

## Sunday School Lesson - January 24, 2021- Called as the Intercessor

Good morning, I hope you are well and feel blessed.

Sunday School Lesson for January 24, 2021, "Called as the Intercessor"

Background Scripture is from John 17:14-24

The Seventeenth Chapter of John is generally referred to as "The Great Intercessory Prayer," or "The High Priestly Prayer of Jesus." It was not uncommon for farewell speeches to include closing prayers, but this prayer is seen by many as "Jesus' farewell speech."

Jesus is our role model for prayer. The Gospel of Luke records the most verses in which Jesus prays. The first incidence of prayer is during his baptism when Jesus is anointed by the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove (Luke 3:21-22). When crowds gathered following miracles of healing, Jesus retreated to a desolate place to pray (Luke 5:15). When the Pharisees attacked him for healing on the Sabbath, Jesus climbed a mountain and prayed all night, the following day he chose the twelve apostles (Luke 6:12). Jesus, when praying alone among the disciples, posed the question: "who do the crowds say I am?" (Luke 9:18). While praying with Peter, John, and James on a mountain top, Jesus is transfigured (Luke 9:28). Jesus was praying when the disciples asked him: "Lord, teach us to pray..." (Luke 11:1). On the night before his death, Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:41).

The prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane is not found in the Gospel of John. Instead, in the same time slot in the passion narrative records the prayer in John 17 which is often referred to as Jesus' high priestly prayer. Although Jesus is best known for the Lord's Prayer, John chapter 17 records Jesus' longest prayer. True intercessory prayers tend to be long. In the Luke passage, Jesus prays his passion: Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done (Luke 22:42) which is paraphrased in Mark 14 and Mathew 26. The focus in John's prayer is on Jesus' ministry.

From the lesson text section, A Powerful and Passionate Prayer. The Gospel of John has twenty-one chapters, and five chapters (13-17) take place in one evening at dinner just hours before Jesus is betrayed and arrested. Jesu

has been in Jerusalem a few days, teachings and healing, and on Passover night, he has dinner with his disciples.

Jesus' washes his disciples' feet, foretells his betrayal, and speaks to the disciples about many significant topics: the new commandment, the coming role of the Holy Spirit, the metaphor of the vine and the branches, and the peace that God will give the disciples. Then Jesus prays at length.

The three main parts of Jesus prayer in John 17 are: Jesus prays for himself in verses one through five, Jesus prays for his 12 disciples in verses six through 19, and Jesus prays for all disciples in verses 20 through 26.

Below is some information that Pastor Kelvin Jones, a Methodist minister provided in one of his writings on the Great Intercessory Prayer, in John chapter 17. Jesus reports on how He has used His life, to glorify the Father, to manifest the Father, to give out the Father's words, and to keep those the Father gave Him. Jesus asks to be glorified. Jesus asks that the Father keep His disciples from the evil. Jesus asks that the disciples have His joy fulfilled in themselves. Jesus asks that the disciples be sanctified through the word of truth. Jesus prays for all those who believe in Christ, that they be one as the Godhead is one and that they may be made perfect in one. Jesus prays that those given Him may be with Him where He is and behold His glory.

All prayers reveal a great deal about the one who prays them. Jesus' high priestly prayer is no exception. Below are some things that we can learn about prayer from this prayer or facts about Jesus that were reaffirmed.

We can share principles that we know. We can report on our progress in life. We can report on the progress of those we have charge of. We can ask that others can have an improved relationship with God. We can acknowledge the ownership of God. We can acknowledge the difficulties that others face. We can speak about our motives for what we do and have done. We can pray for others to receive and enjoy what we have received and enjoy. We can pray for others to receive a testimony.

Jesus' key request for his disciples in the prayer is for their unity. Here are some ways that we can be a part of the answer to Jesus' prayer. Do not look down on other denominational or nondenominational Christians who have different opinions about nonessential matters. God's kingdom is much broader than any one denomination. Cooperate with other Christians whenever possible. Cooperate inside the church even though you don't agree with everything. If we waited to find a group where we agreed with absolutely everything, nothing would ever be accomplished.

Jesus wants so much for us to succeed as his disciple, as a lover of God. He wants us to succeed, not as a Lone Ranger but as a part of his family of disciples. He came to bring the resources of heaven to help us flourish as his followers. Someday he wants to welcome us home to heaven where we can find rewards for our successful journey, even as Jesus was exalted for completing the task given to him. Jesus invites us into a love relationship that can empower our prayers.

**Closing: For the love that casts out fear, the faith that sustains and the hope that never perishes, be with us now and forever more. Amen. God watch over us and take care of us.**

Next week's lesson January 31, 2021, "Prophesying Daughters"

Background Scripture Luke 2:36-38; Acts 1:12-14; 2:16-21; 21:8-9.

*Sources for this lesson: The Bible, Lectionary Bible Studies, by John W. Arthur, Gospel of John, by William Barclay, The Great Intercessory Prayer Writing, by Pastor Kelvin Jones, and The Present Word.*