

**Theme:** Jesus Prayed for His Disciples

**Object:** Hold your hands to pray

**Scripture:** Jesus prayed to God for the disciples God had given to him. Jesus said, **I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.**" (John 17:9)

What comes to your mind when you see someone with their hands together like this? That's right, you immediately think of prayer, don't you? How often do you think we should pray? Once a day? Before meals? Before we go to bed at night? What do you think we should pray for?

The Bible doesn't tell us exactly when to pray, the scriptures say we should pray unceasingly. The Bible does teach us how to pray. One day, Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray. I am sure you know what Jesus said. In fact, we can probably all say it by heart. We call this prayer, the Lord's Prayer, it is found in Matthew chapter 6, **"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."** Amen.

This is model prayer that Jesus taught so that we would know how to pray to the Father. I like to think that the real "Lord's Prayer" is the prayer that Jesus prayed the night before He was crucified. Jesus knew that He would be returning to heaven and that His disciples would be left behind. He prayed that as they lived in the world, they would **not** become part of the world. He did not want them to become stained by the wickedness and evil that was in the world. He wanted

them to remain faithful to God. Jesus wanted the disciples to know His love and to share that love with others.

Here are the things that Jesus prayed for His disciples:

- That they would be one as He and the Father were one
- That God would protect them from the evil one
- That they would be made holy by the truth of God's Word

The prayer that Jesus prayed for His disciples is for us too. He said, "**My prayer is not for ~~them~~ the disciples alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message.**" That's you and me! We must live in this world, and Jesus prays that we might remain faithful to His teaching so that the world will know God sent His Son and God loves them.

Ask your dad and mom to pray with you and teach you to pray just as Jesus teaches in the Bible. In fact, this week, on Wednesday, we will have a day of fasting and prayer for Canyon Bible and each other. Isn't that exciting and your dad and mom can help you honor God this Wednesday by spending time throughout the day in prayer.

Now is a great time to pray. So, let's pray. Our Father, as we live in this world help us to remain separate from the world. Help us to be faithful to Your Word and, in so doing, may we show Your love to the world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## **It's Friday But Sunday is Coming!**

### **Opening**

The setting of the events we are looking at this morning is the Passover week coming to an end in Jerusalem. It is the day before Passover and the Sabbath. The streets and market places are bursting with people trying to finish all their preparations before sunset. The population of Jerusalem has doubled or tripled. We are now at the day of preparation, the day before Passover, the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan. In this year the 14<sup>th</sup> is also the "Fast of the Firstborn." On this day the firstborn are required to fast in the midst of all this activity, work and excitement.

Jews have a number of days set aside for fasting. Jews fasted for three reasons and these were based on the hope of the Messiah to come. Today, for believers in the risen Messiah, we fast with hope for the Savior who has come and is here.

Jews fasted, first, to atone for sin. **#1 For the Jews fasting and sin sacrifices were temporary solutions for sin.** On this day before the Passover, it was also the Fast of the Firstborn. The firstborn male of each family was to fast on this day to recognize their sin and represent their family. While these firstborn fasted for repentance of sin, the firstborn of Mary and more importantly the Firstborn of God is hanging nailed to a cross dead. It's Friday and as Jesus hangs nailed to the cross the day has turned dark, the darkest of all days. Matthew wrote, "Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon the land until the ninth hour." (Matthew 27:45) God physically darkened the day to show the dark state of the souls of

those who had crucified the only begotten Son of God, Jesus the Messiah.

Fasting is also done to recognize loss. By this sacrifice of fasting one relates to loss and need. David fasted while Bathsheba and his son was alive but severely ill as recorded in 2 Samuel, chapter 12. Reading beginning in verse 16, “David therefore sought God on behalf of the child. And David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground... **18** On the seventh day the child died... **20** Then David arose from the earth and washed and anointed himself and changed his clothes. And he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped... they set food before him, and he ate... **23** David said he is dead. Why should I continue to fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.” (2 Samuel 12:16, 18, 20 and 23) If the child had lived then David would have celebrated for by his fasting the joy of restoration would have been increased, but now his fasting related to the pain of death and David’s joy will wait until he goes to heaven and see his son.

Here in John 19 it is the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, on this day, the loss of Jesus was the greatest loss the world will ever know. No fasting can atone for what men have done to Jesus, who is God, the Messiah on the cross. It’s Friday! But, but Sunday is coming! The Joy of restoration, salvation and worshiping a living God would be joy beyond what any could have imagined. However, on this dark Friday this is not yet seen.

