

When Jesus Prayed for You
John 17:9-26
Small Group Guide

Opening Icebreaker Question:

- What two or three items show up in your prayers more than anything else?
- What do our prayers indicate about what we value?

BACKGROUND: We've been in a series throughout Lent called "Teach us to pray." We've looked at a few teaching passages where Jesus or Paul instruct us on how we pray. But today we're wrapping up the series by looking at a prayer of Jesus that reveals what's in his heart. It's his most extended prayer that we know of, at least that's recorded in Scripture. We're looking at the prayer known as Jesus' "High Priestly Prayer," in John 17.

TAKE TURNS READING John 17:9-17.

1. Josh presented 3 main ways Jesus prayed for us. First, Jesus prayed for us, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." (v. 17).
 - a. What does "sanctify" mean? (Look it up if you need to.)
 - b. Why would Jesus pray for us to be sanctified as one of his 3 main emphases?
 - c. Jesus says God's word is truth. How would you summarize the main point of that truth in one sentence?
 - d. How does this truth shape us?
 - e. What practices with God's Word have been most helpful for you, in terms of keeping you distinct from the world's values?

READ John 17:18-19.

2. Second, Jesus prayed for us to be on mission with him: "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world."
 - a. How do you define "mission" or "purpose?"
 - b. What was Jesus' mission?
 - c. Why would Jesus pray for us to share his mission as one of his 3 main prayers?
 - d. One psychologist, recently quoted in the *Washington Post*, stated that having a purpose is healthy: "Purposeful individuals tend to be less reactive to stressors and more engaged, generally, in their daily lives, which can promote cognitive and physical health." Have you experienced this healthy effect in your life?
 - e. On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being high, how much does the mission of Jesus function as your life-orienting purpose?
 - f. In addition, research has shown that "People who perceive themselves as being useful had a stronger feeling of well-being and were less likely to become disabled or to die during a seven-year follow-up period than those who didn't see themselves this way." How does the mission of Jesus give a sense of usefulness to us?

READ John 17:20-26.

3. Third, Jesus prayed for us to have unity.
 - a. How many references to unity do you find in John 17?
 - b. What is the example and standard for this unity? (Hint: see v. 21). Why is that important?
 - c. What things most hinder us from experiencing the kind of unity Jesus envisioned for us?
 - d. How is it possible to have genuine unity with other people when you don't agree about everything?
 - e. In v. 23, Jesus reveals the effect of our unity. What is that? Why is that important? Have you ever seen an example of this happening?
 - f. How might you act differently with your children, your marriage, at work, if you knew people were watching you and would judge the validity and effectiveness of Christ by your unity and/or love for each other?

4. How much do your prayers align with the things Jesus prayed for you?
 - a. Pastor Josh stated that when we understand what it cost Jesus to love us, we will want what he wants and pray what he prays. How exactly does that change in motivation and desire work?
 - b. A "Holy Father" (v. 11) hears our prayers. How might each of those two words affect the way we pray?

5. How has this teaching series on prayer been useful or helpful to you? Have you had any major insights or growth areas?

6. What are some prayers that would sound like the prayers of Jesus for us? Give examples, whether it had to do with God's Word, mission, Christian unity, or another aspect of his kingdom. How can those prayers be specifically applied to our small group?

7. **Share and Pray:** Among our other prayer requests, let's pray some of these sample prayers that we already shared from the above question.