

Fellowship 8 of 8

With Him

#0270

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—August 21, 1970

We often repeat together what is called the Lord's Prayer. This, of course, is the prayer He gave us to pray as recorded in Matthew 6. But in John 17, we have the Lord's Prayer indeed. This is His own prayer. The entire chapter presents the longing of His heart for His people, His church, that they shall be kept in a world of sin free from the taint of evil, that they shall reveal the unity and love which shows His presence in the church, and finally as the great climax, that we shall all be with Him.

We find this climactic request in John 17:24:

“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 loved me before the foundation of the world” John 17:24.

I want you to get the setting of this earnest request. As we have just noted, it is the climax of this whole intercession. But where is Jesus as He prays? He's right on the border of the garden of Gethsemane. He has just completed that final supper with His disciples in the upper room, and has walked with them through the streets of Jerusalem, down across the Kedron, and is now approaching the Mount of Olives and the garden just below the mount, He pauses, and kneeling He pleads with His Father in these words.

But what is ahead of Him? The terrible agony in Gethsemane, the torture of the betrayal and the denial, the seven trials—each a farce, the scourging, the mocking, and finally the long hours of agony, and the crucifixion—all this is just ahead of Him.

But in all this prayer, you'll find no trace of lamentation over this. There is something which is upon His heart far more than any dread of His immediate future suffering. He looks beyond that struggle, and by faith He sees accomplished the great object of His mission. He sees fulfilled the great longing of His heart. What is it? That His people may be with Him.

And this morning there is a longing in my heart, dear ones that you and I shall, in this hour of worship, understand more fully than we ever have before, and feel in a deeper way than we ever have before, Christ's longing for us personally to be with Him.

Says one, "Well, I think I have heard something like that before." Yes you have, and you will again. All through eternity, friends, there will be no sweeter thought that can come to us than this, that God wants us, that there is a place in His heart that only we can fill. That He really longs for our fellowship. This is the message this morning from this verse, taken right from the climax of Jesus' prayer:

"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am" John 17:24.

He wants you there.

You see, when He went to Heaven He said to His disciples, "I go to prepare," what? "a place for you." That's why He went. He didn't go to be separated from us. He went to make arrangements that we might always be with Him. This is the longing of His heart, the consuming desire of His soul. We can't disappoint Him, can we, friends? No. He wants us with Him.

Well, after He prayed this prayer, He went on into Gethsemane. Leaving the eight disciples at the edge of the garden, He went into the recesses of the olive trees. And there, asking the three—Peter, James, and John—to unite with Him in prayer, He began to enter into the struggle with the powers of darkness and pour out His heart.

Christ there in the garden had a great longing for fellowship. If ever anyone needed somebody, Jesus needed Peter, James, and John that night. If they had sensed how much they meant to Him and how much He needed them, I think they would have stayed awake, don't you? Yes. But I fear that like them, we often have a very dim sense of how much we mean to God.

My dear ones, this morning let us, as it were, put to one side all the longings we have for God to do something for us. They're all right. It's all right to tell Him about it. But there is something tremendously bigger than that. It is satisfying the heart longing of the Deity, satisfying God with your love, your fellowship.

This is what Jesus craved in Gethsemane, and this was what was so cruelly, so thoughtlessly, so heedlessly denied Him. He trod the winepress alone, and of the people, there was none with Him. Three times He prays in that agony until the bloody sweat is forced from His pores. Three times He comes back and finds the disciples, the best men He could find in this world, sleeping, failing to intercede, failing to fellowship with Him.

But thank God, friends, He didn't stop. Do you know why? Well, I'll tell you why. There in the blackness of that night when the Devil pressed about Him his legions of angels and bore down upon Him with the temptation: "What's the use of Your giving Your life upon the cross? Nobody will appreciate it. Look at these disciples that You have been taking care of for three years. Look at how little they think of You. One of them is just about ready to deny you and the others here are

sleeping. What is the use of it? Why not go back to Heaven where You're loved? Why not go back with Your Father and the angels?" But it is a very literal fact, my friends that Jesus thought of you. He thought of me, individually.

And it may be a mystery, it is a mystery that we can never fully understand, comprehend, penetrate, or compass, but none of that should keep us from meditating on it. In Gethsemane, you were so precious to Jesus that He was determined to drink the cup that would make it possible for you to have life, even if it meant for Him an eternal loss. This is how much you mean to Him.

We see the same experience on Calvary, for Jesus drank the cup not only in Gethsemane but on the cross. In each of these experiences He was under a terrible darkness. The darkness of the night there under the olive trees, as the Devil pressed his temptations upon Him. And then out there at Calvary the sun was blotted out at noonday, and it was as dark as midnight without moon or stars. And in that darkness, Christ went through an experience similar to what He had gone through the night before in Gethsemane. Here again the Devil urged the temptation upon Him that if He went through with this and died upon the cross, He would never live again. We're told that bright hope did not open to Him the portals of the tomb. He couldn't see the Father's reconciling face. He couldn't see through to the resurrection.

