

What Can We Learn From Jesus’ Final Prayers?

John 17:1: (NASB) *Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You.*



You can learn a lot about someone if you know how they pray and what they pray for, especially when they are in the midst of crisis. When we are in trauma, do we suddenly reach up to God with greater fervor and feelings of faith than we normally would? Do we focus just on ourselves and our need for help and put all else aside? On the last night and day of his human life, Jesus offered three distinct prayers to his Father as his human life was in its final traumatic chapter. We all know the end of this story brings unequivocal victory over sin and death. By examining these three prayers, we can also better know the heart, mind, devotion and strength that led to achieving such a victory.

Last week we talked about the Last Supper and the events that surrounded it. We ended with Jesus and his disciples walking from the upper room towards the Garden of Gethsemane. It was on this walk that Jesus encouraged them with the lessons of John 14,15 and 16. We drop back in on their journey with John 17 - the first and most detailed of his three final prayers.

The **FIRST** of Jesus’ final three prayers is a prayer of **preparation**.



Jesus is praying in front of his disciples. They are listening...and so are we.

Jesus begins with praise and an incredible faith in God’s providence:

John 17:1-4: (NASB) *¹Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You...*

This vision of glory comes just before he is to be tortured and killed.

How would giving Jesus a heavenly reward of immortality glorify the Father? Because this showed the unlimited power of God to raise not only a human being from the dead, but to change their very nature to a divine being like Himself. This had never happened before. God created angels, and Jesus in his pre-human existence is what the Bible calls the *morning star*. But never before was immortality granted, meaning life not dependent on an outside source. His death and raising into this unbelievable position in the universe showed God’s glory.

Jesus next acknowledges his own God-given position and authority:

²even as You gave him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given him, he may give eternal life. ³This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. ⁴I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given me to do.

Jesus is giving an account of his faithful stewardship to God’s plans and purposes.



Jesus Christ whom You have sent - this is the only time Jesus refers to himself as *Jesus Christ*, meaning “Jesus the Messiah.” He is acknowledging that he accomplished what God sent him to do.

It is only after Jesus gives glory to God and accounts for his actions that he petitions God:

John 17:5: (NASB) *Now, Father, glorify me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.*

All he asks for himself is to be reunited with his Father as they once were.



There are many texts describing Jesus’ pre-human existence. Here are just a few:

Colossians 1:13-16: (NASB) ¹³*For He (God) rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵He (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶For by him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities - all things have been created through him and for him.*

Proverbs 8:22-30: (NIV) ²²*The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works before his deeds of old; ²³I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be. ²⁴When there were no watery depths, I was given birth, when there were no springs overflowing with water; ²⁵before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth, ²⁶before he made the world or its fields or any of the dust of the earth. ²⁷I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, ²⁸when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, ²⁹when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth. ³⁰(KJV) Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;*

As the first direct creation of God, Jesus (then called *the Logos* according to the book of John) had an intimate relationship with God before he was sent to earth. This helps us understand the sorrow and pain he felt from being separated from the Father through this ordeal.

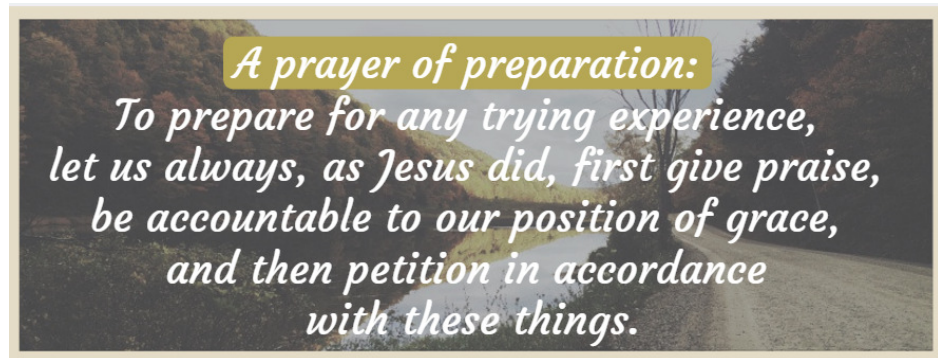
Next, Jesus brings the prayer “down to earth” and begins to focus on his followers.

His love for them and his protective instincts for them begin to be revealed as he pours his heart out to his Father:

John 17:6-7,9: (NASB) ⁶*I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to me, and they have kept Your word. ⁷Now they have come to know that everything You have given me is from You;... ⁹I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given me; for they are Yours;....*

Jesus is humbly accounting for his stewardship over those who follow him, for they are called by God and therefore are God’s. Jesus has the disciples in his heart and mind even though he is the one who is about to die.

The lessons here about approaching the Lord in prayer are good for us to observe. When we are facing an emotional situation, we need to try to set the emotion aside and get ourselves in the right attitude. If we can get rid of any anger and calm our minds, it can be a “safe space” of complete reverence, as we are going before the Creator of the Universe. Jesus prepared for this type of reverent prayer.



