

Lighthouse Bible Church

August 31st, 2014

John 17: 20 – 26 *Scripture Reading: Ephesians 4: 1 - 6*

‘Jesus prays for all believers’

Stand – Read – Pray

As we have seen in our study of John chapter 17, Jesus has been praying to the Father. In Verses 1 – 5 He was praying about His relationship with the Father and the authority and work the Father had given Him to do and that fact that He completed the work and was looking forward to being glorified with the Father.

In Verses 6 – 19, that we saw last week, Jesus was praying for His disciples, the 11 Apostles, who had been given to Him by the Father. Jesus is sharing with the Father that His disciples have received and kept His word and asks the Father to keep or guard them while they are in the world, especially from the evil one.

He prays for their sanctification, or setting apart from sin to holiness, while they are living in an unholy sinful world. In His prayer, we see that the means of sanctification being the truth of the word of God.

Jesus says these which you have given Me and I have kept in Your name, have glorified Me and My desire is to have My joy fulfilled in them, even in the midst of a hostile world that hates them because they have kept Your word.

And so, as we have seen, Jesus has prayed to the Father about His relationship with Him and His finished work. He has prayed to the Father about His disciples that were given to Him and belong to both of them. And now Jesus continues His prayer for another group of people that we see in Verse 20 and His prayer is for you and me who are born again believers.

And this prayer is generally the same as was prayed for, for the disciples and that was **that they may all be one**. Jesus affirmed the oneness He has with the Father and prayed that His disciples and all believers could have the same oneness. So let's look at it starting in Verse 20.

Verse 20: I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word.

Jesus says 'I'm not only praying for **these alone**, for these 11 Apostles, **but for those who will believe in Me through their word**. Here Jesus is praying for all believers that would ever believe in Him. Every believer up to and including this very day, His prayer is extending to.

Do you realize that you were on the heart and mind of God long before you every came to Christ as Savior. Your name, **Revelation 13: 8 & 17: 8** says **was written in the book of life BEFORE the foundation of the world**. And His intercessory prayer that began 2000 + years ago continues on still today **Hebrews 7: 25** says **because He ever lives to make intercession for us**.

Jesus says 'I am praying for all those **who will believe in Me**. All of those who will be saved by putting their faith and trust in Me and not as a result of any religious works they may do. That is what **Ephesians 2: 8 – 9** says. It is a saving faith that believes as **John 3: 16** and **Acts 16: 31** Remember what Jesus said in **John 3: 36** **He who believes in the Son has everlasting life and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God abides on him**.

And how will those people believe in Jesus? He says **through their word**. Through the word of the Apostles. Can you imagine what the Apostles would have thought as they were hearing this prayer? He is praying for others that would believe because of us sharing God's word.

Whether it was people in that day that heard the Apostles directly or read their writings or whether it was people in our day who have read their writings or heard **their** words preached by others, they are all involved in this intercessory prayer of Jesus. And that includes you and me and every other believer throughout redemptive history. 2000 years ago Jesus began praying for us and died for us because we are His personal possession and gift from the Father.

Because **faith comes by hearing**, hearing a message about Jesus Christ as His life, death, burial, resurrection and return. When the word is read and taught, as we do here, we carry on the Apostles ministry and words to this day in spite of our weaknesses, in spite of the worlds hatred of the word, and in spite of the opposition by Satan and his forces.

If you think about it; where would the church be today apart from this intercessory prayer our Lord for future believers through the ministry of the present apostles and all who would follow? This prayer guarantees the successful establishment of the church and future success of many evangelistic ministries where people will hear and read and believe in Christ. What is the prayer that He prays for future believers and us? Look at Verse 21.

Verse 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.

Jesus is praying for a oneness of all believers that is so apparent that the only conclusion an unbelieving world can make is that God sent Jesus to redeem mankind. Unfortunately, some denominations and churches today use this verse to mean that we are to set aside our doctrinal differences and embrace one another and not talk about or deal with anything that divides. They say we should be accepting of one another and get along. But that is not what He means by being one.

