

How is this chapter/prayer often referred to? As the high priestly prayer of Jesus. Because Jesus is....our high priest.

Where does the Bible refer to Jesus as a high priest? Hebrews 4:14 says, "Since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess."

What was the job of the high priest in the Old Testament? There was a curtain separating the holy place from the Holy of Holies where God symbolically resided on the Ark of the Covenant. Only the High Priest could enter only once a year for the purpose of praying/ interceding/offering sacrifices for himself and then for God's people. He served as an intermediary between man and God.

What is the job of the high priest in the New Testament? He is out of work. The curtain has been torn from top to bottom. There is now no separation between the Holy of Holies, the holy place (God), and man. We now have free and direct access to the throne of God. There is no more need for an intermediary/high priest. The role of the Old Testament high priest is made obsolete by Jesus. Jesus doesn't merely offer the sacrifice; He *is* the sacrifice, once and for all! "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).

Note: This prayer is the longest recorded prayer of our Lord. This prayer represents God talking with God.

Jesus' prayer breaks down into three segments.

1) **Who is Jesus praying for in verses 1-5?** Himself and His relationship with the Father. The shortest part of this prayer is Christ's prayer for His own interests.

Jesus asks His Father to glorify Him so He could glorify the Father. How does Jesus glorify God according to verse 4? By completing the work God gave Him to do. **Which was what?** His sacrificial, atoning death on the cross. (See John 13:31-32)

In what ways does the cross glorify Jesus? It fulfills prophecy, and marks the defeat of Satan.

If Jesus glorified God by completing the work God gave Him to do, how can Christians glorify God? By completing the work God gave us to do. "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10).

Application: What is the work that God has given you to do? How has He equipped you to do His work?

What themes are consistent in this passage? The Lord's submission to the will of His Father, and His constant desire to bring glory to the Father.

2) **Who does Jesus pray for in verses 6-19?** His disciples

What is the emphasis of verses 6-10? Jesus is describing a relationship/painting a picture of intimacy between Father, Son, and disciples. All three are mentioned in every verse.

Jesus has accomplished all that the Father sent Him to do, in terms of equipping the disciples for their mission. Jesus has revealed the Father to them and given the Word of the Father to them. He has told them all that they need to know, and thus His earthly mission of making disciples of them has been completed. Jesus is now free to leave and to return to the Father because He has accomplished all that the Father gave Him to do.

How does Jesus view/describe these disciples? As those whom God has given to Him out of the world. This viewpoint accounts for Jesus' confidence as He anticipates their future. They belong to God, and He entrusted them to His Son.

In verses 11, 12 & 15, what does Jesus pray for? Protection for the disciples. Jesus is going to the Father and is about to send His disciples into the world, to proclaim the gospel. Being kept safe assures that the disciples will complete their mission, just as Jesus completed His mission on earth.

The safety which our Lord prays for is not that of freedom from suffering and pain, or from persecution. What does He pray that the Father might protect His disciples from? The evil one. There is a battle going on. (See Ephesians 6:12.) It's an invisible battle but very real. It started in Genesis 3. It's a battle for our hearts and minds. Even though Satan now stands condemned because of the cross, he still has a powerful influence on the world.

Application: What are some examples of spiritual warfare in our lives?

What does Jesus *not* pray for the disciples? That God would take them out of the world.

Why not? Jesus' will is that His disciples not withdraw from the world or compromise with it. Throughout church history Christians have sought relief from the world's hatred by doing both. We can neither withdraw from a disagreeable and dangerous environment nor blend into it. Jesus wants His followers to remain loyal to God while continuing to be a light to those around us.

How does the sanctification process work? How does Jesus ask the Father to sanctify the disciples in verse 17? By the truth of His Word. This means that it is essential for disciples to know, understand, believe, and obey the revelation that God has given us. The Bible is the key to believers' practical sanctification.

3) Who does Jesus pray for in verses 20-26? All future believers.

What is the main message/theme of verses 20-23? Unity—both vertically (with God) and horizontally (with other believers).

What are some of the purposes of unity? To glorify God.

Verse 21= "so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

Verse 23 = "to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

The unity of those who are believers in Jesus Christ should be a visible witness to the unsaved world. Unity is best demonstrated in diversity. Unity shouldn't be seen as being an exclusive club.

Note: This verse is a favorite of promoters of the ecumenical movement. However as the content and context of this verse clarify, Jesus was not speaking about institutional unity but personal unity among genuine believers.

What kinds of things get in the way of unity among Christians? Selfishness, doctrinal/denominational differences, pride.

Another theme of this passage is intimacy/intimate relationship. What kinds of things get in the way of intimacy between us and God? Unconfessed sin. Satan. Cares of this world. Things that distract us. Busyness. Self focus/pity.

Note: These two prayers of our Lord at this particular time in His ministry (the high priestly prayer of John 17 and the Gethsemane prayer of Jesus as recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke when His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground), which took place so close in time, are not found together in even one Gospel. John records the high priestly prayer of Jesus in chapter 17, and did not mention the Gethsemane prayer. Matthew, Mark, and Luke describe the Gethsemane prayer of Jesus, but say nothing about His high priestly prayer.

Conclusion: Our Lord's prayer in John 17 surely has something to teach us about prayer. A few lessons might be:

- Our Lord prays for Himself, that He will fulfill God's mission and ministry. Our prayer should be the same.
- Our Lord prays for others, because He loves them and cares for them. Our prayer should be the same.
- The primary goal of our prayers, like His, should be the glory of God.
- Since earthly suffering can bring glory, our prayers should not be obsessed with the termination of our suffering, but with the realization that God's purposes in our suffering are for His glory.
- Our prayers should seek our protection from Satan, the evil one, who seeks to destroy us.
- Our prayers should seek to gain a proper perspective of the present, in the light of eternity.

MEMORIZE: John 17:3