

**The Final Week (Thursday/Friday):
Jesus Implores the Father**
Looking into the Face of Jesus
The Life of Christ, 2: Pages 424-426, 431, 432
Manuscript: Lesson Plan 110

Introduction

The text for this lesson is John 17:1–26.

We have finished John 14–16 which is Christ's final words to His disciples. The Truth for Today commentary summarizes these words to two main points from Jesus. First, you need to maintain a right relationship with Me. And, second, you need to maintain a right relationship with each other.

He gives them many encouraging words about how He has been able to overcome and how they can overcome because He is sending them a helper, but He also provides direction on how they can overcome (based on the points above).

This lesson will move on to the final section of this session with the apostles which is a prayer to the Father. Guy N. Woods believes they were still in the upper room and were about to disband and go out to the fateful night, but before doing that, Jesus knew they needed to be supported and sustained by a petition to the Father.¹

So, we have the real "Lord's Prayer." Warren W. Wiersbe wrote that "John 17 . . . is the 'holy of holies' of the Gospel record . . . We are privileged to listen in as God the Son converses with His Father just as He is about to give His life as a ransom for sinners!"²

Let us take a look at John 17:1-26 (read). We start this lesson with a . . .

Potential Outline of the Prayer

In the Truth for Today commentary, David Roper proposes this simple outline. In the first part of the prayer, Jesus prayed regarding His relationship with His Father (John 17:1–5). Then Jesus prayed for the apostles (John 17:6–19, 24–28). Jesus closes His prayer by praying for those who believe on Him through the apostles' word (John 17:20–23).

Guy N. Woods, in *A Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, has it broken down as David Roper does, but breaks each section down further. God and the Son should be glorified (John 17:1, 2). His disciples may have eternal life (John 17:3–5). They may know and believe the truth (John 17:6–12). They may have joy in the face of an antagonistic world (John 17:13, 14). They may be kept from evil (John 17:15, 16). They may be made holy and fulfill their mission (John 17:17–19). They may all be one (John 17:20–23). They may partake of His glory (John 17:24–26).³

With each of these outlines fresh on our minds, we can now look for . . .

¹Guy N. Woods, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1981), 352.

²Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1989), 367.

³Woods, 352.

Lessons from the Text

Notice first, Jesus' prayer regarding His relationship with His Father (John 17:1-5). In John 17:1, Jesus turns His attention away from the apostles and directly on God: "He lifted up His eyes to heaven." Also in John 17:1, He makes but one request for Himself. That request to God is glorify your Son. Why would He make this request? That the Son may glorify God.

Then, in John 17:2, we learn what authority has Jesus been provided. He has authority over all flesh to provide eternal life.

In John 17:3, He speaks of eternal life. Perhaps a better question is this: "how do we obtain eternal life"? Jesus provides the answer: "that they know you." When Jesus spoke of knowing God, "know" in the Greek is in the present active subjective tense. What this means, literally, is that we must keep on knowing. And to know God we must know Christ.

John 17:4 raises an interesting question. Had Jesus accomplished everything He was to do at this point? He still had to be crucified, but note the fact that He knew He was going to obey.

Finally, in His prayer regarding His relationship with His Father, in John 17:5, He made the request to obtain the glory He had before He left heaven.

In His prayer for the apostles (John 17:6-19) there are many lessons we can learn. From John 17:6 we learn what separated these disciples. They belonged to God. They were given to Christ. The key point here is that they kept God's word (i.e. Judas fit the first two of these, but not the third).

In John 17:6, note that Jesus looked at these disciples almost as gifts from God. This is similar to how we view family. It is a gift from God, so what will we do with that gift? The same could almost apply to our church family.

John 17:7 points to the source of the revelation made through Christ. In John 17:8 He acknowledges their response and acceptance is evident in their belief. Then, in John 17:9 He tells why was He not praying for the world. It was because the blessing He was referring to and the requests about to be made were specific to the apostles. Is it wrong to pray for the world? No, He does that in John 17:20.

In John 17:10 Jesus prays, "All mine are yours, and yours are mine." Can we say that phrase? No, only deity can say the latter, "Yours are mine."

In John 17:11, He provided reason behind His request and made His first request for the disciples. The reason for the plea was because He was about to leave them. His first request was that "they may be one." "Be one," how? As the Godhead is one—Christ wants His people to have total, complete, undivided unity, which includes matters of doctrine and practice.

John 17:12—Christ was successful at taking care of all the apostles except one . . . "except the son of destruction"—Judas. He was lost so the Scriptures could be fulfilled (Psalm 41:9). This was not by reprobation (divine caused), but by apostasy; it was Judas' choice. Judas was taught just like all the rest, but he chose to be the "son of destruction."

In John 17:13 He gives another reason for the prayer; that they may be encouraged and have joy. In John 17:14, He gives another reason why the apostles needed the Father's care; the world hated them because of His word.

He makes His second request for the disciples in John 17:15, 16, that God would "keep them from the evil one." In John 17:17, His third request was, "Sanctify them in the truth." Sanctify means to "set apart" for holy purposes. How

are we to be set apart today? By truth, which is God's Word. His prayer was that they may be consecrated to a life of useful service.

John 17:18, 19 explains the reason for the last request was that He had sent and would be sending them into the world and that they must sanctify themselves.

The Lord's request for His apostles can be summed up in three main points. One, be united in thought and action as were He and the Father. Two, be kept from all worldly influences and from the power of Satan. And three, be consecrated to a life of useful service.

The final part of the prayer is for those who will believe because of the apostles' testimony (John 17:20-26). Notice John 17:20—here in this section, Jesus made an eternal intercession for all humanity until eternity. In this section He prays for you and me. When death for Christ was just a few hours away, He prayed for us! That is an amazing feeling and thought. We are continually indebted to Him for more than just His sacrifice.

And what does He pray for us? First notice John 17:21—His first request is that we are One. Again, like the Godhead is One. Why? So that the world may believe. But He also prayed for us, in John 17:23, so that the world may know that Christ was sent by the Father and that God loves them as He loved Christ

In John 17:22, 23, He continued His plea for unity. And in John 17:24, He made a request that His followers see the same glory that has been given to Him.

Finally, in John 17:25, 26, He wished that we all we know the love that God has for us. If we only understood that love, Christ knows we would stay in Him. Christ prays that we will stay in Him.

Those are some powerful lessons! Now let us take a moment to see some . . .

Application to Us Regarding Prayer

Guy N. Woods describes some characteristics of this prayer. He notes the simplicity in style, the child-like faith of Christ, the humility, the fact that there is no appearance of any weakness, that it displays unselfishness, and that it is sensitive.⁴

The main focus of the prayer is unity. This should help us understand what our desire should be for Christ's kingdom.

He provides many reasons for why He was praying. One comes out in John 17:13. He was saying this prayer out loud and at this time so they could be encouraged. This should be the purpose of our public prayers.

Finally, let us conclude by making . . .

Application for Us in Life

Four short applications. First, we should be one with our fellow Christians. Second, we need to be sanctified through truth. Third, we should pray as Christ prayed. And fourth, we should never forget that Christ prayed for each of us personally.

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⁴ibid, 366-367