

January 24, 2021

“Called for the World’s Belief”
Lesson 4 of Unit

John 17:14-24

Intro

Today’s passage is found only in the Gospel of John. It is part of the prayer Jesus prays while in the Garden of Gethsemane just prior to his arrest, trial, and crucifixion. Interestingly, the other three Gospels record Jesus’ prayer asking to be spared the necessity of the crucifixion; John’s Gospel instead focuses on Jesus’ prayer for His disciples. In 17:1-13, Jesus has noted that His mission would continue through these disciples, so He asks God to equip them to be able to continue in that work.

Read John 17:14-24

1. vs. 14: The Word and the World

In 17:6-8, Jesus says that He gave them the words given to Him by the Father
He says that the “received them”, which means understanding / application
One of the things they received was the knowledge that Jesus is the Son of God
The World: Receiving and applying these words causes a reaction
The world hates the disciples because they are of God
Jesus and those who follow Him have been persecuted already in John
Jesus’ life has been threatened (John 7:1, 7:30, 8:58-59)
The parents of the man who was healed of blindness by Jesus are threatened
with expulsion from the synagogue if they support Jesus
Persecution becomes common after Acts 8
The disciples are “not of the world anymore” because they have been born again
They follow God’s values and perspectives, not the worlds
As citizens of heaven now, they are foreigners in a hostile world

2. vs. 15: Jesus’ prayer for them is also His prayer / expectation of us

Not taken out of the world, but protected from the Evil One
That protection is not usually physical, but definitely spiritual
The Holy Spirit guards our hearts and minds if we seek Christ continually

3. vs. 16: Jesus repeats the last part of vs. 14 “They are not of the world, even as I am not of it”

Repetition is emphasis.
Followers of Christ are not of this world; they are strangers passing through
If this world isn’t home to Christians, that implies it’s Satan’s territory
Following Christ makes this a place we don’t belong to

4. vs. 17: Jesus asks the Father to “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth”

A definition of *sanctify* from Hendriksen’s Commentary on John: “to set apart from the world by actual sanctification of life, so that in heart and mind, in thought, words, and deeds, one begins to live more and more in accordance with the law of God.”
Jesus has asked for them to be protected from Satan, and now asks for them to be made holy as well

Jesus is “the way, the truth, and the life”, but He is about to leave them
The words of God He spoke to them must now be the truth they live by

5. vs. 18: Jesus is talking about Senders and the Sent

God sent Jesus, and now Jesus sends the disciples

Jesus was Sent by God, and the disciples are sent by Jesus

Both Jesus and the disciples are preaching the same message: redemption is in Jesus alone

Being sent by Jesus gives the disciples authority

Rejecting them is like rejecting Jesus (see Luke 9:1-6, 2 Cor. 1:1, 5:20)

6. vs. 19: Jesus is already holy (“sanctified”); so he means something else about Himself here

He is “sanctifying” Himself in terms of holy living as an example to the disciples

If they follow His example, they too will be “sanctified”, holy in their living

7. vs. 20: Jesus asks the Father for favor beyond and through the 12

He prays while on the earth for those (us) who will believe at some point in the future

He knows that others will come to faith because of the disciples’ preaching

He prays for us before we have ever come to faith in Him

8. vs.21: A very important comparison / connection is being made here

Jesus says that He is in the Father, and the Father is in Him

This is talking about more than their aspects of the Godhead, though it’s part of it
Jesus wants His disciples to be “one” in the same way Jesus and the Father are “one”

The “one” here must be more than spirit, as we can’t be “one” with Jesus and God
in that way while we are here on earth.

The “one” must be one in mind, one in effort, one in purpose

We must think the way God thinks, act as He acts, do what He wants done

If we do these things, we will be “one”, unified, and together with Jesus and God

Loving one another is at the core of what will help us in this effort

Jesus’ purpose in praying this is seen at the end of the verse

“That the world may believe you have sent me”

If Jesus’ impact on our life makes us truly love one another, have the same mind
and concerns, that will draw others to Him through our lives

This is what Jesus is praying for

9. vs. 22: The meaning of the phrase “the glory you gave me” is not universally agreed upon by scholars

Some say it means God’s divine nature and attributes

Could be, but we know we can’t be exactly like God (all-knowing, etc)

Some say it means “having the Son in them”

Could be, but that doesn’t seem possible given that last part of the verse “that you
gave me”: God didn’t give Jesus to Jesus. He always was.

Some say it means salvation, pardon, forgiveness

Could be, but again, God didn’t give those things to Jesus

The best connection I found was multiple commentaries that referred to this as the giving of the Holy Spirit. Jesus gives the disciples the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and their lives demonstrated holy living, particularly a unity of spirit, which vs. 20-21 deal with. Since those verse come just before this one, unity seems to be these connecting thread for the context. This seems especially likely given the last words of vs. 22, “that they may be one as we are one.”

vs. 23: This verse also carried the idea of the value and importance of unity in those who follow Jesus. If followers have “complete unity”, the world will notice, know that Jesus is from God, and be drawn to him through the way we love each other.

10. vs. 24: The word translated as “want” or “will” or “desire” all say the same thing
Jesus wants fervently for us to be with Him
He wants us to see Him in His glory, as He truly exists
He wants us to see how close He is to the Father, how much He is loved

Application: In this passage, Jesus stresses His oneness with the Father. That oneness meant that they shared the same goal, the same plans, the same purpose. And Jesus used that relationship as a model for how His followers should relate to one another. We are to be so united, so connected, to both Christ and one another that we share the same goals, the same plans, the same purpose—the same love.

If we continue to strive for this kind of relationship with one another, Jesus says the world will take notice and be draw to Him. This is essentially another form of witnessing—our lives show others what we believe.

Prayer: Father God, help us to love one another the way that you love us, so that the world can see you through how we love and connect to each other. May our lives be used as a witness to draw others to You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.