

**Youth Messages from River Harrill based on John 17:6-19 and Amelia Pruitt based on 1 John 5:9-13  
Delivered on Youth Sunday, May 12, 2024, at Shelby Presbyterian Church**

**River Harrill:** Has anyone ever prayed for you? I feel certain they have. Did you know today's scripture, John 17:6 - 19, is the longest recorded prayer by Jesus!

Who was he praying for, you ask? The disciples! And not just the disciples of their time, but all of us in this day and time. The prayer confirmed the disciples were given to Jesus by God. Jesus made sure they knew who he was, where he came from, and what would soon happen when he returns to his father. This marked the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, but it did not end his ministry. It continues today through us.

Friends, Jesus prays for us! Pause and think about that.

It is such a gift and blessing to be prayed for. I personally appreciate everyone who prays for me. Prayer is a remarkable gift, because it opens us up to God's promises, and invites God to help us, and those we pray for. Every prayer is heard by God, which means that every time we pray, or are prayed for, something quite wonderful is about to happen.

What did he pray for? He asked God to protect his disciples and that they be one as Jesus and God are one. It didn't stop there. It included all of us!

By now, I hope you realize how important prayer was for Jesus and the amount of time he spent praying? What better gift is there? And not only that, but we get to actually listen in on his prayer. John heard this prayer and faithfully recorded it, so we actually know what Jesus was praying for.

Jesus would go to prayer whenever specific things approached. One source indicates 25 verses in the Gospels that show Jesus praying. Here are just a few you probably know: he prays for healing, and he gives thanks to God, like at the feeding of the 5,000.

When you go to God in Prayer what do you pray for? To give thanks? To give praise? Do you ask for help? Do you pray for others? Do you question him? Jesus hears us.

In Jesus time when he walked the earth the world was a constant battleground between God and Satan. They were in constant spiritual and physical warfare. Jesus prayed to God that he would keep his people pure, give them abundant joy, give them peace and unity, as well as protect them from Satan's power. Today, and every day, we need to continue praying for this. If our hearts show joy and love, we can clean up the battleground. If you do not have special times for praying, remember Jesus would go to a quiet place and talk to God.

How does it make you feel knowing someone is praying for you? Does it make you feel loved? Does it make you feel cared for you? Does it make you ask why are they praying for me?

Now time for a little confession... Carol Ann asked me to make this personal. At the ripe young age of 14, I haven't been able to think of an example. I'm sure there is an example my parents would love for me to give one, but I just can't put my finger on anything. However, I do know that prayer works, as I have heard my family and friends in their personal stories.

I also know that my family prays for me daily. I have a feeling some of my teachers even pray for me, probably to not blurt out. But without a doubt they pray for me!

As one of your youth, I ask this congregation to continue to pray for us all. The children and youth need your prayers. As you all know, life can be difficult at times, especially for our young, curious minds. So, thank you for all the past and future prayers.

I am thankful Jesus prays for us and it helps us grow in our faith! Because Jesus prayed for us, we need to encourage others to pray for each other.

Jesus is that truth. And he asks that we share it with the world. Let us do so faithfully, glory be to God! Amen.

**Amelia Pruitt:** Everyone sees things differently. If two people witnessed an event they may describe it differently. People's words are often unclear. One time Carol Ann made us play two truths and a lie, where people make up a lie and then say two true things and then you have to guess which one is the lie. People say things that can be very believable. But we cannot always believe what they say. That's human testimony, but God's word is always true.

So, how do we know we have eternal life? When we accept God into our hearts we are accepting God's truth. People who are experiencing eternal life are inspired by God to speak his truth. Eternal life from God is through the Son. If we can believe the words of our friends, surely, we can believe the words of God. He sent his son to earth so those who believe his word may live forever. Faith in God's word, that's what matters.

God created us, sent his Son to live and die for us, and go back to heaven to be with God. If you believe that, you have eternal life. When John wrote this, he was writing it to a hurting church. Despite his best efforts, people were still making bad decisions, and because of that, people were afraid of judgment. He writes to them to love each other and God, to believe in him, and to trust the Holy Spirit. No matter what people say about Jesus, the Spirit continues to testify to the truth.

The people who got his letter knew Jesus. They believed that Jesus was the Son of God. They struggled with sin, and false teachings, and they were afraid. Everything John wrote in this letter was because he wanted them to know that God never fails to keep his promises.

When human testimony is wrong, God is faithful. For these people that believed in the name of Jesus, they knew they had eternal life because of God's faithfulness and grace. The good news of Jesus isn't something we can lose or earn, or we deserved. The grace of God is something given freely, and it's the one thing in this life we can rest assured we will never, ever lose.

John wrote this letter to the people and told them to stop sinning. He warned them of false teachings. He urged them to stay strong in the faith. But, at the end, what he wants them to know is that even in their divisions, and sins, and broken relationships, they still belong to God.

God gave us eternal life through Jesus, and this isn't something we can lose. We cannot lose the grace of God because it is a gift given to us. Salvation is a gift freely given by God. If we can't lose it, then we don't have to be afraid.

So, in closing, when you play two truths and a lie you can sometimes get the right answer but it's not always easy. You can know human testimony but it's not always true. When you believe in God's truth you can always find the right answer. And it leads you down the right path as once you accept him. He is always there, and you can trust and know him. Amen.