

A FRIEND IN HIGH PLACES / Sunday, January 11, 2015

Unifying Topic: JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS DISCIPLES

Lesson Text

- I. Jesus Prays To The Father (John 17:6-8)
- II. Jesus Prays For His Disciples (John 17:9-19)
- III. Jesus Prays For All Believers (John 17:20-21)

The Main Thought: That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. (John 17:21, KJV).

Unifying Principle: Small intimate groups exist in the midst of a larger community. How can a small group impact the larger community/ Jesus prayed that the Disciples would be united and protected by God as they brought new people into their community in an unsafe world.

Lesson Aim: To review Jesus' prayer for the unity of His believers.

Life Aim: To unite in prayer for one another and for unity in the church.

HISTORY:

Chapter 17:1-5 The entire chapter is Jesus' prayer. His earthly mission is about to end, but before He departs, prayer is needed. He prays first for Himself (vv.1-5), then for His disciples (vv.6-19), and finally for future believers (vv.20-26).

17:1 **These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:**— This was a prayer for Himself as He lifted up His eyes to heaven and called God Father. Jesus' hour had come, meaning the time of His death had come. For many types and symbols for hundreds and thousands of years had pointed toward this time. He was claiming to know God intimately; to be the very Son of God. The first thing that Jesus asked for is for the Father to glorify Him—and "*that His Father in turn be glorified.*" How is God glorified and how is Jesus glorified? Well, the whole purpose God sending Jesus to earth was to give eternal life to men. So, God's glory and Jesus' glory are found in the completion of the great work of salvation; that is, in man receiving eternal life. And the only way a person can glorify God is to receive and do what God says.

17: 2 **As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.** God has given Jesus power and authority over all people; flesh. And by Him having this authority, He is able to give eternal life (live forever) to as many as was given Him (the disciples and *those who seek to know God through Christ Jesus*). He had finished the work God had given Him to do, thereby glorifying God.

17:3 **And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.** Eternal life means to live forever, but more exactly, it is the quality of life. To possess this quality of eternal life means to know God and to know Jesus Christ.

17:4 **I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.** Jesus has brought glory to the Father by fulfilling His Will and completing His task He was given to do.

17:5 **And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.** The second thing Jesus asked in prayer was to be restored to His former glory in which He had before the world began.

LESSON:

John 17:6-8 Jesus Prays To The Father

17:6 **I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.** God gave Jesus men out of the world and Jesus taught and made known God's Name. God stirred and led these men, the first believers out of the world to follow Jesus, and to receive and be shown the revelation of God! "*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him...*" Jh.6:44a. The first believers belonged to God and He drew them to His Son by His sovereignty and power and foreknowledge. Jesus was speaking to His Father about them, letting Him know that they have kept His Word!

17:7 **Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.** Their listening to Jesus brought them to know that all things given to Jesus was from God; whatsoever Jesus commanded was from God the Father.

17:8 **For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.** The men/disciples now know that Jesus was

the Son of God. They knew that He was the embodiment and revelation of God. Three things occur in this verse.

1. They had received the Words, the very Words of God.
2. They now knew Jesus' origin. He had come from God.
3. They now believed that God hath sent Him.

John 17:9-19 Jesus Prays For His Disciples

17:9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. What Jesus prayed for is meaningful for believers. Four reasons why Jesus was praying only for His disciples: (1) He prays for the ones God has given Him and not for the world. It was not because the world didn't need prayer, for they did. But He considered those the Father gave Him to be the ones marked for a special duty. They were given to Him for a reason and He was responsible for their welfare; they were entrusted into His hands by the Father. It's the same as those in your household. You are responsible to pray for them. You want the best for them.

17:10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. The disciples belonged to the Father, as well as the Son. This was mutual possession, claiming deity and oneness with God. God could count on Jesus for hearing and answering Him. (2) Therefore, Jesus prayed for them because He was glorified in the disciples

- The disciples lived for Him by obeying His Word and working with Him.
- The disciples showed loyalty and allegiance to Jesus.
- The disciples lifted Jesus up to the world and proclaimed Him to be the Savior of the world and Lord of the universe.

They would become strong in their continued witnessing to glorify Jesus.

17:11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. (3) Jesus prayed for the disciples because He was leaving the world and returning to heaven. Now, those He would leave in the world, would be the ones to carry the Gospel after His departure. Jesus was faithful to God's Name, faithful to revealing God and lifting up His Name to the disciples. Why?— For God would be faithful to keep them, just as Jesus and the Father were one. This keeping power of God does not mean that God delivers believers from the trials of this world, but that He delivers them through the trials. God will allow absolutely nothing to separate Christian believers from His Son! Therefore, the disciples being in a divisive world and Jesus having to leave, (4) His prayer was that they be one. Divisiveness comes from the depraved nature of man, but the nature of Christ came to change and convert to love. Believers are to be unified, just as Jesus and the Father are. We are to be one in...
—nature: been born-again; made into a new creature; become a partaker of the divine nature, etc.