Jesus’ attitude of prayer makes us stop and think - would we be as clear-minded when faced with our most difficult experiences?

Jesus’ prayer perspective here is a remarkable model. It is Jesus who is going to be taken, beaten, accused, tried, derided, insulted and crucified. Yet his heart, his focus, his mind are all set firmly on those whom he loved. He would not - he could not - leave them without tenderly and carefully handing them over to the Father, the Great Protector of all who seek His will.

Sometimes there arise people who have such love for their fellow man they risk their lives for them.

 Introduction, *Witold Pilecki - Unsung Hero of WWII, Unknown History, BitmapAxis*

- *He was one of the biggest heroes of World War II. He was the man who volunteered to get captured and sent to Auschwitz where he spent over two years in the concentration camp, gathering information and organizing resistance. He was the man who informed the Allies of Nazi atrocities and German plans to exterminate the Jews. He was a captain of the Polish army, and his name was Witold Pilecki.*



This attitude of volunteering reminds us of Jesus:

Isaiah 6:8: (NASB) *Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I. Send me!*

Jesus continues his prayer of preparation, which now develops into a prayer for protection:

John 17:11: (NASB) *I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given me, that they may be one even as we are.*



Jesus is praying in front of his disciples, and these words would strengthen them. Jesus continues to petition for their protection and blessing by laying their vulnerability of being in the world without him before God.

God and Jesus have the same spirit of unity. This means Jesus aligned himself perfectly under the will of God, and he asks for his followers to also be one in this line of unity. There is a hierarchy of unity - it is not separate wills. It is one will of the Father and all of the faithful of creation line up under it. This is harmony. This is unity under God.

“Top down” Christian Unity



Normally we think of unity where we all get together and figure out what we are going to do - pictured as more of a circle. This is unity that is strictly under the will of God through the authority of Jesus Christ. Our unity is bound by those higher guidelines. It is a “top down” unity.

Jesus prays that they may know the Father through him, as to become one with the Father when he is gone. They could see the reflection of the Father through the son, but once the son was gone, they would have seen enough of the reflection to know the Father directly.

Jesus next accounts for the care with which he fulfilled his stewardship of his beloved disciples:

John 17:12,14: (NASB) ¹²While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled...¹⁴I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Jesus makes a case for God to provide for his followers. The only loss suffered was the son of perdition, as prophesied. Even Peter, who would deny him, would not be lost. Perhaps this was a solace for Peter after his huge mistake.

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world - Episode #1068 “Do I Have a Sound Christian Mind?” discussed 2 Timothy 1:7 about the spirit of power, spirit of love and spirit of a sound mind. Here we have a hint of a “worldly” spirit. We are to be more like ambassadors than citizens in this world. The spirit of the world will come up when Peter draws his sword to fight for Jesus. The spirit of the world is when we put our fleshly logic and reason before the providence of God, or fleeing when we do not have to be afraid.

Jesus knows they will be safe in God’s hands but is reluctant to let them go:

John 17:15-18: (NASB) ¹⁵I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁷Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. ¹⁸As You sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

Jesus now petitions that his followers be sanctified by God’s word, even as Jesus himself was set apart to do God’s will. It is interesting to note that he never prays for any kind of greatness, riches or power. His prayer is that they be kept from sin and the corruption of the world, and given strength.

(Source: Biblical Commentary by Matthew Henry) It is like they might pass through the world as through an enemy’s country, as he had done...The spirit of God in true Christians is opposed to the spirit of the world.

Sanctify them in the truth - sanctify means “to set apart for a holy purpose.” If we go through our daily activities with the mindset that we are set apart for a holy purpose, and that purpose is to give glory to God in all we do, we will act, talk and think differently as we are presented with different challenges. To the extent we have a worldly spirit, we will act worldly and that is NOT what glorifies God.

Jesus now includes every Christian through the age of the gospel who would follow him:

John 17:19-21: (NASB) ¹⁹For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. ²⁰I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in me through their word; (this is US!) ²¹that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in me and I in You, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that You sent me.

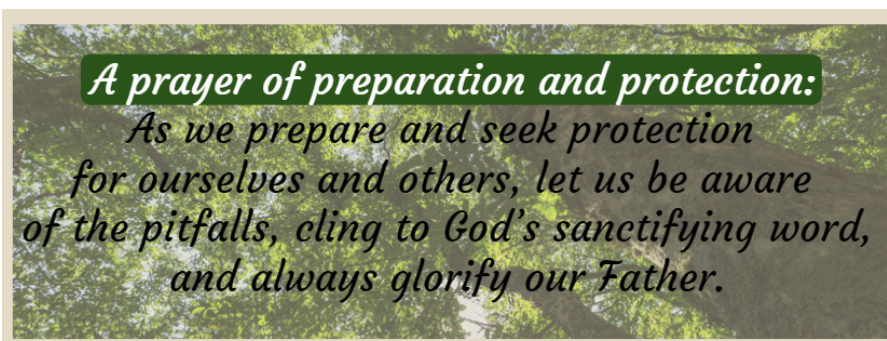
Based upon their sanctification by God, Jesus now petitions for his followers to participate in the incredible oneness he and his Father have. We are to be unified under the headship of Jesus, who is under the will of God. We are included in the last undisturbed prayer that Jesus was able to pray before the great ordeal of his life began!