Because He says **AS You Father are in Me and I in You**. So whatever kind of oneness and unity He is praying for it is the same unity and oneness that He and the Father have. This oneness has to do with convincing the **world** that Jesus came from God, that Jesus is God in human form.

This oneness among all born again believers that the world can see is evidenced in the common salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone, by their common belief that the Bible is the inerrant, infallible word of God and by their common membership into the body of Christ as **Romans 12: 5** says.

When you became a born again believer you were placed into the body of Christ as one. **1st Corinthians 12: 13** says **for by one Spirit you were all baptized into one body**. It is the unity of the Spirit that binds us together as one in Christ and we entered into a love relationship with God the Father and God the Son as they have a love relationship together because that Father is in Him and He is in the Father.

Jesus says **that they may be one in Us**. We know that it is a love relationship first and foremost between God the Father and God the Son because Jesus says that at the end of **Verse 23 ‘as You have loved Me’**. In **Verse 24 ‘for you loved Me before the foundation of the world’** and in **Verse 26 ‘that the love with which you loved Me may be in them’**. And it is that love relationship with Jesus that sets us apart from the world and that the world sees and believes Jesus came from God and can transform lives and truly is a Savior of sinful people.

The sad thing today is that when the unbelieving world looks at the church they don't see, in many cases, that kind of oneness and love and unity that points them to a loving God. So Jesus is praying that we will be one in mind, heart, will, purpose and truth and love, as they are so that the world may believe.

And by the way, in **Ephesians 4: 1 – 6**, when we are unified in Spirit, when we are one, it says we are **one body**, the body of Christ composed of all believers, **one Spirit**, that indwells all believers and baptizes us into one body *1st Corinthians 12: 13*, **one hope**, the hope of eternal life in heaven, **one Lord**, the only way to the Father and head of the church, **one faith**, that saves and grows a believer, **one baptism**, baptism into the body of Christ and water baptism professing faith in Christ, **one God and Father**, the only true God.

Not only that, but the convincing argument to the world that there is a Savior that can change lives is the life of someone that has been changed. If someone claims to be saved and yet lives like the world and talks like the world, it will be hard for the world to believe that God sent His Son as its Savior. Then Jesus says in Verse 22.

Verse 22: and the glory which You gave me I have given them that they may be one just as We are one.

Remember, as we have seen before, that **glory** is all the divine character and attributes of God and Christ put on display. Jesus says **the glory You gave Me**. In other words, Jesus is saying that God You gave Me, in His humanness, all of Your glory, all of Your divine character and attributes; and now I am going to give them to them.

How is He giving His glory to believers? He comes to live within them. Remember what Jesus said in **John 14: 23** ...**We talking about the Father and Son will come to him and make Our home with him**. And of course, as we have seen, the Holy Spirit does as well, so we have the full trinity of God living within us to be able to show the glory of God to the world. That is why He says in Verse 23.

Verse 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.

You see, we couldn't live in perfect (or complete) unity, and oneness with God apart from Him living within us. And the oneness and unity that God the Father and God the Son and God the Spirit have together is the same oneness and unity that Jesus prays that we will have as well.

And He prays for that so that **the world**, again, **may know that God sent Jesus** as the Savior of the world and that **God loves them**, those who are saved, **just as He loves the Son**. All of the greatest expressions of love that you see the Father show the Son are the same expressions of love that He shows for us. Isn't that incredible. So Jesus not only prays for our oneness and unity but look what else He prays in Verse 24.

Verse 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.

Think about this! Jesus is praying that we can be with Him. And He already sees Himself as being with the Father in heaven, in glory and He is asking the Father to grant the eternal presence of us all with Him.

You see, it was God's plan from the foundation of the world that we be with Him in heaven because our names were written in His book of life before the foundation of the world. And Jesus said in **John 6: 39 all that He**, the Father, **has given Me I will raise up on the last day**. To be with Christ in heaven is God's eternal plan for His children and Jesus' intercessory prayer is that He will do what He said He would. Jesus is praying in the will of the Father and has a **desire**

It is hard to believe that Jesus would want us to be with Him. We want to be with Him and that is our hope and desire, but for Him to want us to be with Him is incredible. But it is understandable because we are part of **those whom You gave Me**, Jesus says. We are the ones God gave Christ and He just wants what is His; and the rest of Verse 24 tells us why.

