Introduction:

John chapter seventeen is the longest recorded prayer that Jesus offered during His public ministry on earth. It takes three minutes to read, showing that effective prayers do not have to be lengthy. In John 17, the veil is drawn aside and we are ushered into the Holy of Holies if you please. We are in the presence of our great High Priest, Jesus Christ, as He makes intercession for us. We are humbled and hushed as we get to listen in on God's Son as He speaks with His Heavenly Father before the hour that He gives His life a ransom for the human race.

Background:

The prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 is commonly called “The Lord's Prayer.” However, that prayer is actually a model for the prayers of believers. The true Lord's Prayer is the prayer of John 17. This is Jesus' farewell prayer for His disciples. In the prayer of Matthew 6, Jesus explains what His disciples should desire for themselves. In the prayer of John 17, Jesus petitions God on behalf of His disciples. Jesus and His disciples had just finished eating the Passover meal. And “Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father” (from John 13:1). Jesus gave the disciples their final instructions. He told them of the coming betrayal, going to the Father to prepare a place for them, and the coming of the Holy Spirit (John 13-16).

After completing His final teaching, called the “Upper Room Discourse,” Jesus offered up His longest recorded prayer, called the “High Priestly Prayer.” The prayer was likely prayed in the presence of the disciples either in the Upper Room or on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane.

Context:

John 17:1,6-8,11 (KJV)

1 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:
6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. 7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.
8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. 11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

Here our Lord addresses the whole Divine nature, as he is now performing his last acts in his state of humiliation.

Jesus asked God the Father, "Glorify thy Son." He was looking ahead at the cross.

- The cross was the glory of Jesus because He was never more magnificent and majestic than in His death.
The cross was the completion of His earthly ministry, His course, His race in life.

By going to the cross, Jesus demonstrated there was nothing the love of God was not willing to do and suffer for our salvation and redemption. There is no limit to God's love for us.

The cross showed what men thought of Christ. The Resurrection showed what God thought of His Son.

The cross was the worst that men could do to Jesus, but it was the best that Jesus could do for men. Man's worst could not conquer Christ.

Resurrection glory shattered the rejection and rebellion of the cross. Rising from the grave, Jesus proved once and for all that He was the Son of God. Jesus glorifies His Father by giving eternal life to believers.

Jesus said they have "kept" thy Word. The word "kept" is from the Greek word tereo {tay-reh'-o} which means "to guard, observe, to attend to carefully."

I have delivered thy doctrine to them, so that they have had a pure teaching immediately from heaven: neither Jewish fables nor fictions of men have been mingled with it.

Jesus would be departing the world to rejoin the Father; the disciples would stay behind to carry out God's plan by spreading the good news of salvation. Such a mission would arouse great hostility from the evil one, so the disciples needed special protection. Jesus asked that the Holy Father would keep them and care for them.

Today's Lesson:

John 17:14-19 (KJV)

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Jesus prayed that God would keep the disciples from the world and from the evil one or Satan. Both the world and Satan are evil and stand opposed to all that Jesus and His disciples proclaimed.

There were three primary reasons why God needed to protect the disciples from the world and the devil.

1. The world and the devil hated the disciples of Jesus. Note why.

   a. The disciples of Christ have the Word of God. It is God's Word that reveals...

      • God's love, a sacrificial love that gives all it has, is different from the love the world wants. (See Deeper Study #1, Love—Matthew 5:44; note—Matthew 22:37-38; note—Matthew 22:39 for discussion.)

      • God's holiness and justice and man's depravity, a fact that man rejects and refuses to face.

      • Christ, the Son of God Himself, who demands total allegiance and commitment to become
b. The disciples were not of the world, even as Jesus was not of the world.

⇒ Jesus came from God, "out of heaven" (John 3:31).
⇒ The disciples and other believers were born again by the Spirit of God and given the very nature of God. The world and the devil want absolutely nothing to do with a selfless and sacrificial nature, a righteous and godly nature that gives all one is and has to meet the needs of the diseased and starving and lost masses of the world. (John 3:1-15, John 1:13; 2 Cor. 5:17; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:14; 1 John 5:1; 1 John 2:29; 1 John 4:7.)

2. The disciples were needed in the world. The need was not for them to be taken out of the world; the need was for them to be kept from the evil one or from Satan (cp. Ephes. 6:10-18). The disciples were called to be ambassadors and messengers of God in the world. God's mission to save the world depended upon their loyalty and faithfulness. They had to be kept and protected and covered with the armor of God.