These were precious moments of preparation for him, and he saw fit to use them to lay our lives into the hands of God along with the lives of his disciples.

He thought about US when he was the one who would be suffering:


John 17:22, 24: (NASB) ²²The glory which You have given me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as we are one;... ²⁴Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given me, be with me where I am, so that they may see my glory which You have given me, for You loved me before the foundation of the world.

Jesus ends his prayer where he started - glory to God for His character and plan.



**This was truly a deep, connected and selfless prayer!
What changed between this prayer and Jesus’ next one?**

The John 17 prayer would be the last peaceful moments of Jesus’ human life, as the road to our salvation would now require him to suffer without mercy. Perhaps this prayer was his last deep breath of goodness, grace and fellowship before leaping from the cliffs into the turbulent waters of sacrifice.

 **Prisoner 4859, Witold Pilecki - Unsung Hero of WWII, Unknown History, BitmapAxis**

- *By the 1940s, Auschwitz was believed to be a POW camp or large prison and no one knew what the Germans were planning to do there. Pilecki created a plan to enter the concentration camp in Auschwitz, gather intelligence and organize resistance. Once inside, he was assigned prisoner number 4859 and immediately started to organize the resistance network, which by March of 1942, consisted of about 500 prisoners. Pilecki started to write reports by hand. They were smuggled to London, to the Polish government in exile.*



Acceptance of what has happened is the first step to overcoming the consequences of any misfortune. — William James

When facing extreme stress in our lives, we all have favorite places or circumstances that we seek to help us find strength and peace. The Garden of Gethsemane was such a place for Jesus, as it offered an ancient beauty and rustic presence in which to deeply communicate with his Heavenly Father.

John 18:1-2: (NASB) ¹When Jesus had spoken these words (the words of his prayer in John 17), he went forth with his disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which he entered with his disciples. ²Now Judas also, who was betraying him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with his disciples.

This beautiful garden was always a place of peace and fellowship for Jesus and now would become a place of peril and betrayal.

The **SECOND** of Jesus’ final three prayers is a prayer of **pleading**.



Imminent betrayal and the weight of the world pressed Jesus to seek support and prayer... and pray he did, over and over and over...

But his friends were weak:

Matthew 26:36-38: (NASB) ³⁶Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to his disciples, Sit here while I go over there and pray. ³⁷And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. ³⁸Then he said to them, my soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with me.

Jesus’ spiritual instincts led him to pray for the physical strength and the spiritual courage necessary to overcome.

The two sons of Zebedee - James and John. Peter, James and John were the same three who were with Jesus at the raising of Jairus’ daughter in Mark 5:37, and at the Mount of Transfiguration vision in Matthew 17:1. We do not know why these three were given such high honor. Peter was to be a spokesperson for all of them, but when his boldness got him into trouble, Jesus would shape



it into spiritual courage. James and John were faithful and perhaps showed an extra level of devotion and care. These were his inner circle of the inner circle. For some reason, these were the three he felt he could most depend on.

Matthew 26:39-42: (NASB) ³⁹And he went a little beyond them, and fell on his face and prayed, saying, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as You will. ⁴⁰And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, So, you men could not keep watch with me for one hour? ⁴¹Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. ⁴²He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done.

It is interesting to see a progression. He prays, first asking for this cup of experience to pass from him. *If it is possible, let this cup pass from me.* He shows acceptance but still questions. Then he sees how weak his three friends are - even though these are the most dedicated and loyal humans on the planet at this point. He realizes he can never truly help them, and those like them, until he takes that next step. It is like he had a paradigm shift in his thinking once he saw them failing at the smallest task. This makes him say, *if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done.* He moves beyond **acceptance** to **embracing** and his attitude will soon blend into complete **trust**.

ACCEPT EMBRACE TRUST



Carina suggests: I think it is significant that Jesus told the disciples to watch and pray so they would not fall into temptation. They slept instead. Jesus DID watch and pray in the hour of temptation. I think he possibly doubted the need for the ignominy and blaspheming charge kind of death, not the death itself. Since he prayed and asked for the Father's help and told God nevertheless not his own will but God's will be done, he got that help and grace in his time of extreme need. He knew God's will was to be trusted above his own, as the flesh is weak. Perhaps if Peter would have watched and prayed, he wouldn't have fallen into the temptation of denying Jesus. Jesus understood how much the watching and praying he speaks of in Matthew 26:41 was necessary for the apostles just as for himself. He trusted God and knew connection had to be maintained continually to succeed.

