TITLE: Wonder of Prayer

TEXT: Jn. 17:1-26; Heb. 7:24-26; Ps. 46:1-3;

Lk. 22:39-44

INTRODUCTION: The Wonder of Prayer is the subject of the message this morning and the prayer that I want to look at from Scripture is the Lords Prayer. But not the Lord’s prayer that you may be thinking of. Not the prayer that Jesus used as an example for how we should pray, but I want to look at a prayer that Jesus actually prayed..

**John 17:1-26 (NIV)  
1After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:**

**“Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. 2For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. 3Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. 4I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. 5And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.**

**6“I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. 7Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. 8For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. 9I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. 10All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. 11I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you.**

**Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one.**

**12While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me.**

**None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.**

**13“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. 14I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. 15My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. 17Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. 18As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. 19For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.**

**20“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: 23I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.**

**24“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.**

**25“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. 26I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”**

What do you think that it would have been like to have been there with the disciples the day Jesus prayed this prayer?

**11I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one. 12While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me.**

**13“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them…….15My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one…… 17Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. 18As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. 19For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.**

How would having Jesus pray this prayer for you have affected you? How might it have made you feel?

What impact would it have had on you if you were there that day with the twelve disciples as Jesus prayed this prayer?

Would you have been strengthened, encouraged, enlightened, filled with hope and strength and courage to face the task to which you have been called?

Would you have been emboldened to go out into the world to do His will and spread His gospel?

What would it be like to have Jesus pray this prayer for us today?

Well, the fact is Jesus has! You and I were also the recipients of this prayer… That day that Jesus prayed this prayer He was praying for you and I also…

**My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message!**

That is you and I! Jesus was praying for us also!

Just as if we were standing right there along side of the original 12 disciples.

Jesus said:

**20“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.**

**22I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: 23I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.**

**24“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.**

And what is really exciting about this prayer that Jesus prayed is that it is not in the past tense but is in the present and future tense.

This is still a prayer that Jesus is praying for you and I today.

Do you realize that Jesus actually prays for you?

**Heb. 7:24 -26 (NIV)  
24but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. 25Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.**

**26Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.**

Did you catch that?

**Because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. 25Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.**

The ministry of Jesus today is that of an intercessor.

In the devotional, Our Daily Bread, one time I remembering reading about a widow who shared about the pain she experienced after the loss of her husband.

She said it was dawn and she was painfully aware of being only a few weeks into widowhood. After another restless night, she felt too weary to pray for herself. Lord, she sighed, I need someone to pray for me right now..

She shared how almost instantly Gods Spirit comforted her distraught mind with the words of Hebrews 7:25 reminding her that Jesus was praying for her at that very moment…

“**25Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.**

She said that with that understanding about the intercession of Jesus, that Jesus was praying for her, a wave of relief come over her soul, she then acknowledged Him as her lifelong intercessor.

She shared how she would never forget how God changed the bleakness of that morning into a morning of great hope and comfort….

Right now Jesus is interceding for us.

Every time that we go through one of life’s trials, Jesus, our great high priest, is interceding for us.

Every time that Satan may try to bring a false accusation against us or try to bring up a sin that has been forgiven and covered by the blood of Christ, Jesus is standing right there to intercede for us. Approach the father on our behalf..

A Scottish minister by the name of Robert Murray McCheyne once said: *“If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no difference…He is praying for me!”*

EXAMPLE: At a Sunday night service several years ago, before I went into the ministry, I remember going up to the alter one night at the close of the service along with several others for a time of personal prayer and intercession before the Lord.

There where some things that I was struggling with at the time, and as we were all up there just quietly praying, most praying in the quietness of heart but a few praying quietly, but audibly.

And as I was in that quiet time before the Lord one who was praying quietly but audibly a little ways down from me I noticed was praying for me…

I wasn’t intentionally listening to hear their prayers and I am sure that they didn’t know that I could hear them, they were simply pouring out their heart to God and evidently God had laid me upon their heart.. But what an impact that had on me that night to hear someone praying for me at a time when I needed that prayer..

It was a great sense of encouragement to me to know that someone was lifting me up in prayer.

And then I realized that distance would make no difference. That they, and probably others, were praying for me at other times as well.

As great as an experience as this was, how would it make us feel if we could hear Jesus praying for us in the next room….

How does it make us feel to know that Jesus is praying for us? That He always lives to make intercession for us?

Reminds me of a promise of Scripture found in

**Psa. 46:1 -3 (NIV)  
1God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.**

**21Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,**

**31though its waters roar and foam**

**and the mountains quake with their surging.**

***Therefore we will not fear because God is our refuge and He is our strength, and He is an ever-present help in times of trouble.***

Jesus is praying for us whether we can hear Him or not..

