

an ancient prayer on our behalf

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. Slide2 Harvest Festival: this Thurs. *A church w/o walls community event*. We still need about 30 volunteers. Candy & baked goods.
- B. Slide3 Rick Mossa Retirement: Rick was on staff at CCTV for 13 yrs. Then came on w/ us for 17 yrs. Before that went *door-to-door* throughout Bellflower. We've served on the brd at Colina de Luz for 20+ yrs. [old spice/vinegar, pstr Todd. Suit at door/flush drugs]
1. What are a few practical things that has helped you in serving the Lord all these years?
 2. You are known as a **prankster** around here. Tell my favorite story about what you did to Romulo.
 3. What's next for pastor Rick?
- C. Prayer: God we start by *recalibrating* our minds, hearts & souls toward you...rather than towards *the things of this world*. God our goal isn't to get something *from* you, God our goal **IS** You.

II. Slide4a **Intro:** *an ancient prayer on our behalf*

- A. Ch.17 Outline: *Jesus prayed for Himself (1-5). For the disciples (6-19). For us (20-26).*
- B. Here, Jesus' prayer turned specifically to those who **would come to believe** in Him through the disciples message & testimony.
1. Every true Christian can be assured of being **included** in this prayer.
 2. Though Jesus doesn't call us **by name** in our text this morning, it is very clear that He had **each of us** in mind.
 - a) Let's eavesdrop on an ancient prayer *on our behalf*.
- C. Slide4b Outline: God's **Gifts**. God's **Unity**. God's **Glory**. God's **Love**. God's **Withness**.

III. Slide5a **GOD'S GIFTS (20) we are**

- A. Read vs.6 - reminder, we are **Gifts** from the Father to the Son. (6 x's this chapter)
- B. He asks for us - *what do you think you are, God's gift to humanity?* Nope, to Jesus.
1. Jesus is praying for this & every generation. *He's asked for us*. [put your name in]

C. **Through their word** - their mission, our mission.

1. In *the Church Age* the apostles (& following believers) would **preach**, **and** people would be **converted**, **and** *the church* would be **formed**.
2. *Slide5b The church is never more than one generation away from extinction; all it would take is for a single generation not to hand the **word** on. But it's never happened.*¹ Answered prayer!

IV. *Slide6a* **GOD'S UNITY (21-23)** *unity starts in Him*

A. Unity starts with God.

1. **Even as we are one.** Jesus is talking about the **relational** nature of God.
2. **Think of the Trinitarian God of the Bible. Father, Son and Holy Spirit** doing everything together, loving one another, serving one another.
 - a) They are by **essence** and by **nature relational**.
3. They also are **relational** and **conversational**. **Jesus praying to the Father here, is no different than what He always did/does.** They **talk** about everything **and** have for all eternity. **So unity and oneness starts with God. This is our precedent and pattern.**
4. *Slide6b* There is **single headship & plural leadership** in the **Trinity** (in gov of God)
5. There is **single headship** and **plural leadership** in the **family**. (in gov of fam)
 - a) There was a violation of this governmental order in heaven. It was a coup, a rebellion, by Lucifer. *Unity is godly, division is demonic.*

B. Is Jesus praying for a uniting of all the **branches** of the **Christian church** (*i.e.* the ecumenical movement)? **No.**

1. *Slide6c* **Unity not uniformity. Unity is relational not organizational.**
2. **Why is there so many churches in Protestantism? Isn't this a lack of Unity?** **Not** necessarily. **Yes** Protestantism is splintered, we have many interpretations ...**but** on the minor doctrines...**not** on the majors.

¹ N.T.Wright, John For Everyone, Part 2, Ch.17.

a) Catholics are equally splintered as you study what the **Jesuits** believe, vs. the **Franciscans** vs. the **Dominicans** (again in the *minors*).

C. So Jesus is asking for a unity of **love**, a unity of **obedience** to God and His Word, **and** a united **commitment to His will**.

D. **That they all may be one** - 3 x's.

1. We recognize **diversity** you & I have within us. What we need is **unity**.

a) **Slide6d** Our coins say, *E pluribus unam, out of the many one*.

2. **But what Unity** is Jesus speaking of here? He's speaking of a unity of **belief**. **A unity that originates from shared convictions**.

a) In the narthex of an impressive **church in Berkeley**, Calif, hang huge portraits of influential human leaders: *Ghandi, Lincoln, Jesus, Luther, a president, & a philosopher*. Engraved in bronze above them is a quotation from the bible. It reads, *For you are all the children of God*. The quote is from Gal.3:26. **But** the last part of the verse is omitted...*through faith in Christ Jesus*.

