

The Pursuit – God’s Relentless Plan to Save Us

“He Prayed: His Last Request!”

“I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message.”

John 17:20

A. His Pattern

1. He prayed... for Himself.

“After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.’”

John 17:1-2 (NRSV)

Personal needs/requests:

2. He prayed... for those close to Him.

“I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one.”

John 17:15 (NRSV)

Needs of close family/friends:

3. He prayed... for all those who would believe.

“I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message.”

John 17:20 (NIV)

World needs or those who need the Gospel:

B. His Purposes

1. He prayed... for God’s full glory to be seen in Him.

“So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.”

John 17:5 (NRSV)

2. He prayed... that His followers might have joy (v. 13), be protected (v. 15), be holy (v. 19), and remain unified (v. 11).

3. He prayed... for us! He prayed that we would be one.

“I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message.”

John 17:20 (NIV)

“...that they may all be one. As you, Father, 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.”

John 17:21 (NRSV)

C. Our Priorities

1. It’s ok to pray for myself. It’s difficult to help those in my world if I’m not in a good place physically, emotionally, or spiritually.

2. The people around me... they’re no ordinary people!

“It may be possible for each to think too much of his own potential glory hereafter; it is hardly possible for him to think too often or too deeply about that of his neighbor. The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbor’s glory should be laid on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken. It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these

destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no *ordinary* people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations – these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit – immortal horrors or everlasting splendors. This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously – no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption. And our charity must be a real and costly love, with deep feeling for the sins in spite of which we love the sinner – no mere tolerance, or indulgence which parodies love as flippancy parodies merriment. Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses. If he is your Christian neighbor, he is holy in almost the same way, for in him also Christ *vere latitat* – the glorifier and the glorified, Glory himself, is truly hidden.” – C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*

3. I must relentlessly pursue unity with my brothers and sisters in Christ. God relentlessly pursued us, and we will best demonstrate that to our world by how we pursue unity with each other.

“The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

John 17:22-23 (NRSV)

- a. Let’s decide together to...

- Remove gossip from our lives.
- Think of how we can serve, rather than how we can be served.
- Be more upset with our own sin than the flaws we see around us or in others.
- Focus on saving lost people instead of what we don’t like about the Church.
- Pray continually with and for each other.