

## **The Real Lord's Prayer, part 3**

(John 17:20-26)

(preached 8/25/19; Pine Grove BC Sun AM)

### **Introduction**

Take your Bibles and turn to John 17.

This morning, we will finish our examination of the greatest prayer ever prayed on earth.

This prayer takes up an entire chapter of the Bible as all of John 17 is Jesus' prayer to His Father in the hours before his crucifixion.

A prayer that covers 26 verses, but reveals 100s of truths.

A prayer that took a few minutes to pray but would require many months to grasp the glory of it.

Well, we have spent 3 weeks in it and I feel like I am cutting it way too short, but we must move on..

So today, we leave this sacred chapter by looking at the end of Jesus' prayer to the Father..

Let me read the end to us beginning in John 17:20..

***20 “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; 21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may [f]believe that You sent Me.***

***22 The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; 23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected [g]in unity, so that the world may [h]know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. 24 Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.***

***25 “O righteous Father, [i]although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; 26 and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”***

Let us pray.

In one of the most famous Peanuts cartoons, Lucy walks into a room and demands that Linus change the TV channel.

Linus replies, “What makes you think that you can walk right in here and take over?”

Lucy answers, “I got five reasons.” She then makes a fist by counting off her 5 fingers.

Then she says, “Individually these 5 fingers are nothing but when I curl them together into a single fist, they form a weapon terrible to behold.”

Immediately, Linus gets up and changes the channel.

He then sits back down and looks at his hand and says, “Why can’t you guys get organized like that?”

Unity is a word tossed around today in the world.

Our own country is called the United States of America, but we don’t feel very united these days.

Someone said recently that we were more like the UNTIED States of America.

Everyone seems to want unity, but no one can seem to find it.

In the church, unity is a problem as well.

Just one look at the Christian landscape reveals hundreds of denominations all a result of division rather than unity.

For centuries, preachers have preached sermons about church unity.

I have listened to many of them during my time in the pews.

Sermons where the people are told to just get along and be unified in our families, in our churches, in our friendships..

And often times, the message would be centered around the end of Jesus' prayer in John 17..

The specific focus would be on verse 20-21..

***20 “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; 21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may [f]believe that You sent Me.***

And preachers will look at verse apply that to our lives by telling us that we must all be unified in the church.

People will look at the multiple denominations and say that the church is not obeying Jesus' prayer for unity..

And then will come a sad story of people who sit on opposite sides of the church because they can't get along..

And then service will end with everyone holding hands and weeping because they are disobeying the desire that Christ has for us.

Look, I say that because I have been in those services.

But let me tell you that Jesus' prayer in John 17 is not a prayer for that kind of unity.

Look, it is good for believers to be unified.

I would encourage you to forgive and set aside differences with others.

But that is not what Jesus is praying for here at all.

And how do I know that?

Well, first of all, the prayers of the Son are always answered by the Father.

If Jesus was praying for some sort of outward unity in the church, the church would have never split multiple times over multiple issues over the past 2000 years.

Remember, Jesus prays for your eternal security and you are safe because His prayers are always answered.

So If Jesus prays for unity, we have unity.

And we do have the unity that Jesus prayed for, but it clearly not the unity of outward agreement..

So what unity does Christ pray for here?

If you look at the outline that we have followed through this entire chapter, you will see the 2 kinds of unity that Christ prays for in His followers..

I call it an earthly unity and an eternal unity..

So, let's look at the verses to see what this means for us.

### ***A. An Earthly Unity (20-23)***

As we wind up John 17, we are most likely out in the night air of Jerusalem.

Jesus and the disciples have spent all of Thursday evening together.

Once the sun went down, Jesus gathered with his disciples in an upper room to celebrate the Passover as they had done on previous occasions.

But this Passover was different.

It was the final Passover.

Jesus would transform that Passover supper into the Lord's Supper.

God's deliverance of Israel from bondage in Egypt was worthy of celebrating, but Jesus' deliverance of His people from the bondage of sin was exceedingly greater.

So the old Passover had to go as the Passover prepared to go the cross.

Now the disciples were not fully aware of what the next 24 hours would entail.

Jesus had told them that he was going away.

HE told them that He was going to die in Jerusalem, but they like us, were slow to understand.

But he spent this Thursday night preparing them for what was ahead.

His arrest would shock them and send them running.

His trials and crucifixion would trouble them.

So Jesus spent most of the evening and into the night and next morning teaching them how to find peace and joy and love in the midst of trouble..

He commanded them to love one another despite what was ahead...

Most importantly, he told them that they wouldn't be alone even though he was leaving.

The Holy Spirit would come and comfort them and empower them and equip them to speak the truth to the world..

And all of those things happened in John 13-16, but not in John 17, Jesus ceases teaching these disciples and turns to His Father to pray.

He prays first of all that He would be glorified.

We saw that in verses 1-5, and we agreed that Jesus' perfect life and substitutionary death and miraculous resurrection were grounds for glory.

Christ is deserving of glory and that portion of his prayer was answered once the Father received Him back to heaven in ascension.

