

John Chapter 17 – Jesus prays that God will be glorified, both through Him, His disciples and subsequent believers.

First – read John 17 v. 1-26.

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,² as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.³ And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.⁴ I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.⁵ And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.⁶ “I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.⁷ Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You.⁸ 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.⁹ “I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.¹⁰ And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them.¹¹ Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as *We are*.¹² While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.¹³ But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.¹⁴ I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.¹⁵ I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.²⁰ “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;²¹ that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.²² And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as *We are one*:²³ 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.²⁴ “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.²⁵ O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me.²⁶ And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare *it*, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

Context of John 17

Firstly we need to put John chapter 17 into its context. From Chapter 11 – 20 John is teaching about the death of Jesus and its implications, both for the here and now and also for eternity.

In Chapters 11-13 Jesus taught that His death would achieve life, because His death would deal with sin and Satan. In chapters 13-17 which we call the “Upper Room Teaching” Jesus explains what his death and departure will mean for His Disciples.

This “Upper Room Teaching” is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the disciples questions concerning the departure of Jesus. The second part deals with the importance of God’s people persevering as disciples of Jesus. If they do this they will achieve God’s purpose for them. This purpose is to be fruitful.

We have already discovered that being fruitful is making disciples of people. Jesus calls it fruit that will remain.

Over the last 30 years of being in Christian ministry I have discovered that people who profess faith in Jesus need to be correctly discipled. If this takes place, there is no 100% guarantee, but they are more likely to remain faithful followers of Jesus.

Jesus prayer in chapter 17 draws on all the bits of teaching that have taken place from chapter 11 up to this point.

In the prayer that Jesus prays He has one major concern. This one concern is that God will be glorified both through Him, His disciples and subsequent believers.

With this in mind we come to study the text.

I will divide up the chapter into three sections.

The first section is chapter 17:v. 1-5 – Jesus prays that Father God will accomplish His plan by enabling Jesus to complete His ministry.

Verses 1 and 5 can be put together. They contain the same request.

There are two “Glories” that Jesus is praying for here. The first is that Jesus is requesting that He is glorified so that He can then give glory to God. (v. 1) This is concerning His death on the cross. Jesus said “The hour has come.” This means the hour of His death.

The second half of this glory prayer is in v.5. Here Jesus is requesting from the Father that He gets back the “Glory” that He had before the world began.

The word “Glory” is used 5 times in v. 1-5. Therefore it is important that we understand what this word means. The answer is always in the text so we need to discover where this word is mentioned in John’s gospel so that we can share more light on the subject.

Let us first go to John 2: v. 11. (Read verse) The miracle of changing water into wine manifested the “Glory” of Jesus.

Now let us go to John 11: v. 40 (read verse) the raising of Lazarus from the dead was evidence of the “Glory of God”.

So we see that the “Glory” of God can be seen in the manifestation of miracles.

However John tells us that the greatest “Glory” was going to be through the suffering and death of Jesus. Let us read John 12: v. 23-25 and John 13: v. 31-32.

John 12: v. 23-25

²³ But Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. ²⁴ Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. ²⁵ He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

John 13: v. 31-32

³¹ So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. ³² If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately.

The second and most important aspect of the “Glory” of God is the death of Jesus on the cross and what it would achieve for those people who put their trust in Him.

So in conclusion God is glorified most when we acknowledge His miracle works and proclaim the clear gospel of what Jesus achieved by His death and suffering on the cross.

This is why at OIC most of our efforts should be in presenting the clear gospel to those who will listen, and praying for them to open up their hearts to the work of God's Holy Spirit in their lives.

The second thing that Jesus prays is concerning the gift of eternal life. It is on the basis of the finished work of Jesus Christ that we have the "Gift" of eternal life". In chapter 17 the word "Gift" is used in one form or another at least 17 times in the whole chapter.

Seven times Jesus says that "believers" are the Father's gift to His Son. (v.2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24.)

