



May 16, 2021 John 17:6-19 Acts 1:15-17, 21-26

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ENTERING THE SCENE:

Just before Jesus goes out to be arrested, he goes deep into prayer. He prays for the disciples and for each of us, that we may all know God like he knows God. He trusts that eternal life is the realization that we are all God's beloveds. He sinks into prayer, as one who is leading worship for those present. Imagine yourself sitting around the table that night. How might you feel as you heard Jesus praying for you? Could this help you start to appreciate how the disciples must have felt as they tried to comprehend what was going on? Jesus knew that all those given him were God's. This includes us. What are you feeling as you sink into this?

Jn. 17:6-19

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. 12 while I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. 13 but now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. 14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 15 I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. 16 They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19 and for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Jesus teaches that all of us will be protected in his name. What does that mean to you?

PRAYER: Holy God, I come to you in prayer as one of those whom your son Jesus prayed for. I count on the protection he promised as I live in the world while trying to remember that I am not of the world. It gives me strength and courage to press on as I rely on that promise and look forward to whatever your will is for me today. Amen.

WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

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 you know about God, from this passage of scripture? What helps you to 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 you see yourself in that gift? How?

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

How do you understand the word - world? Are you 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. Jesus says he and God know us in this very intimate way.

Do you 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 you 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 you 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 you to the Father? Are you tempted to stop at Jesus? If so, why?

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 you? Can you 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 you received what Jesus wants to give you by way of the disciples?

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' words, or is this something Jesus is praying that they will be able to do in the future?

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

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

ASKING: One form of prayer is asking God for something.

What is Jesus asking of God in this prayer? Are you 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 you think the disciples truly felt that Jesus was on their side? Do you feel Jesus by your side in the prayer?

GLORIFIED: Jesus sees his role to make 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 you ever felt this kind of glory when someone trusted your word and stayed by your side? What was that moment like? Does this help you to get in touch with Jesus' feelings that night?

PROTECT / PROTECTED / GUARDED: To protect is to be in front of someone or something to cover it and prevent it from harm.

How has Jesus protected the disciples? From what has he protected them? Through them, how are you protected?

ONE: To be one is to be an undivided unity.

How are the disciples one? How are Jesus and God one? If God is one with Jesus and Jesus is one with the disciples (and us), what does this imply?

LOST: Something is lost when it cannot be found.

Can God lose anyone or anything? How?

JOY: Joy is a feeling of intense happiness.

How can Jesus feel joy or intense happiness at a time like this? Have you ever experienced joy in the midst of sorrow? How do you explain this?

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?

HATED: Since the Hebrew language lacks words that express degrees of feeling, it's either love or hate.
Why do you think the 'world' would 'hate' the disciples? Does the 'world' still hate those who believe that the world of space/time is not all that there is? If so, how do you know that?

BELONG: To belong is to be a part of something else.
How does the belief in life after life make us a part of something else?

EVIL ONE: People in Jesus' times believed that spirits were more powerful than humans but less powerful than God. These spirits readily interfered or intervened in human life, sometimes for evil.
If a person 'belongs' to the world, can that make them vulnerable to doing evil in a way that someone that does not 'belong' to the world? Why is that so?

SANCTIFY / SANCTIFIED: To be sanctified is to be set apart for holy use.
How are those who belong to Jesus and Jesus' God set apart for holy use? Are you sanctified?

SENT: Something is sent when it is conveyed from one place to another.
How does this prayer of Jesus convey the disciples from one place to another? If we are included in this prayer, how you conveyed from one place to another?

PARALLEL TEXTS: **Jn. 17:10** // Jn. 16:15; 2 Thes. 1:10,12; **Jn. 17: 12** // Jn. 13:18; 18:9; Ps. 41; 10; Mt. 26:24; Acts 1:16; **Jn. 17:13** // Jn. 15:11; Jn. 17; 14 // Jn. 15:19; **Jn. 17:15** // Mt. 6:13; 1 Jn. 5:18; **Jn. 17:17** // 1 Pt. 1:22;

OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK: Acts 1:15-17, 20-26; Ps. 103: 1-2, 11-12, 19-20; 1 Jn. 4:11-16; Jn. 17:6-19; Revised Common Lectionary: Acts 1:15-17, 21-26; Ps. 1; 1 Jn. 5:9-13; Jn. 17:6-19;

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:

The great thing about God's love is that it's not determined by the object. God does not love us because we are good. God loves us because God is good. It takes our whole lives for that to sink in because that's not how human love operates. Divine love is a love that operates in an unqualified way, without making distinctions between persons and without following our personal preferences. We don't have the capacity to receive that notion! Divine love is received by surrender instead of performance or perfection. Richard Rohr

"Above all, trust in the slow work of God.
We are quite naturally impatient in everything
to reach the end without delay.
We should like to skip the intermediate stages.
We are impatient of being on the way
to something unknown,
something new.
Yet it is the law of all progress that is made
by passing through some stages of instability
and that may take a very long time.