And His glory continues today as He sits at the Father's right hand while His enemies are made a footstool for His feet.

After Jesus prayed to be glorified, he prayed for these 11 men around him to be sanctified.

As we said last week, these 11 men would feel hatred and rejection like their Master, but Christ would pray for them to be protected and to be sanctified and to be received to heaven.

And the portion of the prayer was answered and is being answered even today as Jesus prays for us to be kept and protected and sanctified by His word.

You are here today because Christ is keeping you and enabling you to grow in obedience to Him.

But there is one final portion of this prayer in verses 20-26..

And it is a prayer for the church to be unified..

So what is this unity and how is God answering the Son's prayer.

Well, let begin with what we will call an earthly unity..

Look back at verse 20..

***20 "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;***

So far, Jesus has prayed for Himself and for the men around him, but he also looks to the those who will believe in Him in the future..

And note how they will come to believe in Him..

Through the words of the disciples..

These 11 men will preach and spread the gospel and some will write books in the NT.

But all of their teaching will become the foundation of the church..

And many will come to faith in Christ in the years ahead due to the faithfulness of the disciples teaching and preaching.

Jesus knows everyone who will be saved, so he begins to finish up his prayer to the Father with a prayer for all who would believe in Him..

And what is the prayer for all who would believe the gospel?

Verse 21..

***21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may [f]believe that You sent Me. 22 The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; 23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected [g]in unity, so that the world may [h]know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.***

The prayer request of the Son to the Father is that believers in Christ be One, but not as the world thinks of one..

But that believers be one in the manner of the Father and Son being One.

Now, how is that possible?

How can you and I experience oneness in the same way that the Father and Son and Spirit exist as one God?

Well, for starters, we can't experience every aspect of the unity between the Father and the Son simply because we don't understand all there is to know about the Trinity.

But we can see unity in some of the interaction between Father and Son..

One aspect of unity implies submission.

The Son does as the Father commands, yet that doesn't violate their unity.

We often that bosses and employees must fight.

And the reason we think that is because one is in charge and the other submits.

Yet, guess what?

You can still have unity with someone that you submit to.

Think of the military.

There is unity among the soldiers simply because there is submission.

Think of a godly marriage.

There is unity in a marriage even though the wife is commanded to submit to the husband.

Think of the church.

There is the unity even though the church submits to the leadership over it.

Look, we can unity can have unity as believers as we submit to one another in the same way that the Son submits to the Father.

Another aspect of unity that Christ prays for here is unity of purpose in those who are saved.

The Son and the Father and the Spirit are one in purpose.

They never contradict.

They never compete.

Believers are to be united in purpose.

We are one the same mission, - to take the gospel to the world and make disciples of all the nations.

We are on the same mission, - to worship and love the One true God and make His name great in the world.

One final aspect of unity among the Father and Son is love.

The Triune God is united in love.

The Father loves the Son.

The Son loves the Spirit.

The Spirit loves the Father.

The same must be true for us as believers.

If we desire unity like the what the Father and the Son experience, we must love one another with the same love.

And look, this prayer request has been and is constantly being answered by the Father.

The church has survived because there has been unity in submission, unity in purpose, and unity in love.

In a sense, the church as an organization was doomed from the start.

It began with a group of Jewish believers who were orphaned by their families because they believed in Christ as the Jewish Messiah.

They had no money.

No real organization.

No real plans.

On top of that, the church has been made up of people who had little in common.

Men and women of all nations and languages and cultures and backgrounds, yet unity in love, unity in purpose, and unity in mission have been the key ingredients in our existence through the years.

Now to be clear, that unity was also made possible through the Spirit that came.

But the Son's prayers continue to unite us and sustain us today.

And what is the purpose of unity?

Is it just church survival for the sake of survival?

And the answer is clearly no.

Look at the end of verse 21 and the middle of verse 23.

***so that the world may believe that You sent Me.***

***so that the world may know that You sent Me.***

The church endures so the the world may believe in Christ.

In a sense, the unity and existence of the church prove that God is behind it.

How else could such a group of vastly different people co-exist in unity unless God was behind it.

Believers are such an oddity in the world.

We give up everything to follow Christ, and God provides everything we need.

We are as diverse as diverse can be in some respects but we are incredibly united in Christ.

And that really makes an impact on unbelievers.

People see unity despite our diversity and they wonder why we all get along.

And that is when we tell them that it is a supernatural work of God to make us like Him.

So Jesus prays for an earthly unity among believers so that the earth may believe that Jesus was sent by God.

But that is not the only unity that Jesus desires among his people.

The second unity that He prays for is found in verses 24-26..

We will call this an eternal unity..

### ***B. An Eternal Unity (24-26)***

Let's read verses 24-26 again..

***24 Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.***

***25 "O righteous Father, [i]although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; 26 and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."***

This is an incredible prayer request that we often don't think about but should.

Here is the closing of this prayer, Jesus prays that believers be taken to heaven to be with Him.

This is an incredible request by the Son.

Father, I want you to take these people that you gave to me and I died to save.

I want you to take them to heaven to be with me.

