

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Jesus Prays for Us, Part 1

Scripture: John 17:20-23

Code: 1568

Turn in your Bible to the seventeenth chapter of John, if you will, please, with me. The title of our message this morning is "Jesus prays for us." We have found that in this chapter Jesus Christ prays to the Father the night before His crucifixion. And in this prayer which could very well have been very self-centered, and in which He could have spent the time praying for Himself and ... and anticipating His own excruciating agony. We find that He does not do that but rather prays for those who are His. And in the first five verses when He does pray for Himself, it is only insofar as by accomplishing what He needs to accomplish He can thus bless all of us. And so, even the first five verses in which He prays for His own glory are indirectly geared to us.

We see, then, in the sixth verse through the 19th verse that He prays for the living disciples, those that are His at that time. And this morning we come to verses 20 to 26 in which He prays for all believers who will be born in years to come and that includes us.

And I've been telling you all along that the seventeenth chapter to me is the greatest chapter on love in the Bible. It's mostly associated with His high priestly prayer and we think of other chapters regarding love, but to me this is love personified. I can see it defined in many places in the Bible. I can see it in action right here. And above all other things considered in my mind and heart as a Christian, I want to know that Jesus Christ loves me more than I want to know anything else. And thus I come again and again to the 17th chapter of John and I find in it my Savior's love for me ... love which I do not deserve, never have deserved and yet rejoice in and enjoy more than any other thing in existence.

And so, as we come to the seventeenth chapter, we're introduced to two things, really, Jesus' love for His own and the pattern of His intercession. We find how it is that He intercedes for us. And in this little preview of His mediator's work, even before He ascended to the Father, He gives us insight into how it is that He prays for us.

I was at a conference yesterday up in Portland, up on the snowcapped Mount Hood and we had a wonderful time and we were having a question and answer time and one of the kids asked me -- Does Jesus stop caring for you when you're saved, is that it? And then I began to tell him about the 17th chapter of John, how that's not the end of His care that's just the initiation of it ... how that He continually, continually, continually cares for us. And His love is spelled out in this chapter. And the Bible could tell us He intercedes and the Bible could tell us He mediates and the Bible could tell us

He prays for us but before Jesus ascended into the heaven, He gave us a preview of it in front of the disciples so that John could record it and we could see just how it is that He intercedes for us. And so, we see the pattern of His intercession and His love in this chapter. And this is Jesus' prayer, verses 20 to 26, this part, His prayer for us.

Let's look at these verses, 20 to 26, and I'm going to show you three things that are simple things here, very parallel to what we saw in the last section because again He's praying for His own. The subjects of His prayer, the requests in His prayer and the confidence in His prayer ... subjects, the requests and the confidence.

Now, first of all, the subjects of His prayer. Now, He's been praying for Himself only insofar as He ... His glory may be realized for the sake of us, then He prayed for the disciples, primarily the eleven Apostles, who were alive at that time. Now He begins to pray specifically for all believers of the future and He kind of sweeps into the future and gathers up all the believers who will ever be saved in all the ages to come and He prays for them.

Now, notice verse 20, and we see the subjects of His prayer. And watch this opening statement, just a footnote here: "Neither pray I for these alone." And that's interesting because that's a negative statement. Neither pray I for these alone. That's the third negative in the 17th chapter. There are three things in this chapter that Jesus doesn't pray for. Number one in verse 9: "I pray not for the world." Number two in verse 15, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world," the removal of the believer from the world is not the prayer of Christ. He wants us here. The third negative, verse 20: "Neither pray I for these alone." I don't just confine My prayer to these disciples and Apostles alive now. He reaches out. Verse 20 says: "... but for them also who shall believe on Me through their word."

And in that statement, Jesus in His sovereign, omnipotent eye and in His omniscience, scans the centuries and presses to His loving heart all of those true followers of the centuries to follow whose names He knows already, for they have been written in the book of life since before ... what? ... the foundation of the world. Jesus knew your name. Do you realize something? Do you realize that you appear in the 17th chapter of John if you're a Christian? You say Me in the Bible? You're in there. You're one of the biblical heroes ... right there. You say -- Where's my name? See the word - them -- that's you.

Now, I realize it's not as personal as you'd like it ... but it's you, it's me. Jesus isn't praying nebulously, generally and nonspecifically, He is praying for them who shall believe and He knows exactly who they are by name. And this is not a general prayer, my friends, it is specific ... it is absolutely specific. Jesus does not pray for those who will not believe in Him, He prays for those who shall believe ... and He knows them by name. Fantastic thing to realize that Jesus actually, two thousand years ago, was praying for me. And I'll tell you, that ... that shows me those same two things -- the pattern of His

intercession which is for me and the depth of His love that He would pray for me even before I was born.

