

The Golden Prayer

John 12:23-28



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FOCAL Read Responsively John 12:23-28 KJV And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. (24) **Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.** (25) He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. (26) **If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.** (27) Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. (28) **Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.**

I was very interested that, just a short time ago, that **David Wilkerson** made a great deal of money teaching about an obscure passage in the Bible dealing with a little known man named *Jabez*. The passage was:

1 Chronicles 4:9-10 KJV And Jabez was more honorable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bore him with sorrow. (10) And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.

Now, this is not to say that Mr. Jabez's prayer wasn't a good prayer, nor is to say that Mr. Jabez wasn't a good

man. The Bible does say that **he was more honorable than his brethren**. However, his brethren could have all been *ax murderers*, and as such, if Mr. Jabez wasn't an ax murderer then he would have been naturally more honorable than his brothers.

What Jabez did do that was *honorable* was that he **called on the God of Israel and God, in His infinite mercy, granted him that which he requested. (1 Chronicles 4:9-10)**

God is like that. He answers prayers, many times whether the one praying is worthy or not.

The One we see praying today in our focal text *is worthy, worthy beyond all measurement*. Jesus Christ is **more honorable than His brethren** because Jesus Christ was, is, and will always be both Eternal God and Perfect Man. He is more honorable than His *stepbrothers*, the children that Mary had after she, yet a Virgin, had Him. He is more honorable than the *adopted brothers* He has, adopted by faith in the shed Blood of Calvary. His prayer, dear friends, is much more honorable, I believe, than Mr. Jabez's prayer. And unlike Mr. Jabez's prayer the prayer the Lord Jesus¹ made was *very unselfish*. He merely prayed:

FOCAL Read Responsively John 12:28 KJV **Father, glorify thy name. ...**

¹ Have you ever thought that the names “Jabez” and “Jesus” begin with the same letter, and have the same number of characters in them? Just curious ...

to which God *immediately* replied,

.. I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

This *a golden prayer* because, unlike the many prayers that men make for their own blessing, this prayer is *going to be answered*. God said “**I have both glorified [my Name], and will glorify [my Name] again**”. (John 12:28)

God *will* glorify His Name, and when we – like Jesus – pray **Father, glorify Thy Name** – this is a prayer that He has *already promised* to fulfill. He will glorify His Name.

1. The Golden Prayer Will Be Answered When Prayed By The Surrendered

FOCAL John 12:23 KJV **Verily, verily**, I say unto you ...

Before Jesus prays this Great Prayer He begins it with His trademark **verily verily** or His **double Amen**² to show that He is going to give us a *great spiritual truth*. Jesus now uses a wonderful illustration from the field – a grain of wheat. He says:

FOCAL John 12:23 KJV ... **Except a corn of**

² Jesus uses the *ἀμήν*, [amēn, am-ane' (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries) Of Hebrew origin [H543]; properly *firm*, that is, (figuratively) *trustworthy*; adverbially *surely* (often as interjection so be it): - amen, verily.)] *twenty five times in the Gospel of John*

wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.³

Why did Jesus use “wheat” in His illustrations? Why here?

Jesus loved to use *wheat* in His illustrations, just as much as He loved to talk about *chaff*. When He spoke about the *eternity of Hell* (**Matthew 3:12; Luke 3:17**) our Lord spoke of the **wheat** (the believer) gathered up by God, whereas the **chaff** (the unbeliever) is cast into everlasting burning. Jesus spoke of the **wheat and weeds** in **Matthew 13:25**, and warned Peter that Satan "**wants to sift you like wheat**" (**Luke 22:31**). We may not be as familiar with these illustrations as Jesus' congregation was, but **wheat** is a great illustration nonetheless.

Imagine a stalk of wheat. At the *head* of that stalk is a *cluster* of grain, the offspring of that stalk or plant. There is only one plant, but several many grain at the head of that plant. Wheat only has value when one of two things happen. First, the *head* of the wheat is threshed, and the grain is separated from the stalk. Then the grain is *tossed into the air* until the *chaff* or the *inedible* part of the plant is removed from the *edible* part. The grain is then *crushed into a floury powder* and, as a flour, is made into bread. The grain *still on the stalk* has *absolutely no*

3 Holman Christian, (John 12:24 HCSB) "I assure you: Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains by itself. But if it dies, it produces a large crop.

value but for the basest of uses. Certainly it can be fed to cattle and lesser creatures as fodder, but it has no higher use than that.

The *second* use for the wheat is the one that Jesus uses in this illustration. The wheat is, as in the first application, beaten. The grain must be *drawn away* from the stalk, put into tilled fertile ground, and then watered.

