



Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

Bible Reading: John 17:6-19

John 17:6-19 (CSB)

6 “I have revealed your name to the people you gave me from the world. They were yours, you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7 Now they know that everything you have given me is from you, 8 because I have given them the words you gave me. They have received them and have known for certain that I came from you. They have believed that you sent me.

9 “I pray for them. I am not praying for the world but for those you have given me, because they are yours. 10 Everything I have is yours, and everything you have is mine, and I am glorified in them. 11 I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by your name that you have given me, so that they may be one as we are one. 12 While I was with them, I was protecting them by your name that you have given me. I guarded them and not one of them is lost, except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture may be fulfilled. 13 Now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy completed in them. 14 I have given them your word. The world hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I am not praying that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 I sanctify myself for them, so that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

I. Background – the disciples are about to be scattered by Jesus' death

A. Not a high priestly prayer

- “Some scholars reject the designation ‘high priestly prayer’ and prefer to call it ‘a farewell prayer’ or ‘the prayer of consecration’ ... Barrett... argues that the passage is all about the unity of the Father & the Son. In the same vein, R.E. Brown [says its] ‘more a prayer of union or communion of the Son & the Father than it is a prayer of petition... Appold also rejects the ‘high priestly prayer’ [label] for ‘sacrificial elements are not present in the prayer, nor is Jesus ascribed... in the 4th Gospel high

priestly functions.'...Mary Coloe asserts that Jn. 17 is about 'the future mission of the disciples in [Jesus'] absence'." [AG. Urga, Intercession..., p. 111]

- "Some scholars, both ancient & modern, approach Jn. 17 as the High Priestly Prayer & consider that when Jesus speaks of 'consecration' ['sanctify'] he is speaking as a priest. I disagree. Jesus' consecration is as a living temple, the dwelling of God (10:36), & this is what he prays for his disciples. Also, that Jesus makes an intercessory prayer for his disciples is not the prerogative of priesthood...During his 'hour' Jesus is the active agent not a sacrificial victim (Jn. 12:27-32) ...In his final prayer, Jesus is neither priest, nor victim [sacrifice]." [Mary Coloe, "Jn. 17:1-26: Missionary Prayer of Jesus," Australian Biblical Review, Vol. 66 (2018) pp. 8-9]
- John 17 "is often titled 'Jesus' High Priestly Prayer' by Bible editors & in commentaries. According to D. A. Carson, this designation is as old as David Chytraeus (1530-1600), & is so common that it is difficult to call the chapter anything else... Certainly Jesus is called the 'Great High Priest' in Hebrews, but there is little else in the NT which uses that metaphor for Jesus... That is not how John presents the prayer, there is no implication that Jesus is functioning as a priest here..." [Philip J. Long, Reading Acts, p.]

B. A prayer of a shepherd

- "Jesus [is] the good shepherd who is concerned for his sheep...The hour of the shepherd's sacrificial death has come, & the immediate consequence will be the scattering of the flock (['an hour... has come, when each of you will be scattered'] 16:32). This dispersal is the immediate crisis addressed [in Jesus' prayer]. True to his [shepherd] vocation...Jesus is intent on gathering the scattered children of God into one (11:52). His [Jn. 17] prayer, therefore, addresses not internal factionalism, but specifically, the external threats associated with his death, & generally...the... status of God's people as dispersed...The oneness motif in Jn. 17 most urgently addresses dispersal not disharmony, the state of being scattered more than the state of schism." [Andrew J. Byers, One God, One People: Oneness & Unity in Early Christianity, p. 202]
- "J. Ramsey Michaels has proposed that the 'High Priestly Prayer' could also be called the 'Shepherd's Prayer', since pastoral imagery is just as prevalent as priestly imagery." (J. Ramsey Michaels, John, p. 857) [Andrew J. Byers, Ecclesiology & Theosis in... John, p. 145]

C. Praying to the Father with the disciples being present

- Jn. 17:1 establishes the fact that this is a prayer, but it is immediately apparent that the prayer was uttered not primarily for the benefit of the Father, but of the disciples, who were listening (17:13). This means that the chapter is more a brief discourse than a prayer in the usual sense. Secondly, it is vital to note that Jesus speaks as though he were already in heaven: 'I'm no longer in the world' (17:11). In this sense, the prayer assumes an atemporal character. Finally, the relative length of the prayer is important in establishing the fact that the 4th Gospel is more than a body of doctrines, but also a witness to the mind & heart of Jesus, including 'the hidden foundation of all his work, namely, his relationship with his Father'." [David A. Black, "On the Style & Significance of Jn. 17," Criswell Theological Review, Vol. 3.1 (1988) p. 144]

