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John 17:20-26

How He Prayed:
He Prayed for Us.

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Do any of you have friends who have an **in-home camera**? You can buy some of them that connect to an app on your phone. I want you to imagine for a **moment** that on **Black Friday** you purchased the **SpaceTime 2000 NestCam** with a crystal clear picture and audio feed. You install it in the ceiling-corner of your dining room. It works great, but one day when you tune to check in on **Fido**, you see a different scene.

There seems to be a **glitch** because the camera app is now showing you a **live-video stream** of the **Last Supper**. You know it's the Last Supper because the app's clock says AD 30~, it's clearly a middle-eastern house, the long-wooden table is low to the ground, and Jesus and his 12 disciples are sitting on only **one side of the table**. As you listen in, you see Jesus take the bread and cup with his disciples, Judas leave, and you see what you would expect to see from the Gospel accounts.

After dinner, Jesus lifts up his eyes to heaven and **prays**. Just like our sermon series in **John 17**, he opens his prayer by focusing on his **Father** in heaven. Once he prays for his father to be glorified, he prays for his **disciples**. You even see him glance around at Peter, James, John, and the others. But once he finishes praying for them, he looks up to the top corner of the dining room directly **at you**. The **4th wall** is broken. He is now praying for you. In fact, he addresses you by name, "I pray for Diana, for Bruce, for Kathy..."

This is what is happening in John 17. First Jesus prayed for his Father's glory, then he prayed for his disciples, and now he is praying for all believers after his disciples, including us today.

John 17:20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, (NIV®)

Last week I talked about what Jesus prayed for his **disciples**, and so **might** be praying for us today. Today I'm talking about what he **definitely** prayed for us. Do you want to know what Jesus prayed for you?

Jesus prays for our union. (John 17:21-26)

Jesus prays for our union. **What** is union?

Union: A relationship that binds people together in love, togetherness, mind, and purpose.¹

Who can we experience union with? Jesus prays for our...

Union with other believers. (v. 21a, 22b, 23b)

Jesus fills this portion of his prayer with **repetition** and **parallel words**, but our modern English translations don't do a great job of showing it. Of the ones I looked at, I thought the **Holman** Christian Standard Bible (HCSB) did the best job.

21 **May they all be one,**
as You, Father, are in Me and I am in You.

¹ Adapted from Crossway's ESV Study Bible John 17:11 footnote.

All Scriptures are quoted from the New International Version (NIV®) unless otherwise noted.

May they also be one in Us,
so the world may believe You sent Me.

22 I have given them the glory You have given Me.
May they be one as We are one.

23 I am in them and You are in Me.
May they be made completely one,
so the world may know You have sent Me
and have loved them as You have loved Me.

Jesus wants us to be “one”—to be unified, to love each other, fellowship, share the same mind and purpose. Jesus’ first call, and repeated call, is for **horizontal unity** among believers. We picture this as a horizontal arrow demonstrating a connection between believers in the **local church**, but also believers in the **universal church**. The type of unity Jesus is calling for is **global** (“may they all be one!”). In the Nicene Creed, we say, “We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.” What does that mean? **Holy** means set apart. **Catholic** means universal. **Apostolic** means built on the teachings of the Apostles (NT).

In our Cornerstone Playbook, we say how we try to do this as a church.

We believe that like-minded local churches can help promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another by prioritizing fellowship, mutual accountability, and a unified witness.

We desire to work with “like-minded local churches” who believe the **gospel**, who want to promote the message of Jesus Christ. Jesus prays for us to be unified with other **local churches**, and what is taking place all around the **globe**. We can demonstrate our global oneness by **praying** for **missionaries** and **financially** supporting them. When we had Thierry Mirone preach here that was a chance to show our oneness with the church in **France**.

We can also show we’re apart of the universal church body by supporting our **church conference**, the 4Cs and other 4Cs churches. As a **church plant**, we have a **unique opportunity** to show our unity by how we interact with our **parent church**, Immanuel. As we speak highly of the leadership there, and express our gratitude, we are one, and we’re a **positive witness** for Jesus. But the **converse** is also true. If we speak negatively of them or any Christ-centered local church, we are a **negative witness**.

So we should **pray** for other churches to encourage and support us, and for us to be an encouragement and support to other churches, and do everything in our **power** to make that happen. *Jesus prays for us to have union with other believers*. But we can’t do this alone, so Jesus also prays for our...

Union with the Father and the Son. (v. 21b, 23a)

Let’s look at our passage once more for where it speaks of unity with the Father and the Son.

21 May they all be one,
as You, Father, are in Me and I am in You.
May they also be one in Us,
so the world may believe You sent Me.

23 **I am in them and You are in Me.**
May they be made completely one,
so the world may know You have sent Me
and have loved them as You have loved Me. (HCSB)

To understand Jesus' prayer for **vertical unity** between us, the Father, and himself, we need to understand how Jesus and the Father are unified, not just as **God**, but in **relationship**.

