

Jesus' School of Prayer
"THE Lord's Prayer"
October 18, 2020

Overarching theme: In 2020, FUMC will be a **GO** church!

Instructions:

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.

Core Point:

The past is the past. There is nothing that can be done about it. The past can only be used to gain wisdom for the future. What can change is the future. When we, as God's people, are willing to follow God in our daily lives, God will make a good way in the future. The way may be bumpy at times and have curves, but the process will be filled with God's love and grace.

John:

The Gospel of John was probably the last of the four Gospels written. The "John" who is named as author in the title is not the same one who is introduced in John 1:6, that is, John the Baptist. Nor is a "John" ever identified within the text as the Gospel's author. Instead, the author is said to be "the disciple whom Jesus loved", an anonymous follower of Jesus who makes brief appearances at the Last Supper; the crucifixion; the empty tomb; and at the Sea of Galilee after Jesus' resurrection. Tradition identifies this disciple as John, son of Zebedee, but his actual identity remains unknown.

Like the other three Gospels, John is written "so that you will believe that Jesus is the Christ, God's Son". But at the heart of it is something more. Jesus' intent for his disciples is that "you will know that I am in my Father, you are in me, and I am in you". This deep relationship is the heart of what has been called Jesus' "high priestly prayer" of John 17, and Jesus invites his disciples to enter into this intimate union in life and in prayer. Perhaps this is why John is the favorite Gospel of so many Christian believers. More than any other it draws its readers into the ancient story, assuring all who believe that they are "God's children, born not from blood nor from human desire or passion, but born from God". Its legacy is nothing less than a new birth, a promise of eternal life that begins not at death, nor even at the coming of God's kingdom, but here and now.

-adapted from the CEB study bible, pp 167-68 (NT)

Reflect on this Scripture:

Selections from John 17 (John 17:1-3; 6-11; 15-26 NRSV)

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, ² since you have given him authority over all people,^[a] to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

⁶ "I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and 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 for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹ I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹ And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

¹⁵ I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one.^[e] ¹⁶ They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.²⁰ "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us,^[f] so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. ²⁴ Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ "Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Commentary

Jesus' prayer in John 17:1-26 is the final scene of his farewell meal with his disciples. Since the sixteenth century, the traditional title of this prayer has been "Jesus' high priestly prayer." This title highlights the role of Jesus as intercessor in this prayer, but it minimizes the intrinsic connections between this prayer and the preceding discourse.

By concluding his narration of the farewell with this prayer, the Fourth Evangelist is adhering to the conventions of the farewell genre (see Overview to John 14:1-16:33). In biblical literature, for example, Moses' farewell speeches in Deuteronomy conclude with a hymn of praise to God (the Song of Moses, Deut 31:30-32:47) and Moses' blessing of the Israelites (Deuteronomy 33). Many of the farewell speeches of the patriarchs in *Jubilees* end with prayer, as do farewell speeches found in Jewish apocalyptic literature. The farewell prayer is thus well documented in the religious literature of the ancient Mediterranean world and would have been a familiar genre to the first readers of the Gospel.

The prayer in John 17, however, is not the conventional prayer of a dying man. Indeed, Jesus' farewell, as John 14-16 has underscored, is about the full constellation of the events of Jesus' hour – death, resurrection, and ascension – not simply his death. The prayer, of John 17 is thus not a death-bed prayer, but the prayer of the One on the verge of willingly laying down his life and thus completing God's work (17:1-5).

The Fourth Evangelist has crafted and positioned Jesus' farewell prayer to stand as the theological climax of the Fourth Gospel.

In the Farewell Discourse, Jesus repeatedly spoke of the disciples' complete confidence in God's response to their prayer as a sign of eschatological newness and possibility (14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-23, 26-27). When Jesus prays in John 17 he models this confidence of asking and receiving and so enacts the eschatological reality of union with God. The prayer of John 17 thus represents the relationship between God and Jesus.

– adapted from the New Interpreter's Bible Commentary, Vol IX, pgs. 787-788

This week – THE Lord's Prayer. To review, last week we considered Luke's version of what is generally referred to as "the Lord's prayer" - a prayer many of us recite every Sunday in worship. But some scholars have pointed out that what we call the "Lord's prayer" may be more accurately called, the "Disciples prayer", a prayer for followers of Jesus to pray. In contrast, John 17 is the prayer that the Lord Jesus himself offered over his disciples (and all of us, by extension) and it could be argued that this prayer more accurately represents **"the Lord's prayer."**

At any rate, John 17 includes the last prayer that Jesus prayed over his disciples during his final moments as a gathering of 12 before he was to be arrested, tried and crucified. He prays with the knowledge that they will be carrying on his mission in the world after his resurrection and ascension. In this prayer he asks that his disciples might experience eternal life (not just in heaven, but intimately knowing

God and Jesus in the present); protection from the evil one as they continue in the world; and a sense of deep oneness and unity in the Father and the Son. This deeper "oneness" in God's love would then be evidence to a divided, divisive world of the authenticity of Jesus' ministry and a way of drawing all persons to the glorified Christ.

Questions to Ponder for accountability in the group:

As you think about this passage, how can you respond to this Scripture:

1. Contrast Jesus' definition of eternal life in John 17:3 as something we can experience now ("*...this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*") with the notion that eternal life is something reserved for the future (in heaven). How might Jesus' assertion that 'eternal life' is an experience for today change the way you live?
2. Jesus prays that we who remain in the world would be protected from the power of evil (verse 11,15) and that we might be 'one', as he and the Father are 'one.' How can Christians be a positive witness for deeper unity in an increasingly polarized world?
3. Reread verse 23 – "*I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*" Jesus seems to indicate that our oneness is a byproduct of having a deeper connection in the Father's shared love with the Son. What are some ways that we can connect more deeply with Jesus and his "Abba" (Jesus' address for God, not the pop group from Sweden) even in this season of physical distance?
4. "*So that the world might know...*" How might our oneness in Christ be a witness to non-Christians that Jesus has been sent by God?
5. How hard is it to be "one in Christ" with someone who has a very different political view or a different take on contemporary social issues? How can we seek a deeper oneness even in the midst of our differences?

Activity for the life of a disciple:

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMC.
2. Ponder and pray on this Scripture this week: John 17:20 ²⁰ "*I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word,* ²¹ *that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us,*^[1] *so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*"
3. Pray for deeper unity in Christ's love among his followers in these days of increasing polarization. Pray as well for the healing of our nation's political and racial wounds and that the church can be part of the solution, not part of the problem.