

Jesus Prays for His Church
John 17:20-26
Jesus Prays Series

Today we come to our 3rd and Final look at Jesus' Prayer here in John 17.

- A) Seen V. 1-5 He prays for Himself
V. 6-19 He prays for His Disciples
V. 20-26 He prays for His Church

B) Those who would come to Him from the influence and the Ministry of His Disciples.

Text:

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. 24 'Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. 26 And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

PRAY

The Focus of this Prayer is that of UNITY!

A) It seems obvious that Jesus prayed this way for the Church that was to come-
He knew **UNITY IS NOT – Our Natural tendency**

B) He knows that in our flesh there is this natural tendency in our flesh toward DIVISION.

1) He watched it first hand – in his 12 disciples – who often are seen – arguing – jockeying – comparing

C) Jesus knew there would be a natural tendency in His body – toward division – **HARD TO GET ALONG.**

D) Story: man shipped wrecked Island – 8yrs - Finally rescued – 3 huts on the beach.

1) My House - My Church – Church I used to go to

E) We don't even need other people to have conflict

1) We see it in ourselves

Let's consider for a moment all the things that can be a challenge to our being in Unity.

#1 Nationalities – Revelation 5 – Scene around the throne – Singing a new Song

"You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth." Revelation 5:9-10

The very fact that the body of Christ is made up from people from all over the world – great Diversity

A) It can be a challenge to maintain unity amongst all of that Diversity.

B) If we focus on the Diversity it can be a challenge to our Unity.

1) Cultural challenges – way people worship – Africa not odd for a service to last 3 hrs

C) People worship different according to culture

1) Africa – Pastors during worship – Dance around the room –

D) If Steve and I did that – horrified – rightly so – **NO RHYTHM.**

Language barriers can make unity difficult

A) Travel – you realize **TWO THINGS** – the body of Christ is **REALLY BIG** – also really small.

B) Put aside the differences and realize – we are connected in Christ – Worship – awesome.

C) But - Our nationalities can be a challenge to unity.

#2 Our Backgrounds:

A)The way you were brought up shapes the way that you look at things – look at others.

B)That can affect our outlook of the body of Christ.

#3 Personalities

A)The body of Christ is made up of different personalities – Personality conflicts

B)Extroverts – some are introverts

C)Sometimes – People get on your nerves

1)We all have people we naturally gravitate towards.

D)Sometimes we can think that the body of Christ would be awesome – if everyone was like me!

1)NOT REALLY – SO BORING

E)All the different personalities that make the body of Christ – so beautiful

1)Different personalities can be a challenge to unity

Then there is that which affects every single one of us - #4 SIN- ALL SINNERS –

A)None of us is perfect – We do things and we say things – give looks – all a part of our sinful nature.

B)Church is one big Dysfunctional family –

1)True – full of imperfect people

C)Our pride gets in the way – our flesh is UGLY

D)AND – IT CAUSES PROBLEMS –

1)When that is the focus – Destroys unity easily.

Bill MacDonald a Christian Pastor and author who has gone home to be with Jesus.

“There is enough flesh in any one of us to wreck any local church or work of God.” Bill MacDonald

A)So True – We constantly need to Crucify our flesh!

B)Those are all things that can be a challenge to Unity!

How do we keep the Unity amidst such Diversity?

A)#1 Realize that The oneness of believers is a Spiritual oneness!

V.20 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us.

B)Notice that INDWELLING is a Key to Christian unity! – The word in As you father are in me

1)I in you – they would be one IN US.

C)The Father Dwells in Jesus – Jesus Dwells in the Father –

1)Jesus dwells in us by the Holy Spirit.

D)Amazing thought – The Holy Spirit – Lives inside of all of us. – The moment we get saved

1)Christ is in every believer! -

E)There is a unity that results because of a Common Spirit – the Holy Spirit – Common Nature

Actually we have two common Natures.