This is where the *watch and pray* advice comes in for us. If we can keep that line continually open, this is how we will not fall into the worldly spirit around us.

Jesus prayed in the Garden three times. The Apostle Paul brought his *thorn in the flesh* (probably his poor eyesight) to Jesus three times.

Here was the answer:

2 Corinthians 12:9: (NASB) ⁹And he has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

This models after Jesus asking if the cup could be removed from him, if it be God's will. Jesus learned the glory would be in going through this experience. Paul was not part of the Gethsemane experience, yet was taught in the same way.

Each time Jesus prayed, he became more focused, because his mission demanded submission to God’s way even in areas that went entirely against his very being. The end result of this struggle was simply, *Your will be done.*

Matthew 26:43-46: (NRSV) ⁴³Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. ⁴⁵Then he came to the disciples and said to them, Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.

This prayer led directly to betrayal. There was no more time.



In general, a biblical *cup* represents an experience. The Bible mentions a lot of different cups - a *cup of blessing*, a *cup of indignation*, a *cup of sacrifice*, even a *cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath* - what cup is this and how do we know?

There are varying opinions, but we believe this cup is the idea of being labeled a blasphemer of his Father, one who is against God. All of his life had been about the exact opposite - to glorify Him!

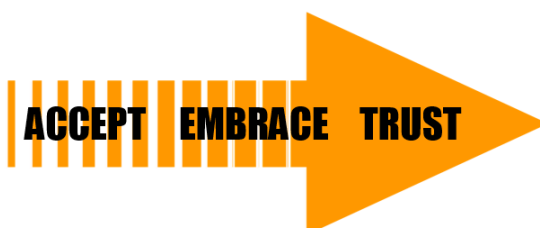
Jesus knew the Old Testament Scriptures.

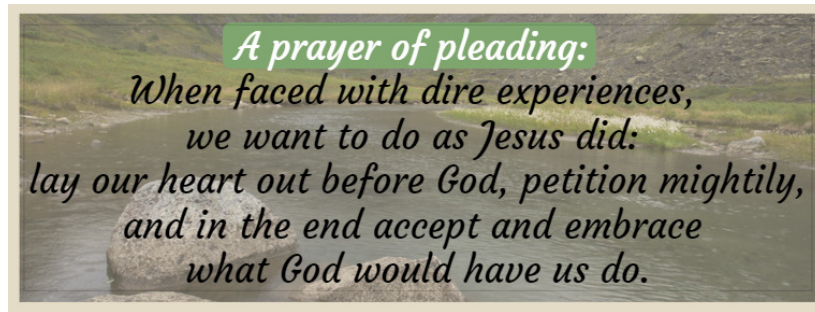
Isaiah 53:3-4: (NASB) ³He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face he was despised, and we did not esteem him. ⁴Surely our griefs he himself bore, and our sorrows he carried; yet we ourselves esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

(Source: Biblical Commentary by Albert Barnes) “Yet we did esteem him stricken,” “Yet we thought him judicially stricken.” Noyes, “We esteemed him stricken from above.” Jerome (the Vulgate), “We thought him to be a leper.” The Septuagint renders it, “We considered him being in trouble (or in labor, εν ποιω) and under a stroke (or in a plague or divine judgment, εν πληγη), and in affliction.” Chaldee, “We thought him wounded, smitten from the presence of God, and afflicted.” The general idea is, that they thought he was subjected to great and severe punishment by God for his sins or regarded him as an object of divine disapprobation. They inferred that one who was so abject and so despised; who suffered so much and so long, must have been abandoned by God to judicial sufferings, and that he was experiencing the proper result and effect of his own sins. The word rendered ‘stricken’ means properly “struck” or “smitten.”

In other words, he was cursed of God. He was accused of being punished by God because he stood against God. We think this was part of the experience that would be so difficult for him.

Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree. (See Deuteronomy 21:23 and Galatians 3:13). The ignominy (public shame, disgrace, humiliation, mortification) was difficult for him to go through, because God meant everything to him. Everything he had done for the eons of his existence was to bring glory to God. But he left it at, “Let Your will override everything I feel.”





After such a prayer of pleading, how do we know Jesus was entirely ready to accept all of what God would allow?

The Scriptures show us in subtle ways just how thoroughly Jesus was set to endure the torture, crucifixion and blasphemy that was about to unfold. As we discuss his final three prayers, we want to now focus on the prayer he did NOT pray. This prayer is just as significant regarding his character and resolve.

