



Sermon-Based Study Guide Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

John 17

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I. Introduction to this Study

This week we continue our spring series *Faith: Verb.*, listening in on Jesus' "high priestly" prayer in John 17. If you're reading along in Mark Labberton's book *Called: The Crisis and Promise of Following Jesus Today*, read chapters 7-9, entitled *The Way of the Beloved*, *The Way of Wisdom*, and *the Way of Suffering*, respectively.

II. Connecting with One Another

Have you ever been present when others have prayed for you? How did it impact you?

III. Study and Respond to God's Word

- a. The passage before us this week, John 17, is an intercessory prayer prayed by Jesus concerning his followers and their mission in the world. It concludes Jesus' extended discourse begun in John 13.31. If you have time, read John 13.31 through John 16.33.

What do you find surprising in this extended passage? What questions do you have?

- b. Read John 17.1-5.

What images come into your mind when you read "Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you"?

"Glorify" usually means to honor or praise someone or something, though in John's writing, it has a more specific connotation, namely Jesus' sacrificial death (see, for instance John 20.18-19). One commentator notes, "Throughout the Gospel, Jesus has revealed the Father's glory by manifesting his characteristic gracious love. In the death of the Son this same love is revealed most profoundly, for God is love, and love is the laying down of one's life."

How does this change your understanding of Jesus' prayer? To what is Jesus referring when He prays that God would "glorify Him"? How could your life be a "living sacrifice" that glorifies God?

- c. In verse 2, Jesus references His authority "authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those [God has] given him."

Jesus refers to God the Father as the giver thirteen times through this chapter. Scan the chapter, finding as many as you can. What do these verses reveal about God's giving? What does God the Father give? What does Jesus the Son give?

- d. In verse 3, Jesus makes a statement about what eternal life is. How does that reframe your understanding of eternal life?

The Greek word for "eternal" refers not only to an unending quantity, but also to a certain quality of life, as well. In *Against Heresies*, 2nd century Church Father Irenaus wrote "The only life is participation in God, and we do this by knowing God and enjoying his goodness."

e. In verse 5, Jesus again uses the term "glorify." This verse recalls the beginning of John 1.1-14 and Philippians 2.5-11.

f. Read John 17.6-10.

In these verses, Jesus turns His attention from Himself to His disciples, "those whom [the Father] gave [Him] out of the world." In verse 9, Jesus makes clear that He is "not praying for the world."

What do you make of this statement? Why doesn't Jesus pray for the world!?

How does it line up with John 3.16, that "God so loved the world"?

g. Read John 17.11-19.

In verse 11, Jesus prays to His "Holy Father," a phrase not found anywhere else in Scripture. One author writes, "Holiness refers to divine otherness, the realm of the divine in contrast to the mundane. Thus, this phrase captures beautifully God's 'purity and tenderness', the 'transcendence and intimacy characteristic of Jesus' personal attitude to God and of his teaching about God.'" A similar theme is seen in Jeremiah 23.23-24.

What effect does our Creator being a "Holy Father" have on you? How does it impact your prayer life? How does it impact your call to personal holiness? (see Leviticus 19.1-2 and following)

h. If Jesus has been protecting His disciples, why was one of them "doomed to destruction", as referenced in verse 12?

i. In verse 15, Jesus prays, "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one." How have you been protected from the evil one throughout your walk of faith? How have you seen others be protected?

j. Reread John 17.18. This is an important verse for our understanding of mission. Who is sent into the world? Why?

Where are *you* sent? To *whom*? To accomplish *what*?

k. Read John 17.20-26.

Jesus prays not only for His disciples, but also for those who would *become* disciples *through* His disciples! Who are you praying for, that they might *become* a disciple *through* interaction with Jesus' disciples?

l. In verses 22 & 23, Jesus prays for the church's unity. What is the basis for this unity? How unified does He want the church to be?

How could you work toward a deeper unity with fellow believers at Good Shepherd? With those who worship at other churches?

IV. Pray

a. Thank God for Pastor Jim's ministry, and ask God to bless he and Connie as they enter a new chapter of life,

b. Lift up Good Shepherd's 8th graders who will be going on a Confirmation Retreat June 26th-28th in Yosemite,

c. Ask God to continue to guide our pastors, staff, and elders as they work together for the future God has for our church.