gospel record. Nowhere else. I spent quite a few jots and tittles explaining why THIS is the Lord's Prayer – and not the other so-called Lord's Prayers, variously and randomly designated as such by myriad individuals in other parts of the Bible. I have stressed this subject as I have because I think this is a very important piece of Biblical knowledge to possess. It certainly helps us discuss Scripture in a sincere, educated and knowledgeable manner. If you have not read our previous report and, indeed, all twenty-seven reports from this book of the Bible, then I can only suggest you go back and do so now....

2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

~ To me, this is an alarming statement because it defines the power of Christ over all flesh. He could force every man, woman, child, plant and animal – as well as all inanimate objects – to bow to Him if He wanted to. God could bring everyone and everything into abject subjection to Himself; in which case everything would operate like robotic zombies in a rehearsed script. God is never going to do that. Even so, God still has power over all flesh. The church is the Father's love-gift to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that automatically brings up the question of election. Well, we have been over election – and we will take it up extensively again on safari at the appropriate time – so I am not going into that again now. Many people have very strong views about election; many are hyper-Calvinistic. Others would take the low Armenian view. Somewhere between those two is the normal and natural interpretation; and that's where I am – somewhere between.

Our safari holds many Calvinist views, as you have already seen. Spurgeon said to a man one time who knew that Calvin believed in election and knew

that Spurgeon was Calvinistic in his theology and also preached a “whosever will may come” Gospel, and who had criticized Spurgeon terribly for his style of preaching, “.... if God had put a yellow streak on the back of every elected individual, I wouldn’t even bother preaching; I would just run up and down the street lifting up shirt tails and finding those with the yellow streak on their back and I would only talk to them.” I like that very much.

If God gave us inside information and told us who the elect were, my friends, I can promise you I would do it that way, too. Well, the Bible teaches, “whosoever will may come” – and that is a legitimate offer from God to every person reading this report right now. If you disagree, I can only conclude that you haven’t any excuse – you simply refuse to come to God. That will be your own condemnation. Eternal life is given to those who have heard the call and responded in their hearts and have chosen to come to Christ of their own free will. That’s the way I teach the Bible because that is the way I understand it....

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

~ Life eternal is not contingent upon the amount of knowledge you have; it’s dependent on the nature of the knowledge you have. WHO you know is what is important. Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ, friends? Likewise, it’s not the amount of faith one has – it’s what KIND of faith you have that is all important. Spurgeon also said, “.... it’s not thy joy in Christ that saves you – it’s Christ! It’s not even your faith in Christ that saves – although that is the instrument used – it is Christ Himself!” The Blood of Christ and HIS merit with the Father is what saves us. The object of faith is our Redeemer. It’s entirely possible to have faith in and believe the wrong thing. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. The Gospel is that Jesus died for our sins, was buried and rose again. Our knowledge of these facts and our response to that knowledge is saving faith, because we have then trusted Christ as our Savior....

4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

~ We see Jesus turning in His final report to the Father; but He hasn't yet died on the cross or risen from the dead. See, God speaks of things that are not as if they are. God speaks of things to come as if they have already happened; because as far as God is concerned, those things have already happened. Future tense with God is as completely accurate as past tense. Let's try it this way: the future IS the past with God. Remember, on the cross Jesus will say, "it is finished!" That means YOUR redemption – and mine – is finished. So, with that, we could just place a period, and nothing could be added or taken away from His finished work. God has already done everything that is essential for our salvation. Therefore, the Gospel is not about you doing something for God – the Gospel is about what God has ALREADY done for YOU. Your response to that finished work is what determines your salvation....

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

~ In the epistle to the Philippians, Paul speaks of the fact that Christ "emptied Himself." Naturally, those who deny the deity of Christ seized upon this statement from chapter two and they teach this means He emptied Himself of His deity, which is entirely incorrect - not to mention being a reckless, irresponsible interpretation. We have already seen the Word became flesh in this Gospel. That little baby in the manger was God Himself. Jesus, as a man, wasn't ninety-nine percent God - He was one hundred percent God. What Jesus "emptied" Himself of were His prerogatives of deity and, also, He laid aside His glory temporarily. We make a huge production of angels, a few wise men and shepherds showing up at Christmas time; but, friends, Jesus is the Lord of all creation; and all creation – every human being on the top of the earth – should have been at Jerusalem at His birth - but they weren't. So, Jesus hands in this report and He now prays for Himself and His disciples....

6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

~ Here, we have another direct reference to the doctrine of election. You can reject election if you want to but, since it's in the Word of God, I'll teach it this way. Jesus certainly did talk to the Father about it in prayer. Because Jesus and the Father are the Ones talking it over, and we are only listening, I feel this is a sort of private conversation; I also feel that maybe I don't know as much as I possibly could know or should know - about election. I have considered Hodge, Calvin, Thornwell and Shed, Strong and just about every great theologian's perspective on election and I am here to tell you I still don't really know anything about election. The reason is: after studying all those great Bible scholars I have discovered that they don't know much about it, either. In fact, I know as much as they know, and neither of us understand the doctrine of election. What I do know is that NO ONE is elected to be lost. This is God's side of the problem; and we're just not privy to it. There are many things God knows that we do not know - maybe you didn't know that? Well, verse six is mystical as Jesus talks to the Father about us. You can't fathom the meaning of this, and neither can I. We're witnessing the relationship between Christ and His own here; and it is a wonderful relationship....

8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

~ To be fair; the disciples had made tremendous advances in the three years they had been with Jesus. I have made them out to be totally ignorant of Jesus at certain times - and they were but, here, I think they have a correct conception of His Person. They still have a very wrong conception of His purpose, and they simply do not understand His death

and resurrection - at all. The apostles do know Jesus has come from God, though; and they believe God has sent Him to them....