 **Pilecki’s end, Witold Pilecki - *Unsung Hero of WWII, Unknown History, BitmapAxis***

- *He fought in the Warsaw uprising in '44. After its defeat, he surrendered to Germans and was taken to Murnau in Germany where he was liberated from a POW camp by the U.S. Army in April 1945. He was ordered by General Anders, the commander of Second Polish Corps, to return to now Soviet-controlled Poland and gather intelligence for the Polish government in exile. Pilecki was arrested by the communists on May 5th, 1947. He was tortured, having his ribs and nose broken and fingernails ripped out. He was accused of activities against states and put on trial with others. He was sentenced to death at a puppet court and executed in May 1948.*

He had escaped from Auschwitz, only to be killed by Communist Poland.

I've been trying to live my life so that in the hour of my death I would rather feel joy, than fear. — Witold Pilecki, after the announcement of his death sentence

This reminds us of Jesus in the hour of his death, able to feel joy and not fear.



A crowd with torches, swords and armor approached. It was led by an unarmed man, an unarmed and familiar man:

Matthew 26:49-50: (NASB) ⁴⁹Immediately Judas went to Jesus and said, Hail, Rabbi! and kissed him. ⁵⁰And Jesus said to him, Friend, do what you have come for...

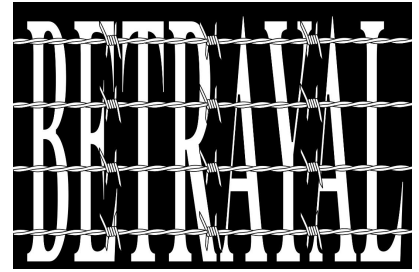
Luke 22:48: (NASB) Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?

Jesus did not flinch at such an action; he acquiesced.

Jesus next focuses on those he spent so much time praying for and teaching:

John 18:3-5,8: (NRSV) ³So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons...Jesus asked them, Whom are you looking for? They answered, Jesus of Nazareth...
⁸Jesus answered, I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go...

This is what betrayal looks like - lanterns, torches and weapons and a contingent of chief priests and Pharisees, all to apprehend a man who never even used a sword or spear and whose life was spent healing, teaching and encouraging all.



Peter leaps into action - after all, he told Jesus he would be by his side:

John 18:10-11: (NRSV) ¹⁰Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave’s name was Malchus. ¹¹Jesus said to Peter, Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?

1

Jesus’ response is threefold. First, he stops the violence and proclaims his faith in God’s providence.

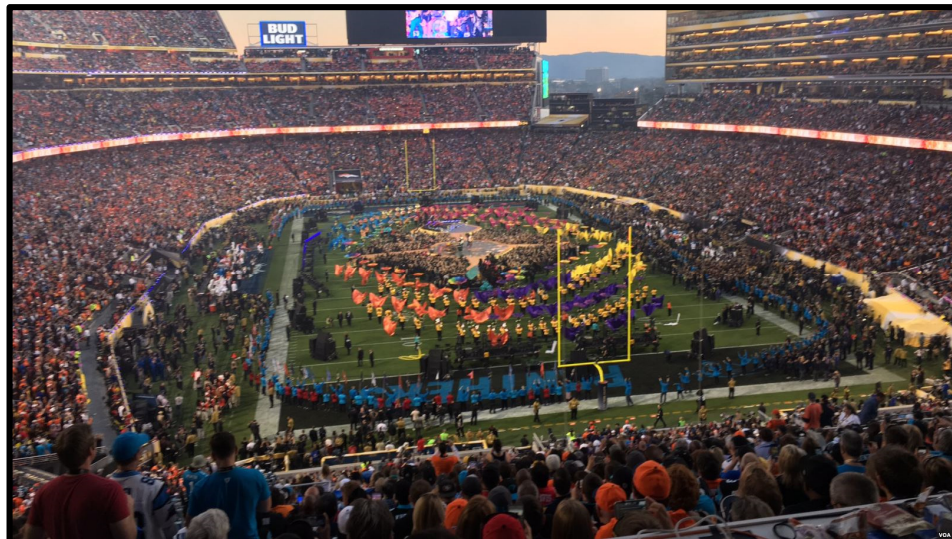
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Second, he reveals how easily he could have been defended and even rescued by his Father. This is the prayer he did NOT offer, as Jesus showed us that obedience is greater than our fear.

“The Prayer that Never Was:”

Matthew 26:53: (NASB) *Or do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and He will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?*

That is more than 72,000 angels! How many is 72,000? The 2019 Superbowl between the New England Patriots and the Los Angeles Rams was held at U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis, Minnesota. That stadium holds just over 66,000 people, which is about the average size of an NFL stadium - some hold less, some hold more. Picture what that football game was like with all those people surrounding that little field. Now think of this scene with Jesus and Peter. If we could flip on the “spiritual lights” to see what was going on, we imagine more than 72,000 angelic beings surrounding their friend Jesus, just waiting for the “Go!” order from the Heavenly Father to rescue him. They would have been on red alert just watching and waiting. The tension would have been unbelievable! And just one angel could have flattened all the soldiers. To have the firepower of not one, not 10, not 10,000 but over 72,000 of these powers is incredible!



