



John 17:20-23

Jesus Prays for All Who Believe

This week as we look at Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17 we come to the third section of His prayer. In the first section His prayer is about Himself, in the second section about His disciples, and in the third, all who would believe after them.

There is a lot of familiar language in this section as themes found throughout the book are referenced here. Unity, the word, glory, and love all come into play. Unity though, is the major theme.

John 17:20-23

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 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 in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me

The Source of Unity

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,

Verse twenty is the transition from Jesus praying specifically for His disciples to praying for all believers. The disciples are the foundation of the church. New believers would be added based first on their preaching. Peter's sermon at Pentecost is a prime example. Many believed because of his "word" that day. As time went on the teaching of the disciples is written down and shared in that way. Today we have the apostles teaching preserved for us in the New Testament.

We have been studying the Gospel of John for a number of legislative sessions now. The "good news" about Jesus is a message that must be communicated in oral or written form.

Some have claimed that a good life is the best testimony about Christ. While a "good life" is important in that it validates the message, a "good life" does not save anyone. Only the "word" shared can bring salvation to another person.

Romans 10: *⁻¹⁴ How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO PROCLAIM GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!"*

Jesus again prays for unity. This time that all who believe would be one. What type of unity can be shared by all who ever believe in Him? Since all who believe are not alive at the same time it can not be a "get along" type of unity.

Jesus defines the type of unity He means for us. It is the type of unity that the Father and the Son share. "Even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You." His prayer is that "they also may be in Us." Fundamentally this is a unity that comes with salvation. To be in Christ and have Christ in us. Each believer is united to Christ through salvation and each believer then has unity with the other believers.

This unity brings with it a unity of purpose. Philippians 1:27 puts it this way – *²⁷ "Only live your lives in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear about your circumstances, that you are standing firm in **one spirit**, with **one mind** contending together for the faith of the gospel."*

The source of the unity of believers then is salvation itself. Unity begins with being united to Christ and flows out of that reality.

The Picture of Unity

²² The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be

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one, just as We are one; ²³ I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity,

The unique intra-Trinitarian relationship of Jesus and the Father forms the pattern for the unity of believers.

1. The Father and the Son are united in motive; they are committed to the glory of God
2. The Father and Son are united in mission. They share the same goal of redeeming lost sinners and granting them eternal life.
3. The father and Son are united in Truth. In John 17:8 Jesus had said, “the words which you gave me, I have given to them.”
4. The Father and Son are united in Holiness. Scripture describes both the Father and the Son as Holy.
5. The Father and the Son are united in love. In verse twenty-four of John seventeen Jesus affirmed that the Father had “loved (Him) before the foundation of the world.”

Jesus is most glorified in the cross. He was obedient to the Father to the point of death on the cross. His salvific work on the cross brings Him glory. That glory is passed on to those who believe in Him and are then are obedient as well and share the “word” by which others are saved as well.

The Quality of Unity

and loved them, even as You have loved Me.

Jesus prays that those who believe in Him would know that the Father loves them as the Father loves the Son. Again, this is most exemplified in the cross. *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”*

God is a god of love. In fact, the definition of love is God. “God is love.” Jesus speaks of the love between Himself and the Father. The fact that God is “three in one,” Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is what enables that love. To put it another way without the trinity there would be no love in God.

The quality of the unity that believers have is based on the very love of God. It is not a shallow, superficial type of unity but a unity based on love.

The Effect of Unity

so that the world may believe that You sent Me ... so that the world may know that You sent Me,

Twice in these verses (21, 23) are the words “so that the world.” The unity of believers to Christ and to one another is to be a witness to the world. When a person “believes” in Christ and is “united” to Him it should be evident in that person’s life. That fact that Jesus is now “in you” should cause profound change in you. There should be a marked movement away from your sinfulness and towards the Holiness of Christ.

The unity of believers to each other, in motive, mission, truth, holiness, and love should be a testimony to the world as well.

The unity they see should make them want to hear the “word” – the good news about Jesus. The “good news” is that while we were dead in trespasses and sins God sent His son Jesus to live a perfect life and die to pay the penalty for those sins so that we might have salvation and eternal life, and be united to Him.

As you consider the **Source of Unity**, the **Picture of Unity**, the **Quality of Unity** and the **Effect of Unity**, what do you need to do in your life?

Have you responded to the good news?

If you have, can others tell?

Who do you need to share the good news with?

Bible Studies:

7:00 am Tuesdays: Bible Study – Governor’s Large Conference Room – Open to All: Legislators, Constitutional Officers, Lobbyists, Staff

8:00 pm Tuesdays: Legislator Only Bible Study –Red Rosa

