

John 17:11-17: I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, & I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. ¹² While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, & not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³ But now I am coming to you, & these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them your word, & the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

Intro: Last Sunday, we focused on prayer to encourage you to pursue God in prayer in 2024 like never before. To do so, we began studying the LORD Jesus' high priestly prayer to His Father in John 17. (Prayer; Unity; Missions)

Notice what Jesus doesn't pray for: physical health; physical prosperity; an easy life; your best life now!

We see Jesus deeply loves His own glory; He deeply loves His Father's glory, & He deeply loves those whom the Father has given Him – His elect, so He prays. He's praying this prayer right before His arrest & crucifixion.

He prays for you because He loves you: John 15:9: As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. - Since Jesus loves you so much & prays for you, you should want to be like Jesus & deeply love His glory, deeply love the Father's glory, & deeply love God's elect, so pray.

Jesus is praying for you, guarding you, granting you His joy, & giving you His Father's Word, & the Father is keeping you & sanctifying you through His Word so that you may be one, even as Jesus & His Father are one.

Ephesians 2:11-22: Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands - ¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 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 and 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. **GOSPEL!**

Jesus purchased & prayed for the profound unity of His people, so pursue unity by pursuing Him by His power.

1. Jesus' Disciples Face A Common Experience Of Exile

John 17:11, 16: I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, & I am coming to you . . . ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

a. Jesus is praying for His disciples who were with Him in His ministry on earth, & yet He's praying for you as well: John 17:20-21: I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you

b. Jesus is going to ascend back to the Father: John 16:28: I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.

Eric Watkins: The ascension of Jesus Christ is much more than just a postscript to the resurrection; it is the return of the King to His rightful throne from which He furnishes His rescued people with gifts of service for use in His kingdom. The chief gift that Christ continues to give, however, is Himself. In this connection, the Westminster Shorter Catechism rather brilliantly relates the threefold offices of Christ (prophet, priest, and king) as being ministries that Christ performs “both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation”. In His ascended state of exaltation, Christ our Prophet continues to reveal to us “by his Word and Spirit the will of God for our salvation” (Q&A 24). As our Priest, Christ makes “continual intercession for us” (Q&A 25). And as our King, Christ is continually “subduing us to himself, ruling and defending us, and restraining and conquering all his and our enemies” (Q&A 26). If the resurrection is the main event of history and the climax of the Christian story, the ascension is the crowning of our King as He sits upon His throne in glory. From there, He bestows many fine gifts upon us, the chief of which is union with Him through the Holy Spirit. In Christ, we find life and fitness for service to the King of kings and Lord of lords who is our divine Rescuer and the Lover of our souls.

c. Jesus’ disciples are all in exile: V. 16: They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

The “world” here means that realm that stands in rebellion & total opposition to God & all His ways & commands.

- **John 7:7:** The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.

- **John 14:16-17:** I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him.

- **1 John 2:15-17:** Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions – is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

- **1 John 5:19:** We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

Philippians 3:18-21: For many . . . walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, & they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, & from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Because we are in exile right now in this world, we’ve got to pursue unity & help each other pursue God & grow in Christ-likeness by the power of the Holy Spirit:

- **Hebrews 3:12-13:** Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. ¹³ But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

- **Hebrews 10:23-25:** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Jesus says you are not of the world! Be who you are! You are not a worldly people! You died to that way of life:

Romans 8:9, 13-14: You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him . . . ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

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2. Jesus’ Disciples Are Unified As One By The Father’s Sovereign Power

V. 11: Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one

a. Jesus prays to His holy Father: Jesus' Father is holy! He's totally separate from sinners, transcendent, high & lifted up! He is perfect in purity & set apart!

- **Isaiah 6:3:** [One of the seraphim] Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!
- **1 Peter 1:14-16:** As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

b. Jesus prays for those His Father has given Him in be kept in the Father's name: Jesus is praying for God's elect, His disciples on earth at the time, and those who will believe – to be kept in the Father's name. Two ways:

D. A. Carson: 1) Protect them by the power of your name: **Psalm 54:1:** O God, save me, by your name, & vindicate me by your might. (God's name points to His character & might – He's a powerful protector!)

2) Keep them in your name, keep them loyalty to you or keep them in full adherence to your character: Keep them trusting & keep them obeying & keep them following Jesus!

- **John 17:12:** While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, & not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

c. Jesus wants His own to be kept in the Father's name so that they will be one, even as He & His Father are one:

John 17:20-23: I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 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.

1) Jesus is praying for believers to be one in the sense that they are in union with the Father & the Son: We are the temple of God! God dwells in us!

- **1 Corinthians 6:19-20:** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

- **Ephesians 3:16-19:** that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith – that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

2) Jesus is praying for believers to be one in faithfulness to trust and obey God; one in purpose; one in love; & one in action & mission for the glory of God.