This showed Jesus’ great RESTRAINT and ability to control his emotions for the greater cause. This is something we need to think about when we are angry and want to lash out. When we are cheated on or lied to or disrespected, we want vengeance. Jesus had such superior intellect, knowledge and power at his disposal it was laughable, yet he never was vindictive. He always showed RESTRAINT.

This is the prayer he COULD have prayed, and he did not. Sometimes we may have the opportunity for deliverance that is not God’s will. Perhaps the Lord wants us to walk *through* a trial for our greater good.



Notice even Jesus could not command the angels directly - he would have to ask God to do it. This is something to think about when you hear people who pray to angels or want to have them do things on their behalf. This is a little detail about the spiritual realm we would not have known but for this “Prayer that Never Was.” But he let his followers know there are great powers we cannot see, ready to fight if God requires it.

3

Third, Jesus heals his enemy, for Malchus was just another sinful man for whom he would die:

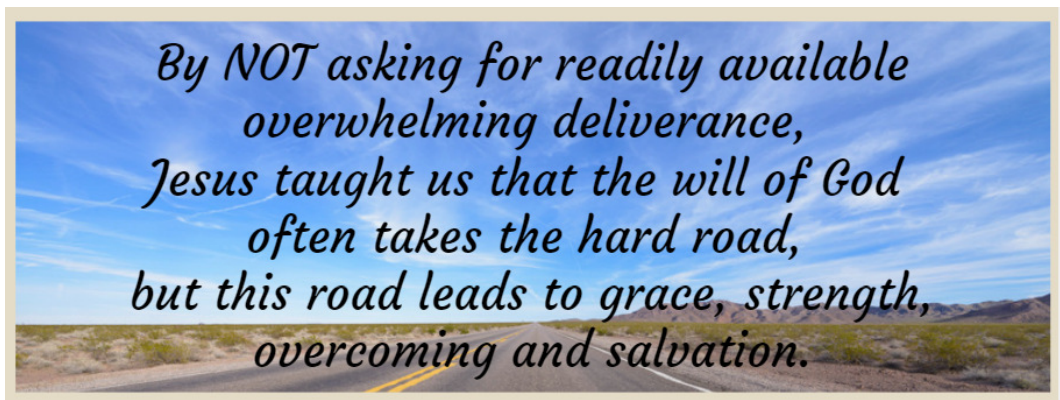
Luke 22:51-53: (NRSV) ⁵¹...No more of this! And he touched his ear and healed him. ⁵²Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple police, and the elders who had come for him, Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a bandit? ⁵³When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness!

Jesus verifies that it is God’s plan that is unfolding and they have no power to stop it.

Power of darkness - this reminds us how it was dark when Judas left the Upper Room. Satan thrives in the darkness.

Matthew 26:56: (NASB) *But all this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets...*

Then all the disciples left him and fled.



Prayers of preparation and pleading and an unspoken reliance on providence. Where do we find Jesus’ final prayer?

Undoubtedly Jesus prayed throughout the whole night of trial, but none of this has been written for us to see. Jesus’ final prayer was uttered in his last words before his death. He had hung on the cross for six hours, and the end of his suffering and ignominy had finally come. His last words were from the 22nd Psalm.

 James the Lesser, *LWC James - Verse, The Skit Guys*

- *My name is James, and I'm one of the disciples, but not the one you're thinking of. I'm the other one. James the Lesser. That's what the disciples would call me to distinguish between the two of us. Through the years, that's what I started calling myself. That's how I thought of myself. I was the last disciple picked. I was never the top dog, but none of that matters anymore. Because Jesus was sealed in a tomb, and three days later he flipped life as we know it on its head.*

We fast forward to the cross. Here, Jesus is at the very end of his journey, and his mind goes to the prophecies about him in Psalm 22. We see this as a prayer because at the end he is speaking directly to his Father. **For a full walk through this Psalm, please search our archives for Episode 860 “Jesus Lives!”**

The **THIRD** of Jesus’ final three prayers begins as a prayer of **perseverance**.



Mark 15:33-34: (NASB) ³³When the sixth hour came, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour. ³⁴At the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, Lama, Sabachthani? which is translated, My God, My God, Why have You forsaken me?

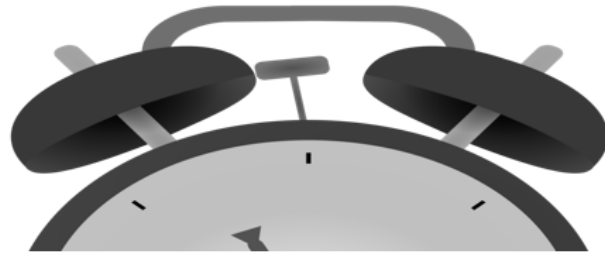
Psalm 22:1: (NASB) My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.