A)A sin nature – a nature that is given toward flesh and self –

B)We also have a new Nature – Born of the Spirit

1)Holy Spirit resides in us

C) “Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the Flesh.” – Galatians 5:16

Oneness occurs as we get closer to God!

A)Different guitars – different sounds - Some have a deep rich tone – others light and bright

B)Bass guitars – electric guitars

C)10 Guitarist on the stage – the thing that is going to make them sound great – not horrible

1)All tuned to the same tuning fork - - same key

D)That is the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers – we get closer to God – Thru His Word

1)Tuned into His spirit – there is a unity that occurs in the body of Christ.

“The Love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.” – Romans 5:5

A)The spirit of God is always moving us in the direction of love

B) “And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.”

1 Peter 4:8

C)Interesting – Above all things

1)Underscores the significance – this has in the heart of our Lord.

D)1 Corinthians 13 – All gifts – no love – gong

1)Like Gong Show.

“And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover - little tiny sins? – No - love will cover a multitude of sins.”

A)I don’t like that phrase sometimes – a multitude of sins.

B)Hard to imagine – loving someone who has sinned against you greatly or hurt you deeply.

C)Our flesh wants to hold grudges - our flesh wants vengeance – our flesh wants to lash out.

1)Don’t want to think about the Love of Jesus and the sacrifice of Jesus covering that –

D)But it does – Sometimes when we have been really hurt by someone – they have confessed – repented

1)We are reluctant to forgive them – It has nothing to do with them –

2)Problem is our hearts – unwillingness to let the Holy Spirit work His love into us.

We all have Scars – Hurts –

A)Scar – will either be the symbol that defines you – Paranoid – bitter – unforgiving

B)Or it will be the symbol of the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

1) “This should have ruined me..... but

C) There is a Oneness of Spiritual – Christ dwelling in every believer by His Spirit –

1)Moving us toward Love

#2 Oneness because of Redemption

A)And Every believer is in Christ

B)Born again – two miracles – Christ comes to live in you by His Spirit

C)2nd Is that you are placed in Christ –

1)Covered by the Blood of Jesus

D)Positionally righteous – How the father sees you.

E)We need to learn to see each other that way!

See Jesus in each other

A)Paul’s profound statement really helped me in this area - 2 Corinthians 5 – talking about our new birth

B)How we are all a new Creation in Christ – old things have passed away – all things new!

C)Paul made this statement concerning how he chose to see people.

1)2 Corinthians 5:16 **“Therefore we regard no man after the flesh.”**

D)When Paul looked at people he was focused on two things – ARE THEY IN CHRIST – SAVED

1)Or are they not in Christ – not saved.

If Saved: He chose to see them in Christ!

A)Fellow bros/ sisters – Redeemed by the blood
Sinners saved by Grace

C)His focus was not going to be on their Flesh
¹⁷Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

How do we keep the Unity amidst such Diversity?

#1 Spiritual – Holy Spirit indwelling

#2 Redemption – In Christ – covered by His blood

**#3 We chose to Focus on the ways that we are one! – not on our DIVERSITY! – Ephesians 4
TURN THERE**

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, {Worthy – weight – lifestyle would match your calling – Redeemed – indwelt with Holy Spirit.

I beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, {How? ² with all lowliness

and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,³ endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

{Endeavoring = striving – using energy – requires focus {doesn't just happen

Reminds us of the unity that already exists

⁴ *There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

The way that we maintain the UNITY that already exists is by focusing/ rejoicing in the ways that we are ALREADY one – instead of the Diversity!

A) Comes with maturity. THERE IS ONE BODY

B) MANY CHURCHES – ONE TEAM!

C) Many Churches = Many expressions of Faith!
TURN BACK TO JOHN 17

A pile of lumber in a lumber yard is not unified

A) What unifies them is when they are used to build a house.

B) Focus on the house as a whole – not the individual pieces –

1) Wood used to make the roof – Vaulted ceilings – admire that - - Cool

C) Wood used to make a front porch – Awesome place for sitting –

D) Wood used for Cabinets – Flooring

E) Wood used for a nice beam in the living room

Every expression of the wood – has been used to make the house – glory in the house as a whole.