Now, notice how He qualifies those for whom He prays in verse 20, and this tells us who they are. "For them who shall believe on Me." Now that is an indication of a true believer, a true Christian is one who believes on Christ. Now what is meant by that statement is a total involvement and a total commitment to all that Jesus is and all that He said. In Acts 16:31, the Word of God says: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and ... what? ... thou shalt be saved." God wants faith. God does not want your works, He does not want your religion, He does not want your pioucity, that's, you know, being super religious, you all know that. He does not want your activity; He does not want your membership in the church. He wants your faith commitment to the person of Jesus Christ. And that's the only kind of person who ever knows God, who ever knows Christ and that's the only person for whom Jesus intercedes. There are a lot of religious people but they are not those for whom Jesus prays. To be a part of Jesus' intercessory work, you must believe.

I ministered to a church, this last week-end, that sickened my heart, frankly, from head to toe, -- in fact. Nobody except for one fellow on the staff who brought me up there to try to do something about the problem, I guess, who was a dear, dear person who loves Christ. He didn't know what he was getting into, he's a young guy. But he's not too sure anybody on the staff believes the Bible was really inspired by God. The pastor's son's job every week, I was informed, was to take out the Vodka bottles; this is what he told me. And he went on and on to tell me about all of this kind of a thing and one of the pastors has the young people before he came involved in sensitivity training groups. There are an awful lot of people in that church who are plugged into that church for whom Jesus never prayed ... because they do not believe on Him. They are secure in a religious form, no reality at all. True saving faith, believing on Him. And when it says -- believe on Me -- it means all that is embodied in Me ... all that Jesus Christ is, said, everything ... true saving faith.

All right, Jesus says, then, -- I'm praying for all those that shall believe on Me, He knew who everyone of them was, He knew everyone of them. But watch this. This is a beautiful thought. Watch how it is that they're going to believe. Now, get the picture. Jesus is praying and the disciples are gathered around, they're hearing what He's saying, see. It's going into their little computers, see. And they're hearing all of this stuff. And they've heard all of His prayer up to here and it must be exciting by this time. And now He says -- I pray for them also who shall believe on Me through their word. Whose word? The eleven Apostles that are standing around Him. And, of course, those that were associated with Him. And you can imagine their reaction ... Us? See. I mean, they were weak, frail, just ... their faith was infantile.

But notice the confidence of Jesus. By the gospel preached by the Apostles and disciples, will all the generations believe ... those who will believe. Now, that's a very confident statement, you know that? That is not a wish, that is the confidence of omniscience. Jesus knew everything and He knew that

faithless, though they were and weak though they were and about to scatter when He was crucified, nevertheless through them, all who ever believed would believe.

You say -- Well, that doesn't apply to me because I wasn't led to the Lord by an Apostle. Yes you were ... let me show you how. Before the Apostles died, not only did they preach and teach and found the church but under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they wrote the New Testament. And I don't care whether it's directly from reading the New Testament or indirectly from somebody sharing you the principles of the New Testament, your salvation goes right back to an apostolic origin or to at least a disciple of Jesus Christ in the early years. All of us find our basic concepts in terms of Jesus Christ and God and the gospel, right here in the pages of this book ... whether you know it or not, you're directly or indirectly related to apostolic messages and proclamations.

And do you know, that those blessed Apostles didn't have any idea what was going to happen? They didn't have the faintest idea that two thousand years later, old John sitting there listening to Jesus pray wouldn't have the faintest idea that two thousand years later we'd be telling you what John said, hoping that you'd believe what he said and come to Jesus Christ. Can you imagine the thrill and the joy that's in their heart through the ages to know that their continuing ministry goes on and on and shall go on until the end of the age? There they were ... those guys ... and Jesus is just building confidence. He says -- I thank You that through them they will believe.

In the strictest sense, the Apostles are God's ambassadors ... and the early disciples. The Apostle Paul said in Romans 10, "Their word has gone out into all the earth, to the ends of the world." And so it is that salvation whether it was in the first century, whether it was Peter standing up on the day of Pentecost or whether it was Peter preaching a little while later and saying, "Neither is there salvation in any other," whether it was then or whether it's when somebody picks up the Bible and reads Peter's sermon and is saved, whether or not, it's all back to the apostolic gospel ... committed to these faithful men by the Holy Spirit. And so, salvation comes today the same as it did then, through the Apostles.