Lastly, fasting is meant to forsake the physical in order to focus on the spiritual.

**#2** By denying oneself of physical nourishment, one takes this time to recognize how God sustains one spiritually. The time normally used for eating is taken to read and meditate on the scriptures.

Our focus is different from the Jews at the time of Jesus and today. For we understand, “... there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 2:5) Therefore, we set time aside to pray with God, placing our sins and needs and desires before God and then listening to God as He washes us with forgiveness and places on our hearts His desires and His plan for us to live by and be obedient to.

It is on such a day, the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, when these purposes of fasting have been set aside because God hangs dead on the cross. The Lamb of God had died along with the Passover lambs being sacrificed all over the city, but these lambs were temporary atonements. Jesus is the permanent atonement. On the cross Jesus demonstrated the loss of God’s favor for the Jewish people. For believers in Jesus, how great will be their joy be on Sunday morning by His resurrection. Jesus’ death took the physical and brought salvation into the spiritual. These three purposes of fasting and the events of Jesus’ death must have seared themselves into the mind of John. John writes of this the blackest of all Fridays, the blackest of all Passovers and the darkest event of all history illustrating man’s total depravity and desperate need of God’s grace and salvation. Salvation has been dearly paid for on this black Friday. It’s Friday, but Sunday is coming!

### **Friday - Death** – v.31-37

Please turn in your bibles to John 19, I begin reading in verse, **31** “Since it was the day of Preparation,” which is the day before the Sabbath Passover. Everything must be finished by sundown. Continuing in verse 31, “and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be

taken away.” Crucifixion can take 2 to 3 days, but if the legs are broken the person cannot push up in order to breathe and they will quickly die of suffocation; die quickly meaning an hour or two. Reading at verse 32, “So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. **#3** But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. **34** But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. **35** He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. **36** For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: ‘Not one of his bones will be broken.’ **37** And again another Scripture says, ‘They will look on him whom they have pierced.’ ” Verses 36 and 37 fulfill scripture from the Old Testament found in Exodus, Numbers, Psalms and Zechariah.

Lets take a moment to look at verse 36, “Scripture might be fulfilled: ‘Not one of his bones will be broken.’” What is this all about? Why does John write this detail? It is also mentioned in Psalm 34:20, but this does not appear to be a direct reference to the crucifixion. Remember when the Passover began, Exodus clearly taught that the Passover lamb was to be eaten at the house it was sacrificed in and that no bone should be broken. As James Boice observed, “this seemingly pointless detail in the Passover ritual and this seemingly pointless detail in the death of Jesus combine in God’s providence to identify Jesus as the Passover Lamb through whom we have a spiritual deliverance.” Everything in the scriptures is inspired by God with reason and purpose.

Also in this passage we see Jews concerned about ritual or works and there is a disconnect with what these rituals were meant to do. That is, to help reinforce

peoples' relationship and worship of God. As we have often observed, things do not change. People, at the time of Christ and today, are fallen sinners living in a broken world. Paul wrote a verse that is known as part of what is called "The Roman Road to Salvation." I will use the verses from The Roman Road to Salvation this morning for they quickly explain our sin and need for salvation and what is required. Reading from Romans chapter 6, verse 23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Many people who use the title "Christian" for themselves come to church on Sunday for many reasons. Unfortunately to worship and be fed with the Word of God in order to strengthen their relationship with the living God and help them live holy in this world may not be one of those reasons. They see Sunday morning as an island of time separate from the rest of their life. After all business is business, just like the thoughts of the Sanhedrin.

Returning again to verse 31, "Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away." So, these Jews are concerned with the Passover, not for what God had meant it to be, but for the empty ritual it had become. They had no value of life for the ritual had become more important than life. The function of rituals was meant to strengthen peoples relationship with God, but by this point in history worship has given way to ritual and ritual to focus on man and focus on man to positions of power and material wealth. The business of religion is about man not God. This process by God's chosen people that led them to become like the world took several thousands of years. It has now been almost 2000 years since Jesus' church was planted as the center of salvation and sanctification.

What do we see as the state of the church today?

We live in a society preoccupied with staying young and avoiding death. Our society fears growing old and the process of dying. This complete fear of death stems from the fact that everyone ever born lives in sin. The set of verses known as “The Roman Road to Salvation” brings this into simple focus. It begins with, **#4** “For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23) It does not matter who your parents are, what country you are born in, what time in history you live in or what things you accomplish. As Peter said, “God is no respecter of persons.” (Acts 10:34) God has been teaching the Jews for thousands of years that through Adam sin entered into the world and only through the Messiah could sin be atoned for. Death is the enemy of mankind for with mortal death comes the second death that lasts for eternity. We know Jesus conquered death, and come Sunday, so will His disciples. They then come to understand, like you and me, that Christians have a mission in life. Jesus, our Lord, commands those who believe to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20) We are to live and share the gospel of Christ!