My God, my God - literally means “Mighty One, Mighty One.” At no other time did Jesus ever address God as *God*, but always as *Father*. This was the final phase of Jesus’ suffering for the sake of all of us. He, too, had to experience the “darkness” that occurs when God turns His face away.

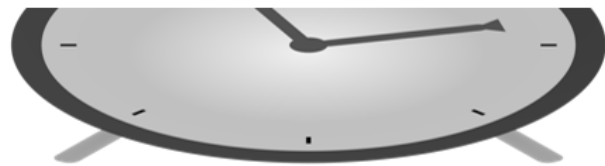
This is a plea of anguish, of separation from His Father. It is reasonable to conclude that God turned his face from Jesus *at the sixth hour*, when darkness came, staying for three hours.

Psalm 22:2: (NASB) O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer; and by night, but I have no rest.


This is fulfilled by the fact that he was on the cross for six hours total; three hours were in daylight and three hours were in darkness.



- The Jewish 24-hour day is nightfall to nightfall.
- The "day" is 6am to 6pm, so 6am is "the first hour."
- Jesus is put on the cross at the 3rd hour, 9am.
- At the 6th hour, noon, darkness comes until "the 9th hour," 3pm, when he dies.
- He is on the cross for a total of 6 hours.



Why did he die at 3pm? This fulfills yet another prophecy! The Passover lamb of [Exodus 12](#) was slain at twilight, or 3pm.

The Passover Lamb vs. Jesus as the Lamb		
TYPE		ANTITYPE
Lamb slain at 3pm, fully consumed and brings a new day of freedom		Jesus slain at 3pm having been fully offered, and his sacrifice brings a new day of freedom!

For more about the striking comparisons between Passover and the death and resurrection of Jesus, please search our archives for Episode 859 "Israel's Passover - What Does it Mean to Us?"

Jesus' prayer became a prayer of peace:

John 19:28: (KJV) *After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst...*

Mark 15:35: (KJV) *And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias....*

John 19:30 and Luke 23:46: (KJV) *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he bowed his head, and gave up the (spirit).*

What was the darkness that occurred while Jesus was dying?



- It could not be a SOLAR ECLIPSE, as they only occur at a new moon, where the moon is just a sliver. Passover always happens at a full moon. A solar eclipse only lasts a few minutes. In fact, scientists already know there will be the longest solar eclipse to occur in thousands of years on July 16, 2186. It will last 7 minutes and 29 seconds. (The maximum duration can only ever be 7 minutes and 31.1 seconds.)
- It could not be a LUNAR ECLIPSE, even though they can only occur at a full moon and can last several hours. They only happen at night, never at noon, making the moon appear reddish.
- Could it have been STORM CLOUDS? The aftermath of a VOLCANIC ERUPTION? Something supernatural happened.

The history of man has seen many dark times, but this was the darkest when the world's truly only innocent man was put to death.

John 9:5: (KJV) *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*

It is fitting that the light disappeared as he was dying. The darkness ended precisely at his death. Light coming back was a message of hope.
(Romans 5:2,9-11)

Perhaps the darkness was God's way of expressing the pain He felt in witnessing the crucifixion being played out.

The last verse of this Psalm:

Psalm 22:31: (NASB) *They will come and will declare his righteousness to a people who will be born, that he has performed it.*

(Source: Charles Spurgeon) That he hath done this, or, that "It is finished." Salvation's glorious work is done, there is peace on earth, and glory in the highest. "It is finished," these were the expiring words of the Lord Jesus, as they are the last words of this Psalm.

Jesus verbally expressed the first and last parts of Psalm 22.

There is no greater peace than complete resignation into the hands of the Almighty God.

There was darkness in the sky. And the earth quaked. And the veil rent. And his voice fell silent. It was now untraceable. It no longer existed, for he had died. And for the first time since time began, all of the creation of the Almighty was without its leading voice of harmony. In his place was an empty and utter silence. In all of the vast expanses of the universe there had never been a time or place where such an empty silence could be found. This, too, was necessary, but only for a time, for the Almighty was not yet finished.

- Rick, from a sermon called *His Voice*

A prayer of perseverance and peace:

Let us always remember Jesus’ prayer example on the cross. His prayer for strength to absorb the full measure of humanity’s sin led him to the conclusion of Psalm 22 – the proclamation of peace at the end of the tumultuous road of sacrifice.

 **Less is more, LWC James - Verse, The Skit Guys**

- *We thought it was over. We thought all of this was done. But instead, he put death in its place. He did it. He did it! And when I look at myself, I see the disappointment. I see dismissal; I see the lesser. And I realize I’m pretty forgettable. But then I remember, he did it. He conquered death. He did it for me. Because of the cross, because of Christ, I am redeemed, reborn even. He has set me free from my sin. He has set me free from myself, and I do not mind having less of me if it means I can have so much more of him.*

The end result of Jesus’ prayers and faithfulness was a new beginning of ALL!