And so I think it is with you.
Your ideas mature gradually. Let them grow.
Let them shape themselves without undue haste.
Do not try to force them on
as though you could be today what time
- that is to say, grace -
and circumstances
acting on your own goodwill
will make your tomorrow.....
Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

This is my enlightened, well-founded hope: dying is a farewell inward, and entry and homecoming into the ground and origin of the world, our true home, a farewell perhaps not without pain and anxiety, but hopefully in composure and surrender, at any rate without weeping and wailing, and without bitterness and despair, but rather in hopeful expectation, quiet certainty, and (after everything that has to be settled is settled) ashamed gratitude for all the good things and less good things that now finally and definitively lie behind us – thank God. Pg. 206.

...this Jesus of Nazareth did not die into nothingness, but into God. So trusting in this message, I hope as a Christian, like many people in other religions, not to die into nothingness, which seems to me to be extremely irrational and senseless. Rather, I hope to die into the ultimate reality, into God, which – beyond space and time in the hidden real dimension of the infinite – transcends all human reason and conceiving. Pg. 205-6.

Kung, Hans. [The Beginning of All Things](#): Science & Religion. Grand Rapids, MI. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. 2007.

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. "Greater love than this no one has, that a person lay down his life for his friends." He gives his Spirit for us and we are given to him by the Father as the body-person worthy and good enough for him to give his Spirit. This is the Church, the ongoing loving giving process of person inter-presence that is holiness. Parr, Raymond. [Process Person Presence](#). Thomas More Press, Chicago. 1990. Page 165.

In the early church the problem of who Jesus was engendered fierce battles that often found Bishops ordering someone killed, or Caesar's sending someone into exile. One of the earliest challengers named Arius, developed a strong and enduring belief that Jesus was not truly God. When Arius was finally defeated a bishop named Athanasius (one of the more brutal bishops of the day) recounted Arius' defeat this way: "Now this man bought a field with the reward of his wickedness; and falling headlong he burst asunder in the midst and all his bowels gushed out. ... such was the end of Arius; and Eusebius and his fellows, overwhelmed with shame buried their accomplice, while the blessed Alexander, amidst the rejoicings of the Church, celebrated the Communion with piety and orthodoxy..." (Arius died suddenly from a severe sudden illness resembling the flu the night before he was to be condemned as a heretic and exiled) Athanasius saw a parallel to his death and the death of Judas. (Acts 1:18)
Rubenstein, Richard. [When Jesus Became God](#). NY, Harcourt Brace & Co. 1999. Page 136.

"Many of the disagreements (of what the Bible means) arise because we do not have a single original text to work from. For the New Testament, the earliest manuscripts date to around 200 CE, but they are only a scrap or two. Most existing manuscripts come from the fourth century C. E. or later, and all of these are copies of copies of copies. Variations among the manuscripts are often blamed on the copyists, who may have changed passages for stylistic or theological reasons or tried to harmonize differences among different passages, or who may simply have made mistakes. ... For in the days of Paul and other New Testament writers, and indeed for the next few centuries, people wrote in a style called *scriptio continua*, that is, without any breaks between words, sentences and paragraphs, and without any punctuation at all." __Omanon, Roger L. [PUNCTUATIONINTHENEWTESTAMENT](#). Bible Review. 12/98 Pg. 40ff. .

As Christ's "high -priestly" prayer in the Fourth Gospel makes clear, it is the presumption of John's theology that the promised unity of the world is itself ontologically grounded in the oneness of God's triune family, in which, by the Spirit's own bonds of unity, the Father and the Son abide in one another - that mutual indwelling which the later church named *perichoresis*. The church's own oneness, in its unity with the Father through the Son and in the Spirit, is the ground which the fractured world might be convinced of the Father's love and believe that it, too, may participate in the mutuality of the Father with the Son and in the oneness-through-plurality of God's own self. Pg. 389=390.
Lewis, Alan E. [Between Cross and Resurrection](#). Grand Rapids, MI. Eerdmans. 2001.

When I despair, I remember that all through history the way of truth and love has always won. Gandhi

Be not miserable about what may happen tomorrow. The same everlasting Father, who cares for you today, will care for you tomorrow- Francis de Sales

The function of hope is to keep the present open and provisional. Walter Brueggemann

Let your first rule of action be to trust in God as if success depended entirely on yourself and not on him: but use all your efforts as if God alone did everything, and yourself nothing. Ignatius Loyola

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Links to all the books mentioned in this guide are on The Ark web site: www.theark1.com
Bausch, William J. [Storytelling](#). Twenty-Third Pub., Mystic, CT. 1984. **THE QUAIL & THE HUNTER**: Pages 144-6
Janice Grana Ed. [Images](#). St. Mary's College Press, Winona MN 1976. **NOT FOR THE HESITANT**: Page 130.
Mitchell, Stephen. [The Enlightened Heart](#). Harper & Row, NY. 1989. **TRUTH**: Page 37.