Just as sin entered into the world through Adam, the atonement for sin and the way of salvation came into the world through the second Adam, Jesus Christ. As His followers we are to live and share the gospel of Christ for Jesus, for this gospel is the only hope. **#5** Here is truth, the truth we need to tell people, “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

For Christians, death is no longer an enemy for Jesus destroyed death when He was put on the cross and rose from the dead. The Apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Corinth, “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. **But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**” (1 Corinthians 15:55-57) Here Paul is quoting Hosea chapter 13 where God is telling the prophet of His persecution of Israel for their lack of faith and worship. Yet, for most of the Sanhedrin they do not understand, for them death brought a permanent end to life and eternal darkness. Remember it was Paul who reveals by the time of Christ the Pharisees believed in a resurrection by the Messiah as seen in Acts 23. But, the Sadducees believed “**there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit.**” (Acts 23:6) We know by the time of Jesus’ death the Sanhedrin was made up of predominately Sadducees and this led to the common belief that the Messiah was going to be a military conquering king instead of the King who would atone for sin and He restore Israel as a sovereign nation.

It is the scriptures that correct false doctrine and thoughts. God inspires everything in the scriptures for a reason. This is why we read, study and preach the Word of God to grow in our understanding of Him whom we owe everything for He created us and gave us salvation. Let me ask you, “Is your life balanced spiritually?” How is your day filled? How much time do you give to the God who created you and saved you as one of His own?

Now, we return to John and understand Jesus is taken down from the cross so not to violate the Passover Sabbath.

## **Friday – Jesus laid in the Tomb** – v.38-42

We begin reading at John 19, verse 38. Please turn to John 19:38 in your bibles.

“After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. **39** Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. **40** So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. **41** Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. **42** So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.” (John 19:38-42)

**#6** Pilate behaved in a manner uncharacteristic of a Roman official when he gave Joseph of Arimathea Jesus’ body. Romans normally refused burial for those crucified and left them on the cross for vultures and scavengers as a witness of what the penalty was for defying Roman authority.

The prophet Isaiah wrote, “they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. (Isaiah 53:9) Here we find prophecy fulfilled as Jesus was crucified between two criminals and He is laid in a rich man’s tomb. Joseph was well to do or he would not have been in the Sanhedrin. I believe John wrote of Joseph and Nicodemus earlier in chapter 12, “Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. **42** Nevertheless, many even of the authorities (*Pharisees and Sadducees*) believed in him Jesus, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not

confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; **43** for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.” (John 12:41-43) We know both of these men were wealthy and part of the Sanhedrin, but, if they were believers in Jesus, they were secret believers because they feared man more than God. Now they come forth when it is too late to confess Jesus while He is alive. How many people today, who call themselves, “Christian”, fear man more than God? They say they believe in Jesus, but do so in secret or only within their small group of believers because they think being open about their belief will not be good for their career or social standing. These men, Joseph and Nicodemus, were secret believers with little, to no, effect on the world for the gospel of Christ while Jesus lived. My beloved do not be a secret believers who will in the end have little effect on the world and either die quietly or show up at the end of their lives at someone else’s funeral testifying to that person’s faithfulness. I pray you will live boldly for Christ. I believe Joseph and Nicodemus were men who regretted their lack of courage to profess Jesus while He lived. **#7**

**Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who visited Jesus in the night, were secret believers.** But, now, after Jesus has been crucified they find their courage and come out in the open and publicly claim Jesus’ body.

My beloved why is it that as we live in a society where everything is “coming out of the closet” with acceptance, but Christians are sitting on the side lines and not standing up to be counted as belonging to Christ? “Would be” Christians and their churches shame Christ by either their lack of courage or their acceptance of the world’s standards in their lives and their churches!

People foolishly debate the doctrines found in the Bible because they fear man

more than God or they are deluded to believe they know more than God and can correct His Bible. But remember, no one can debate your testimony. They can call you a liar or they have to accept what you say as true, but there is no debate.

