

# THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

## THE LESSON: JOHN 17

John's Gospel devotes five whole chapters to a few hours that passed on one intense evening, while Jesus was observing the Passover with his disciples in the upper room. It was his last night, just before he was arrested to be crucified, and some of his most revealing teaching is given to us in these chapters.

The passage begins with Jesus washing his disciples' feet, a moving gesture of humility and service, and an example to them of how they also ought to love and serve one another. He explains that he is about to go away to the Father, but that he will send the Holy Spirit to them.

This "farewell discourse", as it is sometimes called, closes with Jesus saying: "Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." (16:32-33)

These words are followed by what is sometimes called the "high priestly prayer", the longest recorded prayer of Jesus, and one in which he prays for all of his disciples, including "those who will believe" in him "through their word" – that's us!

## AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each day, set aside some time to contemplatively pray with these phrases, lifted from the high priestly prayer of Christ. You may choose to pray the personal version ("I am") or the collective version ("we are"). Spend some time in silence, considering the rich meaning of each phrase, and remembering that Jesus prayed these things for us.

Father, I am yours.

Father, keep me in your name.

Father, do not take me out of the world, but keep me from the evil one.

Father, sanctify me in the truth of your word.

Father, let your Church be one.

Father, let me come to be with Jesus, where you are.

Father, we are yours.

Father, keep us in your name.

Father, do not take us out of the world, but keep us from the evil one.

Father, sanctify us in the truth of your word.

Father, let us be one.

Father, let us come to be with Jesus, where you are.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this prayer, pausing to reflect after each phrase.

*We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate us with thy Holy Spirit, to receive us for thine own children by adoption, and to make us members of thy holy Church. Grant that, being now born again, and made heirs of everlasting salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, we may continue thy servants, and attain thy promises; through the same Lord Jesus Christ thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the same Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.* (PRAYER AT A BAPTISM, BCP PAGE 539)

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## JOHN 17: **THEY ARE YOURS... KEEP THEM...**

<sup>1</sup> When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come...

<sup>6</sup> “I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. <sup>7</sup> Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. <sup>8</sup> For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. <sup>9</sup> I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. <sup>10</sup> All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. <sup>11</sup> And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one... <sup>14</sup> I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>15</sup> I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

<sup>20</sup> “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, <sup>21</sup> that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup> The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. <sup>24</sup> Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am...”