II. Jesus Reviews His ministry – 17:6-8

A. Revealing the Father's name to the disciples

- "Jesus had manifested [revealed] the Father's name to the disciples. The "name" in Scripture means the Person, His attributes, and character. Christ had fully declared the Father's true nature." William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary
- "When Jesus speaks about revealing to his disciples God's 'name', this encompasses who God is in his character, his essential nature." G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, Commentary on the NT use of the OT, p. 498
- "Jn. 17:6-8...speak of Jesus' mission of making God known...In these verses the term used is 'name,' which has similar theological force as 'glory' because the name expresses the essence of the

person. To avoid saying 'God,' parts of the OT... use 'name,' as is the case in modern Judaism... The work given [the Son] by the Father was to reveal the God that only he knows from within the intimacy of his relationship." [Mary Coloe, "Jn. 17:1-26: Missionary Prayer of Jesus," Australian Biblical Review, Vol. 66 (2018) p. 5]

B. They are given by the Father to the Son – they are chosen

C. They have kept the Father's word

- "At the fundamental level, Jesus' assessment of his closest followers is entirely realistic, and in no way a contradiction of 16:31-32. After all, despite the generous assessment in 17:6, Jesus goes on to ask the Father to keep them safe (17:11). That they have kept the revelatory 'word' that Jesus has mediated to them from the Father does not mean that they have already become 'Christians'... It simply means that, as compared with the world, they have been drawn out of it (v. 6), and constitute the nucleus of what will become the expanding messianic community, the church." D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 559

- "It appears that this final prayer of Jesus is itself an operation of divine grace, transforming the shaky faith of the disciples into something firm and lasting." J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, p. 863

D. Jesus gave them the words from the Father

E. They know and believe

1. They know everything given to the Son is from the Father

2. They know and believe the Son came from the Father (16:27)

F. Jesus' positive view of the disciples

III. Praying for their protection – 17:9-16

- "The following section contains Jesus' actual prayer on behalf of his followers (17:9-19). Jesus' petitions are for his disciples' protection (17:11-16) and for the consecration for service in the truth (17:17-19)" G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, *Commentary on the NT use of the OT*, p. 498

A. Jesus is glorified in them – vv. 9-10

- "For Jesus to be glorified in the community means that the identity of Jesus is made visible in them.... The formation of a community based in the mutuality and intimacy of the relationship of God and Jesus belongs to Jesus' completion of God's work." Gail O'Day, *John*, p. 677

1. They belong to the Father and the Son

B. "Holy Father, protect them by your name"

1. They are in the world while Jesus is leaving the world

- "Again the Lord Jesus anticipated His return to heaven. He prayed as if He had already gone. Notice the title Holy Father. Holy speaks of One who is infinitely high. Father speaks of One who is intimately high. Jesus' prayer "that they all may be one" refers to unity of Christian character. As the Father and Son are One in moral likeness, so believers should be united in this respect—that they are like the Lord Jesus." William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary*

- "Jesus' revelation of God's name – that is, God's identity and character – shaped the identity of the faith community during his ministry and he now asks that God keep secure the community's grounding in that name." Gail O' Day, *John*, p. 677

2. That they may be one as the Father and Son are one- v. 11

a. No indication of disharmony

b. A unity of the flock under one Shepherd (10:16)

- “The purpose of this request ...is to ensure the unity of the faith community, which mirrors...the unity of God and Jesus. The community’s life after the hour is thus entrusted by Jesus to God.” Gail O’Day, p. 677

- “In Jn. 17... [Jesus’] prayer [is] that they ‘may be one, as we are one.’... Ezekiel texts are...at play as Jesus presents himself as the good shepherd who is concerned for his sheep. His pastoral [shepherd’s] concerns are raised by the specific crisis... described at the end of Jn. 16. The hour of the shepherd’s sacrificial death has come, & the immediate consequence will be the scattering of the flock (16:32) This dispersion is the imminent crisis... True to his pastoral [shepherd’s] vocation, the pastoral... figure of Jesus is intent on gathering the scattered children of God into one (11:52) ... The prayer that oneness might be extended to those who will ...believe...through the disciples’ testimonies (17:20-21) accords with ...Jn. 10:16 ‘other sheep I have...I must bring those also & they will...become one flock, one shepherd’ Jesus prays within the vocational mode of the one Davidic shepherd of Ezek. 34 & 37. He longs for the restoration of the scattered people of God into one ecclesial identity.” [Andrew J. Byers, One God, One People: Oneness & Unity in Early Christianity, p. 202]

c. A unity of the nature of the Son with the Father – not legislated, not organized

