

May 24, 2020 John 17: 1-11 & Acts 1: 12-14

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#### ENTERING THE SCENE:

We encounter this text in the weeks following the Resurrection. It is only now, looking back from the heights of hindsight that we can begin to see what Jesus was seeing on that night he shared this prayer with those gathered around him. Walter Burghardt says that "Prayer is a long loving look at the real." So often, we only "see" what someone or something really meant, when we have the time to reflect on our experience. As you reenter this text, try to place yourself around the table. Feel yourself being prayed over by Jesus. Try to imagine yourself cherished by him, and through him by God.

#### Jn. 17:1-11

1 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and **prayed**: "Father, the time has come. **Glorify** your Son, that your Son may **glorify** you. 2 For you granted him **authority** over **all people** that he might give **eternal life** to all those you have **given** him. 3 Now this is **eternal life**: that they may **know** you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. 4 I have brought you **glory** on **earth** by **completing** the **work** you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, **glorify** me in your presence with the **glory** I had with you before the **world** began. 6 "I have made your **name** known to those whom you **gave** me from the **world**. They were **yours**, and you **gave** them to me, and they have kept your **word**. 7 Now they **know** that everything you have **given** me is from you; "for the **words** that you gave to me I have **given** to them, and they have **received** them and **know** in **truth** that I came from you; and they have **believed** that you sent me. 9 I am **asking** on their behalf; I am not **asking** on behalf of the **world**, but on **behalf** of those whom you **gave** me, because they are **yours**. 10 All **mine** are **yours**, and **yours** are **mine**; and I have been **glorified** in them. 11 And now I am no longer in the **world**, but they are in the **world**, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, **protect** them in your **name** that you have **given** me, so that they may be **one**, as we are **one**."

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** Jesus unites with God so that we can be one with God in and through him. How do I help others unite with God in and through me?

**PRAYER:** Loving God, when I sink into the depths of your love, I find an endless source of life. I think this must be what Jesus is talking about in this prayer because it gives him the confidence to press on to meet the cross. The cross that will usher in the Resurrection that he trusted awaited him and me. Help me as I learn to trust your process as he did. Amen.

#### WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

**AUTHORITY:** In this passage Jesus is transferring his mission to the disciples. His authority is the Father, and their authority comes from the same Father through Jesus.

*How can I tell where someone's authority comes from?*

**ETERNAL LIFE:** This life on earth can be beautiful, but it is also can be very short. The human spirit intuits that there must be something more, and longs for that more-ness.

*In what ways do I intuit a life beyond this physical life? Does my daily choices reveal that I believe in an eternal life?*

**ALL PEOPLE:** The revelation now expands to include all people, not just those who accept the Torah.

*What effect does this have for John's community? For me?*

**COMPLETING / COMPLETE:** To be complete is to have all the necessary components of something.

*How is Jesus complete here at the Last Supper? What makes his joy complete?*

**WORK YOU GAVE ME:** Jesus never forgets that his work is to bring the world a larger understanding of the Father.

*What work has the Father given me, that can enlarge others understanding of God?*

**NAME:** In the time of Jesus a person's name told you their true identity, not just who they were. Moses was given God's name on the mountain, and Jesus gave the people the fullness of that name in his life.

*What do I know about God, from this passage of scripture? What helps me see God's true identity in this prayer of Jesus?*

**GAVE /GIVEN:** Jesus knows that God has given humanity to him as a gift.

*Can I find myself in that gift in this prayer of Jesus? How?*

**WORLD / EARTH:** Jesus uses this word thirteen times in this passage. In John's gospel the world is anything that exists in space/time. It can and will perish. Knowing he is about to leave space/time, Jesus assures the disciples that there is more.

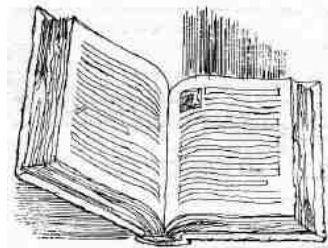
*How do I understand the word - world? Am I confident that there is more?*

**KNOW:** The bible uses the word *know* in a very special way. It more closely resembles the words we use to describe the intimate relationship of a husband and wife.

