

Acts 1:6–14
Ps. 68:1–10, 32–35
1 Pet. 4:12–14;
5:6–11
John 17:1–11

Faithful Prayer

Focus on John 17:1–11

WHAT is important to know?

—From “Exegetical Perspective” by Richard Manly Adams Jr.

In verses 9–11, Jesus’ prayer turns into supplication, asking the Father to keep those whom he leaves, who remain in the world, though they are not part of it. In Jesus’ request that the Father “keep them,” he hands “those whom you gave me” back into the custody of the Father. Jesus speaks of his “guarding” them while he was on the earth (v. 12), and now that he comes to the Father, he asks for their continued protection, echoing his earlier promise to ask the Father to send the Paraclete (see 14:16–19; 15:26–27; 16:7–11). Even in Jesus’ absence, the community will maintain its access to the Father.

WHERE is God in these words?

—From “Theological Perspective” by Larry D. Bouchard

Glory, then, must be understood within the cruciform logic of “God is love” (1 John 4:8). All relations, actions, and meditations find their norm and full extent in love, an implication of verses 2–3: “authority” connects with “to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.” What is “eternal life”? It is to “know” God and Christ. What sort of knowing is this? Again, knowing God must entail continuity and discontinuity with ordinary forms of knowing; but in any case, it must be a knowing and also living that ultimately seeks its form in forms of loving.

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

—From “Pastoral Perspective” by Nancy J. Ramsay

In a time when great divisions threaten the unity of so many Christian communions, the poignancy of Jesus’ prayer that we believers may be one is striking. He prays from the context of the profound intimacy he enjoys with God, an intimacy that elsewhere in John Jesus also ascribes to his relationship to the Spirit or Paraclete. Jesus, the Father, and the Paraclete enjoy a positive interdependence that allows for difference. Perhaps this early Trinitarian theme is suggestive for how we may imagine our oneness in Christ. Surely it does not mean we must be identical in thought and practice, any more than the persons of the Trinity are in their dynamic interdependence.

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

—From “Homiletical Perspective” by Linda Lee Clader

Jesus prayed “that they may be one, as we are one” (17:11). “The Word was *with* God, and the Word *was* God” (1:1). Some ancient theologians who studied these very verses talked about Jesus’ oneness with the Father in terms that suggest *movement*—a kind of interweaving or even a dance among the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. What if the answer to Jesus’ prayer for unity was not about solidifying into a monolithic block but, rather, was about joyful interplay, glorious dancing? If we tried that idea on for awhile, could it affect how we view our own disagreements with our brothers and sisters? Perhaps the vision toward which we strive is not one of total agreement but of the ability to join, in our disparate ways, in the common dance of faith.

John 17:1-11 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

17 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, 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. **4** I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. **5** So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

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.

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

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