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# Jesus' Prayer For The Eleven

## JOHN 17:6-19

### Introduction

1. As we learned two weeks ago, this is the final prayer of Jesus recorded by any of the gospel writers.
2. It is also the longest of his recorded prayers.
3. As we noticed, Jesus prayed for two things in the first five verses of this prayer:
  - a. His glorification and the glorification of His Father (v. 5).

“Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” (John 17:5, NASB95)
  - b. Eternal life for those whom the Father had given to Him (v. 2).

“. . . even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life” (John 17:2, NASB95).
4. Tonight, as we look at verses 6-19, we find Jesus praying for the eleven disciples.
5. However, before we delve into tonight's lesson, I would like for each of us to consider what Jesus has done.
6. For the 3 - 3 ½ years preceding that evening, Jesus had worked closely with those men whom He chose to be His disciples:
  - a. They had followed Him throughout Galilee, Judea, even to the regions of Decapolis and Tyre & Sidon.
  - b. They had listened to countless hours of his teaching, both with them in private, and through the parables He shared with the crowds.
  - c. They had witnessed miracle after miracle which they knew could be performed only by someone who came from God.

- d. They had heard the demons profess Him to be “the Holy One of God” (Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34), and had even declared the same themselves (John 6:69).
7. Now, Jesus knew He was about to die a terrible death through crucifixion, be buried, rise from the dead after three days and then, after another forty days, He would ascend back to His Father.
8. The big question that night was this: Would these eleven men be faithful in carrying the message of salvation to a world lost in sin, or would Jesus’ mission be all for naught?
9. There was no other plan. This was it. Equip these men and commission them to go into all the world with the message of salvation.
10. Such an important task necessitated the prayer prayed that evening and many other prayers prayed before then.
11. Thankfully, they were faithful to the cause. You and I are evidence of their faithfulness.
12. As we contemplate this truth, let’s look at the things for which Jesus prayed on that evening so long ago as it pertained to these eleven men.

**Slide 2****A. JESUS’ REVEALING OF GOD’S NAME TO THE DISCIPLES**

“I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.” (John 17:6, NASB95)

1. When the Old Testament speaks of someone’s name, it does not simply mean the name by which a person is called (i.e., John, Bill, Carol, Dianne)
2. It means the whole character of the person as far as that person can be known.
3. In Psalm 9:10, the psalmist David wrote, “those who know Your name will put their trust in You.”
4. By this, David did not mean that those who knew what God is *called* will trust Him, but that those who know what God is *like*, His nature and character, will trust Him.
5. Long before Jesus’ day, God spoke through His prophet Isaiah and said, in

Isaiah 52:6, "My people shall know My name."

6. Here, when Jesus prayed, "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world" (v. 6), He meant, I have enabled these men to see what you are truly like.
7. In the beginning of this gospel, in John 1:18, the apostle John wrote, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him."
8. On this very evening, shortly after the Passover meal, Jesus had said to Phillip, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

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## **B. HIS REQUEST CONCERNING THEIR DISCIPLESHIP**

"Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me." (John 17:7-8, NASB95)

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1. Discipleship is based upon the realization that Jesus came from God:
  - a. Disciples (followers) of Jesus recognize Him as God's Ambassador.
  - b. In His words we hear God's voice.
  - c. Through His deeds we see God's action.
2. Discipleship results in obedience:
  - a. It is in keeping Jesus' word, that we keep the word of the Father.
  - b. When we submit to the Son, we submit to the Father.
3. Disciples bring glory (honor) to their teachers:

"I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them." (John 17:9-10, NASB95)

- a. Perhaps you excelled in your course of study, either in High School, in the graduate or post graduate level.
- b. Was there a specific teacher to whom you would give credit, because he or she expected your best?
- c. If so, you have honored them through your achievements.
- d. Jesus had been glorified in His choosing of the eleven and would be glorified even more through their work after His ascension.

### **C. HIS REQUEST FOR THE DISCIPLES' STANDING IN THE WORLD**

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#### **1. "Keep them in Your name" (vv. 11-12)**

"I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are. While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled." (**John 17:11–12, NASB95**)

- a. Jesus speaks these words because He knows He is about to leave these men. Already, the events have been set in motion.
- b. During His ministry, Jesus had protected the disciples and kept them safe in the name God had given Him (i.e., Jesus (*Joshua*) — God saves or *Immanuel* — God with us).
- c. In the future, it would be through the Holy Spirit that they would be able to withstand the temptations and hostility which the world would bring against them.
- d. In asking His Father to "keep them in Your name," Jesus is praying that God would keep them loyal to Himself, keep them in full adherence to His character.
  - 1) Is Jesus speaking of God as our Savior? Three times in his letter to Titus, the apostle Paul calls God "our Savior" (Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4).

