

Jesus intercedes for us

The gospel for this coming Sunday (Seventh Sunday of Easter) is John 17:20-26. This is the last portion of Jesus' High Priestly Prayer which began at 17:1.

The first petition of High Priestly Prayer of Jesus prayer encompasses 17:1–5. Within this petition, Jesus prays for himself—that his Father would guide him through all that stood before him at that hour (the cross) and that through it all, the glory of the Father would be seen in Jesus as he redeemed the world.

The second petition (17:6–19) includes Jesus' prayer for his disciples, particularly the Eleven. He asks the Father to keep them as “one” (17:11), united in the faith delivered to them (and entrusted to them) to carry forward into the world. Notice 17:19, where Jesus consecrates himself—that he would be up to the task to redeem those entrusted to his care while on earth.

Our text picks up with the third petition of this beautiful prayer of Jesus. Here he expands his prayer to include the entire world—and all who would ever live on the earth. He asks that the profound mysteries of the Gospel would be proclaimed to all people of all time, so that they, too, through faith, would become one with the Father and himself and receive the gift of eternal life that he would accomplish in the hours that now loomed ominously before him.

When Jesus says “*those who will believe in me*” he was confident that they would spread the gospel, and he prayed for those who would believe as a result. All future believers are included in this prayer. This includes us.

Jesus prays that his followers “*may all be one,*” following the perfect pattern that he and the Father have had from eternity. In that oneness, his children on earth would then demonstrate a strong, united witness to the world dying in sin, for Jesus has established his Church (and the people within it) to be his continuing call to the world. Where unity is found, a strong witness always results—to the glory of God and the salvation of men through a faithful witness and practice of the Gospel.

God gave the human nature of Christ glory not because He needed it but so that He could give it to believers, the right to be children of God. It is a gift of the Father to the Son who has given it to us.

In the last two verses of our text, Jesus concludes his prayer. He proceeds from the concept of the Church Militant to the Church Triumphant; that is, from faith to glory. Also herein, Jesus addresses his “righteous Father,” knowing that at the end of time, his good, gracious, and righteous will shall be done. Those who knew the Father through the revelation of Jesus will in the end personally share in the glory and perfect love that is theirs from eternity and into eternity! That, too, includes us.

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for praying for me and all believers. Help me through your Word to be a unifying agent in your church. Reveal in my life the love that you have shown me in your Son. Amen.