—character: godly and holy, denying the works of the flesh and living pure lives as Jesus and the Father; bearing the fruit of the Spirit.
—and purpose: surrendering and giving all to minister and proclaim the message of salvation to a lost and dying world.

17:12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. Jesus kept the disciples while He was in the world. He also kept them covered in the Father's Name! He lost none except Judas. For Judas' betrayal was to fulfil Scripture.

17:13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. Jesus prayed that the disciples would have His joy in all its fullness. The key to joy is living in close contact with Him, the source of all joy!

17:14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Because Christians have the Word within them, the world hates them. The disciples received God's Word and went through many hardships in the world. Just as Christ was not of the world, they also were not of the world and were hated.

17:15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. There was a need for the disciples to be in the world and not be taken out of the world, for they had God's Word to give. Jesus prayed that they be kept from the evil one.

17:16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Those that are "*not of this world*" would mean that they have an entirely different nature, including different heart desires, different fundamental goals, and ultimately a different God.

- Jesus came from God out of heaven.
- The disciples and other believer were born again by the Spirit of God and given the very nature of God.

The world and the devil want nothing to do with the selfless and sacrificial nature that now wants to give the Word to others. God's mission to save the world depended upon the disciples' loyalty and faithfulness.

- The disciples were now of the same nature as Jesus.

17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. *"Sanctify them"* means set apart, be separated, consecrate, dedicate, holy, purify. We are sanctified unto God but through His truth. God's truth is said to be God's Word (*both living and spoken Word*). The sanctification of Christians is a lifelong process but come in three stages:

1. There is initial or positional sanctification—when a person believes in Jesus Christ, he is immediately set apart for God permanently, once-for-all (Heb.3:1. 10:10).
2. There is progressive sanctification—when the true believer makes a determined and disciplined effort to allow the Spirit of God to set him apart day by day as the believer walks upon this earth (Jh.17:17, 2Cor.3:18; Eph.5:25-26; 1Th.5:23-24).
3. There is eternal sanctification—the day is coming when the believer will be perfectly set apart unto God and His service—without any sin or failure whatsoever; the day of the believer's eternal redemption (Eph.5:27; 1Jh.3:2).

The process of becoming holy is only accomplished through the Word of God. *"Be ye holy for I am holy"* 1Pt.1:16.

17:18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. We have the same assignment as Jesus. The disciples were to be sent into the world just as Jesus was sent into the world to bring men back to God through reconciliation. The disciples had to be set apart to God to this same task.

17:19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. This means that Jesus was totally set apart for the Father's Will. He did that in order for believers to be set apart to God by the truth He brought.

John 17:20-21 Jesus Prays For All Believers

17:20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;— This part of the prayer is for future believers; those who will believe on Him through the Word they will teach from that moment to the end of the world.

17:21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. The prayer is always for unity; that all Disciples of Christ be one. Jesus and His Father are one—the Father in Him and He in the Father. Now, the disciples are to be one in the Father and Son. Why?— That the world may believe that the Father had sent Jesus. This was very important for all to know who sent Jesus! It established credibility. There are many voices proclaiming so many different messages. This one message has to stand out as the truth!

- There is only one central message: that God sent Jesus out of heaven into the world.
- There is only one request of men: to believe that God did send Jesus into the world.
- There is only one mission: that men be one (unified), in proclaiming the message of the glorious gospel!

SUMMARY:

Jesus had made known the Father's Name to men that were out of the world; now disciples and He is praying for these disciples who were actually given to Jesus from the Father. In the process, they kept and obeyed God's Word. They have now come to know that everything given to Jesus was a gift from God, and He passed all things in which He had received along to these disciples. Because of this, the disciples know He is the Son of God; that Jesus received God's Words; that He came from God, and was sent by God into the world (**vv.6-8**).

Jesus is specific by praying for the disciples in which the Father had given Him, not for the world. Those that God gives are truly His and so they also belonged to the Son. Jesus is glorified in them. He knows that He will leave them behind as He leaves this world to go back to the Father, and He prays for their unity; their oneness. While Jesus was with them He was able to preserve, guard, and watch over them in God's Name and none were lost, except Judas, the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. He tells the Father that He is coming to Him after speaking to the disciples about many things. He wants them to be filled with His joy. The Word has been given to them and the world hated them because they were not of the world, just as Jesus was not. Jesus prayed not that they should be taken out of the world but that the Father would protect them from Satan's power. They were not of the world, but were needed in the world. Jesus asked the Father to sanctify them through the truth which is the Word. Just as Jesus was sent into the world, He also sent the disciples into the world and for their sakes they needed to be sanctified through the truth (**vv.9-19**).

Jesus is not only praying for the disciples alone, but for future believers who will come to Jesus because of the disciples' Word. Also, that they all be one, as the Father and Jesus are one; and that these disciples be one heart, and mind in the Father and Jesus. This would bring about the world believing that the Father sent Jesus (**vv.20-21**).