

Connecting Through the Word
“That They May Be One”
John 17

John 17:10-26

10 *And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them.*

11 *Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, **that they may be one as We are.***

17 *Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.*

18 *As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.*

19 *And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.*

20 *"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;*

21 ***that they all may be one,** as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; **that they also may be one in Us,** that the world may believe that You sent Me.*

22 *And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, **that they may be one just as We are one:***

23 *I in them, and You in Me; **that they may be made perfect in one,** and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.*

24 *Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.*

25 *O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me.*

26 *And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."*

The next few months of transition can either be a glorious experience and time for RFBC or it can become a very confusing and divisive time. The kind of time it will be is really a matter of choice on each of our individual parts.

It's always amazing to me as to how the Lord and His Holy Spirit coordinate and lead me in bringing the messages on Sunday.

For the last several weeks we have been looking at the Gospel of John. John's Gospel is the universal Gospel!

Matthew – For the Jews

Mark – For the Romans

Luke – For the Greeks

John – For the whole world

I didn't feel I could leave the Gospel of John without one more message and immediately the Lord led me to look at John 17, The Lord's High Priestly Prayer.

This is the only Gospel that this prayer is recorded in.

Most scholars who have sought to harmonize the accounts in the four Gospels have the Lord Jesus praying the prayer of John 17 in the Upper Room after He had finished His instructions to the disciples. Then He and the disciples sang the traditional Passover psalms, left the Upper Room, and headed for the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus had been accustomed to meet with them and pray (Matthew 26:30-46 and Mark 14:26-42).

Whether He prayed it in the Upper Room or en-route to the Garden, this much is sure: it is the greatest prayer ever prayed on earth and the greatest prayer recorded anywhere in Scripture.

John 17 is certainly the "holy of holies" of the Gospel record, and we must approach this chapter in a spirit of humility and

worship. To think that we are privileged to listen in as God the Son converses with His Father just as He is about to give His life as a ransom for sinners!

No matter what events occurred later that evening, this prayer makes it clear that Jesus was and is the Overcomer. He was not a "victim"; He was and is the Victor! "Be of good cheer," He had encouraged His disciples; "I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). The word *world* is used nineteen times in this prayer, so it is easy to see the connection between the prayer and John 16:33.

If you and I will understand and apply the truths revealed in this profound prayer, it will enable us to be overcomers too. The progression of thought in this prayer is not difficult to discover.

Jesus first prayed for Himself and told the Father that His work on earth had been finished (John 17:1-5).

Then He prayed for His disciples, that the Father would *keep them* and *sanctify them* (John 17:6-19).

He closed His prayer by praying for you and me and the whole church, that we might be unified in Him and one day share His glory (John 17:20-26).

Why did Jesus pray this prayer? Certainly He was preparing Himself for the sufferings that lay ahead. As He contemplated the glory that the Father promised Him, He would receive new strength for His sacrifice (Heb. 12:1-3).

But He also had His disciples in mind (John 17:13). What an encouragement this prayer should have been to them! He prayed about their security, their joy, their unity, and their future glory! He also prayed it for us today, so that we would know all that He has done for us and given to us, and all that He will do for us when we get to heaven.

I've highlighted the times the Lord prayed for unity among his followers.

11 "... ***that they may be one as We are.***"

21 ***that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.***

22 ***And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:***

23 ***I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one,***

What makes for this unity? How does this Unity take place among individuals you can be so different.

In nationality, culture and language

In social status

In personality

In preferences

In life experiences

In relationships

Christian harmony is not based on the externals of the flesh but the internals and eternal of the Spirit in the inner person. We must look beyond the elements of our first birth—race, color, abilities, etc.—and build our fellowship on the essentials of our new birth.

Jesus had entered Jerusalem on Sunday, and on Monday had cleansed the temple. Tuesday was a day of conflict as the religious leaders sought to trip Him up and get evidence to arrest Him. These events are recorded in Matthew 21-25. Wednesday was probably a day of rest, but on Thursday He met in the Upper Room with His disciples in order to observe Passover.

John 17 – The Lord's Prayer

In this prayer, our Lord declares four wonderful privileges we have as His children, privileges that help to make us overcomers and experience unity in our fellowship with one another.

