

The Lord's prayer (John 17)

Part 1

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[00:00:00] Something of God's Word, first of all from the Lord's Prayer in John 17, reading from verse 20, Neither pray I for these alone, but from them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, that 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, and the glory which thou gavest me, I've given them, that they may be one, even as we are one, 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 as love them as thou hast loved me, Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, [00:01:01] be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world. Something more about that same oneness from the epistle to the Ephesians, Ephesians chapter 1, verse 3, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him for the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have [00:02:05] redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace. We were led this afternoon to gather from God's word what a wonderful thing it is to be included in Christ's inheritance and as such to be one in a unity of which the world can know nothing, the same time of unity which is God made and God preserved. I couldn't help thinking of one of our, in fact our one converted Muslim brother in Kitty Village. He reveled in that first chapter of the first epistle of Peter. He used to say in his own way, ah heaven is a prepared place for a preserved people.

[00:03:13] I'd like to bring you greetings for many of the Lord's preserved people, preserved in a very special sense of the word over the past three years, in answer to your prayers for which my brethren want to thank you very sincerely. Returning from my last visit home, I got as far as Trinidad and there I could get no further.

No more communication with British Guiana except that there came over the radio news of another thoroughfare being involved in a tremendous fire in Georgetown of looting and bloodshed. [00:04:11] Then the Lord allowed that on the first civilian plane off schedule to be allowed in, I was allowed to rejoin your brethren who'd been preserved at that time and who've been preserved ever since. Leaving British Guiana just after the Quit Monday conference in Georgetown, there were brethren representing each of the 11 gatherings and they were one in asking that their love be conveyed to you and their thanks for your prayers that have been remarkably answered. I don't want to go into

details, but there were remarkable answers to prayer. A bomb was thrown [00:05:08] not as far away as that door from our little residence. Two were killed and two were hospitalized. A fragment went through one meeting room window and yet not a pane of glass in our home which was nearer than the meeting room was even cracked. God allowed that nobody was home at the time. Ms. Nutter was away in Essequibo, but the Glover and his sister had been to a Bible reading in Kitty Village. The Lord had allowed me to be with the Saints at Craig up the Demar River and in that way we were even saved from the shock.

I think of a little assembly in a village called Friendship. [00:06:05] They knew very little of friendship during the recent disturbances. In the short road in which our meeting room stands, seven buildings were destroyed by fire, in three cases adjoining the little wooden homes of Saints.

Yet not one of those homes of the Saints was allowed to catch fire. That was a remarkable deliverance when one realizes what it means to be in wooden buildings and to have a high wind usually blowing it would carry sparks and such like. There's another place on the east coast called To Friends. Our meeting room today looks like a cottage in a vineyard, a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, entirely alone.

[00:07:04] Till recently we had on either side of us a friendly, two friendly Mohammedan families, a Hindu family on the other side and Muslim family opposite.

Due to the disturbance and the artificial partition that has taken place, all those homes have been removed. Large wooden buildings which can be dismantled being made of wood. Now meeting room stands alone. We feel it because some of those whom we regard as the stranger within our gates, some of the East Indian who used to venture into our meeting rooms and hear the gospel, no longer dare be seen, are coming near. One of our brethren made a point, in fact more than one of us, have made a point of visiting [00:08:04] those who've been displaced. Only recently we gather that the car that did so was marked as the next for stoning when an opportunity occurred. Our meeting room in that village was marked and was announced for burning as a reprisal for the burning of a mosque in which needless to say we had nothing to do. But God has preserved each one of our meeting room properties, each of the properties of the saints, each of the saints themselves. The only person to have been injured was a sister who serves with the Red Cross. She was on an errand of mercy and with her colleague was beaten insensible and taken to hospital in a serious condition. But God has raised her up and she's since been at meetings. We want to thank you. During all that time testimony for the Lord Jesus was uninterrupted. [00:09:07] Not one place did the breaking of bread cease. There was a curfew at one time. We adjusted ourselves to that. At one time we were only allowed to travel up the east coast where at one point an armed guard would be put into the car to carry one through a danger area. Thank God all that is over. We hope permanently. We need your prayers because we enjoy at the moment what is called an uneasy peace. But advantage had been taken of it so much so that over Easter we felt quite free to encourage young people to travel to Esequibo where there was held where there was held a Bible school over a long weekend. More than a hundred took part [00:10:06] including seven young brothers and sisters from Barbados who came over with their brother Mahew for the occasion. All these are happy answers to your prayers and during that time there have been conversions. During that time of trial and uncertainty there have been receptions into fellowship. We thank the Lord and we thank those who have remembered us in prayer but we do ask a continuation of your prayers especially for our dear Swiss brother Luc Farage whom the Lord has given to us for the last 18 months. One thinks of Epaphroditus. He's really worked himself right out. Couldn't be restrained. He had such a heart for the Lord [00:11:03] and soon after Esequibo he began