- The unity mentioned here is not simply a unity achieved by legislation. It is a unity of nature because it is comparable to that of the Son and the Father. The unity of the church must spring from the common life that is imparted to all believers by the new birth; and it is manifested in their common love for Christ and for one another as they face a hostile world. The unity of the Son and the Father is manifested in the deep love that each sustains for the other and by the perfect obedience of the Son to the Father and the perfect response of the Father to the Son.” Expositor’s Bible Commentary

d. A unity that comes from our relationship with the Father and the Son

- The kind of unity that is central to Jesus’ ... prayer is not organizational but is an all-encompassing relational reality that binds believers together with each other and with their Lord—a unity that can be achieved only through the regenerating and sanctifying work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” ESV Study Bible

3. Jesus protected them while he was with them – v. 12

- “Jesus asks for the continuation of the Father’s protection of the disciples in the period of danger that lay ahead of them. The title “Holy Father” (like “Righteous Father” in v.25) is unique and occurs only in this prayer. The holiness of God contrasts with the selfishness and evil of the world that confronts the disciples. On the basis of the holiness of God’s character, Jesus requests the Father to preserve his disciples. The verb “protect” here has the sense of “preserve,” with an implication of defense. “Name” stands for the power of God manifested in his person (cf. 5:43; 10:25; 12:28; 17:6, 26), for a name represents authoritatively the person it describes. Expositor’s Bible Commentary

- When Jesus prays “I kept them in your name’...he means that he did so by His Father’s appointment & authority. He was God’s chosen shepherd & he kept those given to him in His Father’s name... [When Jesus says] ‘They are yours; you gave them to me’ therefore they are mine. [We see] A Father—loving, gracious, longsuffering. A Shepherd protecting & about to die for his flock... Jn. 17:12 ‘While I was with them...I kept them...’ As Shepherd of His people he shall give a true & faithful account of all those committed to his trust” [Marcus Rainsford, Our Lord Prays for His Own: Thoughts on John 17, p.]

- “Jesus presents himself as the good shepherd, under whose care none of the flock is “lost” or “destroyed” (10:28, 10:10).” Gail O’Day, p. 677

4. So that they may have his joy in them – v. 13

- “Jesus prays not only for the safety of the disciples but also that they may have joy in spite of the coming conflict (cf. 15:11; 16:22, 24). There will be nothing in the attitude of the world to promote their joy; but, as with Jesus, their awareness of the Father’s approval and the consciousness of a task accomplished and the expectancy of glory will create true joy for them.” Expositor’s Bible

Commentary

5. Jesus gave them the Father's word and the world hated them because they are not of the world – v. 14

- “The very fact that the disciples received the message of God from Jesus differentiates them from the world at large. They have a different nature and a different affiliation. Such a radical contrast draws the hatred of the world, which always demands conformity to its viewpoint and practices. Having taken their stand with Jesus, they will be susceptible to the same rejection he experienced.” Expositor's Bible Commentary

6. Protect them from the evil one – v. 15

- “God keeps His own. Our safety depends on the nature of God, not our own character or conduct. When He was on earth, Jesus kept His disciples and they could depend on Him. “Those whom You gave Me I have kept” (v. 12). If the Savior, in a limited human body, could keep His own while He was on earth, should He not be able to keep them now that He is glorified in heaven? He and the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, are surely able to guard and secure God's people!” NKJV Wiersbe Study Bible

- “Even though God's people in the midst of hardship may sometimes want to be taken out of the world (see Num. 11:15; 1 Kings 19:4; Jonah 4:3, 8), Jesus does not ask for that. The place of believers during this lifetime is not to withdraw from the world but to remain in the world and to influence it continually for good, as difficult as that may be. keep them. The central request of the prayer is repeated again (see John 17:11). Jesus prays that his own will be guarded from the evil one, that is, Satan, who would attack them to destroy their lives and their ministries. But the Greek phrase *ek tou pon?rou* can also mean “from evil” (see ESV footnote), since Greek nouns denoting abstract qualities often take a definite article, in which case it would be a prayer that their lives and ministries not be overcome by Satan or by any other kind of evil, and that they be kept from doing evil as well (see 1 John 5:19).” ESV Study Bible

- “Jesus does not, however, ask that they be removed from a disagreeable and dangerous environment. Like him, they have a mission to discharge and must remain to fulfill it, however perilous it might be; but he does ask for protection for them from the evil one. The declaration that “they are not of the world” gives the negative aspect of the previous prayer that they may be one as Jesus and the Father are one. The disciples' unity binds them to Christ and at the same time separates them from the world. John stresses the separation that results from difference of nature (cf. 1Jn 2:19). The separation is inherent, not artificial.” Expositor's Bible Commentary

