

Jesus Prays For YOU! – John 17:20-26

John 17:20-26 NKJV 20 “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 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. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 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. 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. 25 O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. 26 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.”

We've been spending some amazing time in John 17. So far we saw how in the first 5 verses Jesus prayed for Himself. We then saw last week His prayer for the 11 disciples who would become the apostles. Today we reach the final section, where Jesus turns His prayer towards the future. So far He had been praying for Himself and His present disciples, but now He looks forward to those who would believe. Jesus now takes time to pray for us. He prays for the church across the ages that would be after His disciples. From Acts to today, this is what He's praying for.

We see several different areas that Jesus prays for us today, and if Jesus is taking the time to pray for these specific things, I would venture to assume that they are likely things that we should be praying for and should make important in our lives.

I. Jesus Prays For UNITY

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

- As we look at this section, we will notice something interesting, the burden and focus of His prayer for the Church across the ages was that they be united.
- The disciples at many times had a spirit of selfishness, competition and disunity:
 - *Luke 9:46–48 NKJV “Then a dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a little child and set him by Him, and said to them, “Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all will be great.” -*
 - *Luke 22:24–26 NKJV - “Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’ But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves.”*

- However, it is very clear and apparent that Jesus was not just concerned about that for the disciples, but for us. I wonder what Jesus thinks about when He sees the condition of the Church today.
- Especially in the west, Christians are more divided than ever before. Take a few minutes on any social media platform and you'll quickly find a post or a thread of Christians fighting each other and tearing each other apart. Many groups claim that others are heretics over issues that are secondary or tertiary, and where the Bible allows diversity.
- The Christian Church in our country suffers greatly because of the same spirit that affected the disciples. There's even one specific denominational group that sees it as totally ok to go into other churches and steal their members. They go in and convince the people that their church is teaching heresy because of differences of belief in end times, prophecy, and a few other areas, and they seek to steal them to their church.
- Considering Jesus prayed for unity, doing such things are a despicable, disgusting, and childish thing to do. I genuinely wonder what Jesus thinks of people who think that is ok, to steal people from other churches, that though might believe certain non-essential doctrines differently, are very good churches.
- Disunity and infighting is something the Church has seen since its birth. In fact, the church almost ended in Jerusalem when there was disunity between the Jewish and Greek widows early on. Then later on in Acts 15, there was a church council because the church almost split again over the issue of circumcision and how people were saved. You don't need to look deeply into Church history to see that staying united has been a struggle for Christians for a very long time.
- This is likely why the Bible emphasizes Christian unity so many times:
 - *Ephesians 4:1-6 NKJV "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."*
 - *1 Corinthians 1:10 NKJV "Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."*
 - *1 Corinthians 12:12-14 NKJV "For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many."*
- There are also many verses that say to strongly correct and even discipline those who cause division. In fact, the Bible even tells us how God feels about this!
 - *1 Corinthians 3:1-4 NLT - Dear brothers and sisters, when I was with you I couldn't talk to you as I would to spiritual people. I had to talk as though you*

belonged to this world or as though you were infants in Christ. 2 I had to feed you with milk, not with solid food, because you weren't ready for anything stronger. And you still aren't ready, 3 for you are still controlled by your sinful nature. You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn't that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren't you living like people of the world? 4 When one of you says, "I am a follower of Paul," and another says, "I follow Apollos," aren't you acting just like people of the world?

- *Proverbs 6:16-19 NKJV "These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.*
- *Romans 16:17-18 NLT "17 And now I make one more appeal, my dear brothers and sisters. Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people's faith by teaching things contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them. 18 Such people are not serving Christ our Lord; they are serving their own personal interests. By smooth talk and glowing words they deceive innocent people."*

