

At the end of John 16 and into the beginning of chapter 17, Jesus declares His confidence in the Father's presence despite the soon coming abandonment of His disciples. Three things stand out in these verses that highlight the Son's relationship to the Father.

1. The disciples "finally" believe that Christ came from the Father.

They say to Him in verse 20, ***"...we believe that You came forth from God."*** Jesus has been telling them all along that He is one with the Father; that He came to do the works of the Father; and to speak the words of the Father. They speak as if they've arrived at the settled conviction that Jesus is the Son of the Father - just as He's been saying all along. However, within a few short hours, they're going to abandon Him. Suffice it to say, their belief in Christ is anything but fully mature.

2. Jesus declares His confidence in the Father's presence even though His disciples will forsake Him.

He tells them plainly that they will all be scattered. In short, they will be willing to abandon Him to save their own lives. Jesus tells them this is coming, but He's not worried about it. He draws an unshakable confidence and composure from the unchanging fact of the Father's presence with Him.

The disciples will forsake Him - but the Father will remain with Him. This is the same confidence we can have as followers of Christ. Hebrews 13:5, ***"For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'"*** This is an echo of what God spoke to Joshua as well, ***"Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."*** (Joshua 1:9). The hour is coming when Christ is going to be forsaken by the Father, but this is so that you and I never will be!

Notice how Jesus predicts their betrayal of Him and then speaks words of peace to them! Even though they're going to violate their relationship with Him, He's faithful to them. Never forget that our salvation is rooted in God's faithfulness - not ours.

3. Jesus prays to the Father and focuses on their relationship in eternity.

As we enter into chapter 17, we see Jesus praying what is known as His high priestly prayer. In this beginning part of His prayer, Jesus reflects on His eternal relationship with the Father. See the glory that Jesus had with His Father before time (verse 5). This glory comes from Christ's equality and oneness with the Father. As God, Jesus is eternal and infinitely holy and glorious. He shares all the same attributes as the Father and the Spirit. (John 16:29-17:5)

Also notice the people “given” to Christ from His Father. These are the elect. Scripture says they are chosen before time and exchanged between the Father and Son. The Father “gives” these people to His Son to redeem. In turn, Christ lays down His life to claim them and wash away their sins. Then, Jesus is able to present these redeemed believers back to His Father and say, “Mission accomplished!”

See the pattern in verse 2 - Jesus gives eternal life to as many as the Father has given Him. This eternal life is defined in verse 3. It's knowing God. Eternal life is not merely unending existence. It's life, joy, love, light, and goodness - all in infinite measure - that come from knowing, loving, and worshipping God forever. To know God is to live forever.

This is a covenantal love. Only those who are bought with the blood of Christ know God in this intimate manner. All humans have a knowledge of God written on their hearts. Unregenerate people suppress this truth and war against it (Romans 1:18-23). But only those for whom Christ died can know God in this redeemed covenant relationship. (Also see John 6:37-40, 44-45)