We Share His Life (John 17:1-5) Eternal Life

We Know His Name (John 17:6-12) “I Am....”

We Have His Word (John 17:13-19) “Thy Word is Truth”

We Share His Glory (John 17:20-26)

John 17:22

And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:

The events in John 13 to John 17 took place on Thursday in the Upper Room.

On this one occasion I believe we can find all the things we need to experience to have joy, peace and unity in the times of trial, testing, tribulation and transition!!!!

John 13

The first ingredient that brings Unity is Humility

Jesus washes the Disciple's feet.

John 13:3-5

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

The Lord's example of Humility

Philippians 2:5-8

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal

with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

John 13:15-17

For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

Are we supposed to wash each other's feet at home, in church or at work?

John 13:7

Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this."

I think the real truth here is Jesus is teaching forgiveness for one another.

We should live a life of humility that is expressed by how we can forgive someone who offends or hurts us.

Pride holds resentment, hatred, revenge, bitterness.

Humility forgives, asked for forgiveness and seeks restoration.

If you know these things, blessed, happy, are you if you do them.

The Story and Example of Roger VerLee and Calvary Baptist in Holland Michigan.

The Next thing we notice is Love!

John 13:34-35

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Love is the fruit of the Spirit that is produced by obedience and yielding to the control of the Holy Spirit.

John 14

Next we encouraged to Believe!

Keep focused on who Jesus is!

Keep focused on heaven and eternity!

Keep focused on our mission!

"I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through Me"

The ingredient for unity is Prayer

John 14:12-14

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it."

The family that prays together, stays together!

The church that prays together, stays together!

The community that prays together, stays together!

The nation that prays together, stays together!

The next ingredient for unity is knowing and receiving our Heavenly Helper – The Holy Spirit!

John 14:15-18

"If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you."

The Holy Spirit will teach you what to do.

John 14:26

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."

Chapter 15 – The Vine and the Branches

The next thing I notice about what is needed for unity is remembering we all are the branches and Jesus is the Vine!

We are branches connected and receiving life from the same source!!!! The Vine who is Jesus. We have not life or future or fruit without Him.

John 15:5

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

In three of these chapters, 14, 15 and 16, the Lord speaks of the Holy Spirit!

Chapter 16 – The Work and Ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The next thing that will bring unity to the body of believers is really believing and understanding the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

His Convicting Power

His Guiding into Truth

His Purpose to Glorify the Lord Jesus Christ

John 16:12-14

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.

Unity will be evidenced by Joy and Peace**John 16:23-24**

And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

John 16:33

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Then the Lord's Prayer for "Oneness" among His followers! That would identify them as His disciples and be a witness to the lost world. And bring the greatest glory to Jesus Christ!!!!

The evidence that this prayer was answered in found in:

The Book of Acts**Acts 1:14**

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

Acts 2:1

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Acts 2:46

So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,

Acts 4:24

So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them,

Acts 4:32

Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.

Acts 5:12

And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch.

This is my prayer for Rainbow in the days ahead!!!
I trust it will be your prayer too!

Join in prayer with those around you for the "unity" of the church as

John 17 – The Lord's Prayer

In this prayer, our Lord declares four wonderful privileges we have as His children, privileges that help to make us overcomers.

We Share His Life (John 17:1-5)

Our Lord began this prayer by praying for Himself, but in praying for Himself, He was also praying for us. "A prayer for self is not by any means necessarily a selfish prayer," wrote Dr. R.A. Torrey, and an examination of Bible prayers shows that this is

true. Our Lord's burden was the glory of God, and this glory would be realized in His finished work on the cross. The servant of God has every right to ask his Father for the help needed to glorify His name. "Hallowed be Thy name" is the first petition in the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9), and it is the first emphasis in this prayer.

"Father, the hour is come," reminds us of the many times in John's Gospel when "the hour" is mentioned, beginning at John 2:4. Jesus had lived on a "divine timetable" while on earth and He knew He was in the will of the Father. "My times are in Thy hand" (Ps. 31:15).