A) Be silly if someone came in and Saw the big beam in the living room – whole house should look like that

B) No what makes the house beautiful is when we see it as a whole and admire the Diversity.

C) There is great diversity in the body – Diversity means different – NOT BETTER OR BEST.

DIVERSITY OF EXPRESSIONS IN WORSHIP

A) Some more traditional - Organs – Hymns –

B) Others more Lively – Charismatic – emotional

1) Dancing around – yelling – shouting –

C) More middle of the road like – us

1) Pastor Chuck – great there are places for people to go where – get more expressive – dance etc – not here

Here is the problem: Someone from a traditional church comes into ours – Too Crazy –

A) Music is too loud – people standing – arms outstretched – think TOO CHARISMATIC

B) But person who comes from a more Pentecostal church – comes here – think – DEAD!

1) Not Charismatic enough

C) We give churches labels that often times have nothing to do with doctrine –

1) Everything to do with expression - flavor and taste

D) We call one part of the body of Christ – Dead Another part Crazy – based on Flavor.

1) I would think – that grieves the Lord's heart to no end.

E) We need to celebrate admire our differences –
**“In the essentials – Unity –
in non essentials – liberty –
all things Charity.”**

The 4th way that we keep our unity in the midst of our diversity is – Deep Concern for the lost.

A) V.21 **“I pray that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me”**

²³ **“I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”**

Jesus prays for the oneness of His Church – because he knows that unity in the body is a powerful testimony that something is going on.

A) There is so much TENSION in the world – Political – Social – Racial – Economic

B) When the world sees a group of very diverse people from all different – political bents

1) Social backgrounds, racial backgrounds – celebrating together – IT IS MOVING

C) One of the reasons sports is so popular

1) Pay people incredible amounts of money – to throw – hit – shoot – run with a little ball – UNIFIES US.

D) But it is fleeting – {curtained around – a game united in something

1) Game is over and we go back to our individuality

What Jesus has done is so much better – Lasting.

A) Not just celebrating something – but our lives are being transformed – genuinely love someone – never on your own.

B) People sitting here – Cracks me up

There is a quality of life that comes out of this unity and when people see it they are drawn to it.

A) Equally turned off when they don't see it

B) Warren Wiersbe wrote about a woman in his church – loved Jesus – faithful – husband not saved.

1) She would invite him often – he never came.

C) **Wiersbe wrote:** Later I found out why – The man worked with two professing Christians –

1) All these two men every did was talk negatively about other Christians –

D) It so disgusted him that he wanted no part of Christianity or Church because of it.

1) Think about the price that wife paid because of those two men – attitudes about the body of Christ

E) Teenagers who have been affected the same way by listening to their parents put down the church

Jesus said they will **Know you are My disciples by your Love!!!!!!**

A) **OUR LOVE for EACH OTHER - Not just love for each other – but it is a genuine love for the Lost -**

B) Evangelism brings us together –

C) Harvest crusade - 700 churches participated – all different denominations -

1) 100,000 attendance – 6,500 people RESPONDED

Listen we need to quit our squabbling and bickering with other believers – People are going to hell.

A) People try to bait me – conversations about other churches - NOT GOING THERE –

❖ **Refuse to get caught up IN that**

B) DON'T CUT DOWN A TREE BEARING FRUIT

C) Friends in different churches – we don't agree on everything doctrinally – **Methodology is different**

1) We agree on this – We are here to reach a world that is lost - Celebrate each other.

D) Same team – Admire our individual strengths – Admire the things about them – reminds me of Jesus

Oneness is maintained when we recognize

❖ **Spiritual connection – Christ is in us.**

❖ **Focus on Redemption – We are in Christ**

❖ **Focus on our oneness – instead of Diversity**

❖ **Hearts break for the lost –**

Calvary Vista is a Place:

Love Jesus – UP-REACH

Learning to love each other – IN-REACH

Love and heart for the Lost – OUT-REACH