John 17:20-26 | Sunday October 27, 2024

We started studying the upper room back at the beginning of Chapter 13. Today we reach the conclusion 5 chapters later. We have seen Jesus heart and care in trying to prepare the disciples for His departure. He washed their feet (13:5), warned them about a betrayer in the group (13:21), gave them a new command to love (13:34), predicted Peter's denial (13:38), promised to go prepare a place for them and to one day bring them there (14:3), promised the Holy Spirit (14:16), taught them how to abide (15:4), warned them about coming persecution (15:19), taught about the ministry of the Holy Spirit (16:8), offered them His peace because He overcame the world (16:33), and lastly He has been praying for their protection (17:15). Jesus has poured so much into these 11 men on His final night. It is was His last chance before the cross to teach them and He has not wasted a moment. This is what makes our passage today so incredible. Jesus' love and care extended past these 11 disciples.

John 17:9; 20-26 ESV

> (9) **I am praying for them**. **I am not praying for the world** but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.
>
> (20) **"I do not ask for these only, <u>but also for those who will believe in Me through their word,</u>**
>
> (21) that they may all be one, just as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me.
>
> (22) The glory that You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one even as We are one,
>
> (23) I in them and You in Me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them even as You loved Me.
>
> (24) Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world.
>
> (25) O righteous Father, even though the world does not know You, I know You, and these know that You have sent Me.
>
> (26) I made known to them Your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which You have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

This prayer has always astounded me. On His final night Jesus looked forward through time and prayed specifically for you and I in the church. We are the believers who have trusted in Jesus through the disciples word. **When Jesus spoke this prayer none of the New Testament had been written**, and their was no such thing as the church. **It was through the disciples word (logos)** that we have come to know and believe Jesus the **Word (Logos) who became flesh.** Just as He wanted to prepare His eleven disciples for His departure, He wanted to prepare you and I. As His death was imminent we were on His heart!

John 17:21 ESV

> (21) that **they may all be one, just as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You<u>, that they also may be in Us</u>**, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

His Prayer for us seems so simple and yet it is tremendously profound. He asks for us to be one. This verse is often misrepresented as to what Jesus was asking for. Usually it is used to encourage church to church and denominational unity. The fact that Christianity as a whole is splintered into so many groups is held up as a challenge, and we are encouraged to seek unity and cooperation. Unfortunately this unity that is sought after is usually at the cost of truth. **Yet this interpretation misses the true purpose of Jesus prayer**. Jesus was not praying for you and I to be seek out or maintain unity**. He is praying to the Father. He is praying for all believers throughout history** that have come to believe in Him through the word of the disciples. This prayer is larger than church unity in our life, **it is a prayer for a universal unity throughout all ages of the church.**

Jesus is asking for the Father to bring believers in the church into the unity of the trinity. As connected and unified the Father is with the Son, Jesus asks for believers to have that same type of unity and connection with them " **that they also may be in Us"**. As gentiles this was a relationship that we had no access to. The unity Jesus is praying for could only be accomplished through His death. This oneness is not found by finding the lowest common denominator that we can all agree on. It is found in His blood!

Ephesians 2:13-22 ESV

> (13) But now in Christ Jesus **you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.**
>
> (14) **For He Himself is our peace, who has made us both one** and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility
>
> (15) by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that He might create in Himself **one new man in place of the two, so making peace,**
>
> (16) **and might reconcile us both to God in one body** through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.
>
> (17) And He came and preached peace to you who were **far off and peace to those who were near.**
>
> (18) **For through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.**
>
> (19) So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and **members of the household of God,**
>
> (20) **built on the foundation of the apostles** and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone,
>
> (21) in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.
>
> (22) In Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

We have been brought near and into this unity through the blood of Jesus. His death broke down the division between Jew and Gentile. The wall between God's covenant people and us, the others. He brought us together into His body. **The oneness Jesus is praying for is fulfilled within His body, within the Church universal**. **It is through Jesus in the Spirit that we have access to the Father.** We have been invited into the closeness that is only possible with the triune God. This mystery of the church is built on the foundation of the apostles, the prophets of the Old Testament and ultimately on Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 ESV

> (12) For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, **are one body**, **so it is with Christ**.
>
> (13) For in **one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks**, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of **one Spirit**.
>
> (14) For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

Jews and gentiles are unified in the church within the body of Jesus. It doesn't matter, our nationality, our religious background, gender, hobbies, if you believe in Jesus then you have been brought into His body, into an amazing unity. The moment you believed the Holy Spirit baptized you into the body of Jesus.

John 17:21-23 ESV

> (21) that they may all be one, just as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us, **so that the world may believe that You have sent Me.**
>
> (22) **The glory that you have given Me I have given to them**, that they may be one even as We are one,
>
> (23) I in them and You in Me, that they may become perfectly one, **so that the world may know that You sent Me** and loved them even as You loved Me.

This unity that Jesus enabled in the church is a testimony to the world. If Jesus was not sent by the Father then His death would not have near the impact that it has. The unity that is possible within the body of Christ is only possible because sin has been perfectly paid for. The salvation of believers throughout history proclaim to the world what Jesus has done, and it is deserving of glory.

Revelation 5:9-10 ESV

> (9) And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the scroll and to open its seals, for You were slain, and **by Your blood You ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,**
>
> (10) and You have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

I encourage you to take time to meditate on what this day will be like.