*Do I think the disciples really know as much as Jesus thinks they do? If so, what affirms that? If not, what affirms that? How does this prayer help me to know in the way Jesus is using the word?*

**YOURS / MINE:** Jesus has a very clear understanding of who God is and who he is. He never confuses the two. Humanity is God's, and Jesus is God's word made flesh.

*Do I have any difficulty keeping clear about who God is and who Jesus is? If Jesus had not been clear about this, do you think he could have led me to the Father? Would I be tempted to stop at Jesus?*



**WORD / WORDS:** Words are the way we try to share with others what is in our heart or mind. What begins as a feeling or idea can then enter space and time. When God "talks human", God's speaking is "Word made flesh". The word becomes the cause of the thing made. Therefore words create reality.

*What realities do these words of Jesus' prayer create for me? Can I hear God 'talking human' in this prayer?*

**RECEIVED:** To receive is to accept something from another.

*Have the disciples really received what Jesus wants to give? Have I received what Jesus wanted to give me?*

**TRUTH:** If something is firm and trustworthy it is said to be true.

*How does verse 8 use this word? Are the disciples able to trust Jesus' word as truth?*

**BELIEVED:** To believe is to have confidence and trust in someone or something.

*Have the disciples really believed that God sent Jesus? How do I know? Do I believe that God sent Jesus? How do I know?*

**ASKING / PRAYER:** Prayer is a form of asking God for something.

*What is Jesus asking of God in this prayer? Am I included in this prayer? How?*

**BEHALF:** In its origins this word means 'by his side'. Someone is on another's side in a situation.

*Do I think the disciples truly felt that Jesus was on their side? Do I feel Jesus by my side in the prayer?*

**GLORY / GLORIFIED:** Jesus sees his role as the one who makes visible and tangible the Father. We use the word glory to express the ultimate in beauty or achievement. Jesus feels glorified because of the disciple's faithful acceptance of his word.

*Have I ever felt this kind of glorification when someone trusted my word and stayed by my side? What was that moment like? Does this help me to get in touch with Jesus' feelings that night?*

**PARALLEL TEXTS:** **Jn. 17: 1** // Jn. 13:31; **Jn. 17:2** // Jn. 3:35; Mt. 28:18; **Jn. 17: 3** // Wis. 14:7; 1 Jn. 5:20; **Jn. 17:5** // Jn. 12:28; Phil. 2:6, 9f; **Jn. 17:10** // Jn. 16:15; 2 Thes. 1:10,12; **Jn. 17: 11** // Jn. 13:18; 18:9; Ps. 41:10; Mt. 26:24; Acts 1:16;

**OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK:** Acts 1: 12-14; [Ps. 27: 1,4,7-8](#); 1 Pt. 4:13-16; Jn. 17: 1-11; Revised Common Lectionary: Acts 1: 6-14; [Ps. 68: 1-10, 32-35](#); 1 Pt. 4:12-14; 5:6-11; Jn. 17: 1-11;

#### **SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:**

Atomic scientists looking through microscopes and astrophysicists looking through telescopes are seeing a similarity of pattern: everything is in relationship with everything else. Scientists and contemplatives alike are confirming that the foundational nature of reality is relational, and everything is indeed a holon, a part that replicates and mimics the whole. Richard Rohr

The gospel tells us, "But to those who did accept Him He gave the power to *become*..." (Jn 1:12). It tells us that, by entering into a relationship, we can become something we are not now. In that relationship we will receive a good we do not now have, but which we desire. Fr. Jonah Wharff

For Jesus, prayer seems to be a matter of waiting in love, returning to love, and trusting that love is the bottom stream of reality. Prayer isn't primarily words; it's a place, an attitude, a stance. Richard Rohr

To pray is to listen to the One who calls you "my beloved daughter," "my beloved son," "my beloved child." To pray is to let that voice speak to the center of your being, to your guts, and let that voice resound in your whole being. - Henri J. M. Nouwen