3. The disciples were now of the same nature as Jesus. This is the same truth stated in John 17:14. The truth is so glorious, it has to be reemphasized. Note that it is also the main reason the world and the devil attack the believer (John 15:19-24) and

The process of becoming more like Christ and growing in godliness and grace is called "Sanctification." This doctrine shows up about 1060 times in the Bible. Sanctification means "set apart, consecration, holiness, or dedication." It comes from the Greek word hagiasmos {hag-ee-as-mos}. The root meaning of this word means "to be different." Christians are to live differently than people who do not know Christ as their Savior. We are to be "set apart" unto the Lord.

There should be a difference in our actions, appetites, attitudes, attire, and acclamations (words). We are to be separated from evil and set apart for God's use.

There are three stages of sanctification.

**Three Stages of Sanctification**

A. **Positional Sanctification**

When you trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you were immediately set apart for God, permanently, once-and-for-all.

1 Corinthians 6:11—And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Hebrews 10:10—By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Before we were saved, Satan was our father (John 8:44). In Christ, God is our Father, we belong to Him for we have been bought with a price.

B. **Progressive Sanctification**

As the Christian yields to the Lord and attempts to be set apart for Him, the Holy Spirit empowers and helps him to grow in grace and make him more like Christ.
2 Peter 3:18—But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

2 Corinthians 7:1—Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

C. Perpetual, Eternal Sanctification

Someday we will be perfectly set apart unto the Lord and His service. We will be without sin and failure. Our day of total redemption will have arrived when Christ returns at the Rapture. Max Beerbohm wrote a story entitled, "The Happy Hypocrite." The title sounds like a paradox, doesn't it? The story was about a character whose face personified evil. The man was faced with a dilemma. The woman he loved refused to marry him because he didn't look saintly. To solve the problem, the suitor put on a mask with a kind, gentle face. The young woman married him despite the face underneath the mask. Her husband proved to be an attentive, unselfish husband.

One day in a moment of rage, an enemy abruptly tore off her husband's mask before his wife's eyes. Instead of a cruel, grotesque face, the man had become what he had lived for many years. Kindness, not evil, radiated from his face! The Bible urges us to "keep the faith" because someday we will be like Him in whom we have believed.

1 John 3:2—Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Ephesians 5:27—That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Jesus set himself apart to do the Father's will like a priest consecrating himself to make the sacrifice. His final act of dedication was his offering himself on the cross (see Hebrews 10:10). The purpose of that death was so that the disciples (and all believers) might be entirely God's possession. Jesus died to set us apart for him.

John 17:20-24 (KJV)
20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;
21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.
22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:
23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.
24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

After praying for his disciples, Jesus prayed for all who would ever believe in him because of their testimony. In a sense, everyone who has become a Christian has done so through the apostles' message because they wrote the New Testament and were the founders of the Christian church. So Jesus was praying for all the believers who would ever exist. He was praying for you and others you know. And he was praying for those he wants us to reach! Knowing that Jesus prayed for us should give us confidence as we work for his Kingdom.
There are three requests in verse 21, and they hinge on one another. In the first request, the Lord asked for unity—that they will be one. This all-encompassing petition includes all the believers throughout time. This oneness does not readily fit the idea of one unified church structure. Rather, this unity becomes most visible through love, obedience, and commitment to the Father’s will.

In the second request, Jesus prayed for a unity among the believers that is based on the unity of Jesus and the Father. Christians can be unified if they live in union with God. For example, each branch living in union with the vine is united with all other branches (see 15:1-17); or each part of the body is united with the other parts so that when one hurts, they all hurt, and when one rejoices, they all rejoice (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

This union with the Father and Son would result in people all over the world believing that Jesus had been sent by God as the world’s Savior—and not only believing, but receiving this Savior as their own. This is the third request.

Jesus further explained this oneness in terms of mutual indwelling: “I have given them the glory you gave me.” Jesus was still referring to all his followers, not just the immediate disciples. The phrase is a promise. Jesus gave all true believers his glory by completing his mission of revealing God (17:4-6). Jesus’ work was not only to speak and model the character of God. His ultimate purpose was to present both the splendor and character of God (God’s glory) in such a way that God would become personally real to the disciples. They, in turn, were to pass on what they had received to others who would also believe. Those who, in fact, received the glory would become unified by their shared relationship with Christ. Complete and perfect unity between God and believers results in worldwide belief. When we demonstrate this oneness, we will convince the world that the Father sent the Son, and that the Father loves believers deeply and eternally, just as he loves the Son.

Jesus wants all believers (the eleven disciples and all others) to be with him where he is so they can see his glory. What wonderful assurance Jesus’ prayer gives us to know that the Lord of heaven wants us to be with him. This request impacts our present experience and future hope. In the present, we unite with Christ in God the Father (see 14:6; Colossians 3:3). In the future, we will be with Christ in eternal glory and enjoy with him the love he experienced with the Father forever.