The important word *glory* is used five times in these verses, and we must carefully distinguish the various "glories" that Jesus mentions. In John 17:5, He referred to His preincarnate glory with the Father, the glory that He laid aside when He came to earth to be born, to serve, to suffer, and to die. In John 17:4, He reported to the Father that His life and ministry on earth had glorified Him, because He (Jesus) had finished the work the Father gave Him to do. In John 17:1 and 5, our Lord asked that His preincarnate glory be given to Him again, so that the Son might glorify the Father in His return to heaven.

The word *glory* is used eight times in this prayer, so it is an important theme. He glorified the Father in His miracles (John 2:11; 11:40), to be sure; but He brought the greatest glory to the Father through His sufferings and death (see John 12:23-25; 13:31-32). From the human point of view, Calvary was a revolting display of man's sin; but from the divine point of view, the cross revealed and magnified the grace and glory of God. Jesus anticipated His return to heaven when He said, "I have finished the work which You gave Me to do" (John 17:4). This "work" included His messages and miracles on earth (John 5:17-19), the training of the disciples for future service, and most of all, His sacrifice on the cross (Heb. 9:24-28; 10:11-18). It is on the basis of this "finished work" that we as believers have the gift of eternal life (John 17:2-3). The word *give* is used

in one form or another in this prayer at least seventeen times. Seven times Jesus states that believers are the Father's gift to His Son (John 17:2, 6, 9, 11-12, 24). We are accustomed to thinking of Jesus as the Father's love gift to us (John 3:16), but the Lord affirms that believers are the Father's "love gift" to His beloved Son!

"Eternal [everlasting] life" is an important theme in John's Gospel; it is mentioned at least seventeen times. Eternal life is God's free gift to those who believe on His Son (John 3:15-16, 36; 6:47; 10:28). The Father gave His Son the authority to give eternal life to those whom the Father gave to the Son. From the human viewpoint, we receive the gift of eternal life when we believe on Jesus Christ. But from the divine viewpoint, we have already been given to the Son in divine election. This is a mystery that the human mind cannot fully understand or explain; we must accept it by faith.

What is "eternal life"? It is knowing God personally. Not just knowing *about* Him, but having a personal relationship with Him through faith in Jesus Christ. We cannot know the Father apart from the Son (John 14:6-11). It is not enough simply to "believe in God"; this will never save a lost soul from eternal hell. "The devils [demons] also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19). Our Lord's debate with the Jewish leaders (John 8:12ff) makes it clear that people may be devoutly religious and still not know God. Eternal life is not something we earn by character or conduct; it is a gift we receive by admitting we are sinners, repenting, and believing on Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone.

The Father answered His Son's request and gave Him the glory. There is in heaven today a glorified Man, the God-Man, Jesus Christ! Because He has been glorified in heaven, sinners can be saved on earth. Anyone who trusts Jesus Christ will receive the gift of eternal life.

Because we share His life, we are overcomers; for we also share His victory! "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). When you were born the first time, you were born "in Adam" and were a loser. When you are born again through faith in Christ, you are born a winner!

Satan has tried to obscure the precious truth of the finished work of Jesus Christ, because he knows it is a basis for spiritual victory. "And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 12:11). Don't let Satan rob you of your overcoming power through Christ's finished work.

We Know His Name (John 17:6-12)

Christ has given His own eternal life (John 17:2), but He has also given them the revelation of the Father's name (John 17:6). The Old Testament Jew knew his God as "Jehovah," the great I AM (Ex. 3:11-14). Jesus took this sacred name "I AM" and made it meaningful to His disciples: "I am the Bread of Life" (John 6:35); "I am the Light of the world" (John 8:12); "I am the Good Shepherd" (John 10:11); etc. In other words, Jesus revealed the Father's gracious name by showing His disciples that He was everything they needed.

But the Father's name includes much more than this, for Jesus also taught His disciples that God—the great I AM—was their Heavenly Father. The word *Father* is used 53 times in John 13-17, and 122 times in John's Gospel! In His messages to the Jews, Jesus made it clear that the Father sent Him, that He was equal to the Father, and that His words and works came from the Father. It was a clear claim to Deity, but they refused to believe.