We will be in the throne room of God, worshipping our risen messiah. Praising and giving glory to Jesus for what His blood has accomplished. As you look around you will be surrounded by people from every tribe, language, people and nation spanning human history. **We will be surrounded by Noah, Enoch, Ninevites, Rahab, the Woman at the well, people from every generation and background; only the blood of Jesus could accomplish this.** It is an amazing thought that we are involved at all with something that is so glorious. This is what Jesus means when He says in verse 22 " **The glory that you have given Me I have given to them."**

Ephesians 1:18 NAS95

> (18) *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling**, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,**

The church is part of Jesus' inheritance. This group of people that could only be united and one through His blood is part of His glory and reward. The fact that we are a part of it means we get to share in that glory and inheritance.

Romans 8:16-17 ESV

> (16) The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,
>
> (17) and if children, **then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ**, provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

We are invited to share in the inheritance of Jesus as an heir. We have been called to walk with Him and suffer with Him and enjoy His glory and inheritance with Him. **Often we think too little about what the church actually is.** We reduce it to a building we show up to for an hour, once or twice a week. We loose sight that being apart of the church is a testimony to the world of who Jesus is. **The Church is a glorious inheritance of Jesus that we have been given the opportunity to enjoy with Him!**

John 17:23 ESV

> (23) I in them and You in Me, that they **may become perfectly one**, so that the world may know that You sent Me **and loved them even as You loved Me.**

Perfectly means **to bring to completion**, it is written in a way to show a permeant state that results from a prior action. Jesus death and resurrection is the prior action that enables the church to be one. As the church continues to grow throughout History the oneness is continually brought to completion. This will show the world that the Father has loved us in the church as He has loved the Son. By the nature of the church, **that we are in the body of Christ, God is declaring His love for us to the world.** To explain what an extravagant love this is He compares it to the love that the Father has for the Son. We should worship Him and marvel at what He has done for us in letting us be apart of the body of Jesus.

1 John 3:1-3 ESV

(1) **See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.** The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.

(2) Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that **when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.**

(3) And everyone who thus **hopes in Him purifies Himself as He is pure.**

The Father has loved us as His children. Being in the body of Christ as a believer means we have been made a child of God. **God loves you as His child.** For believers that is true right now! Words fail to describe what a tremendous love that we have received. His love has filled the upper room. The word love was used **8** times in the first **12** chapters of John, and in the **upper room** (13-17) it is used **31** times**. If we could grasp just a little bit more of how much He loves us we would change**. We would live out our hope and desire a purified life getting ready to see our amazing savior. We would be motivated by God's love. Everything will change when we see Him, and Jesus even prays for that moment.

John 17:24 ESV

(24) Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, **may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world.**

When we see Jesus face to face, the lamb who died for us we will be changed. It is not an accident that to grow here we are called to abide in Jesus, and to focus on Him. **In heaven the thing that will fully change us is when we see Him.** He is the focus! We don't fully understand His love for us and do not fully look like His children yet, but we are. We will be with Him, and we will get to see His glory! These 11 disciples had seen His humanity, with the one exception of the mount of transfiguration. He wants them and us to be able to really see who He is. To see Him in His true glory, surrounded by the love of God the Father that He has had before the foundation of the World.

Titus 1:2-3 ESV

(2) **in hope of eternal life,** which God, who never lies, **promised before the ages began**

(3) and at the **proper time manifested in His word** through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior;

This is beyond our comprehension. That this plan for Jesus to receive honor and glory, to pay for sin, to offer eternal life, for Him to unite all things **was set before the ages began**. God is outside of time and before the ages even began, Jesus had the Fathers love and was to receive glory for what He would accomplish on the cross. We cannot fathom this.

Hebrews 4:3 ESV

(3) For we who have believed enter that rest, as He has said, "As I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,'" **although His works were finished from the foundation of the world**.

I don't understand how this can be true but trust it is. Jesus works were viewed by God as completed, fulfilled from the foundation of the World. Here He is in the upper room hours before the cross. Hours until the moment that was set from eternity past. Jesus is praying that we would be with Him and be able to see His glory. He love us so deeply.

John 17:25-26 ESV

(25) O righteous Father, even though the world does not know You, I know You, and these know that You have sent Me.

(26) I made known to them Your name, and **I will continue to make it known**, **that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them."**

Jesus revealed the Father to us and even after He goes to the cross He will continue to do so. He desires for God the Father's love to be in us, and for Him to be in us. So many question if the unity Jesus prayed for has been answered. We see the factions and splits within the church and wonder what happened to this prayer.

We know from 1 John 5:14-15 that if we pray in God's will, He will answer our prayer. Jesus perfectly walked in God's will. **So yes Jesus' prayer has been perfectly answered and will continue to be**. As a believer today you are brought into the Church the amazing oneness in the body of Christ. Being in His body, the Fathers love for the Son is also for us. **The upper room started with a declaration of Jesus love.**

John 13:1 ESV

> (1) Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, **having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.**

It is fitting for the upper room to finish with love. **We are apart of an amazing love story that began before the foundation of the world, and culminates with us seeing Him face to face, in His glory.** So much of this present life will not matter or last once we are face to face with Jesus! Love will continue. We will get to experience His love for all eternity.

1 Corinthians 13:11-13 ESV

> (11) When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.
>
> (12) For now we see in a mirror dimly, **but then face to face**. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.
>
> (13) So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; **but the greatest of these is love.**
