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Jesus' Prayer For Us As Christians

JOHN 17:20-26

Introduction

1. When we gather together for worship or Bible study, we hear the spoken prayers of those called upon to lead us in our petitions and thanksgivings.
2. Have you ever listened to the prayers which your father or mother may have prayed in your home? For whom or what did they pray?
3. Over the last two times that I have stood before you on a Wednesday evening for our Bible study, we have looked at Jesus' prayer with His disciples on the eve of crucifixion.
4. We examined, first, His request of His Father that He have His glory restored to Him and that eternal life be given to those whom the Father had given Him.
5. Last week, we look at His request on behalf of the eleven disciples who remained with Him, that God would . . .
 - a. Keep them loyal to Himself.
 - b. Make His joy full in them.
 - c. Keep them from the evil one.
 - d. Sanctify them in truth.
6. Tonight, I would like for us to look at the last part of our Lord's prayer; His request on our behalf.
7. Jesus looked down through the centuries to our day and time and asked His Father for those things which He knew you and I would need.
8. Tonight, as we examine these last seven verses of His prayer, I want to encourage you to think about what His request means in your life.

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I. Our Unity And It's Importance

“ . . . 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. “The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; 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.”

(John 17:20–23, NASB95)

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A. THAT WE MAY ALL BE ONE

1. Jesus prayer is that you and I as Christians may know the same unity as He and the Father experience: “that they may be one, just as We are one” (v. 22).
2. Verses 21 and 23 are similar in that both verses have four parts:

Verse 21	Verse 23
1) “You, Father, are in Me”	“I in them”
2) “I in You”	“and You in Me”
3) “that they also may be in Us”	“that they may become perfectly one”
4) “that the world may believe that You sent Me”	“That the world may know that You sent Me”

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3. This unity is expressed in three areas:
 - a. Our common love

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even

as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” (John 13:34, NASB95)

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” (1 John 4:11, NASB95)

b. Our common purpose

“My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.” (John 15:8, NASB95)

“If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.” (John 15:10, NASB95)

“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31, NASB95)

c. Our common mission

“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31, NASB95)

“Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;” (Philippians 1:27, NASB95)

4. Wedged between these two requests for our unity is a declaration of the gift which Jesus has given to us: “The glory which You have given Me I have given to them . . .” (v. 22a).

- a. It is the same glory which the Father had given to Him.
- b. Jesus’ true glory was to follow the path of lowly service which resulted in the cross.
- c. For those of us who are His followers, our true glory, likewise, lies in the path of lowly service, wherever that path may lead us.

5. Ultimately, this unity for which Jesus prays is to lead to a fuller experience of the Father and the Son with a specific result: “that the world may believe (know) . . .”

Slide 5**B. THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE (KNOW). . .**

1. That God sent His Son into the world
 - “ . . . so that the world may believe that You sent Me” (v. 21)
 - “ . . . so that the world may know that You sent Me . . .” (v. 23)
 - a. It is in our unity, as followers of Christ, that the world comes to believe in Jesus Christ.
 - b. Our unity gives power to the message we proclaim — those who observe us see God’s hand present among us.
 - c. Earlier, this same evening, as we noted just a moment ago, Jesus had given His disciples a new commandment, that they love one another as He had loved them — He then added, “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).
2. That He loves us even as He loves His Son
 - a. Earlier, in 16:27, Jesus had told the eleven, “for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father.” (John 16:27, NASB95)
 - b. Indwelling is the secret of it all.
 - c. Christ indwells believers and the Father indwells Him.
 - d. It is through Christ that we as believers have our unity with the Father.
 - e. Such unity will also demonstrate to the world that God loves us even as He loves His Son.

Slide 6**II. That We May Know . . .**

A. OUR RIGHTEOUS FATHER

“O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known . . .” (**John 17:25–26a, NASB95**)

1. Jesus addresses God as ‘Righteous Father’ (cf. v. 11, ‘Holy Father’).
2. This is the only place in all of the N.T. that these words are found in reference to the Father.
3. Through them, Jesus reminds us of the character of His Father.
4. As Jesus points out, the world, by its very nature, is ignorant of God (cf. John 8:55).
5. The only way we can know God is through Jesus Christ, who was sent to this earth in order to manifest His Father to us.
6. On another occasion, Luke in chapter 10, verse 22, of His gospel records Jesus as saying, “All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.”
7. There is no greater task to which you and I may commit ourselves than that of seeking to know God.
 - a. The prophet Hosea exhorted the Jews, “So let us know, let us press to know the Lord” (Hosea 6:3, NASB95).
 - b. After many years of preaching Christ, the apostle Paul told the Christians in Philippi that it was his constant goal to “know Him” (Philippians 3:10).
 - ❑ How well do you know God? Christ?

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B. HIS LOVE IN US

“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.”” (**John 17:26, NASB95**)

1. Not only does Jesus pray that we will know the nature of our Father in Heaven, but also His love in us.
2. Jesus' request that the love with which God loved might be in us can have a double meaning:
 - a. First, Jesus may be asking that God's love be 'within' us ('in our hearts').
 - 1) “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.” (Ephesians 3:17–19, NASB95)
 - 2) “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.” (1 John 3:1, NASB95)
 - b. Secondly, He may be asking the Father that His love be 'among' us (it is that which unites us to one another).
 - 1) “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” (1 John 4:7, NASB95)
 - 2) “No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.” (1 John 4:12, NASB95)
3. As the apostle Paul wrote in Romans 8, you and I may face tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, even death for Christ's sake, but

it will not separate us “from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:39).

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III. That We May See . . .

“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.” (John 17:24, NASB95)

A. HEAVEN

“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am . . .” (John 17:24a, NASB95)

1. Earlier that evening, Jesus had told the eleven, “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:3).
2. In his letter to the Christians, Paul expressed his desire “to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better . . .” (Philippians 1:23, NASB95).
3. In his second letter to the brethren in Corinth, he wrote in 5:8, “We . . . prefer to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.”

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B. CHRIST IN ALL HIS GLORY

“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me . . . may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” (John 17:24, NASB95)

1. On one occasion, Peter, James and John, three of Jesus disciples, were privileged to see Jesus transformed before them.
2. As Matthew retells it in chapter 17 and verse 2 of his account, “His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.”

3. In Revelation 1:14-15, the apostle John describes his vision of our glorified Lord this way:

“His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters.”
(Revelation 1:14–15, NASB95)

4. In 1 John 3:2, John writes, “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.” (1 John 3:2, NASB95)

CONCLUSION

1. Those of us who are Christians tonight are our Lord’s ambassadors.
2. Through us, our friends, neighbors and even our enemies are introduced to our Lord and His Father.
3. Do they see among us a unity which convinces them of the truths we profess:
 - a. The truth that God sent His Son into the world to save us?
 - b. The truth of a love beyond our ability to comprehend?
4. If not, there are some changes we need to make, starting with our repentance and our love for one another.
5. Jesus wants us to know His Righteous Father. He wants His Father’s love to take up residence with us.
6. He also wants us to see His Home, the place which He has prepared for us.
7. He wants us to see Him in all His glory, a glory which He seeks to share with us.
8. I wish I could speak the right words which would cause all of you to want these things, but I have done the best I know how to do.
9. Please, if you aren’t one of His disciples, won’t you become one tonight?