

EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #67

(The Real Lord's Prayer - Part #2)

John 17:6-19

When a man has to travel and go on a long trip without his wife or family, if he is anything like me, he typically the night before will have a quiet talk with his wife or family before he departs. In such a case, he will talk over various potential problems and things which are important to know. If the man going on the trip is a man of God, he will usually pray. He will pray for himself and for his family. That is exactly what Jesus Christ does right here. We may observe from **verses 11 and 13** that this is a “now I come to Thee” prayer, not a “now I lay me down to sleep” prayer. Jesus is about to leave to go back to His Father in heaven and in John 13-16, He had a quiet talk with His disciples and in **John 17**, He prays.

It is interesting to observe that Jesus never actually prayed with His disciples, He always prayed alone except for here in **John 17**. This apparently was a prayer Jesus prayed in front of His disciples and years later the Holy Spirit brought every word back to John's mind and he wrote it down in **John 17**.

As we saw last time, this is the real Lord's Prayer and it breaks down into three main parts:

PART #1 - Jesus prays for Himself - 17:1-5

His prayer for Himself was in view of the fact that He had glorified the Father on earth and had finished His work on earth; He asked that God the Father would give Him back His glory that He had before coming to this world. His glory was twofold, a glory of opinion and a glory of visibility. In heaven all creation held Jesus Christ in high esteem as Holy God and His glory was visibly seen. But it was not true on earth.

PART #2 - Jesus prays for His disciples - **17:6-19**

PART #3 - Jesus prays for us - 17:20-26

In this study, we want to examine Christ's prayer for His disciples. What He prays is this:

PRIOR TO GOING TO THE CROSS JESUS CHRIST PRAYED A REMARKABLE PRAYER FOR HIS DISCIPLES WHICH SPECIFICALLY ASKS GOD TO PROTECT AND DEVELOP HIS DISCIPLES IN THE WORLD.

Now in systematizing and analyzing this part of the prayer there are three main contextual observations we may make:

OBSERVATION #1 – Jesus expresses to the Father the general basis for the prayer for the disciples. **17:6-8**

When Jesus Christ looks to heaven and prays this prayer for His disciples, He is not praying it for a bunch of spiritual duds, who are struggling with whether or not they should stay home and watch football or go to church.

These disciples had really developed and blossomed in their faith and doctrine and this becomes the whole basis for the prayer. There is no reason to believe that He would have prayed this prayer for disciples who were apathetic toward Him or toward the Word of God. In fact, I am convinced that any true application we may make to this prayer demands the same type of mindset they had. We need to be believers in Jesus Christ and very serious about the Word of God.

If you look at the five acknowledgement facts that Christ makes about His disciples and if you can say that you are on the same course as they were, then the prayer has great application for you as well.

In **verses 6-8**, Jesus prefaces His request by stating five facts about His disciples:

Fact #1 - Jesus Christ had manifested the Father to the disciples. **17:6a**

This particular Greek word “manifest” (φανερωω) indicates that He revealed God the Father in the sense of making things about Him plain, evident and visible. What this means is that Jesus had fully revealed everything about God to these disciples. Everything He did and said reflected the very nature of God and these disciples lived with Him and saw it. For them it was a manifestation process. Everywhere they went, everything Jesus did and said revealed God.

Fact #2 - God the Father had given these disciples to God the Son. **17:6b**

Jesus reminds God the Father that He was the one who chose these disciples and gave them to Him. The prepositional phrase “out of the world” means Jesus is saying that out of all of the masses of people in the world, these are the disciples that you selected and gave to Me. These disciples were God’s gift to His Son. This then becomes the basis for His prayer - this was God’s select group of men.

H. A. Ironside was one time in Oakland, California and several people were giving their testimony as to how they had found Jesus. Finally, one old skilled preacher got up and said, I have listened to you all tell how you found Jesus and I do not have any such story as to how I found Jesus. In fact, I never found Him because I wasn’t looking for Him; He found me and drew me to Himself (*John*, pp. 745-746). There is certainly nothing wrong, when praying, to remind God He is the one who chose you.

Fact #3 - The disciples are God’s disciples. **17:6c**

Not only were these disciples given to the Son by the Father, but they were also His disciples. These men were God’s property. Just as we take a serious interest in our family members, so does God.

Fact #4 - The disciples had kept God’s Word. **17:6d**

Now the verb “kept” (τηρηω) means that these disciples carefully guarded, preserved, watched over and very carefully took care of the Word of God (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 445). These disciples were serious about God’s Word. They had an emphatic, intense love and commitment to God’s Word.

Real disciples of Jesus Christ love the Word of God and they have an intense passion to understand and guard every book of the Bible and know every chapter. Any who think lightly of God's Word cannot possibly be classified as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Fact #5 - The disciples know the connection between God the Father and God the Son. **17:7-8**

The statement of **verse 7** is powerful; these disciples had come to know that everything about Jesus Christ was "from" God. **Now we may remember that the preposition used in John 16:30 was apo (απο), which means they had previously known that Jesus was from heaven. However, the preposition "from" used in verses 7-8 is para (παρα) which means these disciples now realize Jesus was from God in the sense of being right along beside Him.** Their theology and doctrine had blossomed by the time Jesus prays this prayer. Not only did they know and believe He was from God, but they knew He was right alongside the Father as God.