The grain must surrender it's will to death if life is to come. If the **corn or the seed of wheat** continues to hang on the stalk, then it will *not reproduce*. It will **abide alone**.

The **corn or seed of wheat** must *step outside its comfort zone* in order to be blessed. It must do something that it may not want to do if it wants to receive a blessing from God.

We can - as humans - choose the *lesser* over the *greater*. People do this every day. There are many who have chosen to hold on to the lesser while rejecting the greater.

Humans are creatures that understand loneliness. God has created us with a desire to be bound together with other humans. When Adam looked around and saw that there was *no mate* for him, he asked God for his Eve⁴, and God provided her. We do not like loneliness. But man's *first Companion* was not Eve, but it was *God*. We often forget that! God wants us to *choose Him* over all

4 Genesis 2:20-24

else if we want to be blessed.

a. Surrender The Stalk of Your Job: Just like the grain of wheat in Jesus' illustration, we all are clustered with *other wheat grains* around us. What is the grain cluster gathered around you? What is around you, while you cling to this stalk of life. Is it a job, your job, what you do for a living? Do you cling to this for satisfaction? If so, you have chosen *the lesser over the greater*. The life must be surrendered to The Ground, it must be surrendered To God, else all is vanity and will, in time, prove to lead to more loneliness. A few years ago songwriter **Harry Chapin**⁵ sang:

My child arrived just the other day,
He came to the world in the usual way.
But there were planes to catch, and bills to pay.
He learned to walk while I was away.
And he was talking 'fore I knew it, and as he grew,
He'd say, "I'm gonna be like you, dad.
You know I'm gonna be like you."

I won't sing the whole song to you, though it told a very true story. As the song progressed Mr. Chapin told how the dad continued to hold on to his job above that of his son. Finally, the song goes,

I've long since retired and my son's moved away.
I called him up just the other day.
I said, "I'd like to see you if you don't mind."
He said, "I'd love to, dad, if I could find the time.
You see, my new job's a hassle, and the kid's got the flu,
But it's sure nice talking to you, dad.
It's been sure nice talking to you."

⁵ Cat's In The Cradle, Sandy and Harry Chapin

And as I hung up the phone, it occurred to me,
He'd grown up just like me.
My boy was just like me.

That song tells the truth. When we hold on to the stalk of our jobs to the exclusion of God's will, we lose our children. Yet we may not lose just our families – we may lose our souls. Jesus in another place said:

Luke 12:16-21^{HCSB} "A rich man's land was very productive. (17) He thought to himself, 'What should I do, since I don't have anywhere to store my crops? (18) I will do this,' he said. **'I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and store all my grain and my goods there. (19) Then I'll say to myself, "You have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy; eat, drink, and enjoy yourself." (20) "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is demanded of you. And the things you have prepared--whose will they be?' (21) "That's how it is with the one who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."**

Is work a wrong thing or an evil thing? Absolutely not! The Bible says,

2 Thessalonians 3:10-11 KJV For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that **if any would not work, neither should he eat.**

HCSB Holman Christian Standard Version

{11} For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

Believers should be workers - as a matter of fact, people generally get in trouble (or into someone else's business) when they have nothing to do. But listen, Beloved, our work *must not be our god*.

As the Word states:

1 Corinthians 10:31 KJV Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

Everything we do should **glorify His Name**. When you *glorify His Name* at your workplace, God will bless *both* your job as well as your family. He has promise that **I have glorified My Name, and will glorify My Name**. Surrender all to Jesus, live for Him even in the workplace, and He will bless!

b. Surrender The Stalk of Your Family: What about those who hold their families in high esteem? If you hold to the stalk that is *family* apart from God, again you choose the lesser over the greater. Jesus told us:

FOCAL John 12:26 KJV **If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be:** if any man serve me,

him will my Father honor.

Didn't Jesus Christ give us the *perfect example* insofar as family is concerned? He was willing to leave the splendor of Heaven, to leave His Eternal Joy, to leave the Family of Eternity to come to earth and die for us. The Bible says:

Philippians 2:6-8 KJV [Jesus] being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: (7) But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: (8) And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Jesus surrendered His Heavenly Home and Family to come and die for us on the Cross. He surrendered His earthly family, His earth mother and stepbrothers, in order to suffer that terrible fate for us. (**Philippians 2:6-8**)

If you hold to the stalk of family apart from God, God cannot bless you. Jesus told us that faith in Him could bring division in our families. He said:

Matthew 10:34-38 KJV Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. (35) For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the

daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. (36) And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. (37) He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. (38) And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

Following Christ our Lord means to do as He did, to separate from the stalk that is family and surrender your life to the Family of God. (**Matthew 10:34-38; Isaiah 53:2-6**)

This may cause some dissension, some warring, some anger and separation between you and those you love. Jesus Christ's own stepbrothers did not believe in Him until after His resurrection. His mother believed in Him, and was one of the few who stood at the foot of His Cross and wept instead of jeering. His disciples abandoned Him except for John. The Bible prophetically said of Jesus:

Isaiah 53:2-6 HCSB ... He had no form or splendor that we should look at Him, no appearance that we should desire Him. (3) He was despised and rejected by men, a man of suffering who knew what sickness was. He was like one people turned away from; He was despised, and

we didn't value Him. (4) Yet He Himself bore our sicknesses, and He carried our pains; but we in turn regarded Him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. (5) But He was pierced because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on Him, and we are healed by His wounds. (6) We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the LORD has punished Him for the iniquity of us all.

But remember the promise of God! Jesus surrendered the stalk of His family, and *God honored His surrender*. If you do not surrender yourself to God above the stalk of family, you may find that you have led your children down the pathway of *condemnation*. If you want your children, your grandchildren, your great grandchildren to be saved, then remember what Jesus said:

Context John 12:31-32 KJV Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. (32) And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

Do you wish to see your family blessed? Then lift up Jesus above all else! A sure way to condemn your own kin is to minimize the Lord Jesus Christ, to cling to the stalk of family above surrender to the Lord. When the **corn of wheat fall into the ground and die ... it bringeth forth much fruit.** There can be no blessing until there is the surrender to God. But

When we surrender to God, we will see **God glorify His Name**. We will see our loved ones led to Jesus, saved from condemnation. We will see the Evil One *cast out*, just as Jesus has promised. (**John 12:31-32**)

2. Surrender Is Outside Of Our “Comfort Zone”, But Absolutely Necessary For Us All

FOCAL John 12:27 KJV **Now is my soul troubled**; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

To follow Jesus is also to follow His discomfort. Jesus said, **Now is my soul troubled**. This is a Greek word⁶ which means *to be stirred up like boiling water*. The *tense* of this verb means that Jesus was *stirred up or troubled in the past, with the result that He is still troubled*. (John 12:27; Matthew 26:39)

Jesus knew what was coming.. He knew that, like the grain of wheat in His illustration, that He was going to have to do something awful, something terrible, in

⁶ G5015, ταρασσω, tarassō, tar-as'-so, Of uncertain affinity; to stir or agitate (roil water): - trouble. (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries), Perfect Passive Indicative. Corey Keating (ntgreek.org) writes, "**the Perfect Tense is used less frequently than the other [verb] tenses ... it is exegetically more significant. When it does occur there is usually a definite and deliberate reason it was chosen ...**"

surrendering to the Cross of Calvary. Jesus wanted to say, **Father, save Me from this hour**, from the awful shocking death of the Cross. Yet Jesus, even as He began to utter those natural human words, He acknowledged **but** for this cause came I unto this hour. Our Lord acknowledged, not with indifference, but with *a great burden in His heart*, that He was going to have to step outside of the “comfort zone” to serve the Living God.

Jesus continued to be troubled with what was coming. I do not believe that the *beating* of the Cross, nor even the *death* of the Cross was what He feared. What Jesus feared was that *separation from God* that was coming. Jesus prayed, not once, but three times:

Matthew 26:39 KJV ... O my **Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.**

It is hard to step outside of that comfort zone for God. It is hard to surrender fully to Him, and to say, **nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.**

It is frightening, especially when you know that pain will result from your action. It is hard to pray **O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done** (Matthew 26:42). Yet God has promised that His Name *will be glorified* in the obedience of His Children. (John 12:28)

He has promised:

FOCAL John 12:28 KJV **I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.**

The Bible tells us in another place that, as Jesus prayed His Prayer at Gethsemane, that an *angel from Heaven* came and strengthened Him. God sent a messenger when He saw that His Son

Luke 22:44 KJV ... **in an agony ... prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.**

The answer to His prayer was not that Jesus be relieved from His burden. The answer the Father gave the Son as His sweat – like great drops of blood – poured from Him was the same answer He gave before: **I have glorified My Name, I will glorify it again.** After the third prayer in the Garden Jesus allowed Himself to fall as a grain of wheat to the ground.

He would die for us, so we could live for Him.

He would suffer death for us, so we could find eternal life in Him.