7. They are not of the world – v. 16

- “Those who believe in Christ are not of the world, meaning that they have an entirely different nature (see 3:3–8), including different heart desires, different fundamental goals, and ultimately a different God. The common saying that Christians are “in the world but not of the world” is not found exactly anywhere in Scripture, but the idea is true and is taken from 17:15–16.” ESV Study Bible

8. The believers are now kept by the Father

IV. Praying for their commission – 17:17-19

A. Sanctify them by the truth

1. Sanctify – set apart for a purpose, a commission

- “To sanctify means to set apart. The Word of God has a sanctifying effect on believers. As they read it and obey it, they are set apart as vessels suitable for the Master's use. That is exactly what the Lord Jesus was praying for here. He wanted a people who were set apart to God from the world, and usable by God. “Your word is truth,” Jesus said. He did not say, as so many do today, “Your word contains truth,” but “Your word IS truth.”” William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary

- “Sanctify” means “to set apart,” usually for some specially good purpose or use; its derivative meaning thus becomes “dedicate” or “consecrate.” Believers are so changed by the working of God’s Word in their lives that they are separated from evil and to God. This new devotion, which results in separation from evil, produces purification of life and consecration to God’s service. Since the Word of God is truth, it provides the unchanging standard for the course and character of life. The form of the expression “your word” raises the possibility that Jesus may be referring to himself. He has said that he is “the truth” (14:6); as the Logos of God he embodies truth in its totality.” Expositor’s Bible Commentary

- “Sanctify them. The sanctification of Christians is a lifelong process. It involves both a relational component (separation from participating in and being influenced by evil) and a moral component (growth in holiness or moral purity in attitudes, thoughts, and actions). This occurs in the truth, that is, as Christians believe, think, and live according to “the truth” in relation to God, themselves, and the world. This truth comprises the entire Bible, for Jesus says, your word is truth. The Greek word is surprisingly not an adjective (meaning “your word is true”) but a noun (al?theia, “truth”). This implies that God’s Word does not simply conform to some other external standard of “truth,” but that it is truth itself; that is, it embodies truth and it therefore is the standard of truth against which everything else must be tested and compared.” ESV Study Bible

2. By the Truth (in the Truth) –

- Truth was the sphere in which their sanctification was to take place. They had through Christ received the Father’s word, which was truth, and had passed into a new region of life, separate from the world (John 17:6-8; John 17:14-16). He has prayed that the Father would preserve them in this, and now He prays further that the Father would in this new region of life set them apart for the work to which He had sent them (John 17:18). Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers

B. They are being sent into the world

- “The Father sent the Lord Jesus into the world to reveal the character of God to men. As the Lord prayed, He realized that He would soon be going back to heaven. But future generations would still need some witness concerning God. This work must be done by believers, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Of course, Christians can never represent God as perfectly as Christ did because they can never be equal with God. But believers are here just the same to represent God to the world. It is for this reason Jesus sent them into the world.” William MacDonald, Believer’s Bible Commentary
- “The connection between ‘consecration’ and ‘sending’ evident in 10:36 is maintained here [v.18] as well. ...He speaks of the disciples’ mission to the world in the past tense, as if it has already started, or even been completed, and yet it will not ‘officially’ begin until he tells them after the resurrection, “just as the Father has sent me, so I am sending you” (20:22).” J. Ramsey Michaels, The Gospel of John, pp. 872-3

C. Jesus sanctified Himself – v. 19

- “To sanctify does not necessarily mean to make holy. He is holy as to His personal character. The thought is that the Lord set Himself apart for the work His Father sent Him to do—that is, His sacrificial death. It may also mean that He set Himself apart by taking His place outside the world and entering into the glory.” William MacDonald, Believer’s Bible Commentary
- “When Jesus speaks of his self-sanctification, he is speaking of setting himself apart for the full mission for which God has sent him into the world, not simply his death.” Gail O’Day, John, p. 679

V. Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, has a positive perspective regarding his disciples

- V. 6 – they have kept the Father’s word
- V. 7 They know everything is from the Father
- V. 8 They received the words Jesus gave from the Father
 - o They know Jesus came from the Father

- o They believed that the Father sent the Son
 - V. 9 they are chosen and belong to the Father
 - V. 10 Jesus is glorified in them
 - V. 12 Jesus, as the good shepherd, protected them and guarded them
 - V. 14 They are not of the world