

John 17:6-11

Have you ever paused to consider the ground you're standing on? Ever been on or fallen from a shaky perch like a ladder or roof, or walked on a crumbly path or slippery mud or ice? In reference to the Christian faith and your place in it, what solid reason, what warrant do you have for believing the things you believe and trust in? Who and what under-girds and grounds you and your faith in God? Is the Christian project a reliable path for you? Did you ever consider that the basis for the entirety of all that really matters rests on the prayer of one person, Jesus? And the confidence of this prayer sits squarely on the facts of six short verses in John 17? How seemingly narrow, yet perfectly strong, are these facts.

Here's where we're going
 today

Quick flight, bird's-eye view of John 17			
The 3 Great Words in John 17		The 4 Great Doctrines in John 17	
Glory	vv1-5	Salvation	vv1-5
Kept	vv6-19	Preservation	vv11-16
One	vv20-26	Sanctification	vv17-19
		Glorification	vv20-26

The need for Jesus' prayer for the disciples, and for us!

Jesus prayed for His disciples *before* He chose them (Luke 6:12), *during* His ministry (John 6:15), at the *end* of His ministry (Luke 22:32) & *here* (John 17:6-19), and *later in heaven* (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25).

Most of all, in view of their weaknesses and the difficult, soul-sapping world that they would face, they were in great need of God's grace to sustain them in the future. Here in our passage it becomes apparent that it was **God's keeping power**, rather than their strength, that made Jesus confident as He prayed for them. And that is good news for us!

V6, Jesus viewed these disciples as those ("the men") **whom the Father had given to Him** "out of the world" (cf. 6:37; 15:19; Ps. 22:22), *not as those who had chosen to follow Him*.

Key Point: All true following of Christ is subsequent to the actions of the Father and Son.

This viewpoint accounts for Jesus' confidence as He anticipated their future. "They" had belonged to the Father ("were Yours"), and the Father would therefore protect them. Jesus had revealed God ("manifested Your name") to them. The "name" of God summarizes everything about Him (cf. Exod. 3:13-15; Isa. 52:6). Manifesting the name of God to people means revealing His essential nature to them. The Eleven had "kept" God's "word" by believing on and following Jesus as He revealed the Father, even though they were not consistently obedient.

V7-8, The amount of things they would need to learn vastly outweighed what they already knew and accepted, but they did believe/were convinced that Jesus was God incarnate,

sent from God the Father. In fact, Jesus did and said nothing in his ministry that was not from and a revelation of the Father Himself!

V8, In His ministry and reliance on the Father (in the realm of the Spirit), the ongoing communication “the words” (*rhemata*), Jesus faithfully relayed in word and action to the disciples, so that got a clear picture of God! They did not yet comprehend everything, yet they were convinced of the true and only source of the sending of the Son into the world: The Father. *It is this conviction, their conviction, that is the foundation on which you and I stand. Think of how narrow, yet how unshakably solid is our path!*

V9-10, Because the Eleven had believed on Him, Jesus made His request for them, "not" for "the world". Observe the distinction here! *Jesus did not pray for the world here, because the world has set itself outside the purposes of the triune Godhead.*

Where is the focus of prayer in the NT?

Where should be the focus of our prayers? In the NASB NT there are around 110 references to prayer. Yet I can find just a *tiny handful* (about 5%) of clear examples in the NT of someone praying explicitly or implicitly for the unsaved:

- Luke 6:12 (parallel Matt 5:44), 23:34
- Mark 9:29 (Parallel Matthew 17:21)
- Romans 10:1
- John 17:11--->20,21 (This prayer is for the unity of the saints so that the world would believe that The Father sent the Son into the world.)



The remainder of prayer in the NT (95%) covers a range of topics from worship and praise to, or asking forgiveness of God, supplications/requests to God, prayer for fellow believers for good opportunity for gospel preaching, faithfulness to share the gospel, for spiritual power, for spiritual growth and godliness and the progress of love and for sound morals. There is encouragement for prayer for oneself, and even more for fellow believers. And there is a small handful of times for the health and welfare of fellow believers. Where should our focus in prayer be?

Continued... Those who belong to the Father belong equally to the Son. (and the Spirit). Thus Jesus concern for the Eleven was equal to the Father's concern, even though their function was different (the one Sent, the other was Sent). This is another claim of equality with the Father. Jesus had "been glorified" through the faith of the Eleven, but He received no glory from "the world."

v11a, Jesus explained that He was praying for these disciples because He was about to depart from them ("I am no longer in the world"), and return to the Father ("I come to You"). They needed the Father's added and especial grace, because they would no longer have the Son's visible, encouraging presence with them as they lived in the hostile world.