to sicken. Now hepatitis has been diagnosed and now it's being properly treated he's getting considerable relief. He was to have shared the visits to Trinidad, St. Vincent, St. Lucia and Barbados on the way here but had to forego that pleasure. I should have been so glad of his fellowship. Brethren there although they haven't seen him have accepted him and are looking for him. Please pray that he may soon be fully restored. Now if we go back to what was read. First of all from the 17th of John.

One hesitates to make comment on something so intimate and so sacred as the Lord's own [00:12:13] loving expression and request on our behalf. For we and they for whom you've been praying are certainly included in that verse. Neither pray I for these alone but for them also which shall believe on me through their word 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. This was the Lord's prayer. Does God answer prayer? Indeed. Would he answer the prayer of his own, his well-beloved son? How could it be otherwise? The Lord help us to endeavor to keep [00:13:05] that unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. It works out in a very happy way. Back in British Guiana with race against race elsewhere they sit down together at the Lord's table in more than one gathering. They of both races, one in Christ Jesus. They come to our young people's meetings, to our lads meeting in Kitty Village, both races. Being a pleasure to notice at least three happy David and Jonathan friendships united in service for the Lord, in each case one of either race, one in Christ Jesus in service as well. In verse 22 of John 17 this oneness is associated with a glorified Lord. It's a glorious oneness.

[00:14:17] We need never be ashamed of it. How much we should be proud of it in the better sense of the word. How much we should covet that believers around us might learn more of this oneness and this intimate relationship with Christ Jesus, not only as Savior and Lord, but as head of his body, of his body, the church.

We have to remember, especially out there, God has called us to be something more than just another mission. Thank God there are missions that present the Lord Jesus and present the blood [00:15:07] and God uses them to the salvation of souls, but we are something more than another mission. A local representation of the body of Christ with such a glorious glorified head and with such an intimate relationship as he himself expresses in that prayer on our behalf. Now going to the first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians. It has undoubtedly been noted how throughout the first chapter and to a great extent throughout the second chapter get the expression in Christ, in whom, in him.

[00:16:04] And just for a little while this evening might we dwell upon the end of the sixth verse accepted in the beloved.

It takes the focus away from ourselves, directs us to the Lord Jesus, in whom we have redemption, in whom we've obtained an inheritance which follows nicely this afternoon's Bible reading, verse 11, in the beloved. Who is this referred to as the beloved?

Set apart, infinitely above all others, first of all he is God's beloved.

[00:17:07] We had it in the fourth, 17th of John, thou lovest me before the foundation of the world. This is the object of an eternal love. And in turn, you and I become the objects of an eternal love. Yea, I've loved thee with an everlasting love. One thinks of that busy gospel of Mark, the gospel of the perfect servant son, almost at the beginning of the Lord's ministry. There is testimony from the Father himself

in heaven, this is my beloved son, in whom I'm well pleased.

[00:18:01] Then, upon that mount of transfiguration again, this is my beloved son, hear ye him.

Live to us, he has become our beloved. If we dare say we love him, and how feeble is our love compared with his, it's only that we love him because he first loved us. Love begets love.

It's he, by his spirit, who has begotten love in these otherwise cold, unresponsive hearts. Much is said about the Beloved in that wonderful song of Solomon.