He would surrender to the Ground, to Eternal God the Father, and rise triumphant three days later because **God will glorify His Name.** Yes, it is *outside of the comfort zone* to obey God and surrender fully to Him. And yet, if you will be blessed, you *must surrender*. We must first

of all surrender to Him for salvation. Jesus Christ

1 Peter 2:24-25 KJVR ... **His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.** (25) **For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.**

Jesus glorified the Name of God by surrendering everything for you. He stepped outside of His comfort zone for you. Will you not answer His call to salvation? Will you not step outside of yourself, your family, your job, or whatever else you cling to at the *head of the wheat*, fall to the ground and surrender unto God? Will you not believe on Him for full salvation? Even if no others come, will you not step out in your heart and believe on Him?

If you have, at one time in your life, stepped forward and believed on Him, then does He have a work for you to do? Is He calling you to this Church to serve Him?

Remember Christ's words, “**Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.**” Do you wish to bring forth much fruit? Forget yourself, fall to the ground and die! Jesus surrendered for us. (Luke 22:44; 1 Peter 2:24-25)

Surrender your will to our Eternal Father and He will glorify His name in you. **He has glorified His name, and will yet glorify it still.** You rob yourself and those who love you when you do not surrender to the Lord your all.

If you are in the Church, and already a member, but are not working for Him as He has called, then repent and surrender to Him. We are all called to die to self. The Scripture says both:

Galatians 2:20-21 KJV I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (21) **I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.**

As well as

Galatians 5:24-25 KJV And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. (25) **If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.**

We who are His live surrendered lives. If you belong to Him you are His, not by the Law, but because of Calvary. You are not under the Mosaic Law, but the Law of the Spirit of God. What would God have you do?

What does He bid you? God will glorify His Name, He has promised this. Will you commit to follow His leading? He has elevated you to live with Him in the Heavens – will you surrender to Him as you walk this earth? We find it easy to surrender to an earthly boss for a pittance of money. Wouldn't it be better to surrender to the Lord, to ask Him to **glorify His Name** in your life? Those who **glorify His Name** will be blessed, whereas those who do not will receive no blessing. When Jesus' prayer was answered the Bible tells us:

Focal John 12:28-29 KJV **Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. (29) The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.**

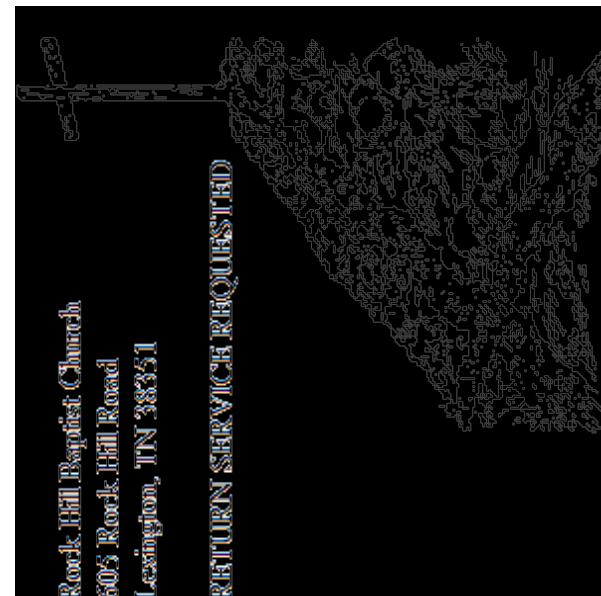
Some heard an angel, others merely heard thunder. Those who refuse to turn to God are in tune with this world, and they hear only thunder. Those who turn to God through Jesus Christ our Lord, who surrender to Him, who step outside their comfort zone and trust Him no matter what.

Learn hence, then, all of you who would have Christ as your Savior, that you must be willing to serve him. We are not saved by service, but we are saved to service. When we are once saved, thenceforward we live in the service of our Lord. If we refuse to be his servants, we are not saved, for we still remain evidently the servants of self, and the servants of Satan. Holiness is another name for salvation; to be delivered from the power of self-will, and the

domination of evil lusts, and the tyranny of Satan,— this is salvation. Those who would be saved must know that they will have to serve Christ, and those who are saved rejoice that they are serving him, and that thus they are giving evidence of a change of heart and renewal of mind.⁷

The road to peace is in surrendering your life fully to Jesus Christ our Lord. Trust God. He has glorified His Name, and will glorify it! Surrender to Him and trust that He will do as He has said.

May God touch your hearts with these words.



⁷ C.H. Spurgeon, *The Rule and Reward of Serving Christ*