

Daily Discipleship

Seventh Sunday of Easter (A) – John 17:1-11

Discipleship: *An Instrument of Wisdom*

Focus Question: *This week how might you be an instrument of wisdom?*

word of life

“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.” John 17:11 (NRSV)

Read John 17:1-11

Jesus prays throughout his life, but the prayers he offers at the end of his life are particularly noteworthy. The prayer at the Garden of Gethsemane following his last supper with his disciples is offered as he waits for Judas to betray him and the guards to arrest him. His prayer in the garden is, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.” (Matthew 26:39 NRSV. See Luke 22:39-42; Mark 14:32-36)

The Gospel of John does not include the scene of the Garden of Gethsemane. Some Biblical scholars understand the prayer in John 17 to be parallel to the one Jesus prays at Gethsemane.

1. *Why pay attention to the final prayer of Jesus?*
2. *How do you explain the omission of the Garden of Gethsemane scene from the Gospel of John?*

The prayer in John 17 continues the theme found throughout the Gospel of John of the glory of Jesus. We read in the first chapter of John, “And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14 NRSV)

Jesus prays for glory, but not in a selfish way. Jesus knows his death will point back to God and give God all glory. His death will complete and fulfill God’s glory so that people may know God. The prayer of Jesus for glory is in actuality a prayer for his disciples.

3. *Why do you believe Jesus is praying for glory?*
4. *Does this prayer for glory fit your understanding of a humble Jesus?*
5. *How might his death be perceived as glorious?*

The prayer of Jesus reflects a unity between the Father and the Son. Jesus confirms his mission of working with the people whom God gave to him. Jesus not only cares and protects his followers, but Jesus also makes an intentional connection between his disciples and his Father.

Jesus prays not on behalf of strangers or those who do not believe. The petition is for those whom God already knows. Jesus returns to God what was first claimed by God.

6. *What might those disciples have been thinking as they overheard this prayer?*
7. *What questions do you have about this prayer?*

Jesus knows he is departing, but does not want to leave these disciples alone or without a protector. He desires the disciples to be connected to God just as Jesus is connected. This is a prayer for unity.

8. *What might it be like to be connected with God as Jesus was connected to God?*
9. *What might it feel like for you to have such unity?*

word among us

Christian had spent hours and hours throwing a baseball to his son. In the beginning, his son had difficulty focusing on the ball. Instead, the boy would be distracted by butterflies and bugs. Christian had little hope his son would share his own love for the game. But around the age of twelve, Christian's son entered a zone. He lived and breathed baseball. Christian beamed at his son's first home run and later, at his first no-hitter. As people patted Christian on his back, he shook his head and pointed to his son.

1. *Describe the joy when a parent watches his or her child do something well.*
2. *How do you explain parents who sacrifice so that their children can succeed?*
3. *Can it become unhealthy for a parent to get glory through a child's successes? How so?*

Jesus prayed for glory, but only so that it would help his disciples to believe and know God. Glory came to Jesus, but not in a typical way. He did not hit a home run, win a lottery, or find success through popularity. His glory came through his crucifixion, followed by resurrection. Death on a cross is not the expected path towards glory. It is no wonder his disciples were baffled and overwhelmed by the events following his last supper with them.

4. *How do you define "glory"?*
5. *What in your life gives God glory?*
6. *What about your church gives God glory?*

The prayer by Jesus is not a selfish prayer, but provides an insight into the heart and wisdom of Jesus. He was able to see the big picture despite his approaching sacrificial death. This wisdom of Jesus is rooted in his connectedness to God.

Not all people gain in wisdom as they age. Wisdom does increase with the number of gray hairs on the head. Now and then, a child is described as wise beyond his or her years.

7. *How do you define "wisdom"?*
8. *How have you grown in wisdom over the years?*

Throughout the season of Easter, *Daily Discipleship* has included the Serenity Prayer as part of its reflection. This prayer concludes with a petition for wisdom to make wise choices. We can be tempted after those things which give us glory. It is so easy to get caught up in ourselves and our path to self-glorification. Jesus in his prayer of John 17 reminds us to redirect our energy towards those things which gives God glory.

9. *Where in your life do you need wisdom?*
10. *What is God calling you to change?*

Prayer

Gracious God, give me wisdom to know the difference between those things which I cannot change and that worth investing energy to change. Guide me in ways to daily give you glory.
Amen

Dig Deeper

Psalm 68:1-10

last word

Pray each day the Serenity Prayer:
God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can,
and wisdom to know the difference.



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