Now this may seem odd to us.

Don't we deserve heaven because we repented and believed in Christ?

Well, God could simply spare us punishment for our belief in Christ.

He could simply send us to a place where there would be no consequences of sin.

But Jesus prays that the Father would bring believers to heaven to be with Jesus.

Now, why does Jesus want that?

Two simple reasons right here in the text..

Reason #1 is the end of verse 24..

***24 Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.***

Jesus prays for believers to be united with Him in heaven so that they can see His glory.

The picture of Jesus that most people have is long hair, robe, sandals, dark Middle Eastern skin tone..

But let me assure you that is not the Christ that you will see in heaven..

Here are two pictures of the glory of Christ.

***Mathew 17:1-2***

***Six days later Jesus \*took with Him Peter and [a]James and John his brother, and \*led them up on a high mountain by themselves. 2 And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.***

***Revelation 1:13-15***

***I saw one like [j]a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. 14 His head and His hair were white like***

***white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. 15 His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters.***

I can assure that your first sight of Christ in heaven will not be a middle eastern man with long hair and sandals..

You first sight of Christ in heaven will be blinding because He will be clothed in His full glory.

So often our picture of Christ is of one who is wounded and beaten, yet Jesus will not let that picture be in our minds forever.

WE will see Him as He truly is.

We will see Him in the glory that He has always had.

Jesus' ministry on earth was necessary but it was only temporary.

Jesus' ministry on earth was full of humiliation but our eternity with Him will be nothing but His exaltation.

Jesus prays that the Father takes us to heaven so that we can see the glory of the One who saved our souls..

You ever seen someone out in public but you can't figure out how you know them?

A lot of times we don't recognize people out of the setting that we normally see them in.

I'll never forget the first time I saw the man who ran the Whitmire Cafe in church.

I almost didn't recognize him.

I was used to seeing him in a white t-shirt behind the counter of the cafe, but here he was in front of me in a suit and tie.

As a kid, it almost scared me.

One day, your picture of Jesus will be drastically altered.

The one on the cross will be replaced with the One who lights up all of heaven with His glory.

There is also an additional reason that Jesus prays for us to be united with Him in heaven..

Verse 25..

***25 “O righteous Father, [i]although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; 26 and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”***

Jesus prays that believers be taken to heaven to see his glory and to know His love.

Look, we are people are people of love as Christians.

But even our love lacks at times..

We don't love as we should.

We don't love God as we should.

WE don't love our families and church as we should..

But on top of that.

We don't always understand and sense God's love for us as we should.

There are times as believers that we wonder if God loves us.

There are times as believers that we question God's love for us.

However, a quick trip to heaven will remove all barriers to love.

We will love God as we should, but we will also know the love of God for us.

In fact, Jesus prays that the love that the Father has for the Son will be in us on that day.

I cannot imagine the ability to love like that, but that prayer will be answered because the prayers of the Son are always answered.

What an incredible chapter.

What an incredible prayer.

What an incredible look inside the relationship between the Father and the Son..

What an incredible reality that our King has prayed for us and is praying for us.

Now what can we possibly draw from these final words of John 17?

## **Conclusion**

### ***#1 - Unity in believers is miraculous and influential.***

It is a clear work of God through the prayers of Christ to unite the church for all these years.

Young and old, rich and poor, eastern and western cultures.

People from all walk of life united with people from all other walks on life in the church.

This is why racism is not biblical.

This is why sexism is not biblical.

This is why any attitude that looks with suspicion on another believer isn't biblical.

The church is called to unity, and for those who truly belong to Christ, they are truly united to their brothers and sisters in the Lord of every shape, size, culture, and gender.

And when that attitude is on display in the church, the world takes notice.

If you haven't noticed, the world can't get along.

There is way more disunity than unity in the world, so we are united, we are making an impact on unbelievers.

It is only when we create division that we lose our effectiveness in evangelism.

### ***#2 - Unity in believers will be eternal.***

Though our unity on earth is imperfect, our unity in heaven will be perfect and eternal.

Not one dispute in heaven.

Not one moment of disagreement.

Instead, we will be unified by the overwhelming glory and love of Christ.

### ***#3 - Unity in unbelievers is impossible.***

Don't miss what Jesus said in verse 20..

He prayed for unity among those who believe in Him.

There is no unity for those who reject Christ.

Instead, there is nothing but discord, disagreement, distress, and chaos.

Look at the unbelieving world.

They strive for unity but only find more division.

I was looking at all the campaign slogans of presidential candidates...

Most are related to unifying America but the irony is that every candidate seeks to separate themselves from their opponents.

Hard to paint yourself as a unifier when all you do is attack everyone else.

How hypocritical is that!

Let me tell you something.

If you want to know true unity, come to Christ in repentance and faith.

What you will find is that your rights and views matter little.

What you will find is that unity with your brothers in Christ is more important than your needs.

What you will find is that unity with Christians is far greater than division with the world.

And ultimately what you will find is that earthly unity will eventually give way to the greatest unity that you have ever known.

And that is unity for entirety with God in heaven.

Let us pray.