- **Psalm 133:1-3:** Behold, how good & pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore

- **Ephesians 4:1-3:** I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

- **Ephesians 4:11-16:** And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

- **1 Peter 3:8-12:** Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. ⁹ Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. ¹⁰ For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; ¹¹ let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

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3. Jesus Kept His Disciples Unified During His Earthly Ministry

John 17:12: While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, & not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

a. Jesus does what the Father does: Jesus kept His own disciples in the Father's name & guarded them so that none was lost! All His disciples fled & forsook Him in His greatest hour of need! Peter even denied Him! But Jesus prayed for them! Jesus kept them! Jesus brought them back! **(Jesus is God!)**

b. Judas was lost that the Scripture might be fulfilled: Psalm 41:9: Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

Jesus' goal in keeping His own in the Father's name & guarding them is the same as the Father's goal: **V. 11:** that they may be one, even as we are one.

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4. Jesus' Disciples Will All Experience Jesus' Joy Fulfilled In Themselves

John 17:13: But now I am coming to you, & these things I speak in the world, that they may have **my joy fulfilled in themselves.**

a. Jesus speaks these things: 1) the things He is praying: John 11:41-42: And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me."

2) The things He's been saying in the whole farewell discourse: In John 13-17

b. Why does Jesus speak all these things? Because He desires that your joy to be full – even as full as His own joy: John 15:7-11: If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. ⁹ As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

- **John 16:22:** So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.

c. Christ's joy in you & you finding your joy in Him will cause us to pursue oneness & unity with other believers: Colossians 3:11: Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

John Piper: [Christ is all] is the death [blow] to racism. Why do we despise? Or hate? Or shun? Or avoid? Or disparage? Or distort? Is it not because we are weak and fearful and insecure and proud and angry and without deep peace and love in our souls? Do those ugly things come from people whose treasure is an all-satisfying fellowship with Christ? I think not. Therefore, what we need is to reckon ourselves dead to all but Christ as the satisfaction of our souls. We need to love him so much and find in his fellowship such completeness that we speak like the psalmists:

- **Psalm 16:2:** I say to the LORD, "Thou art my Lord; I have no good apart from thee."

- **Psalm 73:24-25:** Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is nothing upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Or like the old hymn writer says: "Jesus is all the world to me, my life, my joy, my all."

Oh to be a church full of people who sing that and mean that and live that! Jesus is all the world to me, my life, my joy, my all. Christ is all! In that fellowship, Paul says, there is no Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free, but Christ is all, and in all. Lord, grant us so to die and so to live that Christ might be all and in all.

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5. Jesus' Disciples Experience Hatred Of The World And Attacks From The Devil

John 17:14-15: I have given them your word, & the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.

a. Jesus has given His disciples the Father's Word: John 14:24: Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

b. The world hated Jesus' disciples: Just like the world opposed Jesus & ultimately killed Him, so they hated & will hate His disciples. Remember, the world is all that stands in opposition to God & His way & Word.

Every single one of Jesus' disciples were killed, except John, & he was exiled to Patmos because of the Word!

c. Jesus does not ask for His disciples to be taken out of the world: Jesus didn't pray for His disciples to have their best life now! Often great suffering like this causes unity among God's people:

Hebrews 10:32-34: But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, ³³ sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach & affliction, & sometimes being partners with those so treated. ³⁴ For you had compassion on those in prison, & you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

d. Jesus asks for His disciples to be kept from the evil one: Jesus prays like He taught His disciples to pray:

- **Matthew 6:13:** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

- **James 4:7:** Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

- **Ephesians 6:11-18:** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

- **1 Peter 5:8-9:** Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

- **Luke 22:31-32:** Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. & when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.

Because we are hated by the world & attacked by the devil, we've got to pursue unity & help each other pursue God & grow in Christ-likeness through the power of the Holy Spirit.

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6. Jesus Disciples Are Unified By Being Sanctified By God's Word

John 17:17: Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

- **Of Sanctification:** We believe that Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of His holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; & that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence & power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer & Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means – especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, & prayer.

- **Church Covenant:** It is my earnest desire and intent that with His help, I will express & exemplify my new life in Christ in my every relationship. I will cultivate & deepen my fellowship with God by daily prayer, Bible reading, and meditation.

As the Father sanctifies us by His Word, we will grow in unity and oneness with one another so that Jesus' prayer for unity will be answered.

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What is the foundation of all this beautiful unity that Jesus prays we would grow in? On that cross, the greatest unity in the universe was mysteriously disrupted between God & His Son, the Mediator, when He cried out: "My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?!" And He rose up!

Christ Jesus Alone Can Unify
He's Leaving The World To Glorify
He And His Father To Magnify
And Make Us All One To Nullify
Our Sin And Divisions That Horrify
As Father And Son Are One On High
So We Are One Through Christ Who'd Die
They'd Mock And Beat And Crucify
He'd Die And Rise To Justify
By Faith Alone All Those Who Cry
To Him For Mercy And Comply
He'll Keep Them Safe And Near Him Nigh
Protect From Satan, Vivify
We're In The World, But We Defy
Not Of The World, On Christ Rely
God, By His Word, Will Sanctify
Our Whole Lives He'll Purify
And Everything He'll Beautify
Our Every Longing Satisfy
So In Him Trust And To Him Fly!

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