Someone says, "But hadn't He foretold the resurrection?"

Yes, but in the darkness of this experience on the cross, He couldn't see through. He was taking our place, suffering our penalty, enduring the horrors, the torture of the second death. And so for Him, as He hung there upon the cross, to plunge into a final substitution of His life for ours meant the risk of eternal loss. And why did He go through with it? Ah, my friends, because He saw me and He saw you, individually. And for Him, life was not worth it unless you and I could share it with Him. He could not endure the thought of leaving us to perish and going on alone without us.

May, I plead with your hearts, we're in a comfortable building, in comfortable seats, so comfortable that it's very easy for us to be drowsy this morning and yet, we are dealing with the most sublime, the most wonderful, the most vital themes in all eternity. May, I appeal to you, do whatever is necessary to arouse the energies of the soul, and focus the thoughts upon the scenes of Gethsemane, and Calvary, and then to Heaven as we go with Jesus on the resurrection day.

Let's turn here in this Gospel of John to another scripture, John 20:17. You remember that early on the morning of the first day of the week, Jesus rose from the dead. The first one that He permitted to see Him was Mary Magdalene—This dear woman who had brought such grief to His heart again and again, but who by her repeated repentance was very dear to the heart of the Savior. And in His infinite wisdom, He arranged that she should be the first one that should see Him that resurrection morning.

Is there someone here this morning that feels yourself to be the chief of sinners? Remember friends, the first one that Jesus made His appearance to on the resurrection morning was one of whom those who knew her said, "She is a sinner." But thank God, she was a ransomed sinner one that had laid hold of the Savior's pardoning love.

At first, weeping because she thought He was still dead, she could not discern the Savior, but finally, as He spoke to her, she sprang to greet Him. Now notice:

"Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God" John 20:17.

Later in the day He was met by others, and He permitted them to worship Him. So it is evident between the words spoken to Mary in this scripture and the greeting He received from others later in the day, Jesus went to Heaven and returned. I want to read an inspired description of this wonderful scene of the resurrection morning as Christ enters Heaven to present Himself to the Father. This is taken from the old Spirit of Prophecy, Volume 3. (By the way, these precious old volumes have just been reprinted. They can be secured now through our office or through the Book and Bible House.) Listen to this wonderful description:

"Jesus refused to receive the homage of his people until he knew that his sacrifice had been accepted by the Father, and until he had received the assurance from God himself that his atonement for the sins of his people had been full and ample, that through his blood they might gain eternal life. Jesus immediately ascended to Heaven" *Spirit of Prophecy*, Volume 3, pages 202.

This is after His brief word with Mary.

"And presented himself before the throne of God, showing the marks of shame and cruelty upon his brow, his hands and feet. But he refused to receive the coronet of glory, and the royal robe, and he also refused the adoration of the angels as he had refused the homage of Mary, until the Father signified that his offering was accepted.

"He also had a request to prefer concerning his chosen ones upon earth. He wished to have the relation clearly defined that his redeemed should hereafter sustain to Heaven, and to his Father. His church must be justified and accepted before he could accept heavenly honor.

He declared it to be his will that where he was, there his church should be; if he was to have glory, his people must share it with him. They who suffer with him on earth must finally reign with him in his kingdom. In the most explicit manner Christ pleaded for his church, identifying his interest with theirs, and advocating, with a love and constancy stronger than death, their rights and titles gained through him” *Spirit of Prophecy*, Volume 3, pages 202–203.

Do you see, friends? Notice these wonderful words. After His death, after His resurrection, the heart of Jesus is still, shall I say, obsessed with one great longing. What is it? To make certain that you and I shall be there with Him. He cannot tarry to receive worship on earth until this is settled. He cannot enter into the joy of the homecoming in Heaven until this is settled.

And as the angels gather to welcome Him, He waves them back. He goes in before the Father, and I see those outstretched arms waiting to welcome Him. But oh, there is something on His heart that leads Him to pause there and wait for the embrace of those arms of God. He will wait until He has made His request. And what is it? “Father, if I am to be received here, then my friends must come too. If this is to be My home once again, it must be the home of these for whom I have died. Father, My desire, My wish, My prayer, My request, My will, is that these be with Me where I am.”

And my dear Friends, the heart of the Father is just the same as the heart of the Son. And so God issues the acceptance, He commands all the angels to worship Christ, and the Father and the Son unite in a long, tender embrace. And in that embrace, you and I are welcomed to the heart of God. When Christ was accepted that resurrection morning, we were accepted with Him. It’s settled that you and I can be with Him.

