

That We May Be One

John 17

If you knew that tomorrow, you were going to be separated from your family and friends and die. What are the last things...the last words you would want to leave with them. What would be your prayer?

I have faced the possibility of sudden, untimely death. And I know others who have too. And also those with the possibility of a slower death...over months. There is a kind of sifting that goes on. You have a new freedom to clear away the clutter in your life and move to what's most important. It's not unusual for someone to make a big life decision at this point.

Unfortunately, it's hard to keep that simplified view of your life and what's most important. We recover. We get into routines and eventually the shelves of our life get cluttered again.

What if I told you we can clear away the clutter and go after what's most important together? God has done this for us. It's Jesus' prayer...for His chosen 11 and the gathered of Lillooet Gospel Chapel. Jesus knew Judas was on his way to the Sanhedrin. Jesus knew He would be seized by His enemies, to be whipped, beaten, torn and nailed to a cross. But He also knew His blood would make all who believe, right before God. So these are

some of His last acts...His last words before death (Jn 14-16).

- washing the disciple's feet to remind us we serve one another...and He called them His friends
- revealed that He and the Father are one
- told them He must go for a while and prepare a place for them and that He would send the Holy Spirit to help them
- commended them to remain faithful and bear much fruit (bring God glory)
- commanded them to love on another

And now Jesus wants the 11 to hear His prayer. He wants the local churches across this planet to hear His prayer. He wants us, the believers gathered at Lillooet Gospel Chapel to hear His prayer. So we can clear away the clutter and be about the most important to Jesus...our head, our Great Shephard.

Pray

By letting us in on His prayer life, Jesus demonstrates to us that what we have with God is not just the role of a servant to the high king...but a friend. Where there is conversation, transparency...a dynamic relationship with talking. Recently, I was

encouraged by a new follower of Christ, who said he began praying and reading God's word out loud. He was doing it because he wanted to be more personal, more real.

Read Jn 17:1-5

Finishing for God and Going Home

The glory Jesus asks for (resurrection, ascension to rule in heaven) is so the Father's Gospel plan will be available to all peoples. And all the true believers will bear fruit for Him...bringing God glory until the end. Jesus and the Father are in complete harmony in plan and purpose. Jesus (incarnate) is given authority (Eph 1:22) for the mission to save anyone ('all flesh' only occurs here in John): anyone who knows the one true God AND Jesus Christ. Don't be confused by religions who also talk about the one God. No Jesus, no dice. And the one true God is knowable. This knowing (ginosko) is understanding by learning to know a person through direct contact, ongoing contact. We have His Word and His Spirit first. God uses circumstances, people, His creation to give us insight about Him and His way. It is an ongoing and eternal. Eternal life is given by Jesus only. Jesus said it at the last supper...the new way to know God is through His blood. Jesus looks forward to being home in glory with the Father...back to the way it has always been.

What work is finishing for Jesus?

v6-8 Revealing God Personally

Besides the work of paying the ransom for our sin, Jesus' was faithfully passing on God truth: training the 12 selected by the Father. He is satisfied they have accepted His teaching as from the Father and believe. Jesus was laying the foundation of teaching and life for building His church...which becomes God's household in heaven (1 Cor 3:11) of all believing peoples. Now Jesus, eyes lifted to heaven...lifts the needs of His disciples to the Father.

v9- 11a Prayer for the 11

Jesus is specifically praying for the ones God told Him to choose. And yet He acknowledges that even the ones God has given Him care of...are still the Father's as well. For they share everything...just like they give one another glory. We see some of that reflected in the way the first church in Jerusalem sold everything they had to share as needs arose. This is not the natural way...it's how God is. The disciples had become part of the mission (Mk 6:7, Lk 10)...bringing Him glory by spreading the good news of God's kingdom at hand through Him. But now Jesus is completing His mission and He will no longer be staying with them.

What does Jesus ask of the Father?

v11b-13 Protection for oneness

Jesus has revealed the words of the Father to the eleven and they have accepted it. Jesus is concerned that they do not lose this revelation from God...that Jesus is the Savior. They need to be protected when Jesus is taken away and killed. They will experience God's oneness anew, when they receive the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Notice this oneness is something Jesus and the Father have...a saving purpose for God's glory.

By the name that is above every other name are the disciples protected: Jesus, which means savior. *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.*" (Acts 4:12) Judas, however, has doomed himself to the devil's delight. Again we are struck by how conversational Jesus is with the Father. I'm praying this way on purpose for the disciples to hear my concerns and plans so they will be filled with my joy...so their joy may be complete.

Why do the disciples need protection?

v14-16 Not of the World by God's Truth

They have received God's word from Jesus. God's word is truth...truth not of this world is in them. They have become identified with Christ. The disciples are now alienated from this

world because of God's word and Christ. The world would have them destroyed. But especially, the evil one would have them killed. We know from Job and other places that Satan is not sovereign in his rule of the world. He does not have free reign especially over God's people.

Why doesn't Jesus ask for them to be taken from all danger?

v17-19 Set apart to continue God's work

'Sanctify' is to be set apart for God's work. He will send them into the lost world on mission just as He was sent. They must engage the world, not avoid it. (Uttley) Jesus will ensure their success by setting Himself apart from all to accomplish God's work on the cross.

What is God's work for the apostles?

The apostles were sent by Jesus as His ambassadors to lay the foundation for the church (Eph 2:20). They passed on what God told them: the truth and way of life for the new covenant people. And now we have the New Testament: all about Jesus, His churches, living for eternity and dying to the old way. And how it will all work out in the end. The Bible is God's letter of love to us.

