

“That the world may know.”

We will pick up today where we left off last Sunday in chapter 17 of the gospel of John. We begin with a brief review.

Jesus is headed to the garden of Gethsemane. There, events will overtake Him, bringing Him to the cross. Then He will leave the world and return to His Father.

/Jesus is going to leave the world, but His disciples will remain in the world.\

John 17:15-16

15 "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. 16 "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

They will be His ambassadors. And the world will do all it can to prevent them from carrying out their mission.

/So Jesus now turns to His Father in **intercessory prayer**.\

/First, He will ask the Father to glorify **Him**. John 17:1-5\ He does not pray this for His own sake, however; He prays this for others: His Father, and for all those whom the Father gives Him.

Jesus will die and rise again so that He may give eternal life to all those whom the Father gives Him.

/Second, Jesus prays for **His disciples**. John 17:6-19\

He asks the Father to keep them in His – the Father's - name.

/The Father's name here refers to His shepherding qualities : His rod (power to keep and protect) and His staff (to lead, to keep them together, and to rescue).\

/And Jesus asks His Father to protect the ones He gave Him, His disciples, from the evil one. \

/He also asks the Father to sanctify them: to set them apart for the task He is going to give them.\

John 17:17 "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. 18 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

/Third, He prays for all who will believe in Him through the witness of His disciples:
the church, John 17:20-26\

This is where Jesus prays for us. He's praying for the church, His body, all people who will believe in Him for eternal life. Jew and Gentile. All of His sheep.

/First, He asks for **unity**: that they may all be one.\

John 17:20 "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;

21 that they may all be one; even 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 sent Me.

What a profound verse of Scripture! /He prays for His church, His body, to be one, and to be one in the same way that He and His Father are one!\

For what purpose? That the world may believe that the Father sent Jesus. /It's an evangelistic purpose. It goes hand in hand with the convicting work of the Spirit.\

John 16:7-11

7 "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. 8 "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; 11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

So our mission is to evangelize the world. But not by dying on the cross. That was Christ's mission. Not by writing the New Testament. That was the disciples' mission.

Nope. /We fulfill our mission by being perfected in unity. This is our **corporate** witness to this lost and dying world. We are one body in Christ.\

John 17:22 "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; 23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.

/We have been given a measure of the same glory that that the Father gave Christ when He was on earth.\

Of course, we can't glorify the Father the way that Jesus did. He received authority over all flesh, so that He may give eternal life. And we can't die on the cross.

/Glory is the demonstration of who God is. We reveal to the world what God is like by preserving the unity that He has established for us.\

The world will see our unity and know that God sent Jesus. They will observe our love for one another. They will know that God has loved us in the same way that He has loved Jesus.

/Then He asks that they may be with Him in heaven so that they see His glory.\

John 17: 24 "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

/Seeing Christ in His glory will be the consummation of eternal life for us.\

Remember what eternal life is? Coming to know the Father, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.

/We live now in the hope of seeing that glory one day.\

And God has done something else amazing to prove it. He has placed Christ in us.

Col 1:25-27

25 Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God,

*26 that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, 27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory.*

Then we have the final two verses of this prayer of John 17. It's the summing up.

John 17:25-26

25 "O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me;

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

Jesus ends His great prayer with a fantastic summary of His mission on behalf of His Father: to make Him known to the world, to His disciples, and to the church.

/And the final purpose of making the Father's name known is that the Father's love may be in them, and Christ in them.\

/Chapter 17 is the greatest prayer in the Bible.\

It moves from glory to glory.

/ It begins with the glory of the Father and the Son.
It ends with the hope of glory for the church.\

/And it deals with ultimate things: eternal life, joy, truth, unity, glory, and love.\

All wrapped up in glory. /It is, in a word, MAGNIFICENT.\

This intercessory prayer of Jesus takes on a life of its own, with tremendous movement.

/There are three stages, corresponding to the beneficiaries of His requests.\

The circle widens as He goes along.

/The word of God and the name of the Father propel the story forward.\

The source of all is the glory that the Son had with the Father from all eternity.

The seed - Christ - went into the ground when He died on the cross. What to the world was ultimate shame, to the Father was ultimate glory.

Then Jesus rose from the dead. Thus began the greatest harvest ever known to man or angels. It spread from town to town and generation to generation by means of the seed of the word of God, the gospel of our salvation.

One day, all of creation will give glory to the Lamb who was slain.

I prepared a visual to help you see the three stages of Jesus's prayer in chapter 17.

He begins at the source: the source of all glory and unity and love and life: His relationship with His Father from the beginning.

/pic\

John 1:1

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

At the right time, the Word of God entered human history. God's Son came to this fallen world – a world that did not know Him.

/pic\


John 1:14

14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The world was hostile to the Son. It hated Him, and all those who were His.

/pic\


So Jesus's prayer begins with the Father and the Son. The Son is in the world. And the Son is about to die so that He may bring life to the world.

/pic\
 John 17:1-5

Next, He prays for His disciples. The cone widens to include the men who were with Him that night.

He is going to send them into the world to preach the gospel.

/pic\ John 17:6-19

Finally, their preaching will expand the circle still more. The gospel will spread to more and more people. Millions will hear and believe and be given eternal life.

/pic\ John 17:20-26

Jesus prayed for us. He prayed for our unity. He prayed that we might see His glory. He prayed that His love would be in us.

And this drama continues now with us.

2 Cor 5:20-21

20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

We are now entered into the movement. We are now the ambassadors for Christ.

We have received the precious deposit of the word of God. We have the love of God in our hearts. Christ is in us.

And our message to the world is all wrapped up in the unity of the body of Christ. The unity was established in our unbreakable union with the Father and the Son.

Next Sunday is Resurrection Sunday. We'll have a special message on the resurrection.

The week after that, we will examine the subject of unity, the unity of the body.

Finally, we will wrap up chapter 17 in verses 25 and 26 – The great summation.