Now, you remember that He came back to this world. For 40 days He was with the disciples, meeting with them from time to time—eating with them, talking with them, giving them their directions for the work they were to do. Finally, the morning came when He led them out once again to Olivet, past Gethsemane with its sacred memories and on up to the top of the mountain. And there as He talked with them, extended His hands in blessing, He was slowly taken up, and the angels of God received Him. He went to Heaven.

Once again, there is a triumphant reception. Once again, He waves them back. Once again, the acceptance must be settled before He can assume His place upon the throne. You can read it in this marvelous description in *Desire of Ages*. This is the ascension from Olivet:

“There is the throne, and around it the rainbow of promise. There are cherubim and seraphim. The

commanders of the angel hosts, the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds, are assembled”
The Desire of Ages, page 833.

The whole universe is there through its representatives to welcome the Prince of Life.

“They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King. But He waves them back. Not yet; He cannot now receive the coronet of glory and the royal robe. He enters into the presence of His Father. He points to His wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet; He lifts His hands, bearing the print of nails... He approaches the Father, with whom there is joy over one sinner that repents... Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son had united in a covenant to redeem man if he should be overcome by Satan. They had clasped their hands in a solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety for the human race. This pledge Christ has fulfilled. When upon the cross He cried out, ‘It is finished,’ He addressed the Father. The compact had been fully carried out. Now He declares”
Ibid., page 834,

Oh, listen! He’s talking to His Father:

“Father, it is finished. I have done Thy will, O My God. I have completed the work of redemption. If Thy justice is satisfied, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am” *Ibid.*

The words of our text this morning, you see. That was the climax of His heart longing there on the borders of Gethsemane. That was His heart cry the resurrection morning. Now again, on ascension day, as He enters into the throne room of the universe to take His place again with the Father, first this request. Nothing else counts unless this is settled. What is it?

“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am” John 17:24.

Oh friends, do you mean something to God? You mean everything to Him. There is no possibility of exaggerating. It’s a million times more than the greatest concept you ever got of it. So, enter into it. Make Him happy by being happy in what He thinks of you.

But now I go still further. You know when Jesus went to Heaven, He went there for us. Paul tells us several times in Hebrews He’s there for us. We have a

great High Priest that has entered Heaven for us. He's making intercession for us. It's all for us. Do you know what He's praying? Would you like to listen in to the prayers of Jesus within the veil? Listen. This is one of the Spirit of Prophecy comments in the Bible Commentary, Speaking of John 17, which we have read from this morning as our opening text:

"This prayer is a lesson regarding the intercession that the Saviour would carry on within the veil, when His great sacrifice in behalf of men, the offering of Himself, should have been completed. Our Mediator gave His disciples this illustration of His ministration in the Heavenly Sanctuary in behalf of all who will come to Him in meekness and humility, emptied of all selfishness, and believing in His power to save" *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Volume 5, page 1145.

Did you catch the thought? This prayer in John 17 is a sample, and an illustration of the prayers that Jesus would offer in the Heavenly Sanctuary. So if you want in your imagination to hear Jesus praying there within the veil, turn to John 17, and on your knees, go through with Him verse by verse. And then as you come to the great climax in the 24th verse hear Him saying still within the veil, as He has prayed again and again on earth and on the resurrection day and the ascension day. What is it?

"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am" John 17:24.

Ah friends, if we were one-hundredth part as anxious to be with Him as He is to have us with Him, I think it could all be over soon, don't you? Let us cultivate a longing for His coming. But deeper yet and more importantly, let us cultivate an appreciation of His longing for our being with Him.

Now, let's look ahead a moment—The time of trouble, the falling of the plagues, the death decree, Jacob's trouble, the agony, and then the midnight hour when that death decree is to be carried out. But God intervenes. That mighty voice sounds down through Orion, "It is done." And the people of God looking up through that open space behold the city of God and the portals of the celestial city thrown open, and they see Jesus there before His Father. And you know what is He saying? Do you remember? Let me read it to you. Oh friends, listen:

"By the people of God a voice, clear and melodious, is heard, saying, 'Look up,' and lifting their eyes to the heavens, they behold the bow of promise. The black, angry clouds that covered the firmament are parted, and like Stephen they look up steadfastly into heaven and see the glory of God and the Son of man seated upon His throne. In His divine form they discern the marks of His

humiliation; and from His lips they hear the request presented before His Father and the holy angels: 'I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am'" *Great Controversy*, page 636.

Ah friends, if I may say it reverently, He has an obsession. Every time we hear Him praying the longing of His heart there in Heaven these are the words that come from His lips. He cannot get it off His mind. He cannot get it off His heart. This is it. He wants you with Him. He wants me with Him.

By His grace, friends, I'm going to let Him finish His work with me so that I can satisfy His heart longing, and He can have what He wants. What do you say? Would you like to send Him that word this morning? If you would let us just kneel here quietly for a moment of meditation and silent prayer.

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