9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

~ When someone correctly states that Jesus does not pray for the world, most others are usually taken aback by that. Remember, we're dealing with a very special prayer here. We know that Christ is NOT praying for the world because we are told right here. The ministry of intercession that Jesus continues presently is for His own who are in the world – and that's all! I don't think this is too difficult to comprehend. Maybe you think it's wrong that Jesus doesn't pray for the world; well, friends – Jesus died for the world. What else would you have Him pray for the world? The worldly ministry of God belongs to the Holy Spirit today as the world is convicted of sin, righteousness and judgment. When Jesus says, "...those whom Thou hast given Me..." – well, here we go again with election.

I have discovered many facts God tells me to believe that are paradoxical. They are not contradictory, but they have two conclusions that seem almost diametrically opposed to each other. Election versus free will happens to be one of them. I'm intentionally not addressing the doctrine of election because I am not teaching a theology class – I am teaching John chapter seventeen; another reason is that I am not qualified to teach the doctrine of election. If you had met me ten years ago I could have laid out all the answers for you. I'm not sure what happened, but I don't have all the answers I had at one time. I do know that both election and free will are true. You have the free will to reject Christ or accept Him. You choose to do good or evil - right or wrong - every day....

10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

~ Alright, friends; the whole purpose for which and the entire reason you are saved is ONLY to bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ. We are moving across some profound statements now. Jesus says we might be one as Jesus and the Father are One. This is the Great High Priestly prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is for the present hour as Jesus prays for the unity of believers. Jesus isn't praying for the ecumenical movement and Jesus isn't praying that the apostles will join the right organization, either. No, friends, Christ prays that we will all be as one - in Him - in His Word. This is an organic unity that only God could form....

12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

~ It is the Word of God that causes the problems we are having in this world today. Jesus said He came to bring division, not peace. God makes no apologies for that. I am teaching and you are learning from the most revolutionary Book ever written in the history of mankind. Look around at all the radicals and revolutionaries; I happen to be one of them. The fact that you can't save yourself and that you can't make this world any better; but only the Lord Jesus Christ can save and help us - is certainly revolutionary. The world doesn't like that because they want to plant some flowers and trees, save some animals and work on ecology and attempt to clean up the pollution so they can pat themselves on the back and say, "... I am a good person." Jesus contradicts them, saying, "none are good but God." What men do not realize is they are polluting the world a thousand times more than they can ever clean it up. Man is responsible for all the bad things in the world because our human hearts are polluted. The things I teach just do not happen to be on television programming and in magazine articles. No, the world steers totally clear of this section of Scripture at all

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costs. I wish I could stress to you the all-importance of a complete, correct and proper understanding of Holy Writ. I fear I have failed monumentally....

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

~ "...from the evil ONE" is the correct reading of the last phrase in verse fifteen, and it is very important to note. Christians make a huge deal of the "soon coming of Christ" and "looking for that Blessed Hope" and praying for it; I have news for you: Jesus isn't praying that at all. Jesus is praying that God KEEPS us IN the world. God gets more glory by our being IN the world than He would by taking us OUT of the world. Most people think the rapture is going to be a special something – and it will be – but we need to understand properly what gives God the most glory, and that is for us to be here in this world. Now, if you knew Andrew Hunt like Andrew knows Andrew, you would agree that is quite a miracle to say He gets the glory by keeping me here. I have a hard time seeing through that little paradox, you may be absolutely sure....

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

~ God ONLY uses the Word of God to sanctify the believer through truth. The ONLY instrument of sanctifying power today is the Word of God. Most of you know that this is my one hang up in the world - the Word of God. I feel like I should spend some time developing this completely – again – but I also feel we have to continue to move along now. We are sent into the world to bear a witness and that means to be a witness for the Word of God. Christ identifies Himself with us today in Holy Writ – and nowhere else, friends. We ought to be identified with Him in this world, and that means actually knowing Who we are speaking of when we deign open our mouths concerning the Lord God. One can only learn those things and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ in the Word of God....

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

~ Jesus is praying for the church to come in the future. I do not believe in the ecumenical movement, because I have heard them say a million times, "... let's all get together and answer the prayer of Christ." Well, Jesus isn't praying for you and me to get together to answer His prayers - and He never will. That's heresy. This is the unity the Holy Spirit brings when He places us into the body of believers by spiritual baptism; it is the work of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit alone Who can bring us into the body of believers. Friends, you cannot make that unity – all you can do is fail miserably trying.

The National and World Council of Churches just don't happen to be able to make this happen, and they have failed trying since about 1958. The very ones who speak incessantly about this unity nonsense are the ones that divided the church in the first place. The church is made up of the body of believers; and they can only be joined together by the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. This prayer is not directed at us by any means. We should also understand that God always hears the prayer of Christ. All believers are one in Christ already. The prayer of Jesus was answered a long time ago. We don't have to belong to the same organization because I don't belong to any organization; the vital thing for us today is to be joined to the Living Christ....

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

~ God loves you and me just as He loves His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. What a lovely closing picture we have on safari today. These are all exactly accurate statements, friends – the world doesn't know God – not at all. Christ has embraced His entire mission of redemption in this chapter. Any true believer believes that God sent Christ into this world to die for our sins. We need to pray that love be in our hearts because this is the genuine Lord's Prayer. Our Spiritual Safari concludes chapter seventeen of the Gospel of John with this report - and we will jump right back in at chapter eighteen in the next ~

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