

The Gospel of John: That You May Believe A Prayer of Jesus for His People

John 17:6-19

Sunday, October 22, 2017

Introduction

On the night before Jesus was crucified, after the last supper and before His betrayal, Jesus took time to pray. Jesus knew what was coming; He knew the cross was imminent, so He prayed. And what's incredible is that His prayer was not primarily for Himself, but for His followers.

In John 17 we have the prayer of Jesus recorded and in it we get to see what He valued. As we hear Jesus pray we hear what He desired for us and ultimately what we should desire for ourselves and our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Who Jesus Prayed For (17:6-10)

- Jesus is praying for those who were set apart by God (vs. 6, 9-10)

As Jesus prays it is clear that He's not praying for people in general, He's praying for a very specific group, a special group. Jesus is praying for those who God the Father chose and set apart from the world.

While it seems at this point that Jesus has the eleven in mind, we are also in Christ because of the setting apart of the Father, and this reality creates a special relationship and love between us and God. We are His people whom He has called (John 1:10-13)

- Jesus is praying for those who heard His words and believed (vs. 7-8)

As Jesus prays He is praying for those who heard His teaching and believed. Throughout His ministry most did not believe. In fact, very soon He would be betrayed and killed because of the unbelief of many, but here Jesus prays for those who through faith have believed and followed Him (John 6:66-69).

- Our Inclusion in the Prayer of Jesus (vs. 20)

As Jesus begins it seems clear that He is praying for His disciples, but what we see as the prayer continues is that His requests are not limited to the eleven. In verse 20 Jesus expands His prayer to include all who believe. This means that on the night before Jesus died He prayed for us! And there is a lot to be learned by considering what Jesus desired for us.

What Jesus Prayed For (17:11-19)

- **Keep Them – A Prayer for Spiritual Protection (vs. 11-15)**

In chapters 13- 16 there has been one constant theme: Jesus knows that He is about to leave and He doesn't want His disciples to be unprepared – He cares for what will happen when He leaves. And now as His time is coming He places His followers in the hands of God the Father for safekeeping.

Specifically Jesus asks the Father to 'keep them.' Jesus knows the battle of unbelief and He knows the persecution they will face so He asks the Father to hold them tightly and protect them (John 16:31; 1 Peter 5:8; John 10:27-29)

- Jesus prays for our protection: For the Purpose of Our Unity (vs. 11)
- Jesus prays for our protection: For the Purpose of Our Joy (vs. 13) (Hebrews 12:2; John 16:16-33)

- **Sanctify Them – A Prayer for Spiritual Growth (vs. 16-19)**

- When we are born we are born into the world. By nature we think, act and speak like the world. But when we come to Jesus He begins to change us, to set us apart from the world – this is what the Bible calls sanctification. As Jesus prayed for His disciples He asked God the Father to sanctify them, to grow them and set them apart.
- The means by which Jesus asks the Father to make us holy is through His Word, which is the truth (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 4:12)
- As Jesus prayed for the sanctification of His disciples, He also acknowledged His own 'setting apart' or consecration. This is a reference to His work on the cross. It is because of His work on the cross that we can be made holy (Hebrews 10:11-14).

Application

- How often do you stand in awe of the work God has done to bring you into His family? As His people we are loved by God in a special way, and this love should bring us comfort and lead us to worship (1 John 3:1; 4:15)
- How often do you consider the temptations of unbelief and ask God to keep you? We should always be actively fighting for our faith and asking God to hold us tight – knowing that He can and will.
- How committed are you to the pursuit of holiness? In His final prayers before the cross Jesus prayed that we would grow in holiness and we should have the same desire for ourselves and those around us.