As believers we know that Jesus is the Father's love "Gift" to us. (John 3:16)

However here in v.2 the Lord says that "Believers" are the Father's "Love gift" to His Son.

We may not have thought about it like that before. However this is the clear teaching here.

When you put your "Faith" and trust in Jesus and what He has done by dying on the cross for ALL of your sins, you are a "Love Gift" from God to Jesus, God's Son.

In Japan "Gift" giving is a big thing. It is usually given in appreciation for something. However in "Western" society we don't have "Return Gifts". However it is actually quite nice to get a small gift back when we have made a large purchase for someone.

There is a sense that we are God's return gift to Jesus.

God gave us Jesus for our Salvation which is eternal life, Jesus submitted Himself to a cruel death and punishment for our sins, but when we trust in Jesus for our Salvation, we are God's return gift to Jesus.

We may not think that we are worth very much, however we are worth a great deal to Jesus as "God's Gift" we are precious in the sight of Jesus.

2. The second prayer that Jesus prays is for his disciples v. 6-19.

We will divide the prayer for the Disciples into two sections.

Firstly v. 6-10. In these verses Jesus is affirming His disciples as being genuine and reliable.

Jesus is telling His Father that He has passed on everything to them that He has received from Father God. The disciples are now equipped mentally to pass on this information, however they will need the Holy Spirit of God to pass on this information with the power of God.

The Disciples have been tried and tested over 3 years and Jesus is ready to hand them over to the work of the Holy Spirit. There is always a period of training and testing before God sends his servants out to proclaim His word. Sadly today many Christians want to go out and proclaim Jesus without this training and testing.

Illustration

It is like having instant coffee, rather than ground beans and filter coffee.(Blend Coffee)

It might look the same but it doesn't taste the same.

The Disciples embraced the training and the testing and Jesus prays for them.

In the section we discover what Jesus prays for His disciples.

1. Jesus prays for their Protection.

2. Jesus prays for their Joy
3. Jesus prays for their Mission.

1. Jesus Prays for their protection v. 12. & v. 15

Jesus said while He was in the world He kept the disciples. He guarded them by the power of His name. In the Bible a person's name signifies their whole character, work and action. Jesus says that He kept the disciples through his whole being while on this earth.

He was now concerned for His disciples safety because He was leaving this world. Jesus knew that the disciples were going to have persecution because the world would hate them. Jesus didn't pray that the disciples would be taken out of the world, but that they would be protected from Satan.

0. Jesus prays for their Joy v. 13.

Jesus didn't just pray that the disciples would have "Joy". He prayed that they might have "HIS JOY". This is an amazing thing to pray for. To actually have the same Joy in our hearts that Jesus had. Joy is an interesting word. It does not mean "Happiness". Happiness depends on our outward circumstances, but Joy depends on the condition of your heart.

Jesus knew that the outward circumstances of the disciples was not going to be good in the future. They would be persecuted and put in prison. Their outward circumstances would not be good. However they could experience a "Joy" in their hearts that would help them to get the victory over their circumstances. Jesus wanted the disciples to be "Overcomers" and not to be "Overcome" by the persecution.

What would give the disciples this "Joy". It would be spending time with God in prayer and knowing the presence of God through His Holy Spirit. Knowing the presence of God is an invisible thing but it is a tangible thing.

It is promised in the Bible to "Obedient" believers.

John 14:21

He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

Our circumstances are always changing in life. This can be due to health, lack of money, change of job, change of country, whatever it might be. However whatever those changes may be, staying close to Jesus and developing your relationship with God, through prayer and reading the Bible will maintain the "Joy" in our hearts.

I received a letter from a prayer supporter in England a couple of weeks ago. She is a lady in her 80's with challenging health issues. However she said she has great "Joy" in her life. Why is this? Well the answer is that she spends time with Jesus and she is praying for us here at OIC.