If one does not openly confess the Lord Jesus as the Christ how are they any different than Pilate who knew Jesus was innocent? It was fear that kept Pilate from freeing Jesus. What is required of those who claim Christ, who fear God more than men? We go back to “The Roman Road to Salvation” verses beginning at Romans 10:9, turn there and follow my reading, **#8** “If you confess with your mouth (this means public confession made before men) that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

**10** For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. **11** For the Scripture says, ‘Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.’ **12** For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. **13** For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ ” (Romans 10:9-13)

When one does as these verses command they fulfill what is written in the Old Testament by the prophets Isaiah (28:16), Jeremiah (17:7) and Joel (2:32). They stand before men as one who believes in Jesus as the Christ.

After Jesus rose from the dead and eight days before Jesus was transfigured before Peter, John and James He clearly told His followers, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” (Luke 9:23) Living for Christ before the world is a daily commitment of denying ourselves and professing Jesus. You cannot change yesterday, for it is done. You can deny yourself this day, today, and boldly profess and live for Christ. As our

Lord Jesus so wisely instructed, "... do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." (Matthew 6:34)

Jesus simply calls us to live this day for His glory!

### Sunday - He Lives! 20:1-10

We finish our time in John this morning with the first 10 verses of chapter 20.

Please turn to John chapter 20, verse 1, "Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. **2** So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' **3** So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. **4** Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. **5** And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. **6** Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, **7** and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. **8** Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; **9** for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. **10** Then the disciples went back to their homes."

Jesus has now proved beyond any doubt that He is the Messiah for His is risen!

He died on Friday and Friday was dark, but with the dawn of Sunday comes the Light of God and Jesus is the Light to the dark world. John wrote in his first letter,

**#9** "This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. **6** If we say that we have fellowship

with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:5-7)

This is our daily goal to walk in God’s Light!

Oh, how we are often just like the disciples. They were, at first, skeptical of Mary’s claim that Jesus was no longer in the tomb. Most of us were skeptical when we first heard of Jesus. But Peter and John decided they wanted to know the truth, so they run to the tomb. John arrives first but does not go in for fear of what he might find. Peter charges forward and enters the tomb but does not know what to make of what he sees; the linen cloth that had wrapped Jesus’s body is lying on the stone slab. The cloth used to wrap Jesus’ head is lying neatly folded and placed with care separately. Unlike Lazarus who needed help getting out of his grave clothes it appears that Jesus had simply passed through them. The state of the grave clothes makes it oblivious that grave robbers did not take Jesus as Mary had feared. **#10** The Greek language indicates Peter was pondering the meaning of all that he was seeing, while John observed and believed. What John saw made Him believe. Why, did not Peter believe at this time? Overwhelmed and trying to sort everything out in their minds, the scripture says they returned to their homes.

The world does not want to believe the historical evidence and the event of Jesus’ resurrection. The world is OK with His crucifixion but denies His resurrection simply because they do not want to believe or be accountable to the God who created them.

## Closing

As we close out time in God's Word this morning, I ask, "What are we to take away from John's account of Jesus' burial and resurrection?" First, God does not expect people to believe without evidence. **#11 God has given us great amounts of evidence and then He gives His Spirit that we may believe and understand.**

When a person does not believe even when they have examined the evidence it is because they do not want to surrender their lives to Christ. If Jesus would return this very day, millions would reject Him. If Jesus returned today making the same claims as He did when He walked this earth the first time, people and governments would condemn Him to death. If they were able to kill Him a second time He would rise from the dead and again the people would claim it was a trick.

At the same time there would be those who would respond by the evidence, by the Word of God and by the power of God's Spirit that He gives to those He has called. They are comforted that their faith is found in the unchanging God. They are comforted by their faith, which is given by He who indwells in them. Believers are transformed by Christ, they think differently, act differently and live differently with a peace and hope the world neither understands or experiences.

We look forward to the day when our bodies will be transformed as Christ's body was. Our resurrected bodies will be far superior to our physical ones; they will not hamper us with wearing out, being tried, experiencing pain and weak traits inherited from our parents. Often my current brain struggles to understanding all that God wants to share with me, but once I am resurrected my brain will no longer struggle, I will know and understand. Christians do not lose through death, but gain. We will be freed from the limits of these bodies. We will be free, totally

free in our worship of God, free from sin and experience unlimited opportunities of service to God.

My beloved, let us not wait like Joseph and Nicodemus, but let us boldly speak of Jesus, live for Jesus and serve Jesus by preaching the gospel to the lost. Lets not wait for heaven, but live heaven here on earth. Let your life make a difference in this world, now. Friday was black as death, but Sunday was filled with the Light of God because Jesus lives!

My beloved let us live in the Light and serve Christ!