That they may behold My glory which You have given Me. He wants them and all of us to see His full glory. Oh the disciples got a glimpse of it in **Matthew 17: 1 – 2** at His transfiguration where **His face shown like the sun and His clothes became as white as light.** But that was nothing compared to what His glory will be like in heaven.

When Jesus comes back to this earth, He will come with great glory. Look at **Matthew 24: 27, 29 – 30**

And when He does come back **Philippians 3: 20 – 21** says **who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His GLORIOUS body...**

And when He takes us to heaven and we are around His throne of glory we will say, **Revelation 5: 12 – 13** **worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and GLORY and blessing ... blessing and honor and GLORY and power be to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever.**

He wants us in heaven to see His full glory. That is amazing. The glory of heaven won't be the streets of gold or the pearl gate or the new Jerusalem or the river of life, it will be Christ Himself in all His glory. **Revelation 21: 22** says the glory of Christ will be **the temple of heaven.** **Revelation 21: 23** says the glory of Christ is such that the **city has no need of the sun nor of the moon to shine in it for the glory of God illuminates it.** Jesus wants us there to see all of His glory and that is why we should want to go to heaven as well.

And all of that is possible because as the end of Verse 24 says **for you loved Me before the foundation of the world.** This was God's plan from eternity past where the Father and Son enjoyed perfect love and fellowship together and shared all their glory together and planned and chose His elect people to someday enjoy eternal life in heaven where they too could see their glory.

Verses 24 – 25: o righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You and these have known that You sent Me. 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.

Jesus ends His prayer by saying 'I am only praying for those who know you because they have known Me and have known that I came from You to save those You have given Me. These are the ones I want to be in glory with Me.

Again, Jesus knows the will of the Father and He prays the will of the Father. Prayer isn't about changing God's mind, it is about affirming His will. How do we know the will of the Father? Through His word, right? So the more we know His word the more we can pray in His will. And there is certainly nothing wrong with praying the word itself. For example: **Colossians 1: 9 – 12**

Jesus always prayed in the power of the Spirit according to the will of God and the Father always answers His prayer. All that He has prayed here WILL come to pass and that is exciting.

Jesus also **declared Gods name**, God's divine attributes and character to them and because of that, God's **love will be in them.** The same love that God the Father loved God the Son with, will be in them as well.

If we could sum all of what Jesus prayed for His disciples and us it would be Him asking the Father to:

Keep us from the evil one Vs 11, 15

Unify us as one in Christ Vs 11, 20, 22

Fill us with Joy Vs 13

Sanctify us Vs 17

Bring us to Himself in heaven Vs 24

We can experience the fullness of God's love Vs 26

And as believers, when we experience God answering these prayers for us, we then become a living witness and testimony about Christ for the unbelieving world to see.

Is that what they see in your life. Are you victorious over temptation from the evil one? Are you unified in Christ in your thoughts and actions? Are you filled with His joy regardless of what you may be going through? Are you living a sanctified, set apart from sin and obedient to His word life? Are you looking forward to the promise of eternal life in heaven and to see the glory of Christ all because the love of God has been shed abroad in your heart?

If not, you need to give your life to Jesus today.

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Revelation 13: 8, Revelation 17: 8
Hebrews 7: 25, Ephesians 2: 8 – 9
John 3: 16, 36, Acts 16: 31

Verse 21:

Romans 12: 5, 1st Corinthians 12: 13
Ephesians 4: 1 – 6

Verse 22:

John 14: 23

Verses 23 – 24:

John 6: 39, Matthew 17: 1 – 2
Matthew 24: 27, 29 – 30, Philippians 3: 20 – 21
Revelation 5: 12 – 13, Revelation 21: 22 – 23

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