3. Jesus prays for their Mission. V. 17-19.

The word "sanctify" comes from the same root word as "Holy". It means set apart to make "Holy". Although in the Bible as a whole the word sanctify means personal holiness, it also includes, as is the context here, the idea that a holy God makes his people like himself in purpose and mission.

In this passage it is clear that John means like Jesus in purpose and mission.

Jesus had already set the disciples apart through the “Truth” revealed to them.

He now explains that He is setting them apart for the task of going into the world on a mission.

Jesus is concerned that His disciples would be able to fulfill their mission. They were going into the world with the task of teaching people all that he has taught them.

As God answers Jesus prayer, so God’s eternal plan will be accomplished.

Jesus prayed that His disciples would not be just like Him in personal Holiness but also like Him in His personal Mission to rescue souls from the wrath of God.

3. The third prayer that Jesus prays is for all future believers v. 20-26.

This prayer extends to all people who belong to Jesus through every culture and time span.

This include all believers here today at O.I.C.

The prayer of Jesus is that all His believers may be united.

We must be careful about the meaning of the word “Unity”. It is not a sentimental unity based upon friendship or even attending the same church.

John defines the unity as being the same as the unity that the father and the son share.

We find this in v. 21. It is not just a unity with each other. The Father and Son’s unity is a unity of purpose and intention. This is guaranteed by the sacrificial obedience of Jesus by dying on the cross.

The glory that the Father gave the son is the glory of the gospel message.

The amazing thing about the gospel is that it brings about the reversal of the fall of man in Genesis chapter 3.

Therefore the basis of the unity of God’s people is to be the Gospel of eternal life.

This has nothing to do with uniting with other believers for the purpose of anything that is not totally focused on the Gospel Message.

The purpose of this unity must be evangelistic.

From about 1950 to 1990 Billy Graham used to run evangelistic missions involving all Churches for the single purpose of presenting the Gospel. I don’t think that there was anybody else during this period who was blessed so much in gospel outreach as Billy Graham and his large team. This was an answer to the prayer of Jesus.

The final prayer that Jesus prays for all believers is that they may go to heaven and be with Him forever and share His Glory. v. 24-26.

It is the prayer of Jesus that all believers will go to heaven one day and be with Jesus.

The Good News for us if we are believers is that God always answers the prayers of His Son Jesus. So we know that we will be in heaven one day.

Warren Wiersbe in his commentary on v. 24 says that he often uses this verse to preach devotional messages at funerals.

He starts with the question - “How do we know that Christians go to Heaven?”

He then answers that with this outline.

We know that all believers will go to heaven because;

1. The Price that Jesus paid - John3:v. 14-16.
2. The Promise that Jesus made - John 14: v. 1-6
3. The Prayer that Jesus prayed - John 17:v.24.

If you are the sort of person who would like to prepare for your own funeral, you could ask that the Pastor who takes your service use that outline to preach on.

Application from John 17.

There is one major application that arises from John 17. The application is to embrace the main priority of Jesus in His prayers for us and the disciples.

The main priority of Jesus was to accomplish the work on the cross by reversing the effects of the fall through His punishment and death, and through this, uniting all of God's people to take the Gospel to a lost world.

Being witnesses for Jesus in a lost world should be our main priority here at OIC and any other Church in Japan and throughout the world.

I know it is hard and tough to witness for Jesus but this is our main ministry as believers.

It was no easier for Ezekiel to declare God's word than it is for us.

Quote Ezekiel Chapter 2: v. 1-5.

And He said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak to you." ² Then the Spirit entered me when He spoke to me, and set me on my feet; and I heard Him who spoke to me. ³ And He said to me: "Son of man, I am sending you to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day. ⁴ For *they are* impudent and stubborn children. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.' ⁵ As for them, whether they hear or whether they refuse—for they *are* a rebellious house—yet they will know that a prophet has been among them.

May God help us to be effective witnesses for Him in Japan, so that the people of Japan will know that God has been amongst them.