

## A Prayer to Give Us Joy

### John 17

Everything in John 17, 16, 15, 14, and 13 was spoken by Jesus on one evening, around one meal with his 12 closest disciples. It was the last night before Jesus died.

He said that now *“the hour has come.”* Everything that happens next - His arrest, trials, death, resurrection, appearances to the disciples, and then ascension to heaven - Jesus views all of those things together as one thing, one hour, and from his perspective it's all happening now.

It's actually six weeks until He departs to the Father, but Jesus sees it as happening now, because from now to then is an unbreakable chain of events.

This chapter is unique because it is a prayer. For those who love Jesus, it is a wonderful, humbling privilege to listen as God the Son speaks to God the Father.

And the Son of God was talking to His Father about us. What does Jesus ask for? He has one primary request: “keep them” (v. 11, 15). Everything else revolves around that.

Hearing this prayer is supposed to give us joy (John 17:13). It's supposed to encourage us.

First of all, **this prayer encourages us that if we are living for the glory of God, we are on track.** We are living for the most important thing.

Jesus' chief concern in this prayer is the glory of God (vv. 1,4). The glory of God is His unique greatness. And to glorify Him is to make a big deal out of His greatness.

When Jesus says “I manifested Your name” (John 17:6) that means that He came and showed off the greatness of God. That's what mattered the most to Him.

So if in your life, you say, “I just want God to be glorified through my life. I don't care whether I have sickness or health; whether I am rich or poor; whether I am well known or live in obscurity; whether I accomplish a lot or a little; I just want people to see through me that God is great.” If that's what you say, if that's how you live, then you are living your life for the most important thing; just as Jesus did (1 Cor. 10:31).

Remember too our church mission statement: “For the glory of God, Grace Bible Church exists to make faithful followers of Christ.” And then it says that they “glorify God by knowing His unique greatness, valuing this above all else, and living to make His unique greatness known to others. In other words, we are living for the fame of the true God.”

That's ultimately what this prayer is about - if as a church and individuals God's greatness is our focus, then we can rest and we can rejoice. No matter what our circumstances may be, God is amazing; He is our God; and He will display His greatness through us.

Another general reason **why this prayer is encouraging is because it reminds us again of what God is doing today.** This prayer shows us how despite the tribulations of the world, Jesus triumphs. God's accomplishes His purposes.

In this prayer Jesus not only prays to the Father, He also just talks to the Father. He talks and prays about their purposes in our day. Now if Father and Son are working together on these purposes; if this is their will; if this is their plan for our day - then how confident can we be that it will happen? And even better, how confident can we be that right now today it is happening?



This is a rock-solid foundation for peace and joy. We know what the Father and the Son are doing today. We can't connect all the dots, and see exactly how the details in our lives fit into that, but we know what God is doing, and we can see it again here in this prayer.

Let's just take a little taste of that before we finish. What are the Father and the Son doing today? Well, verse 2, Jesus is giving us eternal life. But then look down at verses 24 and 26. Here's what Jesus is doing: He is giving us eternal life, and the Father is keeping us, so that someday we might be with Jesus, and see and experience His full amazing incredible majestic glory, and experience the full joy of the perfect love of the Father and the Son for us.

So lift up your eyes above today's troubles, today's circumstances, and see God's purpose. Jesus' prayed that you might have eternal life, and be with Him forever, and fully see His glory, and be loved by the Father with all the love that the Father has for the Son. Do you think Jesus' prayer will be answered? Do you think it is being answered in your life today?

Let us pray that we will have a strong desire to understand and know this prayer of our Savior. Pray, "Father turn my heart to your word. Make me hunger and thirst for understanding Your word here."

You know what it's like to walk in to a high school classroom with a substitute teacher. And the teacher doesn't really want to be there. And the students don't really want to be there. And it's as dead as dead can be.

But have you ever been in some situation where the teacher was really excited about teaching, and the students really wanted to learn and understand and apply what they learned - that atmosphere is just bursting with energy. May God make it that way as we study John 17.

You can take practical steps in that direction. Get into a Saturday evening routine that involves getting ready for Sunday morning (or if you are an early bird, maybe it is a Sunday morning routine). Every Saturday evening set aside some prayer time to pray for the services the next morning. Pray for your own heart, and pray for the preacher, etc. Then you could read through John 17 every Saturday night, so that your mind and heart are already in gear when you come Sunday morning.

Let us pray that all of us will come to the word each week saying "Dear Father, I want to hear and know and understand and love and apply the words of your Son."