Solomon, in his outstanding wisdom, inspired by God, he had written a thousand and five songs.

[00:19:05] The Holy Spirit has chosen one out of the thousand and five to preserve to us wonderful thoughts as to God's love for an ancient people, thoughts which we may appropriate to ourselves too. Nonetheless, the thoughts of the love of bridegroom to bride, of whom you and I, through faith in the Lord Jesus, form part. In this day of grace, my return to the song of Solomon, again with unshod feet, because this is dealing with God's Beloved. But one or two thoughts as to what should be our appreciation of him, may be gathered from the song of Solomon. First of all, chapter eight, [00:20:02] verse five.

Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?

Leaning suggests dependence. Leaning acknowledges the strength of another and one's own weakness and insufficiency. As we think of God's Beloved, as we claim him as ours, doing as the bride did in this case, first of all saying, my Beloved is mine and I am his. Learning later to say, not so much what I possess, I am my Beloved and he is mine. Finally, [00:21:03] I am my Beloved and his desire is toward me. The first attitude, leaning upon her Beloved, coming up from the wilderness, rightly, we sing of this world as a wilderness. Thank God for one who came into this wilderness and that he might lift us up from our lost condition, that he might bear us up, bear us to himself, introduce us to the Father. Leaning on her Beloved, taking the place of dependence.

It has been said, Jacob never walked so well as when he was lamed. He never worshipped so well [00:22:07] as when he did, leaning upon the top of his staff.

Chapter 5 Here is the bride speaking well of her Beloved.

A challenge in verse 9 of chapter 5, What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved? O thou fairest among women, what is thy Beloved more than another Beloved, that thou dost so charge us? My Beloved is white and ruddy, the cheapest among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold, [00:23:04] his locks are bushy and black as a raven, his eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk and fitly set, his cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers, his lips like lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh, his hands are as gold rings set to the barrel, his bearing is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires, his legs are as pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold, his countenances as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars, his mouth is most sweet, yea, he's altogether lovely, this is my Beloved, this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem. Do we speak well of the one who to us has become our Beloved? [00:24:04] Or are we sometimes ashamed to acknowledge him? Here the Bride is making much of her Beloved. It's very interesting to notice her description begins from the head downward.

If you notice throughout scripture, anything associated with the Lord Jesus is mentioned from the head downward. It's mentioned from the head downward. In the Gospel of John, I think it is, where that wonderful garment of his is described. It's described as being without seam, woven throughout from the top. In the first of the Revelation, verse 13, [00:25:01] and I turned to see the voice that spake with me, and being turned I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one, like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head, his hairs were white as wool, as white as snow. His eyes were the flame of fire. His feet, like unto fine grass, as if they burned in the furnace, and his voice was the sound of many waters. A garment down to the foot, reminding us of that wondrous garment for which even the rough Roman legionary was constrained to gamble rather than to tear it.

Then the description from his head to his feet. [00:26:07] Going back to the Song of Solomon, chapter 5, his head has the most fine gold. Gold speaking of divine righteousness, gold speaking of divinity itself.

His head has the most fine gold. One remembers there once was a vision, given to Nebuchadnezzar, of world authority as entrusted to man. It began with a head of gold, but how quickly it deteriorated.

The shoulders, the breast of silver, the body of brass, the legs of iron, and then the feet, the toes, part iron and part clay.

[00:27:10] Oh, what an insecure, what an unstable support for, I nearly said, such a top-heavy image. Today, everywhere in the world, and perhaps in a pointed way, in British Guiana of late, we've been seeing how the clay and iron fall apart, they can't be welded, now they can't be fused. But here, what a lovely description, the head, fine gold. When one comes down to the 15th verse, the whole set in sockets of fine gold.

Just now we read he is all together lovely, through and through, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

[00:28:16] And in between, verse 14, his hands are as gold rings, set with the burial.

Gold through and through, from head to foot, and in the middle, one might say. Incidentally, it comes to mind, what we have in Psalm 45, verse 2, Thou art fairer than the children of men, grace is poured into thy lips, therefore God hath blessed thee forever. Fairer than the children of men, all together lovely, grace poured into thy lips, his lips like lilies, that emblem of purity.

