

## The Prayer of Our Ascended Lord

⊕ **Glory with God (vv.1-5)**

⊕ **Treasured protection (vv.6-11)**

In the Name of Jesus Christ our crucified, risen, and **Ascended Lord**, dear fellow disciples:

Do you like a good mystery? Maybe you don't like someone spoiling it for you by telling you how it ends. Like watching highlights instead of the big game. If you already the final score, why watch?

I have to tell you, the Bible is one big "spoiler alert" from God. There's no greater drama than the whole human race being tempted by the Satan-serpent in the Garden Paradise of Eden. "Oh, that couldn't happen," Bible critics claim, then go back to watching their superhero comics. Spoiler alert! Satan loses because the LORD God promises the Seed of the woman will crush the serpent's head. Wait! What's that mean? Spoiler alert! For the next forty centuries or so the Holy Spirit kept promising the *Messiah*. But wait! Who's the *Messiah*, a conquering hero or a suffering servant? Spoiler alert! Jesus *Messiah* is both – suffering Servant who died on the cross and conquering Hero over sin, death, and hell. Christ crushed Satan's head by dying and rising from the dead. "Where's your Jesus now?" critics keep dumping. Spoiler alert! He's coming again in glory to judge the living and the dead. Better get ready, all!

In the spoiler alerts God keeps dishing encouragement as He pulls the curtain on time for us to see. When you're feeling lost and alone, as if no one understands. When you fear you can't talk to anyone about your problem. Spoiler alert! Jesus is praying for you. Today: **The Prayer of Our Ascended Lord**.

⊕ **Glory with God (vv.1-5)**

How does He do it? Jesus is minutes away from suffering torment Gethsemane's Garden, mock trials by Jews and Gentile, agony on the cross. But He's crushing Satan's head by praying for us to enjoy **Glory with God** in spite of this cruel world of sinners, and the despicable traitor inside each of us.

Jesus has just shared some of His most intimate messages in John 14-16, capping it all off with the verse just before our text: ***"I have told you these things, so that you may have peace in me. In this world you are going to have trouble. But be courageous! I have overcome the world."*** (John 16:33 EHV)

Did you catch that spoiler alert? "Looks bad, guys, but Jesus still wins in the end!" He wins and keeps winning by praying 24/7 for nearly 2,000 years as he never sleeps. Now in John 17, Jesus looks up to heaven and prays for Himself, for His apostles, for His Church of all time. ***"Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son so that your Son may glorify you."*** (17:1) Wait a minute! How do you get *glory* out of Jesus' suffering and death? Spoiler alert! It's God's glory to love sinners and forgive everyone in whatever way and time He so desires. No one can stop the march of God's mercy. His glory saves!

Jesus keeps praying to our Father in heaven: ***"For you gave [your Son] authority over all flesh, so that he may give eternal life to all those you have given him."*** Hear all the *giving* going on here? Seven times in this text – it's all about *giving*. God gives you to Jesus to trust in Him so that He can give you eternal life and **Glory with God** by knowing Him. ***"This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you sent."*** This is not knowing Jesus from a distance, but as close as the baby in Bethlehem and the water on your head in Baptism, and the body and blood of our Lord – in, with, and under the bread and wine. God's **Glory** connected earthly elements to His Word and promise. ***"Father, ...I have glorified you on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. Now, Father, glorify me at your own side with the glory I had at your side before the world existed."*** (2-5)

All the world's religions insist Jesus is only a good man, a prophet who said a few good things, but maybe too much for his own good! Yet here Jesus prays about the glory He had at the Father's side *before the world existed*. Jesus is back there now, ascended to heaven, and still praying 24/7.

Yesterday a relative at Olivia's wedding said he remembered a New Life sermon from 20 years ago. "What was it about?" "Romans 8, and you kept repeating the word *all*." Run your memory recording. What's that favorite verse in Romans 8, second only to John 3:16, with the word *all*. "***All things work together for the good of those who love God, for those who are called according to his purpose.***" (Romans 8:28 EHV) To *know* Him is to love Him who loved you first. "You're mine," says the Lover of your soul. That, my dear friends, is truly **Glory with God** and...

### ✦ **Treasured protection (vv.6-11)**

When I told this story a few years ago, someone asked, "Is it really true?" I don't know, but it makes a good illustration. Remember the little boy who saw a puppy in a pet store? Kept coming over to him and no one else? In those days parents did not spoil their children with everything they wanted. Blessed without much money, he had to work several jobs to earn enough to buy that puppy. So happy to bring it home... so devastated when it ran away. Looked until he found it in another pet store. More hard work and finally enough to hold his little friend: "I bought you twice! I'm never letting go of you!"

If a little boy can love his puppy so, think how dearly God must love you. He first created you, but you ran away into sin. Still His Son could not stop looking until He found you. And when it cost His own sweat and blood to buy you back, He did. So dearly, dearly you are redeemed by the ultimate price of God's own Son. Holding you close to His heart, "I bought you twice!" He says, "I'll never let you go!"

The next time you're feeling down and dirty, useless and unwanted, think of this: You are God's gift to Jesus. Your health and wellbeing are His highest concern even while Jesus was preparing to go to the cross for you. You have Jesus' **Treasured protection** even in **The Prayer of Our Ascended Lord**.

When we consider how hard we struggle just to keep up with our own schedules, God must be *working* awfully hard to keep track of everyone's thoughts and concerns. And He has been doing this for sixty centuries plus, without getting tired! Truly our God is infinite. Yet above and beyond all that *working* of His intelligence, He is constantly *working* with His power and love. Yes, "***we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.***" (Romans 8:28) It takes the whole Bible to communicate the wonder of God's *works* in words. And eternity will be too short to praise Him sufficiently for His *work* on our behalf.

That little word *all* is also in today's SECOND READING from 1 Peter 5:7: ***Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*** Jesus is not sitting up there in heaven ringing His hands with high anxiety over you; He's praying 24/7, because He's still a *man of prayer*. (Psalm 109:4) He loves to spoil every heartache by healing your heart. He loves to overcome every obstacle by soothing your fears that no one cares to listen. "I can! I do!" says Jesus, as He wraps His loving arms around your soul and soothes away all shame by His all-forgiving grace. "I forgive you!" He says with nail-pierced hands.

***"I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, because they are yours. All that is mine is yours, and what is yours is mine. And I am glorified in them. I am no longer going to be in the world, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by your name, which you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one."*** (9-11)

God's *name* is His reputation as the Savior God. And since the Bible teaches us that saving reputation, the Bible is the unfolded *name* of God that He uses to protect your soul. We plant that *name* in young hearts with memory work in Sunday School. Review and meditate, and you won't have to medicate so much for mind and heart. We picture in the pascal candle: *The light of Christ! Thanks be to God!* As **The Prayer of our Ascended Lord** continues today, pray for each other in Christ. Amen.