There are two key connections these disciples made:

(Connection #1) - They viewed Christ's words as the Word of God. **17:8a**

They received His word, they carefully understood His word and they believed His word.

(Connection #2) - They understood and believed that Jesus was God sent into this world by God the Father. **17:8b**

The disciples knew about the entire plan of God which centered on Jesus Christ.

OBSERVATION #2 – Jesus prefaces His specific requests for His disciples to His Father with other disciple realities. **17:9-12**

There are five more realities that Jesus Christ brings out before He gets into the specifics of His disciples' prayer.

Reality #1 - Jesus is not praying on behalf of those in the world but only in behalf of His disciples. **17:9**

When Jesus refers to the world here, He is referring to the satanic and anti-true-God system in this world which includes its philosophies, education, goals, entertainment and religion, which is not based on the Word of God.

Now Jesus actually had a connection to this world. His very presence in the world was because God loved it (John 3:16) and His crucifixion was also for sinners in the world (Romans 5:8). But here, in this crucial prayer, He does not pray for the world.

The pronoun "I" is very emphatic in Greek, which means Jesus is emphasizing to the Father, this is Me, God the Son, specifically making this request on behalf of His own disciples. I am not praying for all the people in the world, but only for My disciples.

When we are thinking and acting and even praying like Jesus Christ, we will specifically be interested in praying for our own people. Jesus was concerned for His own flock, not someone else's. We need to be praying for the people connected to our church, not a bunch of other churches. I do not think much prayer really gets answered for people who do not take an interest in their own people at church. Jesus is very specific here to pray for His own flock and not for everyone in the world.

Reality #2 - Jesus is praying for the disciples have been given to Him by God the Father.
17:9a

John Calvin made a very important observation on this point, since Jesus is praying only for the elect, it is critical that we believe in the doctrine of election and if we don't we grieve the heart of God and deprive ourselves of the beautiful intercession of the Son of God (*John*, Vol. 18, p. 173). I know of a minister who one time was confronted by a man who said, "You teach the doctrine of election don't you?" He said, "No. Jesus taught it and so did Paul and I just communicate what they taught."

Reality #3 - Jesus is praying for His disciples because they are also disciples of God the Father. **17:9b**

Jesus believed that His elect were God the Father's elect. The doctrine of election is a critical part of this prayer of Jesus Christ. We are the property of God and we have the right to pray.

Reality #4 - Jesus is praying for these disciples because all things belong to both Him and His Father and because they have glorified Him. **17:10**

Every person brought to Jesus Christ has been brought to Jesus Christ by God the Father. Now these disciples were not perfect men. In fact, He just got done telling them that they would abandon Him. But in spite of their failures and quirks and personality flaws, they had glorified Jesus Christ, which meant they had glorified God.

Reality #5 - Jesus is praying because He is leaving this world and His disciples are not.
17:11a

These disciples were about to say goodbye to the bodily, physical presence of Jesus Christ. While Christ was physically here, He provided for the disciples, He kept them, He guarded them and protected them. This was true physically, emotionally, mentally and doctrinally.

Not one of them lost their way, with the exception of Judas, who was a fulfillment of Biblical prophecy. Why did Jesus bring this up? So that no one would think that the election of God was overturned by what happened to Judas. Judas was "the son of perdition" (**17:12**). The Greek literally reads "the son of the destruction" (ο υιος της απωλειας). These words literally mean that Judas was the specific one born to ruin and destruction. He had never been given by the Father to the Son. God just let Judas go down his own path of destruction, he was the non-elect.

One of the big questions of theology on this point is whether or not the things predicted in Scripture put a human being under necessity to fulfill them, therefore actually ascribing to God the evil work of a man like Judas? To this we must answer “no.” God cannot ever be charged with any evil. His omniscience demands that He knows everything and He knew Judas would betray His Son, but He did not cause it. He just permitted Judas to go his own way. Judas made his own choices and those choices show God knows and predicts everything.

But now things were about to change. Jesus was leaving and He knew His disciples needed special help. It is a wonderful, comforting reality to know that when Jesus Christ is not physically here with us, He has His eye on us. He is very much interested in our hurts and hardship and struggles.

OBSERVATION #3 – Jesus prays specific requests for His disciples. **17:11-19**

Now there are seven specific requests that Christ prays for these disciples:

Request #1 - Jesus prays that God the Father will keep the disciples in His name. **17:11a**

This is a prayer that certainly includes the doctrine of eternal security. Jesus is asking the Father to carefully watch over and guard His disciples, protecting them and caring for them in every way. True disciples will be protected and guarded in doctrine and life forever.

