

GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN

17



CHRYSOSTOM

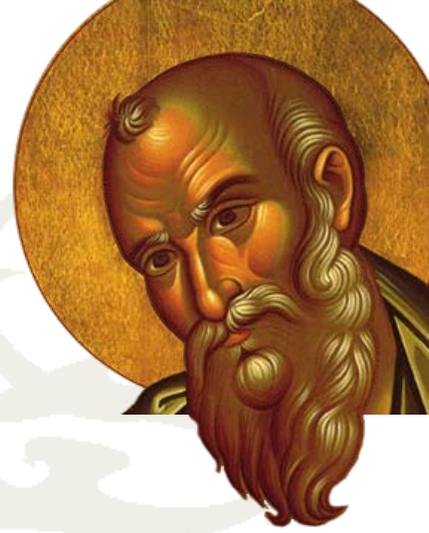
Read St. John Chrysostom's homilies on John chapter 17.



PRACTICE QUIZ

Take a quiz to test your knowledge of John chapter 17.

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Chapter seventeen can be summarized in one word: prayer. Christ is shown praying for Himself, the apostles, and finally all Christians. St. John Cassian even says that this “High Priestly Prayer” demonstrates the perfect prayer because it incorporates supplication, making vows, intercession, and thanksgiving.

In praying for Himself Christ asked God the Father to glorify Him—this is not a selfish desire for glory, however, because glorifying the Son also glorifies the Father (17:1, 5). St. Didymus the Blind explains the Father and Son's mutual glorification in this way: “The Son was glorified by the Father, for He was entrusted with all things, because He is the Son and offspring of the One Who can do everything. The Father in turn was glorified...when the Son was known to have accomplished every mighty deed, the favor of His reputation passes on to the One Who begat Him.”

Jesus' work on earth involved glorifying the Father and leading others to do the same (17:3-4). We participate

in this work today, as can be seen in these words we say to God in many of our prayers, “To Thee belong all glory, honor, and worship.”

Christ next prayed for the disciples (17:6-19), asking the Father (as Blessed Theophylact puts it) “to guard the disciples from dangers and to assist them in remaining steadfast in the faith” (17:15). Christ “manifested (the Father's) name” by being God in their midst (17:6), and they accepted both His teachings and His divine identity (17:8). While Jesus was leaving the earth, and the disciples would be vulnerable to the hatred of world as they went forth proclaiming the Gospel (17:14, 18), He prayed that they would nonetheless be kept in the love of the Father (17:11).

A central theme in this prayer is unity: the Father and Son are united in glory (17:1, 5), and the Father and Son are united in keeping the disciples (17:10). When Christ prayed for the Church, He therefore made a profound statement regarding spiritual unity, praying that all Christians “may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us” (17:21; see also verse 11). This unity is vitally important, not only because it will lead non-Christians to believe in Christ (17:21, 23), but also because such unity is essential for the perfection of those who are in Christ (17:23).

The unity for which Christ prayed is more than simply “getting along” with each other—it is true love. God the Father loved Christ even before the world was created (17:24), and Christ prayed that this same love would be in each of His

followers (17:26). Despite the fact that some people refuse to acknowledge both Christ and the Father Who sent Him (17:25), those who love Christ are sanctified by the truth (17:19) and will eventually behold Christ in His divine glory (17:24).

This unity and love about and for which Christ prayed is not abstract, but instead is personal. St. Gregory of Nyssa says that the glory given by the Father to the Son, and the Son to His followers (17:22), is the Holy Spirit. Likewise, Jesus concludes that the people who receive the Father's love will also have Christ within them (17:26).



LIFE TIP

St. Basil the Great lists four steps you can follow when engaging in personal prayer:

1. Glorify God.
2. Give thanks to Him for the mercies He has shown you.
3. Confess your sins and trespasses.
4. Ask Him to grant what you need (particularly in relation to your salvation), as well as the needs of others.