It could be argued that the fundamental condition for life is not a template molecule like DNA, a work cycle, or a cell membrane but rather a relationship of codependence. Pg. 896. Sherman & Deacon. *Zygon* 12/2007

[Notice that] all of the great liturgical prayers of the churches end with the same phrase: "through Christ our Lord, Amen." We do not pray to Christ; we pray through Christ. Or even more precisely, Christ prays through us. We are always and forever the conduits, the instruments, the tuning forks, the receiver stations (**Romans 8:22-27**). We slowly learn the right frequencies that pick up the signal of God. Richard Rohr

To pray, I think does not mean to think about God in contrast to thinking about other things, or to spend time with God instead of spending time with other people. Rather, it means to think and live in the presence of God. Pg. 70. Nouwen, Henri. *Clowning in Rome*. NY. Doubleday, 1979.

What is the use of prayer if at the very moment of prayer, we have so little confidence in God that we are busy planning our own kind of answer to our prayer? Thomas Merton. *Thoughts in Solitude*. (New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 1956). p. 24.

Prayer is the human response to the perpetual outpouring of love by which God lays siege to every soul. When our reply to God is most direct of all, it is called adoration. Adoration is the spontaneous yearning of the heart to worship, honor, magnify, and bless God. We ask nothing but to cherish him. We seek nothing but his exaltation. We focus on nothing but his goodness. - Richard J. Foster

If the only prayer you say in your whole life is "Thank You" that would suffice. Meister Eckhart

Yes, divine Love, if all souls would only be satisfied with you, what supernatural, sublime, wonderful and inconceivable heights they would scale! Yes, if only we had sense enough to leave everything to the guidance of God's hand, we should reach the highest peak of holiness. Everyone could do it, for the opportunity is offered to everyone." (Jean-Pierre de Caussade: "Abandonment to Divine Providence")

As I understand it, having and the desire to have belong to the standpoint of the self. I leave them behind when I pass over from there to the standpoint of another person. It is then that I go over from having to being. I come upon having once more, however, when I come back again from the other to myself. "To have and to hold" then has an abiding significance for me. When I pass over, I go from care for others as belonging to me to care for them as belonging to themselves, but when I come back to myself, I come back to them as belonging to me. As I continue to pass over, I do indeed go from "No" and "mine" to "Yes" and "Yours" but as I continue also to come back again to myself, I come to something like the standpoint of Jesus in the Gospel of John, "all mine are thine, and thine are mine." *Dunne, John. The Homing Spirit. NY. Crossroad Pub. 1987.*

In the Church-process we ascend. We raise him-ourselves up in glory in our faith. Our faith is our awareness of who, what and where we are to God, right here, right now in a continuing moment. It is an awareness of urgency. "God with us" is constant total giving, and all that we are and all that we can be is response to presence that is God. That response of self-awareness "Me to God-God to me" is faith and when we name and articulate this response, we pray. Faith is the search for self and search for God. Prayer is faith at work. Search for self and search for God are the same search. When we find ourselves, we find ourselves in God and when we find God, we find ourselves. Page 118

Jesus' return to his Father is his total love for us, and he will be properly rewarded for giving up his Spirit for us. In this resurrection, he is the same but new person, given a new life in a new body, and how better can he be rewarded than by being given those whom he has so loved as the new body of his new life. In giving of his Spirit, he is being given identity of presence with those whom "He has loved to the end." Love to the end '*eis telos*' does not mean only that he persevered and did not quit, it means he took human love all the way, as far as it could go. Pg. 165. Parr, Raymond. *Process Person Presence.* Chicago. Thomas More Press. 1990.

The sense of power comes -- not an aggressive, dominating power-- but an inner strength that is empowering. The strength comes from a sense of belonging to the universe and feeling that I am important and relevant just as the insects, bobcats, maidenhair ferns, opossums, rivers, and armadillos. I guess it is a feeling of being alive and intertwined with all these forms of life. It is through this that I gain respect for nature, for creation, for the Creator. It is through God's creativity that this comes about. It is for me to continue to create -- not to destroy that delicate balance of life of which we humans are only a small part.