Request #2 - Jesus prays that the disciples will have a oneness in communion with God.
17:11b

He specifically asks that God the Father will keep His disciples in His name and that they may be one, even as We are one. One old theologian used to say you can build a strong case against denominationalism right here in this prayer. Great disciples don't love the denomination; they love the Lord and the Word of God. The emphasis here is on the unity and the security of the believer. It would not bring any glory to God if one of Christ's own lived alone or did not make it to heaven.

God the Father and God the Son had a close intimate communion and Jesus is praying that same connection will exist with His disciples.

There is no place in Scripture or in heaven where you can defend the idea of isolationism as a believer. The believer needs a communion with other believers, but first he needs communion with God.

Request #3 - Jesus prays that the disciples will be kept and guarded by God the Father. **17:12**

Again Christ brings up the necessity of guarding His disciples. I doubt we even begin to grasp how many times God has actually protected us from terrible things.

When we find ourselves in dark times, do exactly what Jesus did; raise your eyes toward heaven and ask the Father for help, for you have His undivided attention at that very moment. God will fortify you and strengthen you and bless you.

Request #4 - Jesus prays that His disciples will have full joy while in the world. **17:13**

Now I want you to get this point. God wants every one of His people to have full joy and if you don't have it, something is lacking in your grasp of this prayer and God's sovereignty. We sing, "When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be." God wants us rejoicing now. How about singing, when we all get to Monday this week or Tuesday or Wednesday, what a day of rejoicing that will be. The problem with us is that we think our rejoicing has to do with our situation or circumstances and that is where we miss the point. Our rejoicing has to do with our relationship with God.

There is a very specific type of joy that is that of Jesus Christ which may only be experienced by His true disciples. This is a deep inner joy that is wrought of God. It is the kind of joy that Christ had when looking at the cross, as the writer of Hebrews said, "who for the joy set before Him endured the cross" (Hebrews 12:2). This kind of special joy is possible for a believer living in this lousy, sin-cursed world.

If you read the constitution of the United States, it says that you have the right to liberty and the right to pursue happiness. But this world will never give you happiness. You'll never catch up to it in the world. Jesus is speaking this truth about full joy and no one will ever have full joy until you have communion with God. This world will not give you joy, God will.

Request #5 - Jesus prays that His disciples will be kept out of anything satanic. **17:15**

I want you to see that Jesus did not pray that we would be taken out of the world. Donald Gray Barnhouse said sometimes a family member would ask him if he would pray that their sick family member who was in a nursing home or hospital would be taken home quickly. Dr. Barnhouse said, "I would say, 'No, no, no!'" He said, "Jesus never prayed that and neither will I."

Truth is maybe someone at the nursing home or hospital needs your witness as you go visit. Maybe someone at those facilities needs to see that you are a Christian who truly cares. Maybe you yourself will grow by going to these places so Barnhouse said I never pray that one goes home quickly, but in the appropriate sovereign time of God.

But Jesus did know that this is a satanic and evil world. Satan is a very crafty tactician and he knows how to trip up people in life and in doctrine. Our safety in this world does not consist of us being out of the world nor does it consist in our being free from every trouble, trial or danger. Our security lies in being kept out of the snares of the evil one by the prayer of Jesus Christ and by the power of the Word of God.

In 1978 the Jim Jones cult in Guyana led to the mass suicide of 913 people. There are evil religious lures that can pull people away from truth; from the charismatic movement to the religious charlatans who are lurking in the religious shadows.

Jesus prayed that His true disciples would be kept out of these areas and if you love the Word of God and have been kept or delivered from these kinds of things, His prayer has been answered in your life.

Request #6 - Jesus prays that His disciples will be sanctified by God's Word. **17:17**

In **verse 14**, Jesus was clear to point out He had given His disciples the Word of God. This is a critical key to our survival. If you neglect the careful, accurate, rightly divided understanding of God's Word, you neglect your own sanctification. The Word of God is the truth of God. Every word of it is the Word of God and every bit of it is the Word of God. Neglect it and you neglect your own development.

Contextually, it is the Word of God that:

1. Will give you communion with God. **17:11**
2. Will guard you and your faith. **17:12**
3. Will bring full joy like that of Jesus Christ. **17:13**
4. Will keep you from the evil one. **17:15**
5. Will keep you from being worldly. **17:16**
6. Will bring you sanctification. **17:17**
7. Will make us effective witnesses in the world. **17:18-19**

It was the famed D. L. Moody who wrote in the front of his Bible - "This book will keep you from sin and sin will keep you from this book."

Request #7 - Jesus prays acknowledging that He has sent His disciples into the world.
17:18-19

Just as Jesus had set Himself apart for a ministry in this world, so also He set apart His disciples for a ministry in this world.

The disciple's job is to get whatever the assignment is done for God in the world.

PARTING THOUGHTS:

1. The only way to have a relationship with God is by believing that Jesus Christ is fully and completely God and that He is your only God/Savior.
2. The only way to have communion with God once you have believed is by an intense commitment to the Word of God.