- a. **Dependency** - Jesus was **dependent** on the Father (John 5:19 "the Son can do nothing by himself") so we are **dependent** on the Father (complete reliance on God).
- b. **Work** - Jesus did his his Father's **work** (John 10:25 "The works I do in my father's name") so we do the Father's **work** (serving church, serving community, frontline, social justice).
- c. **Words** - Jesus **spoke** his Father's **words** (John 8:28 "speak just what the Father has taught me") so we **speak** the Father's words (truth of Scripture).
- d. **Being** - Jesus shares unity in **being** with the Father (John 10:21 "You, Father, are in Me and I am in You. May they also be one in Us") so we share in the **relational aspect** of God's being (through the **Holy Spirit** in us).
- e. **Love** - Jesus is loved by the Father (John 17:23 "[You] have loved them as You have loved me.") and he invites us to share that very same love (most important part!).

I want to pause for a moment and have you write something on a **piece of paper**. Take your bulletin and a pen and write, "**The Father loves me.**" Do you realize the Father loves you **as much** as he loves his Son Christ Jesus? How can we possibly know that? Just **look** at the **cross**.

At the **cross**, Christ Jesus **makes possible** our union with the Father and himself (John 17:3). At the cross, Jesus **forgives** our sins. He takes on the full **wrath** of God upon himself so that we can now experience God's **love** instead of **anger**. And because we have been **forgiven a great debt**, we can now look all around us at our brothers and sisters in Christ within our **church**, in the next **town over**, or on the other side of the **globe**, and we can extend them this same kind of forgiveness and **grace**. It's because of the cross that we can be **one** with the Father and with Christ Jesus, experiencing true spiritual **union**.

Have you ever seen those *Russian nesting dolls*? Kathy brought this illustration to the preaching breakfast this week. Apparently they're called "**matryoshka dolls**." They stack one inside the other inside the other all the way down. I saw one picture of a **40-piece set**, but I didn't bring it because I thought you would be **too distracted** by how great it is. When people **look inside of us**, they should find the Son's love, and when they look inside the Son, they will find the Father's love, and when they look inside the Father they should find our love, and **so on** and so on. It's the **eternal** Russian nesting doll! When they see us, and are around us, we should **remind them** of Jesus. There's something **different** about her! When they hear the **teachings** of Jesus, it should remind them of us. The Bible says "**Love your neighbor**." I know my friend must be Christians because they do that.

Jesus prays for our union with other believers and with the Father and the Son. Prayer **ultimately** is not about doing **something** (talking at God), but about being with **someone** (speaking to and hearing from God). Did you know **Jesus** desires for you to be **with him**?

24 Father,
 **I desire those You have given Me
 to be with Me where I am.**
 Then they will see My glory,
 which You have given Me
 because You loved Me before the world's foundation. (HCSB)

Jesus has promised us that one day he will take us to be with him (John 14:2). But until that day, we can have a **little taste** (a foretaste) of what **being with** Jesus and the Father is like through **prayer**. It's as we are in this relationship, that the **world** will know Jesus is the **real** thing. We pray for union for **two reasons**:

- A. So that the world may know Jesus is from God.
- B. So that the world may know the Father loves us.

We find this in verses 23 and 25-26.

23 I am in them and You are in Me.
May they be made completely one,
**so the world may know You have sent Me
and have loved them as You have loved Me**

25 Righteous Father!
The world has not known You.
However, I have known You,
and these have known that You sent Me.

26 I made Your name known to them
and will make it known,
**so the love You have loved Me with
may be in them and I may be in them.** (HCSB)

Jesus calls us to love one another and the Father as a **powerful witness** to the world (c.f., John 13:35). If we want better **outreach**, let's **pray** for union with each other, with the Father, and with the Son. At the end of the day, we **can't** do this. None of us have the power to experience true union with God or others apart from a work of the **Holy Spirit**. Let's invite the Holy Spirit to grant us union.

Let's pray for union with the Father, with Jesus, and with each other.

I don't know **about you** but when I hear a sermon on prayer or read a book on prayer, I just **want to pray**. So that's what we are going to do. We're going to spend the next few minutes in **corporate prayer** as a church. I'm going to lead us through praying what we learned in John 17. I want you to pray with the people sitting in a **seat** near you. If you're a **visitor**, we invite you to participate, but you don't have to.

We're going to start like Jesus started his prayer, by praising the Father, by glorifying him. For example, you can pray, "Father, you are glorious or good or kind..." Say a short prayer, and go around (or **hop** around) your circle as you feel led. Keep praying till I take you to the **next prompt**.

"Father, you are _____."

"Father, would you make us one with _____."

"Father, may the world know _____."

Please **finish** your time in prayer as I invite the **worship team** to lead us into worship. *Righteous Father, please give us union with yourself, with Jesus, and with each other...*

Pastor Jonathan Romig wrote and preached this message for the people of Cornerstone Congregational Church. [Click here to listen to more sermons](#) or [click here to read our story](#).