Now, I'm going to give you a little insight into this from just a verse that's been mistranslated so frequently that it's misused and that's Romans 10:17 and it's commonly translated "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." Now that's a true principle ... faith does come by hearing and hearing by the Word of God ... but the Greek there says this: Faith comes by hearing and hearing by a speech about Jesus Christ. Did you get that? Faith comes by hearing and hearing by a speech, ' rhmanot logos, about Christ not God. The accurate reading is Christ. It is the apostolic preaching of Christ that brings faith ... whether from a pulpit indirectly or whether directly from someone reading the Word of God, whether on an individual share basis, it all goes back to a speech about Jesus Christ delivered at one time or another by an early Apostle or disciple. And so, you and I merely have the privilege of taking apostolic gospel committed unto them by the Holy Spirit, the gospel of the first disciples, and handing it to men today and thus the salvation of the entire church of Jesus Christ goes directly or indirectly right back to those men.

Now you know that Jesus must have been omniscient to trust them with that. Because He knew their frailties. He knew that these few failing scattered sheep would be the agents of the reaching of all the millions of believers who would come to Christ throughout all the ages to come. Jesus even knew that they would abandon Him but it never broke His confidence because His omniscience overruled that. He knew they would. And they started the chain of witness of which you and I are products.

So, Jesus prays then for His own. Those who will be saved by believing in the gospel. That's why you can't accept any other way of salvation, there isn't any other. So, Jesus is praying for us. I'll tell you, I can get excited about reading this because I can get excited about Jesus praying for me two thousand years ago.

You say Well, I mean, why bother? Well, I don't know. I can't know the divine mind, but I know there's a lot of stuff messed up in my life and it would take at least two thousand years of prayer to straighten out any of it. I mean, if He's been praying for me for two thousand years and I'm not any better than I am, I'm sure glad He didn't start just when I got saved. Now, I don't know how the divine mind works and I don't know how God activates the power of the ... of the Spirit in my life but I want as much as I can get and I'm glad to know He prayed for me then and ever lives to pray for me, aren't you? I mean, that's a blessed ... that's a blessed thought. Before the world began, He decided to love me and then two thousand years before I arrived, He started praying for me. He knew I belonged on the two-thousand year-later batch of people because I needed that much build-up.

Now, this is telling us that ... that's not theology, that's just fooling around ... we realize that we are His personal possession, that we belong to Him in a unique relationship which really is a heart-felt relationship on His part, a concern for us. And you know, when Jesus ... when Jesus went to the cross, in effect He said to the Father, He said -- Now, I've been guarding them, Father, and I've been protecting them. Now, I'm going to give them to You and I want You to hold to them and hang on to them, protect them while I go to the cross to bear their sin. He really cared about us. Oh how this section reveals His love for us. You know, it's kind of like that ... that child that you're anticipating, you know, and you know the child's going to be born, you've got the name picked out and you figure just what it's going to be and you start getting ready, see. Well, that's what Jesus does. He just gets ready for the sheep not yet born ... prepares everything so that when they're born things are right.

Christ knew that the gospel would prevail despite the world's hatred, despite the antagonism of Satan. He knew that the first generation of Christians would not only preach faithfully but that they, under the Spirit's control, would write the New Testament. He knew all that. And so, He knew that we would believe and so He prayed for us.

Remember the Old Testament -- Esau? Esau had a complaint. You remember Jacob had kind of snuck in and got the blessing of his father. And so, Esau came late and the father only had one

blessing 'cause it was a blessing of primogenitor which is the heir. And so, Esau come and he ... came and he said -- "Hast thou but one blessing, O my father?" And the answer was -- that's it! You got here too late. Isn't it wonderful to realize that we weren't born too late to receive the blessing but that Jesus Christ prayed for us that we would receive all that the Father had to give to us before we were ever born? It's exciting.

Well, let me hurry. Now, I want you to catch the thought here, He's praying only for the Christians. Manton says, "Christ's prayer would fall to the ground unanswered if He should pray for them that shall never believe." Then Manton said this, "Shall the Son of God's love plead in vain?" The answer is -- No. He prays only for His own, only those who shall believe. He embraces all the saints of the future ages, presses them to His loving heart and prays for them.

Now, what are the requests? For what does He pray? And I want you to see this, we're only going to have time this morning to look at just one thing, but watch this -- for our life on earth, He only prays for one thing. Now if Jesus is going to pray for every Christian in every age for all the centuries to come and He's only going to ask one thing, don't you think that one thing is fairly important? I tell you it is. Jesus only prays for one thing while we're here on earth. He prays for a second thing but it has to do with us in heaven ... only one thing while we're here on earth.