In the Bible, "name" refers to "nature," because names so often were given to reveal something special about the nature of the person bearing the name. Jacob was a schemer, and his name comes from a Hebrew root that means "to take by the heel," i.e.,

to trip up, to deceive (Gen. 25:26). The name *Isaac* means "laughter" (Gen. 21:6) because he brought joy to Abraham and Sarah. Even the name Jesus reveals that He is the Savior (Matt. 1:21).

"I have manifested Thy name" means "I have revealed the nature of God." One of the ministries of the Son was to declare the Father (John 1:18). The Greek word translated "declared" means, "to unfold, to lead, to show the way." Jesus did not instantly reveal the Father in a blaze of blinding glory, because His disciples could not have endured that kind of experience. Gradually, by His words and His deeds, He revealed to them the nature of God, as they were able to bear it (John 16:12).

The emphasis in this section is on the safety of the believer; God keeps His own (John 17:11-12). Our safety depends on the nature of God, not our own character or conduct. When He was on earth, Jesus kept His disciples and they could depend on Him. "I kept them in Thy name" (John 17:12). If the limited Savior, in a human body, could keep His own while He was on earth, should He not be able to keep them now that He is glorified in heaven? He and the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, are surely able to guard and secure God's people! Furthermore, God's people are the Father's gift to His Son. Would the Father present His Son with a gift that would not last? The disciples had belonged to the Father by creation and by covenant (they were Jews), but now they belonged to the Son. How precious we are in His sight! How He watches over us and even now prays for us! Whenever you feel as though the Lord has forgotten you, or that His love seems far away, read Romans 8:28-39—and rejoice!

Our security rests in another fact: we are here to glorify Him (John 17:10). With all of their failures and faults, the disciples still receive this word of commendation: "I am glorified in them." Would it bring glory to God if one of His own, who trusted in the

Savior, did not make it to heaven? Certainly not! This was Moses' argument when the nation of Israel sinned: "Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'For mischief did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth?'" (Ex. 32:12) Certainly God knows all things, so why save them at all if He knows they will fail along the way? Whatever God starts, He finishes (Phil. 1:6).

God has provided the divine resources for us to glorify Him and be faithful. We have His Word (John 17:7-8), and His Word reveals to us all that we have in Jesus Christ. The Word gives us faith and assurance. We have the Son of God interceding for us (John 17:9; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 4:14-16). Since the Father always answers the prayers of His Son (John 11:41-42), this intercessory ministry helps to keep us safe and secure. We also have the fellowship of the church: "that they may be one, as we are" (John 17:11). The New Testament knows nothing of isolated believers; wherever you find saints, you find them in fellowship. Why? Because God's people need each other. Jesus opened His Upper Room message by washing the disciples' feet and teaching them to minister to one another. In the hours that would follow, these men (including confident Peter!) would discover how weak they were and how much they needed each other's encouragement.

The believer, then, is secure in Christ for many reasons: the very nature of God, the nature of salvation, the glory of God, and the intercessory ministry of Christ. But what about Judas? Was he secure? How did he fall? Why did Jesus not keep him safe? For the simple reason that *Judas was never one of Christ's own*. Jesus faithfully kept all that the Father gave to Him, but Judas had never been given to Him by the Father. Judas was not a believer (John 6:64-71); he had never been cleansed (John 13:11); he had not been among the chosen (John 13:18); he had never been given to Christ (John 18:8-9).

No, Judas is not an example of a believer who "lost his salvation." He is an example of an unbeliever who *pretended to have salvation* but was finally exposed as a fraud. Jesus keeps all whom the Father gives to Him (John 10:26-30). We are overcomers because we share His life. There is a third privilege that enables us to overcome.

We Have His Word (John 17:13-19)

"I have given them Thy Word" (John 17:14, and see v. 8). The Word of God is the gift of God to us. The Father gave the words to His Son (John 17:8), and the Son gave them to His disciples who, in turn, have passed them along to us as they were inspired by the Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21). The Word is divine in origin, a precious gift from heaven. We must never take God's Word for granted, for those who are overcomers know the Word and how to use it in daily life.