- 2) Or is Jesus referring to God's character as the One through whom all things are possible? (Cf. Matthew 19:26; Mark 10:27; Luke 18:27)
- e. Do we ask God to keep those we love in loyalty to Himself? (i.e., our children who are away at college) If not, we should.

**Slide 6****2. Allow them to have "My joy made full in themselves" (v. 13-14)**

"But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John 17:13-14, NASB95)

- a. Christ's gift to His disciples has been God's word.
- b. The result of their obedience to that word is that they are no longer a part of the world:
  - 1) When Jesus says the disciples "are not of the world," He is not pointing to their location geographically, but to their position spiritually.
  - 2) As we have previously learned, the "world," as Jesus speaks of it, is not a place on a map but a spiritual domain, one of darkness and unbelief.
  - 3) The world possesses values which are hostile to God.
  - 4) In essence, Jesus is saying, "They do not *belong* to the world." Their values and standards were different from the world's.
- c. Because of this, the world now hates them.
- d. For this reason, it is even more important that Christ's joy be made full in them.

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- e. Prior to this prayer, Jesus had said much to the disciples about joy:

"These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full." (John 15:11, NASB95)

“Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.” (John 16:22, NASB95)

“Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.” (John 16:24, NASB95)

- f. William Barclay, in his commentary on this passage, said, “there is a joy in battling against the storm and struggling against the tide; it is by facing the hostility of the world that we enter into the Christian joy.” (p. 204).

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3. Do not **“take them out of the world, but keep them from the evil one” (vv. 15-16).**

“I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” (John 17:15–16, NASB95)

- a. Moses, Elijah, and Jonah each offered prayers that they be taken out of the world (Numbers 11:15; 1 Kings 19:4; Jonah 4:3, 8), but in no case was the request granted.
- b. Jesus never prayed that His disciples should be taken out of the world.
- c. He never prayed for them to find escape from this world, but for their protection within it.
- d. Our Lord never intended for us to live a life of faith that is withdrawn from the world.
- e. Instead, He wants us to know that it is in the rough and tumble of life that we must live out our faith.
- f. We all need those times when we can shut the door on the world and be alone with God — those quiet times when we can pray and meditate.
- g. However, Christianity was never meant to withdraw us from life, but to better equip us for it.

- h. Our faith does not offer us release from our problems, but a better way to solve them.
- i. While it is true that we as Christians are not of this world, it is also true that we must live out our Christianity within it.
- j. We must never seek to abandon the world, but to win it to Christ.
- k. In His prayer, Jesus asked His Father to keep His disciples “from the evil one.”
  - 1) We must always be aware of the fact that there is a power of evil which stands in opposition to the power of God.
  - 2) The knowledge that God is a sentinel who stands guard over our souls against the assaults of evil should bring us great comfort.
  - 3) When we fall, it is often due to the fact that we attempt to meet life in our own strength rather than the strength of the One who the psalmist promised will “guard your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever” (Psalm 121:8).

**Slide 9****4. “Sanctify them in truth” (v. 17).**

- “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.” (John 17:17, NASB95)
- a. Jesus prayed that His disciples might be sanctified by the truth.
  - b. The adjective form of this word *hagios* is often translated as *holy*.
  - c. It means “to set apart for a specific task.”
    - 1) When God called the prophet Jeremiah, He said to Him, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you (“sanctified you,” NKJV; “set you apart,” NIV84); I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.” (Jeremiah 1:5, NASB95)
    - 2) At Mt. Sinai, when God was instituting the priesthood, He instructed Moses to “ordain them and consecrate (sanctify) them, that they may serve Me as priests” (Exodus 28:41).
  - d. It also means “to equip an individual with those qualities necessary for

that task.”

- 1) These include qualities of heart, mind and character.
  - 2) When God chooses an individual for special service, He also equips him with the qualities necessary to carry it out.
- e. Earlier (*John 16:13*), Jesus told the disciples that the Holy Spirit would “guide [them] in all truth.”
- f. Like the disciples, we are set apart for God’s purposes as we feed and meditate upon God’s Word, which is truth.

## **Conclusion**

1. As with the eleven, Jesus’ desire is for each of us to be kept in His Father’s name as we remain in this world.
2. He wants us to know His joy and have it made full in our lives.
3. He wants us to show the world how life is to be lived and how problems are to be solved.
4. He wants us to know the fullness of His joy, as we are set apart from the world through the truth of His word.
5. Many of you are disciples of our Lord tonight because of this prayer prayed almost 2,000 years ago.
6. Others of you have yet to know the God we serve.
7. We long to share our knowledge of Him with you, so that you might come to know the joy of His presence in your life.
8. If, tonight, you want to render obedience to Him, we invite you to come.