Verse 21, here it comes: "That," this is what I'm praying, Father, "That they all may be ... what? ... one." That's all He prayed for. I mean, and that gathers up everything. Jesus prays for oneness. My friends, we've talked about this, we've prayed for this, as a pastor I, like Jesus Christ, want nothing but this. This is what I would pray for. This would gather up every other thing. You wouldn't have to preach on anything else if you had oneness. Oneness is a by-product of holiness and love. And if you had holiness and love, you wouldn't have to preach on anything else. So Jesus gathered ... you could talk about humility, you could talk about don't do this and don't do that and do this and don't do that, all you've got to do is talk about oneness and you've solved it all because He's talking about, mark it, the oneness of holiness. That they be one in a holy separation from a defiled world. We talked about it, didn't we, before when He prayed this? And every time a Christian falls into worldliness and worldly patterns, He destroys that oneness. Remember I told you we were to be different? We're to be set apart, separate and one in holiness. And if we're one in holiness, there will be love between us. There will be caring between us. There will be humility and all these things resolve themselves in oneness.

Now, He's talking about a spiritual oneness and we'll take it apart a little bit so we can see what it means. We're going back to something-some of us have studied in our Ephesians series where we talked about unity and the unity of the body and what it means. But what He's basically ... has in mind is the oneness of a holy life set against the defilement of an unholy world. Christians collectively need to be one in holiness so that we have a total testimony, do you see?

I rode to the airport last night, late, with a kid and he said to me, he said -- You know what messes me up? And he had some problems. I mean, he was the president of the youth group and that afternoon he had been out smoking marijuana, you know. And so he said to me, he said -- I've got some problems. And I didn't want to tell him I knew what they were. He said -- you know what messes me up? He says -- I see all this Christianity stuff and then he says I see people who claim to be Christians. And he says I say to myself, and he says, my friends at school say the same thing big deal. I know a guy that says he's a Christian and look what he does. He's no different than anybody else. How many times have you heard that? And Jesus says -- If you were only one, in a separated, unified holiness where the world could look at you and say they're different and they're all different, it must be real. But the world looks and says -- one of those and one of those and one of these and everything and they don't know if we go together or if we don't go together. And we all claim the same thing and it all comes out different.

Apart from Jesus Christ, the world is a shattered, broken, ruined disunity. In Christ, we become one. The only problem is we don't always manifest that oneness in our practice, do we? Positional unity is already ours; you are one in Christ because of salvation. I'm one with you; we're one in the body, aren't we? But that's positional oneness. What Christ wants is that experiential oneness where our position becomes our practice, right?

Let me show you the difference. Turn to Ephesians 2 and then we'll look at some other thoughts. Ephesians 2:14, now here is positional oneness. Now you have to understand the difference between position and practice or you'll never understand Scripture. Your position is what you are in Christ; your practice is how you act. And sometimes you don't act like what you are. Right? Verse 14: "For He is our peace who has made both one." Now that's our position. Jew and Gentile have been made one. 11 ... broken down the middle wall of partition having abolished in His flesh," Christ did this, "the enmity, even as the law ... even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; to make in Himself of two," that is Jew and Gentile, "one new man. " Christ has made believers one ... in Christ -- positional. Verse 16: "That He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross." We are one positionally.

Then down in verse 21, we have been built into one building. In verse 22 we are built to an habitation, built together. There's oneness. Over in chapter 4 it says -- one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, onefait, onebaptism, one God, one, one, one. Positionally we're one. We all belong to Jesus. We all belong to the body. We've all been born again. We're all one.

But we don't act like it sometimes and the practical oneness comes in chapter 4 verse 11, Ephesians 4:11. Now assuming that we are one in position, we need to act like it. So, watch what the Bible says in verse 11. "And He gave some," Christ did, "to the church. He gave some Apostles, some prophets and then He gave some evangelists and some teaching pastors." Now, the Lord gives to the church evangelists and teaching pastors today; Apostles and prophets, of course have passed from the

scene. Today we have evangelists and teaching pastors. An evangelist is a church planner, more like a missionary than what you commonly think is an evangelist. And these folks are given to the church to bring the positional oneness into practice. You got that? Verse 12: "The pastor, teacher and evangelist are for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Did you know that the pastor is not suppose to do the work of the ministry? He's suppose to perfect the saints and they're suppose to do the work of the ministry. That's what it says.