How does the Word of God enable us to overcome the world? To begin with, *it gives us joy* (John 17:13); and this inward joy gives us the strength to overcome (Neh. 8:10). We commonly think of Jesus Christ as "a man of sorrows" (Isa. 53:3), and indeed He was; but He was also a person of deep abiding joy. John 17:13 is the very heart of this prayer, *and its theme is joy!* Jesus had referred to His joy already (John 15:11) and had explained that joy comes by transformation and not substitution (John 16:20-22). Joy also comes from answered prayer (John 16:23-24). Now He made it clear that joy comes from the Word also. The believer does not find his joy in the world but in the Word. Like John the Baptist, we should rejoice greatly when we hear the Bridegroom's voice! (John 3:29)

We must never picture Jesus going around with a long face and a melancholy disposition. He was a man of joy and He revealed that joy to others. His joy was not the fleeting levity of a sinful world but the abiding enjoyment of the Father and the Word. He did not depend on outward circumstances but on inward

spiritual resources that were hidden from the world. This is the kind of joy He wants us to have, and we can have it through His Word. "Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jer. 15:16). "I have rejoiced in the way of Thy testimonies, as much as in all riches" (Ps. 119:14). "I rejoice at Thy word, as one that finds great spoil" (Ps. 119:162).

The Word not only imparts the joy of the Lord, but it also *assures us of His love* (John 17:14). The world hates us, but we are able to confront this hatred with God's own love, a love imparted to us by the Spirit through the Word. The world hates us because we do not belong to its system (John 15:18-19) and will not be conformed to its practices and standards (Rom. 12:2). The Word reveals to us what the world is really like; the Word exposes the world's deceptions and dangerous devices. The world competes for the Father's love (1 John 2:15-17), but the Word of God enables us to enjoy the Father's love. One of the first steps toward a worldly life is the neglect of the Word of God. D.L. Moody wrote in the front of his Bible, "This book will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from this book." Just as the pillar of fire was darkness to the Egyptians but light to Israel, so God's Word is our light in this dark world, but the world cannot understand the things of God (Ex. 14:20; 1 Cor. 2:12-16).

The Word of God not only brings us God's joy and love, but it also imparts God's power for holy living (John 17:15-17). The burden of our Lord's Prayer in John 17:6-12 was *security*, but here it is *sanctity*, practical holy living to the glory of God.

We are *in* the world but not *of* the world, and we must not live *like* the world. Sometimes we think it would be easier if we were "out of the world," but this is not true. Wherever we go, we take our own sinful self with us, and the powers of darkness will follow us. I have met people who have gone into "spiritual

isolation" in order to become more holy, only to discover that it does not always work.

True sanctification (being set apart for God) comes through the ministry of the Word of God. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). When you were saved, you were set apart for God. As you grow in your faith, you are more and more experiencing sanctification. You love sin less and you love God more. You want to serve Him and be a blessing to others. All of this comes through the Word. God's truth has been given to us in three "editions": His Word is truth (John 17:17); His Son is the truth (John 14:6); and His Spirit is the truth (1 John 5:6). We need all three if we are to experience true sanctification, a sanctification that touches every part of our inner person. With the mind, we *learn* God's truth through the Word. With the heart, we *love* God's truth, His Son. With the will, we *yield* to the Spirit and *live* God's truth day by day. It takes all three for a balanced experience of sanctification.

It is not enough merely to study the Bible and learn a great deal of doctrinal truth. We must also love Jesus Christ more as we learn all that He is and all He has done for us. Learning and loving should lead to living, allowing the Spirit of God to enable us to obey His Word. This is how we glorify Him in this present evil world.

The Word gives us joy, love, and power to live a holy life. It also gives us what we need to serve Him as witnesses in this world (John 17:18-19).

Sanctification is not for the purpose of selfish enjoyment or boasting; it is so that we might represent Christ in this world and win others to Him. Jesus set Himself apart for us, and now He has set us apart for Him. The Father sent Him into the world, and now He sends us into the world. We are people "under

orders" and we had better obey! Jesus is now "set apart" in heaven, praying for us, that our witness will bear fruit as many repent of their sins and turn to the Lord.

How can we be overcome by the world when we have the Word of God to enlighten us, enable us, and encourage us?

