

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

Turn your bibles with me to the Gospel of John

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through the Gospel of John

For the past couple of weeks – we have been going through the part of John's gospel where we find the real Lord's prayer

A prayer that Jesus prayed mere moments before He was arrested – and knowing He was hours away from being nailed to a Roman cross.

It is an intimate prayer that Jesus prayed – out loud in the presence of His disciples.

Not only did He pray it out loud – it was recorded for us

So through it, we may know how to pray and also, that we may know what was in our Savior's heart the night before He endured the cross.

And so far through our studies, we have been given insight on what was in the heart of Jesus regarding Himself – that was the first part of the prayer at the beginning of the chapter

What was in the heart of Jesus regarding the eleven disciples that were going to continue the work through the empowering of the Holy Spirit

And we are now in the last section of Jesus prayer where we find out what was in His heart as He was praying for you and for me some 2000 years ago.

These are Jesus' last word in His teaching ministry that John records for us and they are about us

Our lives today were so important to Jesus that He prayed for us in the shadow of the cross.

Let's pray...

**[Jhn 17:20-26 NKJV] 20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;**

I want to make sure that we truly grasp what is going on in Jesus prayer –

Again, He knows what awaits Him in the next few hours

And He is setting time aside to pray you and for me.

Not only is He praying for the eleven disciples – for those that He has been ministering to for the last three and a half years.

He is praying for those that are going to hear the proclamation of the gospel by His disciples and in many of our cases – for those that are going to read this proclamation of the gospel

Jesus knew – looking through the annals of time, as God in human flesh, that you and I would believe.

Church, these are truly comforting words –

Because in His prayer – Jesus is assuming two things are going to happen.

Jesus assumes that His eleven disciples (who currently are by His side with troubled hearts) He assumes that upon His death - they are going to continue on and proclaim the gospel

And it also assumes that their proclamation of the gospel is going to be effective.

That they are upon the receiving of the holy Spirit, they are going to be witnesses of Him – they are going to share the good news and that people are going to respond to the good news and trust in Him

Jesus, as He is praying – doesn't just know that the cross is in the horizon

He doesn't just know that the resurrection is on the horizon

But, He knows that through Holy Spirit's coming – that these disciples are going to be kept (as we saw in His prayer a few weeks ago) and that their message was going to be effective

Jesus knew that God's predetermined plan of redemption for the world was going to work.

So what was Jesus praying for us -

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.**

So the first thing that we see in Jesus heart regarding His future disciples (including you and I) was unity.

He is praying that they all may be one

He is praying that all who believe in Him will be united.

This is what is on His mind before the cross

He is not worried about the pain He is about to endure

He is not worried about the nails piercing His hand

He is concerned about the unity among believers

Now, earlier in His prayer

Go up to verse 11 – as He was praying for the eleven remaining disciples

**[Jhn 17:11 NKJV] 11 "Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We [are].**

Again, unity

Why was it important that they have unity – because Jesus says that the result of their unity in Him– leads to joy (13) - (not just any joy - His joy – a supernatural joy)

Why is there such an emphasis on unity?

Because the opposite of unity is division – and division leads to strife and ultimately to defeat.

You see, church – it is the enemies' goal to create disunity and strife among the believers because he knows that the result will be division.

And division always destroys

Again – division always destroys

And division will destroy families,

Division will destroy marriages

Division will destroy churches and

Division will destroy even nations.

**[Mat 12:25 NKJV] 25 But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.**

**[Mar 3:24-25 NKJV] 24 "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 "And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.**

So the enemy is constantly stirring up division among the brethren

The enemy wants us to choose a side against each other

Oh you go to such and such church – I heard they don't believe in – fill in the blank

Oh you go to that church – they play drums in that church or the pastor there doesn't dress the way pastors are supposed to dress.

It is so common – that we may not even be perceptive to it anymore and we fall into its temptations

Church –

One of the greatest witnesses to the world is when we learn to get along with each other in unity.

But there's something very troubling when we start backbiting and criticizing one another.

And here is the thing church – much too often – we make our standards for unity the wrong things.

Our unity should be over the fact that we serve the same Lord!

Our unity should be over the fact that we are united in the body of Christ by regeneration in our belief that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone, in Christ alone.

**[Rom 12:5 NKJV] 5 so we, [being] many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.**

That being said – we shouldn't confuse unity with uniformity.

Uniformity has everyone looking and thinking alike –

You might remember the cult in San Diego – 1997, Heaven's Gate

They are the ones that committed mass suicide – 39 individuals

That afternoon, they went to the same restaurant, ordered the same meal, got home, put on the same black outfit, the same shoes and drank the same poison – thinking that they were going to be transported to a spaceship.

Unity is not uniformity

Unity is a oneness of heart, a similarity of purpose and an agreement on major points of doctrine – we would call those the essentials of the faith

Unity is like mindedness

It is not conformity where we all believe exactly the same things

Like mindedness means we generally believe the same way and our disagreements are minor and secondary

I was reading this week about George Whitefield -

He was a preacher in the 1700's and he was greatly used by the Lord in bringing the revival to North America and England

John Wesley was another preacher during this time – however, they had a major disagreement when it came to a doctrinal issue.

