

John 17

- Movement of Chapters: 1-12 Jesus in Public 13-16 Jesus in Private 17 Jesus with the Father
- This chapter lets us stand on Holy Ground. It has been called the *Holy of Holies of the NT*, and *Christ's High Priestly Prayer*. It is the Bible's longest example of the words of Christ in prayer.
- Jesus is often portrayed praying as if in Gethsemane, bowed down in anguish. Here He is best portrayed standing and confident, His hands and eyes lifted toward heaven.

I.	17:1-5	Jesus Prays for Himself	(Key Word: Glorify)
II.	17:6-19	Jesus Prays for His Disciples	(Key Word: Keep)
III.	17:20-26	Jesus Prays for His Church	(Key Word: One)

I. 17:1-5 Jesus Prays for Himself (Key Word: Glorify)

A. 17:1 *the hour has come* In earlier portions of John's Gospel, the hour was not yet here (2:4, 7:30, 8:20). From 12:23 on, the hour has come. Jesus is ready to go to the cross.

Glorify (8x in John 17 – glory, glorify, etc.) Greek *doxa, doxazō* points to exalting or exaltation, praise; the Hebrew counterpart *kabōd* speaks more of majesty, weight, substance. Many see that sense here: Christ desires to make known the majesty or awesomeness of God.

- Application: Christ's goal was to glorify the Father. As we become more Christlike, our desires and prayers will match His, to glorify God. Furthermore, glorifying self is perpetually unfulfilling; glorifying God is richly rewarding.

B. 17:2 That's a lot of authority.

C. 17:3 Definition of **eternal life**: Knowing God personally through Jesus.

This is also the only place in the Bible where Jesus refers to Himself as “Jesus Christ”.

D. 17:4 *finished the work* Christ's work was done – in about 3½ years. Many had not been healed. Many had not believed. Much was left to be done. The disciples may not have felt they were ready, but Jesus knew that He was done. His time was up.

- Application: When the end of this age comes, it will be the same, as Christ returns unexpectedly for most, as a thief in the night. Much will seem to be left undone. Many will not be saved. Many will not have believed. But you'll be ready if you're waiting and watching for Him, living each day as if you might see Him today.

17:5 *before the world was* The preexistence of Christ. Christ in His glory predates the world.

II. 17:6-19 Jesus Prays for His Disciples (Key Word: Keep)

A. The intercessory ministry of Jesus Christ:

*Hebrews 7:25 (NKJV) Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since **He always lives to make intercession for them.***

Right now Jesus is praying for you. It's what He lives for. Did you catch that? "He always lives to make intercession" for His followers.

B. 17:6 *they have kept Your word* That's how Jesus described His disciples. We keep God's word; the Father keeps us – He protects, preserves and holds onto us.

C. 17:9 *not for the world* Jesus makes a distinction between the world and His disciples. He knows which is which.

D. 17:11 *these are in the world* God's way is not to take us out of the world, but to take the world out of us. A boat in the water is normal and good; but water in the boat – that can be a problem.

- i. The monastic movement was an example of an attempt to disconnect from the world. The separation Jesus calls for is not on the outside but on the inside. He wants us here:

Matthew 10:16 (NKJV) "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

E. 17:14, 16 *not of the world* We are in the world but not of it.

Romans 12:2 (NKJV) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Philippians 3:20 (NKJV) For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

- i. Since we are in the world but not of it, we should hold onto it very lightly.
- ii. Since we are in the world but not of it, we should expect some hatred from it.

F. 17:15 *keep (protect)* from the evil one. In that other Lord's prayer it says:

*Matthew 6:13 (NKJV) And do not lead us into temptation, but **deliver us from the evil one.***

G. 17:17 *Your word is truth* and it sanctifies us, sets us apart. The word prepares us, equips us to shine as lights in this very dark world.

- i. Important: God's word is truth itself. It doesn't merely **contain** truth or **lead us to** truth.
- ii. In John 14:6 Jesus says that **He is the truth**. While the Bible is the written word of God, He is the incarnate Word of God. Both Jesus and the Scriptures have a human and a divine side. The Scriptures were written by men but inspired by God.

III. 17:20-26 Jesus Prays for His Church (Key Word: One)

- A. 17:20 *those who will believe in Me* This includes us – and the entire church.
- B. 17:21 *that they all may be one* Jesus desires unity among His followers – in each time period and across the church age. Sadly, that has frequently not been the case.
- i. **Unity** does not mean **uniformity**. Differences or disagreements can exist within the closest families. If two people agree on everything, one of them probably isn't thinking.
 - ii. Denominations can serve a useful purpose. Churches have very different atmospheres.
 - iii. Some division is necessary in order to draw lines between truth and error.

1 Corinthians 11:17-19 (NKJV) ¹⁷Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. ¹⁸For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. ¹⁹For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.

So some of the division in Corinth was harmful, but some was actually needed to sort the sheep out from the wolves.

Matthew 7:15-16 (NKJV) ¹⁵“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶You will know them by their fruits. ...”

The phrase “false prophets” appears in no fewer than seven times in the New Testament, and the concept appears more often than that. The Bible frequently warns of those who would weasel their way into the church and lead people astray with seductive lies.

2 Peter 2:1-2 (NKJV) ¹But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. ²And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.

- iv. True followers of Jesus should be characterized by love for one another:

John 13:35 (NKJV) By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- v. And set apart, sanctified, by the truth – the Word of God – an unwavering devotion to the Scriptures. This is what separates the true teachers or the true prophets from the false ones and what brings unity between us today and those original apostles. **Reread John 17:17-19 above.**

- C. 17:24 Jesus wants us to be with Him. That's what He promised back in 14:3

John 14:3 (NKJV) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

- D. 17:26 Jesus ends His prayer with an emphasis on love.