

Bible Study August 30, 2023

JOHN 17 (AMPLIFIED VERSION)

The High Priestly Prayer

¹ When Jesus had spoken these things, He raised His eyes to heaven [in prayer] and said, “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, so that Your Son may glorify You. ² Just as You have given Him power and authority over all mankind, [now glorify Him] so that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him [to be His—permanently and forever]. ³ Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true [supreme and sovereign] God, and [in the same manner know] Jesus [as the] Christ whom You have sent.

How do we get eternal life? Jesus tells us clearly here—by knowing God the Father himself through his Son, Jesus Christ. Eternal life requires entering into a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. When we admit our sin and turn away from it, Jesus’ love lives in us by the Holy Spirit.

⁴ I have glorified You [down here] on the earth by completing the work that You gave Me to do. ⁵ Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory and majesty that I had with You before the world existed.

Before Jesus came to earth, he was one with God. At this point, when his mission on earth was almost finished, Jesus was asking his Father to restore him to his original place of honor and authority. Jesus’ resurrection and ascension—and Stephen’s dying exclamation (Acts 7:56)—attest that Jesus did return to his exalted position at the right hand of God.

⁶ “I have manifested Your name [and revealed Your very self, Your real self] to the people whom You have given Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept and obeyed Your word. ⁷ Now [at last] they know [with confident assurance] that all You have given Me is from You [it is really and truly Yours]. ⁸ For the words which You gave Me I have given them; and they received and accepted them and truly understood [with confident assurance] that I came from You [from Your presence], and they believed [without any doubt] that You sent Me. ⁹ I pray for them; I do not pray for the world, but for those You have given Me, because they belong to You; ¹⁰ and all things that are Mine are Yours, and [all things that are] Yours are Mine; and I am glorified in them.

What did Jesus mean when he said “they bring me glory”? We glorify God when we reveal his presence and character in the way we live. The lives of Jesus’ disciples reveal his character and show the world that he is present in them. In what ways does your life reveal Jesus’ character and presence?

¹¹ I am no longer in the world; yet they are still in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, so that they may be one just as We are.

Jesus was asking that the disciples be united in harmony and love as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are united—in the strongest of all unions (see the notes on 17:21-23). We achieve this harmony not through structures or organizations alone but through the work of God in and between us, unifying us and drawing our own wills into sync with his own (17:3). It is important to remember, however, that though our unity is essential, we must never abandon or compromise truth simply to be unified. As we all grow closer to God together, we should find that our perspectives on the truth do the same.

¹² While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and protected them, and not one of them was lost except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.

Judas was “the one headed for destruction,” who was lost because he betrayed Jesus and never sought forgiveness (see Psalm 41:9).

The Disciples in the World

¹³ But now I am coming to You; and I say these things [while I am still] in the world so that they may experience My joy made full and complete and perfect within them [filling their hearts with My delight].

Joy is a common theme in Jesus’ teachings—he wants us to be joyful (see 15:11; 16:24). We find immeasurable joy when we keep in intimate contact with Jesus, the source of all joy. Then we will experience God’s special care and protection and see the victory God brings even when defeat seems certain.

¹⁴ I have given to them Your word [the message You gave Me]; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world and do not belong to the world, just as I am not of the world and do not belong to it.

The world hates Christians because Christians’ values differ from theirs. Because Jesus’ followers don’t cooperate with the world by joining in their rebellion and hostility to God’s Word and his will, they are living accusations against the world’s immorality. Without God, the world slides into Satan’s agenda, and Satan is the avowed enemy of Jesus and his people.

¹⁵ I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but that You keep them and protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth [set them apart for Your purposes, make them holy]; Your word is truth.

A follower of Jesus becomes pure and holy by believing and obeying the Word of God (also see Hebrews 4:12). He or she has already received forgiveness through Jesus’ sacrificial death (Hebrews 7:26-27). But daily application of God’s Word has a purifying effect on our minds and hearts. Scripture points out sin, motivates us to confess it, renews our relationship with God, and guides us back to the right path.

¹⁸ Just as You commissioned and sent Me into the world, I also have commissioned and sent them (believers) into the world.

Jesus didn't ask God to take believers out of the world but instead asked to use them in the world. Because Jesus sends us into the world, we should not try to escape from the world, nor should we avoid all relationships with non-Christians. As salt and light to the world (Matthew 5:13-16), we must find ways to be more loving, more creative as we share our faith, and more consistent in staying in touch with unbelievers. God sent us to do this kind of work.

19 For their sake I sanctify Myself [to do Your will], so that they also may be sanctified [set apart, dedicated, made holy] in [Your] truth.

20 "I do not pray for these alone [it is not for their sake only that I make this request], but also for [all] those who [will ever] believe and trust in Me through their message,

Jesus prayed for all who would follow him, including you and others you know. He prayed for unity (17:11), protection from the evil one (17:15), and holiness (17:17). Knowing that Jesus prayed for us gives us confidence as we work for his Kingdom.

21 that they all may be one; just as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, so that the world may believe [without any doubt] that You sent Me.

Their Future Glory

22 I have given to them the glory and honor which You have given Me, that they may be one, just as We are one; 23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected and completed into one, so that the world may know [without any doubt] that You sent Me, and [that You] have loved them, just as You have loved Me.

Jesus' great desire for his disciples was that they would become one. He wanted them unified as a powerful witness to the reality of God's love. Are you helping to unify the body of Christ, the church? You can pray for other Christians, build them up, work with them in humility, be generous with your time and money, avoid gossip, exalt Jesus, and refuse to get sidetracked arguing over divisive matters.

Jesus prayed for unity among believers based on the believers' unity with him and the Father. Christians can know unity among themselves if they are living in union with God. Each branch living in union with its vine is united with all other branches doing the same.

24 Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given to Me [as Your gift to Me], may be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, because You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

25 "O just and righteous Father, although the world has not known You and has never acknowledged You [and the revelation of Your mercy], yet I have always known You; and these [believers] know [without any doubt] that You sent Me; 26 and I have made Your name known to them, and will continue to make it known, so that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them [overwhelming their heart], and I [may be] in them."

This entire chapter is Jesus' prayer. From it, we learn that the world is a tremendous battleground where the forces under Satan's power and those under God's authority are at war. Satan and his

forces are motivated by bitter hatred for Jesus Christ and his forces. Jesus prayed for his disciples, including those of us who follow him today. He prayed that God would keep his chosen believers safe from Satan's power, setting them apart and making them pure and holy, uniting them through his truth.