All right, for what reason? Verse 13: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith." You say -- Wait a minute; I thought we were already one. We are positionally. What's he talking about here? Your practice. You are one, but he says I'm going to give you all the basics and all the things you need to become one visibly before the watching world.

Now, we're one in Christ but we don't act like it. So, Jesus prays that we be one. In I Corinthians chapter 12, let me just read it, you don't need to look it up. First Corinthians 12:12: "For as the body is one," that's us; we're all one in Christ, every believer around the world, "hath many members and all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is Christ." We're one. Watch verse 25 to 27: "That there should be no schism in the body." In other words, we can be one and not act like it, can't we?

Unfortunately there is this kind of division. Christians bicker with each other. This little group gets over here and wants to do it this little way and this little group gets over here and wants ... and bang-bang-bang, and division and carnality and strife and dissension. And that's all part of the devil's plan to divide the body because Jesus prayed that we be one, didn't He? Pretty simple. Paul said that there be no schism in the body, none at all, but that the members should have the same care one for another. If you really care for somebody, you don't have that problem. And if you have the same care for everybody, you'll never have that problem. You know what causes friction? What causes cliques? What causes division? When somebody cares about somebody else more than they care about some other person. If you have the same care for every-body and the same love for everybody, there can't be any place for divid ... for dividing it. It's when it's -- Us four, no more, shut the door. Ump ... upp ... ump, see. That's when you get your problems. But as long as you've got an open heart to care for everybody within in sight and anybody in the body of Christ-the same as you care for everybody else, where's the division going to come, there can't be any division. No schism in the body.

And then he says -- If one member suffers, we all suffer ... sympathy, see. If one member's honored, we all rejoice with him ... just oneness, oneness, oneness. This is the practical oneness that he wants that Jesus prays for.

All right, now go back to the 17th chapter of John and this, I know, has been review for you somewhat. But Jesus only asks for one thing. My friends, if He only asks for one thing, what a shame, what a tragic dire tragedy in our lives that He wouldn't see it happen. I mean, we could try a lot of

things and we could talk about a lot of things and we could say we're spiritual and we could say we're Christians and we could talk about the blessings of this and that, but Jesus only asks one thing, one thing -- that they be one, that's all. And we do a lot of other things but we just don't seem to get around to that. And He's not talking about an outward oneness, not talking about ecumenical getting-together, He's not talking about organizational oneness, He's not talking about administrative oneness or ecclesiastical unity. He's not at all. He's talking about an inner oneness.

How do you know? Verse 21: "That they all may be one," how? "... As Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee." The same kind of oneness that the Father and the Son experience. Now that's a heavy thought. And I can't fathom it, frankly. How can we be one in the same sense that the Father and the Son are one. Well certainly not in divine essence. We can't be one like the trinity, you know. But in the ... in a manner we can. There's got to be a meaning here. The first thing that it says to me is He's not talking about a superficial organizational, denominational, administrative oneness. He's talking about something that is inner and something that is spiritual. You see?

Now, we could talk about this from a lot of different angles, but He wants from us a unity that in some sense is analogous to His unity with the Father. And it must transcend the physical and it must transcend the earthy and it must be something divine. Now we realize, of course, that every congregation isn't going to organize itself in the same way. And that all churches are different. We also realize that believers are going to naturally gravitate to certain kinds of ministries and certain other kinds of believers for the closest circle of their fellowship. And believers will never all worship God in the same forms and the same patterns. But what Jesus is talking about here is a unity that has nothing to do with form and pattern at all; it's a spiritual oneness that transcends that. And sadly, the cause of Christian oneness has all through history been injured, violated and hindered. You know why? Watch this one, because men have consistently loved their organization more than they've loved each other. They have become selfish either in loving themselves or their little organization more than they love others. And that has caused division.

You see, when men try to get together on an organizational level, it never works. Jesus wants a oneness of love possible only in holiness. Now let me go back and give you the principle I gave you last week. The only way we can be one, watch it now, the only way we can be one is when we're all holy. All right? And we're living a pure life. As long as you're living in the world, as long as you're crudding up your Christian life with worldly things, you can't be one with the rest of us. As long as I'm doing that, I can't be one. The oneness He wants is a holy oneness. A oneness where we're all separate from the world. That's true with the Father and the Son, right? Are the Father and the Son separate from sin? That's the basis of their oneness. Two things are the keys and I'll give you these then I'm going to give you some more thoughts. Two things are the key to the oneness of the Father and the Son: separate from sin and love.

