

Alive Again Easter Devotional Series-The High Priestly Prayer

I am not going to go through the devotional line by line because I still want you to take time to do that with your family. I'll ask the three questions but I will give you the opportunity to answer them on your own. However, I do want to address three things in Jesus' prayer in John 17. These are the things I want to make sure you don't miss.

We start with a little context though. In verse 1, John writes, "When Jesus spoke these words..." So, what are these words? For that we go back a few verses in John 16.

John 16:32-33 ³² *Listen, the hour is coming. Yes, it has now come that you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave Me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with Me.* ³³ *"I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world."*

Jesus is alluding to His death, the world-changing event that will happen in less than two days. He is telling them that things are about to get hard for them, harder than they have ever been before. Most, if not all of His disciples, still didn't fully understand what was about to happen and why. Because of the chaos surrounding His death, they would be unsafe and forced into hiding as followers of Christ. Before Jesus begins to speak to the Father, He leaves them with some encouragement. He says, "I know it's going to be hard but keep your chin up, I have overcome this world." They were about to find out what that really meant.

So, "when He spoke these words, He lifted His eyes towards Heaven and said:"

1. This is eternal life-John 17:3
 - a. We don't have many of Jesus' conversations with the Father recorded in the Bible but we know He often spent time in prayer. It was important to Him. It's kind of hard for us to fathom that this is God, talking to Himself, about Himself. In this instance, He knows His disciples are listening. Here, He gives them some insight into what He is about to accomplish. Through His death, the Father will be glorified and eternal life will be made available to all who believe. This eternal life is ONLY available through Jesus.
2. I pray for them, I do not pray for the world-John 17:9
 - a. This is not to say that Jesus never prays for the world or has no concern for the world. He obviously does (John 3:16). However, in this case He is making a point to specifically pray for His followers, those that have placed their faith and trust in Him. This really begins to point to the "high priestly" part of this prayer, which we will talk about in a moment. He is asking for protection, strength, and unity for His disciples. This prayer is answered beyond what any of us could imagine when He sends the Holy Spirit (you can read about that in Acts).
3. I do not pray for these alone-John 17:20
 - a. Here, Jesus prays for you! He prays for me! He takes time to pray for all those who will believe. I hope that is everyone here or if not, you will join that group of believers tonight before you leave this place.

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Like I said, I am going to let you all dig into the devo on your own but I wanted to address the “High Priestly” part because I don’t think the devo really addressed that very well. It focused more on the importance of prayer and that’s good but I don’t want you to miss this very important point.

Jesus is OUR High Priest!

To really understand what this means, we need to look back to the Old Testament and the ceremonial law. Priests, or those responsible for the administration of ceremonial law, were from a chosen bloodline, the Levites. They lived and breathed the Lord’s business from the time they were born. However, the High Priest in particular, had the very important responsibility of approaching the throne of God in the Holy of Holies, once a year to make atonement (to offer a substitute sacrifice) for the sins of the people. This involved the blood/death of a lamb, one with no physical faults. This atonement pictured the reconciled, or repaired, relationship between God and sinful humanity, innocent blood being the only bridge to that gap.

This was done over and over. This atonement only lasted a year.

But then comes Jesus.

Hebrews 4:14-16 ¹⁴ *Since then we have a great High Priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to our confession.*

¹⁵ *For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who was in every sense tempted like we are, yet without sin.* ¹⁶ *Let us then come with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Because of Jesus, His 100% humanity, His 100% deity, His willing sacrifice...as believers we now have direct access to the Father, not only for the reconciliation of our relationship but for continued access to Him through prayer. The same access Jesus had to the Father. If you recall, Jesus continually prayed for us to become one and He and the Father are One. His death was the one event that could make that happen.

Hebrews 7:23-28 ²³ *And the former priests were numerous because they were hindered from serving because of death.* ²⁴ *But He, because He lives forever, has an everlasting priesthood.* ²⁵ *Therefore He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, because He at all times lives to make intercession for them.* ²⁶ *For such a High Priest was fitting for us, for He is holy, innocent, undefiled, separate from sinners, and is higher than the heavens.* ²⁷ *Unlike those high priests, He does not need to offer daily sacrifices—first for His own sins and then for the people’s, for He did this once for all when He offered up Himself.* ²⁸ *For the law appoints men who are weak as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints a Son who is made perfect forever.*

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This was a one-and-done sacrifice. It didn't have to be made over and over. What Christ did was enough, fully, completely, 100%. Because of this, Jesus is continually going to the Father on our behalf.

Let's look at what 1 Peter says about priesthood and us.

1 Peter 2:5 *You also, as living stones, are being built up into a spiritual house as a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

1 Peter 2:9 *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may declare the goodness of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*

As saved, redeemed believers, we are a part of Holy Priesthood, a Royal Priesthood. We are servants of THE King. We are to be about His business 24/7 just as the priests of old were. Jesus Christ continually acts as our High Priest giving us access to the Father, the King of Kings. It starts with initial access through repentance and salvation but doesn't end there. It continues with constant communion with our Creator. It allows us to have a real relationship with God!

That's where we get the title for tonight's lesson and today's devo.

A High Priestly Prayer.

To finish out this night, I want to spend some time talking to our Heavenly Father. I'm going to ask you to do something you probably don't do that often or may have never done. I'm not going to ask you to pray out loud, so you can calm down 😊. I am going to ask you to actually get on your knees as you pray. There are many prayer postures recorded in the Bible. On your knees is one of them. I just want you to switch your focus from just sitting there with your head down, some of you fighting sleep.

Ryan Flynn will lead us in prayer, focusing on our personal walk with Christ.

Zach Simmons will us in prayer, focusing on our relationship with fellow believers.

Each of you pray for the person next to you (left, right, front, behind) specifically, by name. If you don't know their name, ask it now.

Group Prayer.

Stephen Wirges will close us in prayer, focusing on our burden for the lost.