



John 17

Jesus Great Prayer

Jesus prayed unto His God and Father, which is the only long, continuous prayer of Jesus recorded in the Gospels. Many of the same concerns of what is commonly called the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) are here in this prayer.

- Prayer is repeatedly **directed to God the Father**.
- There is recognition of and concern for God's name.
- There is concern for **the work of the Kingdom of God**.
- There is concern for **keeping from evil**.
- Yet there is something different in this prayer; "The request of our Lord thus given in John's seventeenth chapter is clearly **no prayer of an inferior to a superior**: constantly there is seen in it the **co-equality** of the Speaker with The Father. The Two have but one mind."
- Jesus has an **ongoing, present work of intercession** toward his people (Romans 8:34 and Hebrews 7:25).
- **He gave himself wholly unto prayer.** He was not again to instruct the multitude, nor to heal the sick, and in the interval which remained, before he should lay down his life, he girded himself for special intercession. He poured out his soul in life before he poured it out unto death. (Spurgeon)
- The words **lifted up His eyes to heaven** also indicate that Jesus looked up in a hopeful sense and was not gloomy or downcast in this prayer. This is actually a prayer of faith

and confidence, even victory—all the while acknowledging the reality of the conflict. It is uttered by One who has just affirmed that He has overcome the world (John 16:33), and it starts from this conviction. (Morris)

- This is a **prayer deep and rich with relationship**. Jesus prayed with a full and deep sense of the familial relationship and the natural hierarchy or order that exists between God the Father and God the Son.
- **He sets us an example:** in all times of tribulation let us fall back upon our sonship, our adoption, and the fatherhood of our great God.
- **His faith thinks it but an hour:** the midnight of Gethsemane, the morning of the scourging, the day of the crucifixion, all are but an hour, a short space. But he counts it as an hour, for joy of that which shall be born into the world by his grievous pangs. Thus, his love and patience make him despise the time of shame.
- **Glorify Your Son:** His petition was not selfish. **The Man Jesus is also the God-Man;** make it plain by His resurrection and ascension. This glorification embraced His death, resurrection, and session at God's right hand, as accredited Mediator. If the God the Son made use or reasons or grounds in praying to God the Father, we should much more give attention to giving reasons and grounds for our requests before the throne of God.
 - Because the hour has come (v.1).
 - Because the Father will be glorified (v.1).
 - Because authority had already been given to grant eternal life. (v.2).
 - Because Jesus is the only way to life (v.3).
 - Because it finishes the work the Father had for the Son to perform (v.3). To Christ it was the means of true glory.
 - This prayer was wonderfully answered. The Father glorified his Son, even when it pleased him to bruise him and to put him to grief. With one hand he smote, and with the other hand he glorified.
 - We are constantly asking the Father to glorify us and then we wonder why the answer tarries.
 - The CROSS glorified Jesus the Son and displayed the wisdom and the power of God (I Corinthians 1:23-25). Yet it also glorified God the Father, by displaying His wise plan and glory in giving the Son to do such a work. Men and women cannot operate without authority. So, if you put out one authority, another will come in. if you reject the authority of God, human authority will emerge. (Boice)
 - Jesus understood that He was and is the One who grants eternal life to those given to Him by the Father. Christians often think of Jesus as God's gift to us; we rarely think of ourselves as God's gift to Jesus. (Carson). This indicates something that we can dimly understand as a division of labor in the work of salvation between the Persons of the Godhead. Here we see that The Father

gives some unto the Son and the Son gives them eternal life through His work on the cross.



Life is active involvement with environment; death is the cessation of involvement with the environment, whether it be physical or personal. **Eternal life means that we are alive and active to God's environment.** If God and His spiritual environment does not affect our life, then it can be said that we do not have or experience eternal life. If this is true, then we live life in the same dimension that animals live, and we exist if we are dead to God and His environment.

That they may know You: indicating the knowledge is a growing experience. Jesus did not wait until His work on the cross to glorify God the Father. His entire life glorified God. Jesus glorified the Father through his life, from His circumcision and dedication and teaching his disciples.

Jesus with divine confidence and assurance, saw the work on the cross as already finished. There was a sense in which the work was not finished; but since Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8), there is a greater sense in which the work was already finished, completed in the heart and mind of God. Now it just had to be done.

