

A Prayer for Unity

John 17

Intro

Think about the last time you prayed. What did you pray for?

- That shows what is most important to you
- That shows what burdens you
- That shows what you really want to happen

In **John 17**, we have a front-row seat, listening to Jesus' prayer. The One who designed prayer prays for us to hear. We should take note of what He says and how it applies to us.

There are three sections to Jesus' prayer.

- In verses 1-8, Jesus prays for Himself and about His relationship with the Father
 - We see Jesus asking to be glorified so He might glorify the Father
 - We see Jesus asking that His mission would be fulfilled
- In verses 9-19, Jesus begins to pray for His disciples
 - He prays specific things for them knowing that He, their supporter and protector, is about to be taken from them
- In verses 20-26, Jesus specifically includes you in His prayer—**John 17:20**
 - His primary concern for His church throughout the ages is unity

1. Jesus' Purpose and Your Purpose

- Jesus prays, "The hour has come"
 - Jesus had a definite sense of His purpose
 - He knew exactly why He was on earth and filtered every word and action through that purpose
 - Jesus used this phrase a few times
 - **John 2:4**—Wedding feast
 - **John 7:2-8**—Brothers wanting Jesus to go to Jerusalem to show who He was
 - Although this was more of a challenge than anything
 - Jesus had a single-minded focus
 - **Isaiah 50:4-9**
- Do you sense God's mission for your life?
 - Last week we saw that it's the Great Commission—make disciples
 - People coming to Jesus
 - People learning about Jesus
 - People looking like Jesus
 - Are you fulfilling that or just passing time till Jesus comes back?
 - Fulfilling your mission with friends and family
 - Don't be like the doubting disciples, who were torn between two options
 - Focusing on their own thoughts or on Jesus' thoughts for their lives

2. Jesus' Prays for Unity

- We often have a skewed view of unity
 - We think unity is “Be like me”
 - Vote like me, think like me, serve like me, worship like me, live like me
 - We ought to have differences
 - The fact that the New Testament is filled with commands to have unity means that there is room for differences
 - Those differences can be pretty large
 - **“Community is the place where the person you least want to live with always lives.”—Henri Nouwen**
- Jesus shows the purpose of unity
 - Jesus doesn't want us to have unity so we can have great potlucks
 - Jesus says it's so “The world may know that you sent Me”
 - People would know His mission
 - To purchase salvation and glorify God
- As Jesus prays for unity, He ties our unity with our purpose
 - **John 17:21-23**
 - We exist to show the truth about who Jesus is
 - He is from God and is God
 - We point people to Him
 - So they come to Jesus
 - So they learn about Jesus
 - So they look like Jesus
- Our unity comes from our mission, not because we share the same background or ideas
 - We may have different upbringings
 - We may have different goals
 - We may serve God in different ways
 - We are all in Christ
- Our unity will go on forever
 - Jesus makes an incredible request in **John 17:24**
 - He prays that we'll be where He is
 - Someday we will be!
 - **Revelation 7:9-12**
 - Unity can only last forever if it's built on something eternal
 - Not politics
 - Not culture
 - It's built on Jesus and His mission for us
 - Remember the Great Commission? He's with us to the end of the age. And then we're in heaven with Him!

3. What Happens When Jesus' Prayer for Unity Is Answered?

- He sends us
 - “Go and make disciples of all nations”
 - Specifically seen in **John 17:18**
 - Jesus hints at it a couple of times
 - **John 17:15-16**

- Jesus identifies what He's *not* praying for
 - While He's about to be taken out of the world, the disciples will be left to fulfill His mission
- **John 17:20-21**
 - The disciples will communicate who Jesus is and what He's done
 - People will believe their word
 - Including you!
- Will you go as Jesus sends?
 - To work, to school, to your family
- We will have a persuasive witness to the world
 - **John 17:21, 23**
 - The more deeply we know the Father and Jesus
 - Through His word—**John 17:8**
 - The more we are going to portray Who the Father and Jesus are
 - My response to God flows out of my knowledge of God
 - I know Him to be loving
 - I know Him to be trustworthy
 - I know Him to be holy
 - Will you portray who Jesus is?
- We will see God's glory
 - **John 17:22**
 - See and experience the beauty and majesty of God
 - Knowing Him more deeply
 - Knowing His presence
 - Seeing Him work in incredible ways
 - As we fulfill His mission
 - **John 14:12**

Conclusion

Ultimately, as we are united in the mission that Jesus gives us, God gets more glory

- **John 17:1, 5**
- Jesus didn't live His life to glorify Himself
 - Even though He deserved it
 - He *was* God, after all
 - He would receive glory and worship
 - Remember the beginning of the Great Commission?
 - When the 11 came, they worshipped Him
- Instead, Jesus lived His life to glorify the Father
 - Showing what He's like
 - Loving, holy, and just
 - Through words *and* actions
- To live like Jesus did, we have to give up the right to be selfish
 - Selfishness is the opposite of glorifying God
 - It may feel good at first
 - It's end is miserable

- Things won't always go our way
 - People won't always agree with us
 - People won't always treat you the way you think you should be treated
- If you can honestly say, "Lord, no matter what happens to me, whether I live or die, whether I am treated fairly or unfairly, whether people agree with me or not, Lord, you be glorified," you will be set free from misery
- Living like Jesus did, fulfilling our mission and glorifying God, we can find true unity
 - It affirms Jesus mission
 - It empowers our mission
 - It glorifies God
- How do you need to live in unity today?