- Here's the bottom line, Jesus HATES division. Those who are going around gossiping, causing confusion, causing division, splitting churches, speaking badly about leadership behind their back, God hates that.
- Jesus wants us to be UNITED. Now, this does not mean that all Christians should be in one denomination. I am thankful for denominations! Some people hate it, they think everyone should be just like them. They think everyone should only sing hymns or only use specific guitars, or only teach from one specific translation. But I'll be honest, I'm glad not every Church is like us.
- I love our Church, this is where I feel I can grow, I can learn, I can meet the Lord. That's why I started coming here 14 years ago, and have been working here for 10 years coming up in June. But I also know we aren't for everybody. I'm thankful there are pentecostals and baptists and "Discipulos de Cristo" and other denominations that are different, because they can reach people we can't.
- We have a specific style, and calling and format that is perfect and great for some people, but others need a more liturgical setting, others need more emotional setting.
- So when it comes to the topic of unity amongst Christians, when it comes to the greater, universal church, it means that on the essential doctrines, UNITY, in the non-essentials, DIVERSITY.
- It means that I might not go to your church or do things like you would, but if your car breaks down, I'll help you. Because though we may disagree on certain things, we are both Christians and can encourage and love one another. We can agree to disagree on the non-essentials, and worship Jesus together in how He leads us as separate local churches.
 - *A great illustration of this is George Whitefield and Charles Wesley. Such a powerful evangelist was George Whitefield that thirty thousand people would regularly attend his open-air meetings. So anointed and eloquent was he, history records many orators and actors would come just to watch him. Charles Wesley, a contemporary of Whitefield's, was also preaching to multitudes. Yet so diverse were the views of these two men on certain doctrines, they took out*

advertisements in the newspapers explaining why they believed what they did—and why the other was amiss. People thought these men hated each other—until one reporter asked Whitefield, “Tell me, Mr. Whitefield, do you expect to see Charles Wesley in heaven?” “No,” answered Whitefield. “He’s going to be so close to the throne, and I’m going to be so far back, I’ll never see him.”

- THIS is how we fulfill unity and diversity!
- In a local church setting, so amongst us, that manifest by caring for one another, meeting each others needs, putting someone else's needs above my own, praying and singing to one another.
- Why is this unity so important? Because the world is watching! **"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."**
 - The world is watching how we live. Why would non-christians want to be like us, if we are just as divisive, nasty, and cruel as their coworkers who don't believe in Jesus are. Jesus said the world would know us by our love, but often we're known for our divisions.
 - In order to fix this, we must do our part. We have to confess to Jesus our own selfishness and division, if we've gossiped, if we've envied, if we've lied. The Christians Church needs to remember that our unity is not based on what denomination we belong to, what movies we like, what political party we ascribe to, or what sports we play. Verse 22 tells us where our unity lies.

22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:

- What unites us is JESUS. His WORK OF GLORY!
 - *"What is the basis for true Christian unity? The person and work of Jesus Christ and His glory. He has already given His glory to us, and He promises that we will further experience that glory when we get to heaven! All true believers have God’s glory within, no matter what they may look like on the outside. Christian harmony is not based on the externals of the flesh but the internals and eternal of the Spirit in the inner person. We must look beyond the elements of our first birth—race, color, abilities, etc.— and build our fellowship on the essentials of our new birth." - Warren Wiersbe*
- The basis of our unity is the Glory of God, the Work of Jesus, Jesus Himself! He shares His glory with us even now, despite all our failures and weaknesses.
- Because Jesus has done a work within me, no matter where in the world I go, if I find another follower of Jesus, I am already united with them!
- I can have fellowship and camaraderie with them because Jesus is our unity! Our culture is obsessed with politics, race, class, and so many other things that divide us. But for the Christian, our focus is on what unites us!
- *"Within the church of historic Christianity there have been wide divergences of opinion and ritual. Unity, however, prevails wherever there is a deep and genuine experience of Christ; for the fellowship of the new birth transcends all historical and*

denominational boundaries. Paul of Tarsus, Luther of Germany, Wesley of England, and Moody of America would find deep unity with each other, though they were widely separated by time, by space, by nationality, by educational background, and by ecclesiastical connections." - Merrill Tenney

- It is time for us to throw out the window the things that divide us like the early church did. They broke the culture because within the church, there was no slave or free man, there was no man or woman, no black, white, or brown person. Within the church, it was just Christians.
- Every one was equal because all of them had been sinners saved by grace. There were instances where the slaves were the pastors to their masters! The Church turned the culture upside down, and that is why the government of the time hated them. Because they threatened their power and way of life for merely treating each other with human decency and respect and loving one another.
- It is the person and work of Jesus who is our UNITY! His Glory unites us!