Glorify Me together with Yourself: Jesus asked the Father to glorify Him, but with the same glory that the Father Himself has. Jesus' prayer was in no way an expression of independence, but of utter and continued dependence upon God the Father. Jesus could not truthfully or sanely pray this if He were not Yahweh Himself, equal with God the Father. In Isaiah 42:8 and 48:11, Yahweh proclaimed that He shares His glory with no one. If God the Father and god the son share their glory, they must both be Yahweh.

He has one main petition: that the Father would receive him back to the glory he had relinquished to accomplish his task. This petition for a return to the pristine glory implies unmistakably his preexistence and equality with the Father. It confirms his claim that he and the Father are one (John 10:30).

The **Gospel of John** has emphasized the **glory of Jesus** throughout its record. John was careful to record the many ways Jesus referred to His own glory in this prayer.

- The life of Jesus was a manifestation of God's glory, and the disciples beheld this glory (John 1:14).
- The miracles of Jesus manifested His glory (John 2:11).
- Jesus sought the glory of His Father (John 7:18, 8:50).

- God the Father glorifies God the son (John 13:31-32).



Jesus Prays Concerning the Disciples

Having taught and encouraged the disciples as much as He could on the eve of their despair, Jesus now did the great thing: He committed them to the Father in prayer. (6-8) Jesus speaks of His mission among the disciples and their reception of it.

"I have manifested Your name to the men who You have given Me out of the world they were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me."

- Jesus did not simply teach about the name (character) of God, He manifested the character of God. Jesus lived out the love and goodness, kindness, righteousness, and grace and holiness of God. (2 Corinthians 3:2-3) With the responsibility to manifest the name and nature of God to a watching world.
- Jesus chose his disciples after a night of prayer, expressing His total dependence upon God the Father in choosing of the men (Luke 6:12-16).
- They are Yours, You gave them to Me: Here is another hint at the workings of the Persons of the Trinity in what could be called a division of labor. There was some sense in which the disciples first belonged to God the Father, then were given to God the Son.
- They have kept Your word: He saw a genuine work of God in them for all their failures and faults, they had kept God's word.
- They have believed that You sent Me: Jesus looked at salvation from two points of view each perspective is true from its point of view.
 1. John 17:6 explains their salvation in the election of God (the men You have given Me out of the world), seeing it from **God's point of view**.
 2. John 17:8 explains their salvation in their faith (they have believed that You sent Me), seeing it from **humanity's point of view**.

(9-10) Jesus directs His prayer.

1. I pray for them. They are Yours and they are mine
2. He was praying for the instrument He was creating, through which He would reach the world,

3. The salvation of the world depends on the witness of those whom the Father has given him out of the world (vv. 21, 23) and it is they who need his intercession at this junction.
4. I am now wholly employed for my disciples, that they may be properly qualified to preach my salvation to the ends of the earth. Jesus here imitates the high priest, the second part of whose prayer, on the day of expiation, was for the priests, the sons of Aaron. (Clarke).

But for those whom You have given Me: One might say that this has in mind more than simply the eleven disciples, but also those who would believe on their testimony (as is specifically mentioned in John 17:20).

All Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine: Jesus already spoke of the shared glory between God the Father and God the son (John 17:5). Here He spoke of their shared role in the life of the redeemed, that believers belong to both God the Father and God the Son.

1. Everything we have belongs to God, but not everything He has belongs to us.
2. Each has full title to the possessions of the other they share the same interests and responsibilities.

I am glorified in them: in a sense this is what it means to be a believer, to be born again, to be a true follower of Jesus Christ—to have Him glorified in us. Jesus does not merely want to dwell in or live in the believer but to be glorified in them.

1. Just as the world's values were all wrong concerning the cross, so were the world's values all wrong concerning the apostolic band. In them the Son of God, none less, was actually glorified.
2. The Apostle Paul understood the phrase such as Chris in you (Colossians 1: 27).
3. First request for the disciples: Father keep them.
 - They needed prayer because the unique three years of discipleship during His earthly ministry would be over
 - They needed prayer because of the circumstances surrounding the departure of Jesus; His betrayal, arrest trial, beatings, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension.
 - They needed prayer because Jesus would not be there in His bodily presence to help them
 - They needed prayer because of the necessity of the Holy Spirit; both for the sending of the Holy Spirit and their constant reliance upon Him.

Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me: The disciples needed the prayer of Jesus and the power of God the Father to keep them.

1. They must be kept, continuing as disciples of Jesus. **This was not obvious; in the Jewish world of that day no one continued as a disciple to a dead rabbi.** Yet these disciples were to continue to be kept as disciples to Jesus.

2. **You have been redeemed, but you must still be kept.** You have been regenerated; but you must be kept. You are pure in heart and hands; but you must be kept.
3. **We need Jesus our intercessor** (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25) to pray for us, asking God the Father to keep us. Our continuing on in Jesus is not left to our own efforts alone. The world, the flesh, and the devil are so mighty, so pervasive, and so seductive that we could never keep ourselves in our own efforts. If we stay with Jesus, it is because Jesus has prayed for us “Father, keep them.” The work of keeping a believer is so significant that it takes the name of God – the whole character and authority of God. Keep them in unity with Me.
4. **They may be one as We are:** The keeping work of God the Father in the disciples would not only keep them in Him, but it would also keep them together. Jesus prayed that they would be one and one after the pattern of the unity of God the Father and God the Son (that they may be one as We are).
5. **That the Scripture might be fulfilled:** The Scriptures fulfilled by the betrayal of Judas were especially Psalm 41:9 and Psalm 109:8, especially noted in Acts 1:20. The treachery and treason of Ahithophel against King David was a prophesy of the treachery and treason of Judas against the Son of David.
6. **Keep them in My joy and away from the evil one.** (13-16) The basis of Jesus’ request was rooted in the name (character) of God and in His ownership of the disciple (those whom You gave Me),
 - Authority- power and dignity
 - Power – giving an account of His stewardship
 - His will- total reliance upon God the Father

None of them is lost except the son of perdition. One who is destined to evil and destruction. Judas.

Jesus had a life filled with joy; He could speak of My joy. If He did not, this part of the prayer would make no sense. Truly Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3). Nevertheless, there was a joy and a satisfaction in the life experience of Jesus that surpassed the joy of any other who ever lived.

- His joy was rooted in unbroken fellowship with God His Father
- His joy was the fruit of true faith and confidence in His Father
- His joy came from seeing the great things God had done.
- His joy was never diminished by His own sin.
- His joy was never diminished by deception.
- His joy was never diminished by allowing even the smallest foothold to the devil.

Jesus was so concerned for joy among His disciples that He prayed for it. Jesus takes all his teaching from the Father. You never hear from him any boast about being the originator of

profound thoughts. No, he just repeated to his disciples the words he had received from the Father. I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me. If Jesus acted thus, how much more must the messengers of God receive the word from the Lord's mouth and speak it as they receive it!



I do not pray that You should take the out of the world: **This prayer of Jesus cautions us against seeking refuge in Christian isolation**; in modern day monasteries. Our goal is to be in the world but not of it or of the evil one; even as a ship is to be in the ocean, but not allowing the ocean to be in the ship.

If we were taken from the world, **the world would be in utter darkness and would perish**. You are the light of the world. So, shine.

If we were taken from the world, **the world would not have us as a witness, to be a means of salvation unto them**. So, win others to Jesus.

If we were taken from the world, **we would not have the opportunity to serve Jesus in the same manner**.

If we were taken from the world, we could not show the power of God's grace to preserve us in the midst of difficulty. So, continue on. Job and Moses and Elijah and Jonah all prayed that they would be taken out of the world, but God did not answer. He also wants us to stay in the world to complete the work He gives us to do. Jesus didn't pray that we would be taken out of the battle but that we would be strengthened and protected in it.

Jesus didn't simply say that His people were not of the world; He said they were not of the world even as He was not of the world—in other words, after the same pattern of Jesus' not being of the world.

It's possible for someone to not be of the world, but in a very different way that Jesus was not of the world. They can be crazy, they can be violent, they can be weird, or it can be many things but there was a particular way that Jesus was not of the world.

- Jesus was not of the world in His nature.
- Jesus was not of the world in His office.
- Jesus was not of the world in His character.

Jesus' **second request** for the disciples: **sanctify them**.

Sanctify them by your truth. Set apart for God's special pleasure and this implies holiness, being set apart from the world and for God's use. Your word is truth. The word of God read, heard, understood and applied.