[00:29:13] No wonder it was said of him, never man spake like this man. Well, we've got as far as the bride leaning upon her beloved, and then speaking well of her beloved, making much of him.

Doing so from the head, to the feet, how different from man, of Absalom we read, from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head, no blemish in him.

In the first chapter of Isaiah, am I right, or is it the, yes, in the sixth verse, [00:30:06] from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, no soundness, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores, man described from the foot, upward, man is of the earth, our beloved is from above, I am from above, ye are from beneath, he said. Chapter four in the Song of Solomon, verse 16, Awake, O north wind, and come thou south, blow open my garden, the spices thereof may flow out, [00:31:05] let my beloved

come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits.

Relative to the bridegroom, relative to her beloved, the bride is expected to bear fruit.

The Lord Jesus himself made that clear, we might turn to it in the 15th of John, I know these scriptures are very, very well known, it's only a matter of refreshing our memories, stirring up our pure minds by way of remembrance. John 15. Israel had failed like that vine brought out of Egypt in Isaiah 5. [00:32:02] The Lord Jesus now speaks of himself as the true vine who was going to bear fruit and not to fail, who will enable those who abide in him to bear fruit and to the glory of God. John 15.

Verse four, abide in me and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me. Fruit bearing, fruit mentioned here, yes, verse two, we get more fruit mentioned. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that he may bring forth more [00:33:08] fruit. Fruit, more fruit. Verse five, I am the vine, ye are the branches, he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me he can do nothing. Verse eight, herein is my father glorified that ye bear much fruit of ourselves. The more we know ourselves, especially the more we know of him, the more we wonder the Lord could do anything with us. The wonder of his work in this day of grace is what he does very often in spite of the servant, in spite of the vessel, and yet he speaks of being glorified. In the 17th of John, [00:34:07] the Lord Jesus said of us, I am glorified in them. If we bear this in mind, how much more anxious we shall be to be worthy of such a commendation. One more thought concerning bearing fruit in the 16th verse, he has not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain, and that your fruit should remain.

I was very much affected to see the big meeting room, some facetiously call it our Cathedral of [00:35:05] the West Indies at River Road in Barbados. It holds 500 or so and they recently built a gallery which was used during the centenary of the truth having come to Barbados. That room filled to capacity and some in the gallery, it was touching. But what touched me more than all was this. There's a fine brother there, oh I suppose he's up in the 70s, but as upright as can be, son Major Harris. He called me and said I want you to meet one of my brothers scholars. He introduced a sister past middle age. I looked at him, he said yes. This was one of my [00:36:01] Sunday scholars in Sierra Leone, West Africa. Now as a young man he had joined the West India Regiment. A regiment you may have seen with a very picturesque Zouave uniform, scarlet tunic, white britches and turban and so on. Just a young brother and he was being sent away to Sierra Leone. Brethren said to him, look Harris be sure you speak for the Lord Jesus wherever you're sent. Very timidly this young brother with one or two others, perhaps not much older, spoke for the Lord in the garrison. One of those converted by the way was an artilleryman. He became our brother Levy in the island of St. Kitts. Mr. D'Almore and I had the privilege of preaching in a trash building that he built for the purpose, a little village called Tabernacle [00:37:06] at the foot of Mount Misery. There was fruit that remained and this past middle age sister had been a little girl, I suppose one of those in the married quarters. She'd come to a little Sunday school they started and there she was now rejoicing in the Lord with a very good testimony, fruit that had remained. Oh I thought what an encouragement to those of us who are young and feel our youth and feel our dependence upon our beloved. Just one thought in closing from the eighth chapter of the Song of Solomon, the thought with which that wonderful little book ends, the 14th verse of the eighth chapter. Make haste my beloved, be thou like [00:38:07] to a roe or to a young heart from the mountains of spices. Here is the bride longing for her beloved to come again. Surely this should be our attitude. Make haste. Even so come Lord Jesus. May the Lord find

us ready in heart, sincerely so to invite him and to live in the light of his coming for the little while till he come for his name's sake.