Now Jesus lifts to the Father His disciples in the future. He prays for you and me, right here.

v20-23 That all of us may be one

Jesus continues to apply the prayers for His eleven to us.

1. prayer for protection - by the power of Jesus' name - from the evil one (because they have received the word which make them alien and hated)
2. prayer for the Father to sanctify (set them apart by His truth) for continuing the mission (making disciples of all nations).

And what results is Jesus looking for from these prayers?

That all of us may be one, as Jesus and the Father are one. Then the world will know God loves the world so much that He gave His only Son to save them. For the ones who believe continue in this love v23

How is Jesus and the Father one?

- A) edification (giving glory) to each other v1, 22, 24
- B) shared purpose and plan to save people v2
 - a) by revealing the Father's truth through Jesus so they (people) know and believe Jesus is God's Son v6-8
 - b) and then by giving them the indwelling presence (glory) v23, 26 for continued relationship (Father's love) v26 and complete unity v23
 - c) and finally join them in heaven v24

C) sharing all things v10

D) Existence together since before Creation (eternity past) v5, 24
ABC is where the oneness of God is reflected in local churches like us

What sends the strongest message that we are unified by God. Is it how well we work together to accomplish things? Gifts of the Spirit? Amazing faith? John sums it up this way: *No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us.* (1 Jn 4:12)
Not only do we share a deep benefit of God's work in by loving one another, it's the way people will know we are disciples of Jesus (Jn 13:34-35).
And just to make sure love is the highest point of unity or oneness...Jesus commands it of us. You know what's cool? All we do is remember what Jesus did for us...and thankfully let Him have His way.

Read Phil 2:1-5

Jesus Christ, the Son of God made himself nothing compared to His former glory...and followed God's plan right to death on a cross! But now He is exalted to the highest place. And returning soon. Amen? So we have motivation and help...the Bible, His Spirit and people like evangelists, pastors, teachers and missionaries *to build us up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God (doctrine) and become*

mature. What's so great about being grounded in Scripture?

Read Eph 4:14-16

What glory has Jesus passed on to us (Jn 17:22)?

First, He took the punishment we deserved to save us so we could become children of God. But He has also given us an ongoing present glory. When we receive Christ, the Spirit enters us and we become spiritually alive (Rom 8:9). As we seek to know God, we are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is Spirit (2 Cor 3:18). The Holy Spirit brings the fellowship of God with us...forever (Phil 2:1-2). What a gift we've been given. It's life in Christ.

As God refines us (prunes), we bear more fruit, giving God more glory (Jn 15). How are we giving God glory in our services and other gatherings? Is there something God's telling us to work on?

The greatest glory we can give the Father is to remain in Christ's love - obeying His Commands (Jn 15:9). And many churches have simplified their guiding principles to the greatest commandment (love God and neighbor) and the great commission (make disciples).

Jesus finishes His prayer with a genuine love for His disciples.

v24-26 The Indwelling Love of Christ

Jesus looks forward with joy to when we're with him in glory. He even wants to be with those fishermen and tax collectors.

Jesus' prayer reveals that His new covenant people (us) are to experience God (not just head knowledge but relationship). Here's how:

1. protected by the name of Jesus (v11-12)
2. indwelt by the glory of God's presence v 22 see also John 14:15ff, 15:26ff (Illuminates, comforts, convicts)
3. ongoing transformation by the truth v26
4. being set aside (holy) for God's mission v17-19
5. receiving joy from Jesus. v13

The experience of God must be grounded in God's word.

The oneness we find in knowing God leads us to a oneness expressed to one another. Unity is not so much a byproduct of discussion and diplomacy as it is Bible study, worship, repentance, and prayer. The degree to which we seek God together will assist us to find common ground in our lives.

*When our unity is from seeking the Lord together, then it will not compromise His truths.

Our goal to know God better and express His love to each other...leaks. Our neighbors find that God is real to

us. That Jesus is alive! As new people open their lives to God, we get to disciple them...welcome them into our spiritual family, baptize them and help them grow to obey Christ.

It's natural that when the new believer joins the fellowship and mission of the local church...there is now less time and space for the old interests and relationships. How is a lost world going to know about Jesus if we've completely separated ourselves? The purity, holiness, and necessary separation of the church can be at odds with a church's mission to the world. A word of caution: It's even more damaging to become so community minded that we lose oneness with God's people. And so God appointed spiritual leaders for the local church to help discern how to live in the world but not of the world.

We offer Lillooet a priceless gift, something they need desperately. People need the Lord. Behind the skepticism, there is an undeniable mystery. We care for each other and regularly put aside all the other things and people to make time to meet together.

It is no small thing...the kindness, the service, the sacrifice we do for one another. I am honored to be your

pastor. And I only see a slice of what care you are showing for one another. And when I have permission to speak into the lives of people in this community...I can look them in the eye and tell them they need Jesus and they need His loving family...Lillooet Gospel Chapel.

Church, listen to the heart of Jesus in John 17. Let us not be distracted by the clutter of other things...as good as they may sound, feel, or look. Jesus Christ, Son of God is the head of this church. He is ruling in heaven today: defending, advocating, interceding for US (Rom 8:34, 2 Cor 5:21, 1 Tim 2:5, 1 Jn 2:1). His prayers for us have not changed (Heb 13:8).

God's church is as diverse as we all are. And we are going to look more specifically at how He guides the local church next week.

Benediction

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Cor 13:14).