1. Sanctification is not effected apart from divine revelation.
2. The more truth you believe, the more sanctified you will be. The operation of truth upon the mind is to separate a man from the world unto the service of God.

As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world; the thought of service is sandwiched by sanctification. The sanctification Jesus had in mind here was not primarily personal holiness through that is included, but more so being set apart for God's service and mission. A **mission is a sending forth**. They not merely remain in it because they can do nothing else; they are positively sent into it as their Master's messengers.

Jesus came to teach.

Jesus came to live among us.

Jesus came to suffer for truth and righteousness.

Jesus came to rescue men.



Jesus prays concerning all believers. Jesus broadens the scope of His prayer. "*I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;*" (v. 20).

Jesus prayed for His eleven disciples, but He also had the heart and the vision to pray beyond them. He prayed for those who would come to faith by the testimony of these disciples. He prayed for us. He prayed for them. He prays for us. He knew His intercession for them would prevail. He knows His intercession for us will prevail. Then let us rest in Him, with the rest of loving obedience and of surest confidence.

The entire tone of the farewell discourse is built on the assumption that after the resurrection they would renew their faith and carry on a new ministry is the power of the Holy Spirit.

By **worldly standards** of success Jesus had little to show for his mission. **Yet Jesus left His earthly work full of confidence in the work of God through the disciples.**

Jesus prays for unity among all believers, even as among the original disciples. (v.21)

That they all may be one: Jesus envisioned the great multitude before the throne of God of every nation race, language, class, and social level (Revelation 7:9-10). **Jesus prayed that they might rise above their different backgrounds and understand their unity**; that they may all be as one. The perfectly holy would be perfectly united. The more saintly men are, the more they love their Lord and one another; and thus they come into closer union with each other. Christ will have all his members to be one in spirit, one in rights and privileges, and one in the blessedness of the future world.

Jesus prayed that they would remain unified as We are. Jesus prayed that their unity would follow the pattern of the unity of the Godhead, specifically in the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. If the Father is in him and he is in them then the Father is in them: they are drawn into the very life of God, and the life of God is in true love. The oneness Jesus had in mind was the unity that comes from the shared life in both God the Father and God the Son.

There are many ways that Jesus gives his glory to his people.

- The glory of His presence.
- The glory of His Word.
- The glory of His Spirit.
- The glory of His power.
- The glory of His leadership.
- The glory of His preservation.

In all these aspects, there is the essential aspect of the presence of Jesus, God the Son. Scripturally speaking, when God gives or displays His glory to His people, it is some type of manifestation of God's presence. **God's glory is, in some way, the radiance or shining of His presence, His essential nature.** The glory of Jesus was ultimately displayed in His work on the cross. Jesus often referred to it as His glorification (John 7:39, 12:16, 12:23). Where there is a sense of God's glory, unity is so much easier. **I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them as you have loved Me.**

The idea that the unity of God's people would display to the world that Jesus was truly sent from God the Father was so important to Jesus that He repeated it in the same short prayer. This also demonstrated to the world that Jesus loves His people and loves them after the pattern of God the Father's love for God the Son. This reminds us of the importance of unity and love among Christians. Jesus asked that the unity between Himself and His people be completed, even as He promised His disciples that it would be (John 14:2-3). Jesus longs for the consummation of all things, greatly desiring for His people to be gathered to Him in heaven. Jesus did everything in dependence upon God the Father. There must be something so deep, so enthralling, so vast to the glory of Jesus that it can occupy the attention of God's people in

eternity. This glory was given in the context of a love relationship and a love relationship extending into eternity. Genuine love must have an object outside of itself to love; therefore, love existed between the Persons of the Godhead before anything was created.

Jesus understood that His present and soon-to-be-endured pain did not diminish the righteousness of God the Father in even the smallest way.

Jesus declared to the disciples and to the world the name of God the Father. He revealed and lived out the character and nature of God the Father as the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person (Hebrews 1:3).

Jesus received love from God the Father, and this love relationship was the strength and sustenance of His life.

Jesus prayed that His disciples would not only be filled with the love of God the Father, but that they would also know the indwelling presence of Jesus Himself. This continues the emphasis on abiding and the indwelling Jesus from the words of Jesus earlier that evening (John 15:1-8)