And He knows what to pray for because He knows our very heart. He sees all of our hurts, all of our sorrow and pain, all of our struggles, every time that we fall and need lifted up Jesus see’s it.. Jesus knows…Jesus understands….

So Jesus prays for us! Jesus lifts us up in prayer!

I want to play a song by Scott Wesley Brown called Pray for Me. Listen to the words and see if they are words that you can identify with in some way this morning….

Do you ever find yourself being reminded at times that you are incomplete?

That you have times when you struggle or stumble or even fall in your walk with the Lord?

Times when you know the good that you ought to do yet because of the weakness of your flesh you fail to do it?

Times that we are reminded just how really weak we are in and of ourselves?

Times when we are the one who needs to be lifted up in prayer?

Well the good news is that at those times we do have someone who is praying for us!

We have one who Scripture says always lives to intercede for us! We have Jesus!

Jesus is personally interceding for us and Jesus also will often lay us upon each other’s hearts so that we can be praying and interceding for each other..

Tertullian,

*Prayer is the wall of faith: her arms and missiles against the foe who keeps watch over us on all sides. And, so never we walk unarmed.*

Prayer is how we reach the heart of God…

Prayer is that vital communication link that we have with our Heavenly Father..

Prayer is how we reach out to God and prayer is how God often reaches out and speaks to us..

That is why Satan tries so hard to keep us from praying..

If you are ever having trouble going to sleep at night just try to diligently pray…

It seems that, without fail, sleep will come upon you whether you want it to at that time or not…

Someone once said they didn’t know if it was God relaxing them or the enemy trying to shut them up, but that they almost always fell asleep praying..

Both may be true…

The enemy is no dummy. He knows the value of prayer and he will try to disrupt it whenever he can.

Example: gulf war… first order of business was to cut the communication lines between Sodom Hussein and his army. The first waves of bombers concentrated on taking out the communications network within Iraq.

And its effectiveness was phenomenal!

Once the communication lines were cut the Iraqi soldiers just sat huddled in their bunkers not knowing what to do and the collation forces just walked right in with little to no resistance…

As a Christian If we allow the enemy to cut our communication line with our commander then we too will just sit huddled in our bunker lacking the direction and guidance that we need to fight and win the spiritual battles that we face every day…

Jesus found it necessary to pray. The example that Jesus lives out before us in Scripture is an example of prayer..

He prayed for himself when faced with trial and tribulation in his own life…..

The night that he was betrayed and went to the cross Jesus went up to the garden to pray….

**Luke 22:39 -44 (NIV)  
39Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. 40On reaching the place, he said to them, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.” 41He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 42“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” 43An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. 44And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.**

If Jesus found it necessary to pray when he walked among us how much more do we need to pray today?

In this prayer that Jesus prayed in John 17, Jesus prayed for himself, he prayed for his followers that were there at the time and He prayed for all those who would come to believe in Him through their message… He prayed for us…

Jesus is still praying for you and I today…

**25Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.**

This morning are you encouraged to know that Jesus is praying for you?

Are you encouraged to know that in your times of need and times of trial or tribulation, that not only is Jesus praying for you, but He has also laid you upon the heart of others and that they are lifting you up before the Lord in prayer also?

Does the knowledge of this fact not only encourage and comfort your heart, but will it motivate you to follow the example of Jesus and become a person of prayer yourself?

Pray that God would give you discernment into the needs of others that need to be lifted up in prayer?

-- Oswald Chambers

*God never gives us discernment in order that we may criticize, but that we may intercede.*

Is it your desire to be an intercessor just as your Lord is an intercessor?

Are you thankful for the intercession of Jesus in your life this morning?

Thankful that He **always lives to intercede for you.**

Pray for Me

Scott Wesley Brown

Sometimes I'm reminded That I am incomplete  
When I find it hard To live those words I preach  
Oh, the stage is often easy To pretend I know it all  
But back home in the closet I stumble and I fall  
  
Sometimes I'm reminded That in myself I'm weak  
When I find it hard To live those words I speak  
Oh, in church it's often easy To wear the servant's mask  
And driving home, I push and shove To keep from being last

So pray for me That I'll be who I should be  
That what I will give Is what I will live  
And that I'll live the Christ in me  
  
Sometimes I'm reminded That I am incomplete  
When I find it hard To live those words I sing  
Oh, the stage is often easy To pretend I know it all  
But back home in the closet I stumble and I fall  
  
So pray for me That I'll be who I should be  
That what I would give Is what I would live  
And that I'll live the Christ in me