

Before I Leave...

Scripture Reading — John 17:6-19

“[Father,] I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that [my disciples] may have the full measure of my joy within them.” — John 17:13

When my wife and I leave our young children with a babysitter, the parting instructions are very important. We discuss what the kids can have for a snack, what games they play, and what the bedtime routine is. The main point, of course, is that everyone can have a good time.

Jesus’ words offer a kind of “parting instruction” for his followers. Among the last things Jesus did while he was on this earth was to pray that his followers might continue to believe in him, be protected from the powers of evil, and bring glory to the Father. And he prayed these things so that his followers would have complete joy.

As we mark Jesus’ ascension tomorrow, this prayer has continuing significance for us. We are among those whom the Father gave to Jesus, the disciples who would remain in the world after he left. Even though he is no longer physically present on earth, we hear Jesus’ parting desire for continued faith and protection for us.

And it’s important to hear his desire for our joy. Though following Christ may be difficult at times, that cannot snuff out the joy of having full life with him.

May you hear Jesus’ prayer today as a prayer for you, and for all whom he calls to be witnesses to his complete joy.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for praying for us, and for all whom the Father calls to you. Protect us, sustain our faith, and bring us joy until you return to live with us forever. Amen.

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Printed on August 15, 2020

