

Bible Study Guide: Week of 5-23-2022

1. Read through the passage below
2. Read my notes and commentary
3. Read the questions at the end and ponder or discuss with others

Pastor Andrew

John 17:20-26

²⁰"I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²²The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, ²³I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

²⁴Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵"Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

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This passage forms a key part of Jesus' so-called "high priestly prayer" within his farewell discourse in the Gospel of John. Here Jesus prays not only for the disciples gathered there with him, but also for all future disciples, including us. Jesus prays for them to be "one." This oneness involves unity among those who follow Jesus, but it also involves oneness with Jesus and the Father. Those who believe in Jesus are to be "in" him and the Father in the same way that the Father is in Jesus and Jesus is in the Father. All of this unity, oneness, and mutual "indwelling" will have the result that the world will believe that the Father sent Jesus. That is, the unity among Jesus' followers and the oneness they share with the Father and Son will be a witness to the world to the identity and mission of Jesus. In a way, Jesus is handing on his revelatory mission—to make God known—to the disciples who will continue this work after his death, resurrection, and return to the Father. The community of disciples, then, becomes the primary way that the glory of God is to be revealed in Jesus' bodily absence. The love of God will also be evident in the life the disciples will live after Jesus' return to the Father.

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Jesus' desire for those whom the Father has given to him to be with him where he is and to see his glory recalls the words of Jesus from John 14. Jesus says that the glory that the Father has given him was given to him because the Father loved Jesus "before the conception of the world." This "world" is not just referring to an ordered system or a planet, but specifically to those who do not know God through the revelation Jesus came to make manifest. Once again, Jesus is claiming to give that which he and the Father share to those whom he has called to follow him.

Discussion/Reflection Questions:

- 1. Does it change the way you hear this prayer of Jesus to imagine him praying for you specifically as one of “those who will come to believe through their word?”**
- 2. What do you think Jesus means by his “glory?” How do we see and reveal this glory today?**
- 3. What do you think Jesus means by saying that he has “made his name known” to the disciples? Why is this important?**