II. Jesus Prays For LOVE

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.

- Through our unity and love, the world will see the work of Jesus and the love of God in us.
- This is likely why, in these last chapters of John, Jesus gave such an emphasis to them about loving one another and serving one another:
 - *John 13:34 NKJV - "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another."*
 - *John 15:12–13 NKJV - "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."*
 - *John 15:17 NKJV - "These things I command you, that you love one another."*
- Jesus knew that if unbelievers walked into a place where the slave and the master worshiped together, treated each other with respect, and served one another, it would blow their minds.
- I am so blessed because one of the things that a lot of people say about our church is that it is such a loving church. That it is warm and welcoming. Let that never depart from us. Let no root of bitterness or deceit take root in your heart and make you divide from the rest. Jesus is praying that the world will see the work of God in His church, so they would know that Jesus truly does transform people.
- Let us continue to love one another, be patient with one another, to forgive one another, and to encourage one another, so that the world may see it and know that Jesus is real, and come to know Him.
- *"One of the things that most impresses the world is the way Christians love each other and live together in harmony. It is this witness that our Lord wants in the world "that*

the world may believe that thou hast sent me". The lost world cannot see God, but they can see Christians, and what they see in us is what they will believe about God. If they see love and unity, they will believe that God is love. If they see hatred and division, they will reject the message of the gospel." - Warren Wiersbe

- *"This reminds us of the importance of unity and love among Christians. It is as if Jesus gave the world permission to doubt both His mission and His love if the world does not see unity and love among believers." -David Guzik*
- Now please remember that there are other reasons why the world doesn't believe. Too many Christians attack each other for the world's unbelief, which is counter productive. The Bible tells us that they will choose not to believe because they love darkness rather than light. But the point here is let's make sure we don't give them ammunition to be able to deny the Lord. If they choose to do so, it's on them, not us.

III. Jesus Prays For COMPLETION!

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."

- Here Jesus is praying that the unity would be COMPLETED! Jesus is praying that we would be brought to meet Him in Heaven!
- Have you realized that Jesus is excited for the day you get to meet Him face to face? Have you ever pondered that Jesus is looking forward to having you by Him?
- Jesus is eager and looks forward to the day where His Kingdom comes to the earth, He looks forward to the day you join Him in Heaven, He is looking forward to spending time with you. Do you feel the same way?
- Do you look forward to your quiet time with the Lord? Do you realize He looks forward to meet you there?
- Do you look forward to Heaven? To the Kingdom Come? Do you realize Jesus is eager to have you there?!

25 O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. 26 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."

- As Jesus finishes His prayer, these verses are not a petition, but a conclusion and summary of His work. Notice that even as He is about to face the cross, His Words are "Oh Righteous Father!" His final words in His longest recorded prayer are ones of worship and love to the Father!
- In these closing words He makes several important declarations:
 - He declared that the world does not know the Father, but that we believers know Him because the Son has revealed the Father to us. The world may choose to be blind and in darkness, but we have the privilege to know the Father, and reveal Him to the world!

- He declares the importance of truth and love in the church. The Church must uphold the truth of God's Word and defend it. But it must be done through love.
 - *"It has well been said that truth without love is brutality, but love without truth is hypocrisy. The mind grows by taking in truth, but the heart grows by giving out in love. Knowledge alone can lead to pride, and love alone can lead to wrong decisions. Christian love must not be blind!" - Warren Wiersbe*
- He declares victory and triumph. When He says He has "**declared to them your name, and will declare it**", it is the idea that He has and will accomplish the mission of the cross. Jesus knew He had run His race and would finish His work!

APPLICATION:

1. Choose To Be United To The Church. (Come and fellowship, defend fellow Christians, exhort, pray, sing and spend time with one another. But you must CHOOSE!)
2. Choose To Keep The Unity Of The Body. (Forgive other christians , follow Matthew 18, refuse to gossip, refuse to be divisive, look our for the interest of others, hold others more highly than yourself)
3. Choose To Examine Yourself. (Regularly pray the Lord keep your heart clean, to reveal any bitterness or envy or anger, to help you be filled with love and grace and wisdom).