The women at the tomb:

Mark 16:2-6: (KJV) ...²And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. ³And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? ⁴And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. ⁵And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were afraid. ⁶And he saith unto them, Be not afraid: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified:

Luke 24:5-8: (KJV) ⁵Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: behold the place where they laid him ⁶remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, ⁷Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. ⁸And they remembered his words...

The resurrection happened because of faithfulness to the will and way of God. This is what his prayers brought him to. He made the necessary choices and because he lives, we also can live.



It is amazing to see what Jesus prayed for and what he did NOT pray for. Deliverance was available and COULD have been used, but should NOT have been used...and we are thankful he did not.

We all come up short, but his faithfulness gave us grace to get up again and stand for what is right and true.

*So, what can we learn from Jesus' final prayers?
For Jonathan and Rick (and Julie!) and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on April 29, 2019:
Ep. #1071: Should Christians Criticize Anyone?

Bonus Material!

One who gains strength by overcoming obstacles possesses the only strength which can overcome adversity. – Albert Schweitzer

All the world is full of suffering. It is also full of overcoming. – Helen Keller

(Source: Wikipedia)

Witold Pilecki (13 May 1901 - 25 May 1948; codenames Roman Jezierski, Tomasz Serafiński, Druh, Witold) was a Polish cavalry officer, intelligence agent, and resistance leader. He served as a Rotmistrz (captain) with the Polish Army in the Polish-Soviet War, Second Polish Republic, and World War II. He was also a co-founder of the Secret Polish Army (Tajna Armia Polska), a resistance group in German-occupied Poland, and later a member of the underground Home Army (Armia Krajowa). He was the author of Witold's Report, the first comprehensive Allied intelligence report on Auschwitz concentration camp and the Holocaust. He was a Roman Catholic.

During World War II, Pilecki volunteered for a Polish resistance operation that involved being imprisoned in the Auschwitz concentration camp in order to gather intelligence and later escape. While in the camp, he organized a resistance movement and informed the Western Allies of Nazi Germany's Auschwitz atrocities as early as 1941. He escaped from the camp in 1943 after nearly 2½ years of imprisonment. He took part as a combatant in the Warsaw Uprising in August-October 1944. He remained loyal to the London-based Polish government-in-exile after the Communist takeover of Poland, and he was arrested for espionage in 1947 by the Stalinist secret police (Urząd Bezpieczeństwa) on charges of working for "foreign imperialism", a euphemism for British Intelligence. He was executed after a show trial in 1948. Information was suppressed about his exploits and fate until 1989 by the Communist regime in Poland.



Pilecki is considered as "one of the greatest wartime heroes" because of his efforts. Poland's Chief Rabbi Michael Schudrich writes in *The Auschwitz Volunteer: Beyond Bravery*, "When God created the human being, God had in mind that we should all be like Captain Witold Pilecki, of blessed memory." British historian Norman Davies writes: "If there was an Allied hero who deserved to be remembered and celebrated, this was a person with few peers." Polish ambassador Ryszard Schnepf described Pilecki as a "diamond among Poland's heroes" and "the highest example of Polish patriotism" at the commemoration event of International Holocaust Remembrance Day held in the US Holocaust Memorial Museum on 27 January 2013.

Let us remember the big picture of Jesus' sacrifice:

Colossians 1:18-20: (NRSV) ¹⁸He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Notice the elements here: We have Jesus and the church, his called-out ones. Then God, through Jesus and his sacrifice, reconciled and made peace with ALL things - this is much more than the church - redemption looks bigger.

Acts 3:20-21: (NASB) ²⁰and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, ²¹whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.

God, through Jesus, is not only reconciling all things to Himself, He is restoring all things. When something is restored, it is returned to its former state. Peter says the prophets spoke of this restoration. What did they say?

Let's look at just a few:

Isaiah 51:3: (NRSV) For the LORD will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.

The perfection of Eden was lost, and Isaiah says what the waste places of earth will look like. Redemption brings restitution.

Micah 4:1-5: (KJV) ¹But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. ²And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

These are specifics about the future of earth! There will be many nations, ALL seeking after God. They will walk in godly paths with Israel as their example.

³And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. ⁴But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it. ⁵For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever.

God will teach the world the ways of peace - swords to plowshares - spears to pruning hooks - no more war - rather they will all dwell in peace - each with the ability to provide for themselves and all while living under God.



While those faithful to Jesus now will have an inheritance in heaven, the “everybody else” will have an inheritance on earth, once they prove faithful to Jesus in the Judgment Day.

Praise be to God for His unspeakable gift!

No wonder the Scriptures say:

Philippians 2:8-11: (NASB) ⁸Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹For this reason also, God highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

