

Holy Textures

Meeting Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
Short, easy to use, faith-provoking insights.

John 17:1-11

"The blessing Jesus prays for is: That we may be one as Jesus and God are one. That is, the quality of companionship between Jesus and God is the measure of our companionship with each other. Shortening the quotation to: That all may be one; misquotes the verse as it omits the defining quality of the oneness to which we are called."

Listed on The Text This Week, www.textweek.com: Contemporary Commentary, Studies, and Exegesis for the Gospel reading.

Year A

Season of Easter

Easter 7

Read the passage at the bottom of this post: [John 17:1-11, The Message](#) or [John 17:1-11, The New Revised Standard Version \(NRSV\)](#).

Click here, [John 17:1-11](#), for an easy to print or email Adobe PDF version of this note.

Sermon by the [Rev. Dr. George Hermanson](#), ""

Chapter 17 concludes the long, final speech of Jesus to his followers that began way back in Chapter 13:

- **Verses 1-8** constitute the beginning of a prayer in which Jesus reiterates his relationship with, authority received from, and activities for God.
- **Verses 9-19** are prayers on behalf of Jesus' followers.
- **Verses 20-26** are prayers on behalf of those who will become followers.

As always with John, we must allow the circling repetition and non-sequiturs to be like the swirling eddies of a whirl pool. We don't try to manage them; try to make them line up; make them be sequential and logical. We relax in them; let them swirl around us; we soak in them; we let them become an environment in which we experience the true life that comes from Jesus.

John wants us the **SEE** Jesus, and to see Jesus is to see the one who sent him; is to see the glory of the one who sent him; is to see the honour / majesty / purpose / worth of the one who sent him; and not just sent him; but who is **IN** him.

This is eternal life. To see in Jesus the source of true life; the only true God. This revelation of glory, of the presence of God, is the work of Jesus.

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Verse 6. Notice that those who belong to Jesus were **NOT** "converted" by him. They already belonged to God and God gave them to Jesus. The relationship is not created by Jesus. The relationship may be realized; may be enhanced; may grow; but it is not created - it is a given.

This is good news. It is the news that our relationship with God is given by God as the starting point, not an end point.

It is also hard news, because it means that **WE** do not get to choose who God is in relationship with; and that means that if we want to be in relationship with God, we must also be in relationship with those whom God has already chosen to be in relationship with - whether we like them or not; whether we agree with God's choices or not.

How can we love these persons whom God has chosen who may be our enemies and possibly also our neighbours **as Jesus loves me?** Ouch.

Verses 7 and 8. Notice again that Jesus gives what he has received from God, and that his followers receive what Jesus has given them. They "know in truth" because God's word - which they have received from Jesus - **IS** true.

Verses 9 to 11. "No longer in the world" cannot be understood literally. The disciples are now "in" Jesus. They are bonded with him; they abide in him. They are also still "in" the world, but in addition, they are now also embedded in the reality of Jesus. That they also are in the world is the reason for their needing protection.

And notice that - as with other blessings - there is a larger purpose for being protected. We are protected **so that** we may be one as Jesus and God are one.

And notice too, the grace is "that we may be one **as Jesus and God are one.**"

That is, the quality of companionship between Jesus and God is the measure of our companionship. Shortening the quotation to "that all may be one," misquotes the verse as it omits the defining quality of the oneness to which we are called.

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Historical background information in this post is drawn primarily from Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John, see link below, pages 244-248.

* [Link to Amazon.com Bibliography for Bruce Malina, et. al.](#), Social Science Commentary on ... The Synoptic Gospels; The Gospel of John; The Book of Acts; The Letters of Paul; The Book of Revelation; and others.

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John 17:1-11 (NRSV)

¹ 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.

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John 17:1-11 (The Message)

¹ Jesus said these things. Then, raising his eyes in prayer, he said:

Father, it's time.

Display the bright splendor of your Son

So the Son in turn may show your bright splendor.

² You put him in charge of everything human

So he might give real and eternal life to all in his charge.

³ And this is the real and eternal life:

That they know you,

The one and only true God,

And Jesus Christ, whom you sent.

⁴ I glorified you on earth

By completing down to the last detail

What you assigned me to do.

⁵ And now, Father, glorify me with your very own splendor,

The very splendor I had in your presence

Before there was a world.

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- ⁶ I spelled out your character in detail
To the men and women you gave me.
They were yours in the first place;
Then you gave them to me,
And they have now done what you said.
- ⁷ They know now, beyond the shadow of a doubt,
That everything you gave me is firsthand from you,
- ⁸ For the message you gave me,
I gave them;
And they took it, and were convinced
That I came from you.
They believed that you sent me.
- ⁹ I pray for them.
I'm not praying for the God-rejecting world
But for those you gave me,
For they are yours by right.
- ¹⁰ Everything mine is yours, and yours mine,
And my life is on display in them.
- ¹¹ For I'm no longer going to be visible in the world;
They'll continue in the world
While I return to you.
Holy Father, guard them as they pursue this life
That you conferred as a gift through me,
So they can be one heart and mind
As we are one heart and mind.

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