

***The all-inclusive wish.*** (John 17:20-26).

\* Friends, if we look for something ordinary, we may note that today is the 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter. Yet, if we want to find something special, we may note that in 7 days there will be a celebration of Pentecost. But if we go for something remarkable, we may note that this Sunday appears at the end of the one of the 7 segments of the liturgical calendar! After discovering the ordinary and the important numbers of this Sunday, I asked my hypothetical listeners for 7 days to preach to them all these ordinary and extraordinary. However after my request, I was allowed only 15 min. Friends, now it is your turn to make believe that you are also limited in getting to wish, like a person to whom a King granted only one wish, despite the fact that there are so many other important things for which to talk and tell. Unfortunately, we have no choice, just only one wish and 15 min to request. Well, with our situations we have to find something exceptional. Friends, are you in agreement with me?

\* Now, for those who agree, I will make a practical suggestion. Let's pray to Almighty God about this problem. May the King of all creation give us an eagle eye that will be able to discern the exceptional thing we are given to ask and receive. Let's pray together, Almighty Father, according to the promise we received from our Lord and Your Son Jesus Christ, we were given the right to ask You for whatever we may wish for the sake of the glorification of Your Most Holy name, (Joh 16:23). Therefore, give us the ability to discern the primarily thing and grant it to us in Jesus' name so that we may be found in one wish and purpose, acceptable to You; through the same, Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit: ever one God, world without end. Amen.

\* Friends, by virtue of our union with Jesus Christ we are given to ask many things and whatever we ask we might be given. However, it should be remembered, that the will of God cannot be compromised by our petition, also there should be harmony between God's will and our wishes. To prove this idea, I'd like to pick up an example from a biblical account. Here is one from the life of Nehemiah, who was known as the Jewish leader of the post-exilic period.

\* According to the Book, Nehemiah's character indicates his zealousness in wishing. His most desire is to assist in bringing Israel back under God's covenant of love that can be seen from his prayer, (Neh 1:9-11); here we meet the man of great concern. When many Jews returned to their motherland from exile, Nehemiah was still bound by the will of the King of Persia, Artaxerxes I, who wished him to be a cupbearer. Once Nehemiah received bad news. Some travelers witnessed to him that those who returned from exile, were going through tough times. Moreover, Jerusalem was not still fortified, *its wall was broken down, and its gates had been burned with fire*,(1:3). After hearing that, Nehemiah mourned, fasted, and prayed.

Then Nehemiah's concern was not left without a certain outcome; the King noticed that his servant was in a sad mood. Nehemiah, *what's the problem?*, asked the King. At that moment, Nehemiah was afraid for he thought, *surely the King was displeased with him*. On demand of his master, Nehemiah told everything according to his deep concern. Surprisingly, in return the king asked Nehemiah what he desired of him.

\* Friends, imagine yourselves in place of that noble Jew with your heart setting on two things, one is to help the needy and other to help yourself in view of the king's displeasure. After being asked for the wish, you would need to know which way to turn. Now, see what Nehemiah did and follow him. Nehemiah just breathed a prayer to God, and said to the King, *"If it please the king, and if your servant has found favor before you, send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it."* (Neh 2:5). Note, this prayer was addressed to the King of the universe and to the King of Persia simultaneously. Surprisingly, both Kings gave him not only permission but also they lent him a hand.

\* Thanks Nehemiah, now you know what to ask the King! Dear Lord, please sustain me in unity of love with You and your people, that was your petition. After all, your deep desire is to please the king's heart and you are rewarded by receiving this request. As Christians we also have the privilege to pray God as our Heavenly Father. Let's keep in mind to have words of great gratitude to Jesus for this privilege and for the Lord's prayer. Thanks to Jesus for teaching us how and what to say according to the will of the Almighty.

\* When analyzing the Lord's prayer, I found 7 petitions. No doubt, each of these are very important. However, as you remember, our purpose is to find the one exceptional petition in view of the person who was granted only one wish as a gift. Someone may think that the 4<sup>th</sup> petition of the Lord's Prayer, *Our Father ... give us this day our daily bread*, (Mat 6:11) is that one due to its universalism. On the other hand, if we recall Jesus' remark, *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."* (Mat 4:4) leads us to doubt the first statement.

\* Now, it's time to recall our Sunday lesson, (John 17:20-26). For all practical purposes this chapter may consider as a voice of the Wisdom that gives us the knowledge of the most important petition that being asked on behalf of our salvation. The entire chapter 17 shows as Jesus praying to his Father, God Almighty. This prayer called Christ's High Priestly Prayer, was devoted to the needs of his Apostles, including those of us who have such needs. Here Jesus prays to the Father that we would have the protection from satanic powers and the knowledge of truth. Comparing the Lord's Prayer with Christ's High Priestly Prayer, we observe that the second prayer is much longer in words but much shorter in petitions. There are only 3 petitions found within 26 verses of Christ's High Priestly prayer.

First petition - Father, glorify me, (v.5); second petition - Holy Father, keep (safe) them (apostles and those who will believe in Jesus through their word) so that they may be one, even as we are one, (vv.11,20-21); third petition - Sanctify them in the truth,(v.17).

\* No doubt all these petitions are highly important because of our physical and spiritual weaknesses, but they are still not exceptional. The exceptional one is not found in those 3 petitions but in Jesus' desire. *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world, (v.24).* Here, in connection with Jesus' will, we've discovered the human all embracing wish for eternal glory. Next, please note, that the Father's and Jesus' wills are one as he said, the Father and I are one, (Joh 10:30).

\* Finally we are ready to nominate the most important petition that is also found in the Lord's Prayer. Please follow me. *Our Father who art in heaven ... let Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.* This is a King-Petition among all others. The prayer, *Lord let your will for me be done to me* should be our first and foremost desire. Then if it is so, the Lord's longing for our unity with him and the Father will meet its final purpose and we will see one glory upon another.

Beloved let God's will be done in yours and my wishes.

Amen