

Questions for study and reflection:

1. What has the time come for that needed to be done and what does that have to do with Jesus? Where else in the prayer does Jesus mention the theme of glory and what does He say about it?
2. What did Jesus do for those ones that God the Father gave Him? What big thing does He want the Father to do for them when Jesus goes?
3. Who else does Jesus pray for and what is His prayer for them? Why is it important for believers to exhibit unity?
4. Why does Jesus call His Father, Righteous? What is His hope and prayer to have happen with His future believers?
5. What does this prayer mean for your personal faith and for the Church today? How do you feel about the fact that Jesus prayed for you so many years ago?



Session Number Two

China Baptist Church

March 24, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.

Written and led by Pastor David Gorton

Pat Clark, Facilitator

John 17: 1 - 26

In this second Lenten study for 2019, we are going to continue into Chapter 17, which is the next chapter in John's Upper Room discourse. In study one you were looking at most of Chapter 16. In this study we are going to look at Chapter 17 in its entirety. This Upper Room discourse in John's Gospel is an extraordinary event. The four chapters of this discourse (chapters 14, 15, 16 and 17) plus chapter 13 which set the scene and the actions of the narrative total five chapters. This means that John has devoted almost one quarter of the twenty one chapters of his Gospel to this single event. If you have a red letter edition of the Bible, then starting with chapter 14, any words in black, which represent what others say or the actions of anyone, are but small islands in a sea of red words of Jesus. This is the longest speech of Jesus in the entire Gospel record. It beats out the second longest speech, the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, by six verses.

Even more significant however than the length of these discourses, is their location in the Gospel record. The Sermon on the Mount is in the very first part of Matthew's Gospel in Chapter 5. Matthew uses his first four chapters to give us Jesus' background, genealogy and birth. He also gives us the beginning of Jesus' ministry including His call, baptism, temptation, and the calling of His first disciples. The Upper Room event on the other hand, occurs in the last section of John's Gospel. John uses his last four chapters to deal with the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus and particular segments of Jesus' post resurrection appearances. These appearances are geared toward Jesus giving clarification of His teaching (i.e. doubting Thomas) or restoration (a second miraculous catch of fish, or Peter making up for his three denials of the Lord). Therefore, these two longest discourses of Jesus are the bookends for all of His teaching which is recorded in the Gospel record.

Here in the Lenten season, it is most appropriate to study this last chapter of John's discourse. It represents the final thing that Jesus has to say within the framework of His teaching. Since Jesus often emphasized and practiced the habit of prayer throughout His ministry, it is not surprising that this final word of His to the disciples is in fact a prayer. To give us insight into what I believe Jesus is trying to accomplish with this prayer, I am going to use an illustration from my personal life.

One of my hobbies is putting together plastic models, especially military equipment. I enjoy creating something with my hands and it gives me a chance to use cutting, trimming, filing and drilling tools to my heart's content. I get to use paint and put decals on in order to emulate a variety of real historical pieces. Like any craftsman/creator who works on wood, stone, metal, fabric or paper, it is very satisfying to create a real thing. In common with many of those crafts people, a final step in my modeling is to apply a finish coat to seal a model up. This sealant is usually a clear coat that helps to keep bad stuff from getting in and breaking up or ruining the beauty of the final product. This coat also helps the model maintain its luster and it highlights the details that have gone into the work. Overall this coat helps the product maintain the momentum of its beauty for all on-lookers to admire in the years ahead.

This final prayer of Jesus is the sealant that He is applying to His years of teaching with the disciples. He pleads for their protection from the things that might creep in and break up or otherwise mar or destroy the beauty of His church that He has been creating with them. He also pleads that the beauty of that creation, the church, be maintained and that the highlights of what has been accomplished be seen so that the purpose of its creation may be continued and increase throughout the ages ahead. Please study and answer the following questions to get a deeper understanding of the ideas we have been talking about. (Questions on the back.)