We Share His Glory (John 17:20-26)

Here our Lord focuses our attention on the future. He begins to pray for us who live today, for the whole church throughout all ages. **He has already prayed about security and sanctity; now the burden of His prayer is *unity*.**

He is concerned that His people experience a spiritual unity that is like the oneness of the Father and the Son. Christians may belong to different fellowships, but they all belong to the Lord and to each other.

The disciples had often exhibited a spirit of selfishness, competition, and disunity; and this must have broken the Savior's heart. I wonder how He feels when He sees the condition of the church today! The Puritan preacher Thomas Brooks wrote: "Discord and division become no Christian. For wolves to worry the lambs is no wonder, but for one lamb to worry another, this is unnatural and monstrous."

What is the basis for true Christian unity?

The person and work of Jesus Christ and His glory (John 17:2-5). He has already given His glory to us, and He promises that we will further experience that glory when we get to heaven! All true believers have God's glory within, no matter what they may look like on the outside.

Christian harmony is not based on the externals of the flesh but the internals and eternal of the Spirit in the inner person. We must look beyond the elements of our first birth—race, color, abilities, etc.—and build our fellowship on the essentials of our new birth.

We already possess His glory within (John 17:22, and note Rom. 8:29), and one day we shall behold His glory in heaven (John 17:24). As we grow in the Lord, the glory within begins to grow and to reveal itself in what we say and do and the way we say and do it. People do not see us and glorify us; they see the Lord and glorify Him (Matt. 5:16; 1 Cor. 6:19-20).

One of the things that most impresses the world is the way Christians love each other and live together in harmony. It is this witness that our Lord wants in the world "that the world may believe that You have sent Me" (John 17:21). The lost world cannot see God, but they can see Christians; and what they see in us is what they will believe about God. If they see love and unity, they will believe that God is love. If they see hatred and division, they will reject the message of the Gospel.

Jesus has assured us that some will believe because of our witness (John 17:20), but we must make sure that our witness is true and loving. Some Christians are prosecuting attorneys and judges instead of faithful witnesses, and this only turns lost sinners away from the Savior.

There is every reason why believers should love one another and live in unity. We trust the same Saviour and share the same glory. We will one day enjoy the same heaven! We belong to the same Father and seek to do the same work, witnessing to a lost world that Jesus Christ alone saves from sin. We believe the same truth, even though we may have different views of minor doctrinal matters; and we follow the same example that Jesus set for His people, to live a holy life. Yes, believers do have their differences; but we have much more in common, and this

should encourage us to love one another and promote true spiritual unity.

I have often used John 17:24 as a text for funeral meditations. How do we know that Christians go to heaven? Because of the price that Jesus paid (1 Thes. 5:9-10), and the promise that Jesus made (John 14:1-6), and the prayer that Jesus prayed (John 17:24). The Father always answers His Son's prayers, so we know that believers who die do go to heaven to behold the glory of God.

In John 17:25-26, there are no petitions. Jesus simply reported to His Father about the ministry in the world, and He made several declarations that are important to us. He declared that the world does not know the Father, but that we believers know Him because the Son has revealed the Father to us. The world certainly has many opportunities to get to know the Father, but it prefers to go on in blindness and hardness of heart. Our task as Christians is to bear witness to the lost world and share God's saving message.

He also declares the importance of truth and love in the church. Believers know God's name (nature) and even share in that divine nature. Jesus makes it clear that *truth* and *love* must go together (see Eph. 4:15). It has well been said that truth without love is brutality, but love without truth is hypocrisy. The mind grows by taking in truth, but the heart grows by giving out in love. Knowledge alone can lead to pride (1 Cor. 8:1), and love alone can lead to wrong decisions (see Phil. 1:9-10). Christian love must not be blind!

As you review this prayer, you see the spiritual priorities that were in the Savior's heart: the glory of God; the sanctity of God's people; the unity of the church; the ministry of sharing the Gospel with a lost world. We today would be wise to focus on these same priorities.

One day, each of us will have to give an account of his or her ministry. It is a solemn thought that we shall stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and give our "final report."

I trust that we will be able to say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gave me to do" (John 17:4).