Does the Father love the Son? Does the Son love the Father? In an infinite capacity? Yes. Are both of them separate from sin? Yes. And thus, the kind of oneness analogous to the Father/Son oneness is a oneness of holiness and love ... separate from sin and in love with each other. That's what Jesus prayed for. Did you get it? And as long in your life as you are violating either and if you violate either, you will automatically violate both, if you are not separate from the world and the sin in the world and you are not in love with your brother, you are destroying the oneness for which Jesus prayed. Now this is a spiritual, loving, holy oneness. This is exactly what the New Testament enjoins for the believer.

In I Peter 3:8, "Finally, be ye all of one mind." Ohhh, you know, sometimes I say this so much and I preach it so much, I get tired, you know. Because it just ... there's always somebody who won't be one, you know? And you keep saying -- Lord, I love that person, but loving them is severely difficult, it's exasperating.

Above all, finally be of one mind ... having compassion one of another. Love as brothers ... love as brothers. You say -- Yeah, but I don't like the way he does this. Ohhh. Be pitiful, that is empathetic, sympathize, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil. You say Well, I don't like that guy, boy, you should see what he did to me and I'm going to give it right back. Ohhh, that's ridiculous. Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but on the contrary, blessing. See. Just somebody does you evil, bless them. Praise the Lord, thank You, I don't understand this but the Lord must have a purpose. That will get to him. You just love as brothers, not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing but on the contrary blessing knowing that you're called to this that ye should inherit a blessing.

You'll never be blessed in your Christian life until you learn how to really unite yourself with others in holiness and love. Anytime there's division, it's a manifestation of two things ... unholiness, sin, carnality, call it what you want; secondly, a lack of love. That's it.

Now, you say -- Well, I'd like to ... I'd like to have that kind of oneness. It's simple. Separate from the world, loving your brother. You say -- Well, whose my example? Who are yours ... who is your example? Jesus Christ, separate from sinners and love the Father. And the Father the same way, separate from sin and in love with the Son. That's why He says in verse 21, "Be one like we are." See; separate from sin and in love with each other.

And you see, all you've got to do is just worry about being like Christ and you don't have to worry about adjusting to everybody else. I've told you this illustration that Tozer has. He says if you've got 400 pianos and you try to tune 400 pianos to each other back and forth, you have a mess. But if, he says, if you have one tuning fork, just tune them all to that one tuning fork and they'll all automatically be tuned to each other. So we don't need to go around on a superficial basis trying to adjust ourselves to each other, we just get plugged into God, establish our lives on God's principles, determine that we're going to be holy and separate from sin and be as much like Jesus Christ as we

can and we'll never have any problem being like the others who are also like Christ. Now, if you're not like the others, then they're not like Christ. These are the perfect standards that we desire with all our hearts to see in our lives. And I'm telling you, friends, if Jesus only prayed for one thing, only one thing while we're here on earth, what a ... what a shame ... what a lack of love ... what a sick kind of selfishness that we should hinder the one thing that's all He prayed for. And thus

His prayer by our will goes unanswered.

There's so many keys to our oneness, we've talked about them in our series on the body, ministering your spiritual gift to each other. Have you done that? Have you been ministering to others? Do you have the gift of mercy? Have you got some of the other gifts, teaching, gift of faith, praying? Have you been ministering to others? How about fellowshiping with each other? We saw...we saw some months ago that fellowship means loving each other, means rebuking each other if you see a brother in sin. It means helping the weaker brother, the legalist. It means forgiving. It means bearing each other's burdens. It means restoring a brother taken in a fault. Have you been doing that? How about praying for each other, have you done that? Is your prayer life geared for others? Our oneness is to be like that of the Father and Son ... a oneness in them. And the highest type of spiritual oneness exists between them.

You say -- Well, it seems so difficult that we could be one like they are. Yes, but we can. In the gospel of John, for example, it says that: The Father and the Son are one in rights. They're one in purpose. They're one in power. They're one in authority. They're one in honor. They're one in life giving. And I'm just going through the fifth chapter in my mind. They're one in will. They're one in works. They're one in name. Then jumping to the seventh chapter: They're one in doctrine. Jumping to the twelfth chapter: They're one in the ability to save. Jumping to the seventeenth chapter: They're one in glory. They're one in everything ... everything. But overriding all of that is that dual oneness of holiness and undying love. That's the key to any kind of oneness. And whenever oneness doesn't exist, whenever there's discord and disharmony within the body, it's due to that, the absence of holiness and consequently the absence of love.