(1) **Belief** is what *binds us together*. **Not** a vague, nebulous faith, **but a very specific faith** in Jesus Christ.

3. **Slide6e** We should have a **unity** of **principles** **and** a **diversity** of **methods**.

The Bibles principles are timeless and unchanging. Our personal or church methods are timely and changing. So principles do not change, methods do.

E. **Slide7 Creed** = *credo* (Lt.) = I believe. *A Statement of Faith*.

1. **Nicene Creed** (from city of Nicaea, 325) **Eastern** church followed. [**Arian heresy**]

2. **Apostles Creed** (390)- **Western** church followed (both R.C. & Protestants).

3. **I believe in one holy, catholic, and apostolic church**.

4. **One** (unity. Eph.4:5,6 *there is 1 body 1 sp, 1 glorious hope, 1 Lord, 1 faith, 1 baptism, 1 God & Father of all*). **holy** (set apart). **catholic** (universal). **apostolic** (founded on the teachings of the apostles). **church**.

a) The 4 marks of the Church. *aka* the attributes of the church.

F. *Fellowship of the new birth* transcends all historical & denominational boundaries.

1. **Merill C. Tenney** in his commentary on John said, *Paul of Tarsus, Luther of Germany, Wesley of England, & Moody of America would find deep unity w/*

each other, *though they were widely separated by time, by space, by nationality, by educational background, & by ecclesiastical connections.*

2. Jesus *didn't* pray for **uniformity of practice, or unanimity of thinking, or union between all religious organizations.** He prays for **unity**...a oneness which only *the Holy Spirit* can bring about. *And* that *can't* be achieved through committee or consensus...*only through faith in & love for Jesus.*²

G. *The result of this unity* will be that the world will *see, and know*, that this kind of **human community**, united across all traditional barriers of *race, custom, gender, or class*, can only come from the action of the creator God.

1. *Slide8* Thomas Manton said, ***Divisions in the church breed atheism in the world.*** So the converse is true, ***unity in the church builds belief in the world.***

a) *It's a visible unity - that the world may know. that the world may believe.*

H. *On one hand we have unity already* in Christ. *On the other* we should *Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.* Eph.4:3^{NLT}

V. *Slide9* **GOD'S GLORY (22,24)** *beyond the cross, resurrection style glory*

A. (22) *note* past tense *the glory you have given me I have given to them* (glory)

1. Rom.8:30 *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*
2. The promise of our glory is the promise, **almost incredible & only possible** by the work of Christ.

B. (24) His prayer was that we be **with Him** in heaven, where He would be surrounded **in His glory.**

VI. *Slide10a* **GOD'S LOVE (23,24,26)** *even as*

A. (23) *Loved them even as you loved Me* - the love of **God The Father** for the redeemed (3:16) is sometimes *overlooked because of* the emphasis on *the love of Christ* for us.

B. We are **loved** by God, *not merely pitied, but delighted in,* *as an artist delights in his work or a father in a son.*

² Charles Swindoll; John; pg.45

1. **The Father loves Brian as much as He loves Jesus.** (can you say that?)
2. And He loves us with such a perfect love. A love we haven't begun to understand. It's **untainted** love. We've never loved anyone like this.

C. (25,26) The Father **loves** the Son. The Son **loves** us. **And** we in turn are to **love** others.

1. This is to be a love that flows **deep & wide & passes over any rocks of petty differences.**

D. **Christian love is visible & tangible.** God not only **tells** us He loves us, He **shows** it.

1. **Slide10b** Rom.5:8 **But God demonstrates His own love** toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
2. True love *demonstrates, illustrates, proves, & confirms,* itself. **Christian love is visible & tangible & radical.**

VII.Slide11a GOD'S WITNESS (24,26) presence [*Merriam Webster: witness* = the state or fact of being close to or connected w/someone or something]

A. (24-26) **In this prayer** Jesus asks the Father to **secure our destiny.** It's in this prayer of vs.24 that answers *why believers die. Father I desire...*

1. Can you think of a foundation more secure?
2. **Slide11b** That Jesus would be **pleased** for us to be **with Him.** Imagine w/me ...the thought that **any** of us could possibly be a **real ingredient** in the divine happiness of Jesus. [He so wants us **with Him**] *Oh death where is your sting?*

B. (24) Jesus doesn't request *temporal prosperity on earth*, **instead**, He prays for your **sanctification** and **unity** while here. **And** for the *gathering of the saints* to **heaven.**

C. The whole prayer comes down to this in the end...It's about the love of the father surrounding Jesus, *and this same love, as a bond & badge,* surrounding all Jesus' people, making him **present to them** **and present through them** to the world.

1. Last prayer: **Father your love & My personal presence in them.**