Rare, quiet moments but coming at times when I need them most. I require these moments for living, as a life-giving self-confidence. These brief moments of trust - trust of my own emotions, my own thoughts, my own reactions. For me this is God's

creativity seen in nature, God's creativity seen, felt in me -- God's endless energy bounding through every creative process in which I am immersed.

That rapid, loudly pounding surge, that breath that winds all throughout every fiber in by body when I am creating through dance or painting. Sometimes it comes as a quiet feeling that fills when I am standing alone out by the sea, or in the forest, or by a painting. the surge comes and I reply, smiling, "I know." Marilyn Cook Rabb: Reflections on a Moment Grana, Janice, Ed. *Images*. Winona, MN. St. Mary's College Press. 1976.

I have stopped praying for people so much. I try to pray about them instead. It is more all-embracing as a means of prayer. It seems that you and I together, Jesus, simply look with love on those we love. It is as though we answer people's prayers together. I can see now that the more detached I become, the more you will be able to use me to help answer prayers. It is a lovely way to be used and I feel honored. It is a way of becoming a prayer." - Macrina Wiederkehr, *A Tree Full of Angels* -

There is a love like a small lamp, fed by oil, which goes out when the oil is ended; or like a rain-fed stream which goes dry, when rain no longer feeds it. But there is a love like a spring gushing from the earth, never to be exhausted. The first is human; the second is Divine, and has God as its Source." *Isaak of Syria*

We cannot transform ourselves; we can only let God do the work within us. The issue is eternal life, not good mental hygiene. Jesus states his priority clearly in Saint John's Gospel: "This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." Lawyer, John, *Saint Anthony of Egypt and the Spirituality of Aging*. Cistercian Studies Quarterly 35.1 (2000) Page71.

In prayer we are asked "to give up all that divides us from others so that we can become those we pray for and let God touch them in us". Pg. 90. Nouwen, Henri. *Clowning in Rome*. NY. Doubleday, 1979.

All true prayer somehow confesses our absolute dependence on the Lord of life and death. It is, therefore, a deep and vital contact with Him whom we know not only as Lord but as Father. It is when we pray truly that we really are. Our being is brought to a high perfection by this. Thomas Merton (1915-1968), *No Man is an Island*

Prayer is a death to every identity that does not come from God. Pg. 47. Finley, James. *Merton's Palace of Nowhere*. Notre Dame, IN. Ave Maria Press. 1978

The soul which has come into intimate contact with God in the silence of the prayer chamber is never out of conscious touch with the Father; the heart is always going out to Him in loving communion, and the moment the mind is released from the task upon which it is engaged, it returns as naturally to God as the bird does to its nest. What a beautiful conception of prayer we get if we regard it in this light.- Edward McKendree (E. M.) Bounds

Prayer stands cruciform at the place where the world is in pain to hold together Jew and Greek and slave and free. To hold together male and female, to hold together a battered and bleeding world and say, "No, there is a different way to be human." -N.T. Wright

Let the first act on waking be to place yourself, your heart, mind, faculties, your whole being, in God's hands. Ask Him to take entire possession of you, to be the Guide of your soul, your Life, your Wisdom, your Strength. He wills that we seek him in all our needs, that we may both know Him truly, and draw closer and closer to Him; and in prayer we gain an invisible force which will triumph over seemingly hopeless difficulties. - Sidney Lear

Go and find Jesus when your patience and strength give out and you feel alone and helpless. He is waiting for you. Say to him, 'Jesus, you know exactly what is going on. You are all I have, and you know all. Come to my help.' And then go and don't worry about how you are going to manage. That you have told God about it is enough. He has a good memory. -Jeanne Jugan

We are told that St. Francis used to spend whole nights praying the same prayer: "O God, who are you? And God, who am I?"

#### **SUGGESTED READINGS:**

Links to all the books mentioned in this guide are on The Ark web site: [www.theark1.com](http://www.theark1.com)

[Teach me to Pray](#)

[Prayers for the Days of Awe](#)