But I had another exciting thought here in verse 21, as I began to see this idea of trying to see how in what way we could be one like God and the Son, I saw this, too. Listen to this. They're one, aren't they? But are they still two distinct personalities? Sure they are ... sure. Is the Father still the Father and the Son still the Son, they're one and yet two? We don't understand that, do we? We don't worry about it, we just don't understand it. Now watch this. We're one in the body, right? One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one hope, one Spirit, one body, we're all one, one, one, one. And yet, do we lose our distinct personalities? No. Do each of us have separate gifts of the Spirit? Sure. Do each of us have separate ministries? And abilities? Sure. We are still different and yet we are ... what? ... one. So, in that way we're also analogous to the difference between ... to the oneness of the Father and the Son. They're one and yet distinct persons ... we are and yet distinct persons. So, in that sense,

we're one.

So, this is Christ's prayer. You say -- Well, why? What's ... why should we be one? I mean, what's the point? At the end of verse 21, it's a purpose clause in Greek, 11 ... in order that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." Ahh, to whom did Jesus come when He came to this earth? To the world, right? Why did He come? Did He come that men might believe in Him? Yes He did, didn't He? Do you think Jesus wants men to believe in Him? Do you think He does? Do you think He meant what He said when He...when He wept and said -- You will not come? Do you think He meant when He ... meant it when He said -- You will not come unto Me that you might have life? Do you think He meant it when He said -- Believe? And receive Me? Do you think He meant that? Do you think He really loved the world, do you? I do. Do you think He really wants the world to believe? I do. Do you care that He wants the world to believe? Do you care that He does? If you do, you'll be one. Because it is oneness that makes the world believe. You see, it's right there. In order that the world may believe. Believe what? That Thou, that postulates God, men must believe that God is ... right? To be saved. That Thou hast sent ... or must believe in a God who acts in history, redemptively. That Thou hast sent ... what? ... Me. They must believe in the person and work of Jesus Christ. And right there in a nutshell you have the salvation gospel.

Men in order to believe must believe in God, His redemptive acts in history and His Son Jesus Christ. And you can't separate any of those. Do you think Jesus really wants people to believe? I think He does. And I'm telling you, in ... from the bottom of my heart, to the depths of my soul, I say to you -- for one split second, -- I would wish myself dead before I would wish myself to be the cause of the breaking of the oneness of the body which is germane to the testimony to the world that Jesus is God's redemptive act in history. I would not want the responsibility. And I am absolutely shocked and amazed at Christians who so wantonly and so willfully will violate the unity for which Jesus prayed ... and do it selfishly; carnally ... I can't understand it. Jesus only asked one thing and He said on the basis of that one thing, the world will believe ... the world will believe. And if you're truly a Christian, your prayer should be Christ's prayer, that the world may believe and the way they'll believe is when we have an honest, observable, holy, loving, selfless oneness.

All right, verse 22: "And the glory which Thou gavest them ... or gavest Me, I have given them that they may be one even as we are one." Now look at that verse again. You know what He said there? In effect, He said this -- Father, I gave them the ingredients so that they may be one ... now I pray that they will be, right?

What were the ingredients? What is it that we have that makes us one positionally? The beginning of verse 22, the third word, what is it? Glory. What is the glory of God? It's all of His attributes, all of His essence and all of His life put into us. You say -- You mean I have the life of God, the essence of God, the attributes of God in me? Yes you do. In whom? The Holy Spirit ... the indwelling Christ. You say -- You mean that I have the glory of God? That's right and the glory which Thou gavest Me, I

gave them that they may be one. You know what makes ... you know what is the basis of our positional oneness as Christians? That we'll have the same glory. Right? We all possess the same Spirit, the same indwelling Christ, the same divine life, the same divine nature, the same divine essence has been planted in us and that's the basis of our unity. Do you see it? Positionally we are one because we have common glory ... the common Spirit. And you'll notice this fantastic thing in verse 22, the glory which Thou gavest Me, I give them ... I have given them. God manifest Himself in whom? Christ. Christ manifests Himself in whom? In us. In John 1:14, it says: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory." And whose glory was it? The glory as of the only begotten of the ... of the Father's glory ... in Christ.

Then Colossians 1:27 says: "Christ in you ... what? ... the hope of glory." So, you see, the same manifestation of God's nature that was in Christ, Christ plants in us and that is the basis of our oneness because we all have common glory, we are one. Christ says -- I gave them all the ingredients for oneness. The only thing that's missing is the will of every individual Christian.

