

John 17vs1-26

Jesus' mission prayer

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John 17 vs 1-26

In John 17, the “Upper Room Discourse” comes to a close. Jesus concludes this intimate time with his disciples by praying for himself, his disciples and the church. The prayer is prayed literally minutes before his arrest and trial.

This prayer summarises Jesus' teaching in chapters 13-17. It spells out his greatest concerns:

- His mission in the world (vs1-5)
- What he wants for his Apostles (vs6-19)
- What he wants for his Church (vs20-26)

Jesus' mission in the world

Read John 17 vs 1-5: *When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ² since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴ I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.*

- v1 and v5 match – ‘Glorify the Son... so that he might glorify God the Father’

Why is God going to glorify the Son?

- v2 and v4 – Jesus has accomplished the work that God had given him to do.

What is the work that Jesus had to do?

- it's to give eternal life, bringing people into relationship with God:

v3: *“And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”*

So... NOT golf courses in the sky, sitting on a cloud etc... but a personal relationship with our Creator, starting now.

Summary:

- The Father glorifying the Son...
- in recognition of the fulfilment of his task...
- to bring us into relationship with God...
- which is summarised as... ‘eternal life’

Once again Jesus indicates that he will bring glory to God through his death on the Cross – which will be followed by his resurrection and ascension to his Father's side.

Where do we look to see a perfect display of the Father's glory?

- THE CROSS!

How can this be?

- Because at the Cross he achieves the GREAT WORK of bringing relationship with God to sinful men and women.

Why is this such a surprise?!

- Because WE would expect God to be glorified by dazzling displays of power or spectacular works of wisdom. We don't understand the depth and seriousness of OUR sin ...and just what a HUGE thing it is for Jesus to deal with it.

What Jesus wants for his Apostles

Read John 17 vs 6-19: *"I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. ⁸ For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. 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. ¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.*

¹¹ And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and 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, and 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, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

¹⁴ I have given them your word, and 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. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth."

The inference here is that Jesus is talking about those with him at the time - i.e. the Apostles.

- vs 6-10: He gives assurance that they are the “real McCoy”!
 - v6: God gave them to Jesus – they kept God’s word!
 - vs 7-8: They have made an authentic response to Jesus
 - vs 9-10: They belong to both Jesus and God ...and bring glory to Jesus
- vs 11-19: He prays for their protection and preservation

We all know that Judas - ch 17 v 12 “***the son of destruction***” – has already gone out to betray Jesus...

ch 13 v 21: *After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, “Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.”*

...and we also know that Jesus’ betrayal was known from the beginning and factored into God’s plan.

In this section of Jesus’ prayer, he is praying for the remaining 11 Apostles.

Why is it so important that God not only chose the Apostles and kept and preserved them, but also recognised them as authentic?

- Answer: They founded the Church – God’s people – who glorify God.

v10: *“All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.”*

How does this explain why Jesus goes on to pray what he does in vs 11-19?

...The reason he is praying, is that he is going away.

- He wants God to keep them:
 - v11: ***“Holy Father - keep them in your name - that they may be one, even as we are one.”***
- He wants them to remain full of his joy (i.e. in relationship with him):
 - v13: ***“... that they may have my joy...”***
- He knows the world will be against them:
 - v14: ***“I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.”***
- He wants them protected from Satan:
 - v15: ***“...keep them from the evil one...”*** while they live in a lost world.

- He wants them to remain distinctive in the “lost” world:

v17: **“Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”** ...that they might keep their distinctiveness.

In summary, this section of Jesus’ prayer provides us today with real confidence as we come to the words of Jesus’ Apostles - on which the Church is founded.

What Jesus wants for his Church

Read John 17 vs 20-26: *“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.*

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.”

Who is Jesus talking about in v20?

v20 *“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word...”*

- The Church to come... i.e. including us!

What is his prayer for us in vs 20-21?

- That we will be one (united) through the Apostles’ words - i.e. the New Testament teaching about Jesus - as the Gospel writers and letters of the New Testament explain all that Jesus has done.

v21: *“... 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.”*

Why is the Church so frequently disunited?

- Because it is NOT preaching Jesus’ WORD – churches are often not WORD based – it therefore sinks to the lowest common denominator!

- We often hear people speak about Christian unity. Jesus is passionate about it – and prays for it. BUT Jesus tells us that TRUE Christian unity will come only as we submit to the teaching as we find it in the New Testament.

So then, how does disunity come about?!

- Through people following their own ideas, or through people putting other things ahead of obedience to the words of Jesus and his Apostles in the Bible

What should we do to promote Christian unity?

- Submit to God's WORD!

What things, other than the words of Jesus and the Apostles, do people listen to?

- Church traditions (“*We’ve always done it like this!*”)
- My own ideas (“*I don’t like to think of God like that!*”)
- Experience (“*It doesn’t FEEL right*”)

How is DISUNITY promoted?

- By false teachers, even senior men like Bishops or Archbishops NOT sticking to Jesus’ WORD!!

What is the goal of the unity Jesus prays for?

- v21: “***...so that the world may believe...***”

In vs 22-23 Jesus restates the point – it is that important!

vs 22-23: “*The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³I 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.*”

So:

1) What has God (Father and Son) given?

- “***the glory***” (v22) – i.e. the gospel word and work of Jesus

2) What does this produce?

- Unity (v23)

“***...I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one...***”

3) What is the goal of that unity?

- Evangelism (v21): “***so that the world may believe***”

So can we see how Jesus’ followers will impact the world:

- Unity through Jesus’ word...
- leads to glory for God...
- and belief in Jesus.

PROTECTION:

Read John 17 v 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.*”

Jesus prays that his disciples will make it through to the end – to be with him in Heaven

- His people, a beacon to the world, through the word of the Apostles.

Conclusion

Breaking this passage down – it’s in 3 sections:

Section 1) Glorification of the Son through giving Eternal Life

- How? Through THE CROSS

Section 2) Protection of the Apostles as they give the WORD of Life

- Why? SO THEY CAN TEACH AND PASS ON THE TRUTH

Section 3) The UNITED advance of the Church to the glory of God

- How? Through THE APOSTOLIC WORD OF THE BIBLE

In other words... it’s all about God’s glory!

Summary

What does Jesus pray for?

- Jesus is to be glorified through his work on the cross that will bring eternal life – (a relationship with God)
- He has chosen and kept his Apostles, who have been protected in order to teach his WORD to the church
- We believe this word and are united UNDER his word...
- And as we are united in this way.... so “***the world***” will “***see***” Jesus’ glory, and come to receive LIFE.

John 17 vs 1-26

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