And so, Whitefield and Wesley would take up ads in the paper arguing their positions against one another.

People thought these men hated each other because of their differences —until one reporter asked Whitefield the question,

*“Tell me, Mr. Whitefield, do you expect to see John 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.”*

Here these two guys had very different views doctrinally, and very different flavors in ministry—but they had unity through love in their diversity.”

Their disagreements in the minor things submitted to the primary things that they believed.



The same goes for us today –

If someone doesn't believe that Jesus is God – then we can't have fellowship with them

If someone doesn't believe in the virgin birth – then we can't have fellowship with them

If someone believes that Jesus is the brother of Lucifer or that Jesus is just another angel or a created being– then we can't have fellowship with them.

They believe in a different Jesus than we do

But when it comes to secondary things – we can have disagreements with them and still be in unity with them.

I had you make a note of the last portion of the verse –

that the world may believe that You sent Me

Here is why –

The love of God working thru His people (as we walk in unity)—is the greatest testimony to the world that we belong to Jesus

That is why unity is so important among the brethren

Write this verse down -

**[1Jo 2:8-10 NKJV] 8 Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. 9 He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. 10 He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.**

The way our love for God is manifested is in how we treat each other.

Anyone who says they love God and yet hates other Christians, regardless of what church they go to or denomination they belong to—is a liar and deceiving themselves.

The early church had divisions – just like we have them today

And therefore, if you have ever studied his epistles – which we will probably do next, once we finish with John.

John writes to the churches to encourage them and remind them that God is love and that He resides in us –

God's love is perfected in the believer.

God's love is made perfect in you and me, sinners saved by the grace of God.

He reveals His love through us.

And it is only His love will heal the divisions in the church

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.

I had you make a note of the three that's in these two verses–

The word "that" shows the purpose that something is done for

Jesus said – I have come so that they may have life

I have come for the purpose that they may have life

So here, Jesus gives us glory for three purposes

1) That we would have unity, just like the unity of the Father and Jesus, and the unity of Jesus being in us and the Father in Him.

2) That we would be made perfect in unity.

3) And that the world may know that the Father has sent Jesus, and that the Father has loved us just as much as He loved Jesus.

So what is this glory that Jesus is speaking about –

First - Turn to Ephesians 4

**[Eph 4:1-4 NKJV] 1 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;**

Did you notice verse 3

This unity that Jesus is talking about –

**We must endeavor to keep this unity – notice.....we do not create it.**

God never commands us to create unity among believers.

He has created it by His Spirit; our duty is to recognize it and keep it.

**The Holy Spirit is the basis for our unity as disciples of Jesus**

So what glory is Jesus referring to?

**God's attributes/ His nature**

God's nature was instilled in us at the moment of salvation—

When the Holy Spirit came to live inside us...

He is referring to the unity and oneness of Himself with His Church—

He being the Head and we being His Body— connected to Jesus and one another through the Holy Spirit.

Since we are one with Him through the indwelling Holy Spirit—we have access to God's attributes which, when we walk in them (when we live a Spirit-filled life)—we bring glory to God by showing the world what He is truly like.

**[Rom 8:30 NKJV] 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.**

Here is the lesson for you and me

The more we understand and operate under the power and authority that God has given to us, the greater the witness will be to those around us.

**"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill"** – that is what Jesus said in Matt 5

When people see God's power at work through our life, they will glorify our Father in heaven.

**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."**

Remember – we have to keep this in context

Jesus was about to go away (back to heaven and the Father) and He would long for the day when we (His Bride) would be reunited with Him in heaven—and He wanted us to desire with all of our hearts to see Him face to face where we would never be separated from Him ever again

He prayed that the glory of heaven would fill our hearts and motivate our lives—not the glory of earth or anything it has to offer.

It is what Paul told the church in Colosse –

To focus on the eternal / on the vertical and not the temporal / horizontal

**[Col 3:1-4 NKJV] 1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ [who is] our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.**

One day we will see the crucified Lamb standing.

Executed lambs don't stand.

This one does.

One day we'll see the crucified Lamb standing, in His glory, and we will never again be the same.

One of the other things that we also see in our closing verse is how much does God love us.

His love is eternal toward His Son

And in His prayer – Jesus prays that the same eternal love that the Father had toward Him (agape – unconditional love) we will fully experience God's love for us and we will have His love indwelling in us.

This comes back full circle to unity

You see, loving people as God commands with His agape love is impossible for us—it is beyond our ability because it's a supernatural, divine love!

This is not a love one can generate or manufacture through hard work and raw determination.

It is not a love that can be produced in the fallen heart of men—in other words, it is not in me to love like this—

God's love has to be given to us.

**[Rom 5:5 NKJV] 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**

It is through our abiding in Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit flowing through us that this kind of love can become a reality in our lives to touch others around us—

Amen

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I



accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Abiding in Jesus is the key to everything He prayed for His disciples on the night before the cross.

In fact, it is the key to everything God wants for us in the Christian life in the way of bearing the Fruit of the Holy Spirit and fulfilling the work He has called us to here on earth.

All made possible by the Cross which we will begin to look at in detail next week

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'