You say -- Well, surely, we didn't receive the glory of God. Listen to this. John 1:12: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name." All right, we believe, we receive the right to be children of God. Verse 16, hold on to this, "And of His fullness have all we received." Did you hear that? Of His fullness have all we received.

You say -- You mean to tell me that God in His own life, in His own essence, in His own glory abides in me? That's exactly what I mean to tell you.

Peter said in II Peter 1:4 that we have been made partakers of the divine nature ... II Peter 1:4. We are to be glory bearers to the world, Christ in us.

And over in verse 10 of chapter 17, look what it says: "All Mine are Thine and Thine are Mine and I am glorified ... where? ... in them." In them.

In Colossians chapter 2 and verse 9, Paul says this: "For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." That's Christ. All the fullness of God is in Christ. The next verse: "And ye are complete in Him." He just moves it onestep down to us. God dwells within us, the glory of God, the presence of God. And why did He give us glory? Look at it, verse 22, He gave us glory, in order that ... another purpose clause: "We may be ... what? ... one." He gave us that which gives us positional oneness and then prays that we'll manifest it in experience, in practice, in living.

And so, the gift of divine glory unites us into one body, all tied together by the common divine life, all tied together by a common salvation, a common indwelling Spirit. And you know something? If there's not oneness in the body, it goes against God's very design as well as the prayer of Jesus.

Then I'll read verse 23 and close 'cause it's almost a repeat of verse 21: "I in them," this is beautiful, what a tangle we're in with the trinity, "I in them and Thou in Me." Did you get that? I mean, if ... just pull that baby apart for a minute. I in them. All right, Christ in me ... got it. Thou in Me -- that means God's in Christ who's in me. That's the dwelling of the glory of God within me. He says I gave them that ... I'm in them and You're in Me, we're there that they may be made perfect in one. We've given them the ingredients, right? There's no excuse for any discord, disunity, disharmony. And we did it, verse 23, that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me. Now the world isn't even going to know where Jesus came from and the world isn't even going to understand the love of God unless they see oneness.

That's the testimony that we have to this world. Just a footnote, verse 23, at the bottom. "... and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." Isn't it wonderful to be loved by God in the same way that He loves His Son? You say -- Well, how could God possibly love me like He loves Christ? It's easy. "If any man be ... what? ... in Christ, he's a new creation." You know why He loves you so much? Where are you? You're in Christ. Ephesians 1:6, "You are accepted in the beloved one." And if He loves Christ, He loves you equally because you're in Christ. But the world isn't going to know the love of God, the world isn't going to know that God is, that God acts redemptively in history and that Christ is His Son and they're not going to understand any of this unless we are ... what? ... one. As I said before, the world will be one when we are one. And so, Christ's first request is practical. He wants a loving oneness in holy living, made possible because He gave us common partaking of divine nature and He wants us to act like it that the world may know Christ's deity, His redemptive mission and the love of God. Let's pray.

Father, we thank You again for the Word, it speaks to us. Lord, we just are convicted, I'm convicted this morning. I want more than anything to be pure and to live the holy life that You want, separate from sinners like Jesus and like You. I want the kind of love that reaches out equally to every believer. Father, I'm sure sometimes I offend and sometimes I -- I grieve the Spirit and I wound the spirit of ... of another individual in the body sometimes, I don't show love like I should. Father, that's not my desire. My desire is to do all that I can for a separate from sin kind of love. Sometimes it seems so far away and yet, Father, I know in Your Spirit it's possible. Even as Jesus prayed, I pray for myself and this people, sanctify them with Thy ... Thy truth, Thy word is truth. Help us all to be in the Word, hiding it away that we might not sin. Lord, we would not have discord, we thank You for the sweet fellowship and the oneness that we have here in Grace Church and for the oneness that exists in so many ... so many areas and yet, Father, we could never be content because we know it isn't the oneness that Jesus prayed for because it's incomplete. It's not all ... it's a kind of exclusive oneness here and there and, Father, we need to be one. Lord, if any of us here this morning have been sowing deep seeds of discord, if any of us have had a bitterness against another believer, Father, I pray that they'll confess it immediately to you. Go to that person and make it right. Father, I just pray that you bind Satan from bringing in division. Lord, I know too that there are some here this morning who do not know Jesus

Christ as Savior and, Father, we've talked to Christians this morning but Your Spirit can speak in power in any situation and so we ask that those who don't know Christ, but perhaps have a searching heart, longing to have sin forgiven and to know eternal life, might this morning come to Christ. Speak to all of us. Teach us to be obedient and be blessed for it. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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