

Acts 1:6-14

John 17:1-11

1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11

“Let the righteous be glad and rejoice!
Sing to God, Sing praises to the Lord.”
AMEN!

“She says, “We’ve gotta to hold on
to what we got!

It doesn’t make a difference
if we make it or not.

We’ve got each other and that’s a lot for love.

We’ll give it a shot.

Woah, we’re half way there,
woah-oh living on a prayer.

Take my hand,
we’ll make it I swear.

Woah-oh living on a prayer.”

That’s Bon Jovi reminding us that Jesus
was a man of prayer. :-)

Well, maybe not the intent for the whole song
but for us it is.

Jesus knew how to pray and when to pray.

Two things that were and (are) hard for
his followers to imitate.

So we give thanks for sections
in the Bible like today's assigned text,
where Jesus models for his disciples
(and for us) a great way to pray.

First off, it begins with the naming of the Parent.

The One to whom the prayer is directed.

Here, Jesus used "Father," but it could
very well be "Mother" or "Parent" or "God,"
for Christians... it can be: "Lord, Jesus."

The important thing is a name or identity
that is greater than ourselves.

Next is the model of Jesus praying for himself.
"Glorify your Son."

We are good at praying for ourselves,
I should not even mention it, except that
we don't pray for ourselves the way
Jesus prayed for himself.

Meaning, we'll pray to win the lottery or
pray for good health and happiness for ourselves,
but neglect the prayer that asks God
for the strength and awareness
(upon each of us)

to do things that glorify God.

Ah, that's a lot harder when you get down
to it because doing the things that glorify God
can bring pain and suffering upon you and
me and anyone that does things,

says things, utilizes possessions that glorify God.

And those things are what we are taught to avoid!

You see, "glorify" in the Bible often means
making visible the presence of God.

So prayer is great!

There is no discouragement from me to prayer,
but without direction, like the kind of
direction Jesus models today,
then just prayer is only getting
halfway there. (Pause)

I'd like to move now from that teaching from Jesus

to the next one in his model of prayer.

And it is specifically there in verse 3,
which begins with “And this is eternal life.” (Pause)

Wait a second, what is eternal life?

What exactly is “this” Jesus?

So remember the setting here is
Jesus’ farewell speech to his closest followers.

The feet are washed, meal served,
the foretelling of denial and betrayal
have been predicted.

They gather together,
everyone except Judas is there, for this
farewell prayer and Jesus said,
“And this is eternal life.”

Everything, right there and in that moment,
with Jesus and his imperfect followers is
eternal life because in that instant

there’s a communal experience with openness
and honesty and there’s a making known
presence of God: Word, Meal, Service.

A glorification that comes in the present moment.

This - is - eternal - life.

Eternal life is that presence of the way
a parent hugs their child.

It's not a "bro hug" or one of those half hugs
(that's appropriate for personal space and respect)

but the one from God is a full embrace
that wraps the child protectively and
holds on extra long even when
we want to draw away, God holds on.

Jesus' prayer describes the relationship
between him and the Father and entrusts
the community to God's tender care.

This is the Jesus Way for motivation.

Not the human way, which is often,
motivation through shaming.

We all know about that way, don't we?

We all have accounts of pastors and priests
who shame people into discipleship.

I was recently told about a religious leader
that told his congregation they didn't have
the Spirit upon them because
the bishop hadn't given it to them.

Luckily the bishop was coming in two weeks! :-)

His motivation was to encourage them
to come to church when the bishop
would be there, but it was done in
a way that shamed.

Shame is a significant motivator but that
doesn't mean it is the good way to motivate.

It is not a good way because it advances
one's own agenda, not God's will.

Here Jesus grants power to the disciples
to set the record straight.

The power is given to each one of us, too.

Sing with me... We shall overcome!
We shall overcome, some day.

Someday, we will walk hand in hand!

We shall live in peace and all be free.

As the great spiritual song leads us,
deep in my heart, I do believe.

And our text concludes with Jesus' prayer
request to the Father calling his followers
to be one.

One, united in Christ's mission of loving God
and in one another.

Last week, we spoke of love
in the action word sense.

Today, we hear from John Cousins with
an example of love in action.

John is from Sleep in Heavenly Peace where
he serves as president of the Tallahassee chapter.

Their first build was November 3rd 2018.

(Go to bio)

Thank you, John!

We are motivated by the good things
Sleep in Heavenly Peace is doing and look
to partnering with the organization further.

We shall overcome the fact that kids
are forced to sleep on floors... not in this town!

Love in action and love
bringing communities of faith together.

That's the prayer we live on today.

AMEN!