

Jesus Prays For All Believers
John 17:20-26
Sunday, May 29, 2022

In certain parts of the Bible God is depicted as building a structure using people instead of stones, with Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone. Jesus reflects this in the complex prayer that He offers as the role of a great High Priest. In it He speaks of us being One as He and the Father are One, which is baffling to me in that there is a word in the New Testament that refers to "one" as a unified group that stands together, embracing common values. But that word for "one" is not used, rather the word for numerically "one" is used, as if describing a unit. I think some of the reflections from last Sunday and during the week reveal that the work of the Holy Spirit is to cause our lives to intersect in such a way as to weave a single fabric, a single community with one source of life and one mind at its center. The emphasis is that of the Body of Christ as a unit working together, and each person involved, while still unique, is part of a whole.

- Love within the Godhead overflows

One person in the church saw that the love of God overflows the Trinity onto humanity. She wrote, "Jesus notes that He and God were together from eternity, which has to include the Spirit. God's love was so overwhelming that He created us on whom to lavish that great love. And Jesus wants us to be as close to Him as He is to the Father." I find it interesting that the love of God for us existed before we did, and that the overflow of that love is meant to enter into human relationships. I think this helps inspire the following.

- The Love of God overflows among humans

Here's an example of how that love enters into human relationships. One person, when she was a little girl, received an invitation to spend the night with a classmate. She spoke with her father about the invitation but asked him to deny permission because she really did not want to spend the night at her friend's house. It was too messy. Her father refused to deny permission, probably because he did not approve of her attitude. She spent the night with her friend and had a great time and learned never to bother criticizing people over unimportant issues. It was far better, and much more fun, to love everyone. That was a lesson that showed that connections were made.

- Connected to Christ and to one another.

Another person brought up connections when she noted the image of the church being connected was common in Scripture and pointed out the image of a grapevine, which was common in that area. In John 15, Jesus said that He is the vine and we are the branches which makes us very dependent upon Him and connected with each other. No one has ever seen the branches of a grapevine get into a fight with each other. So also when there is unity in the church there will also be peace in the church.

- Our spiritual life is important.

When we are closer to Christ, we become closer together

And then someone reminded us of the old trick we can make with our hands along with the line "here is the church, here is the steeple, open it up and see all the people." He encouraged us in light of these truths in Scripture to set aside agendas and pride that can easily disrupt the peace of a church. Hebrews 12:1-2 remind us to cast aside sins that easily beset us and focus on the person

of Christ. He noted also that 2 Corinthians 3:18 speaks of the change that comes over a person so focused on Christ and that drawing closer to Christ will inevitably draw us closer together as a church.

Finally I had an interesting experience this week. An old friend that I hadn't seen since high school dropped by the church to visit. He had been in Marshalltown to attend a meeting, and at the meeting was invited to drop by a local business, and there at the local business ran into an old friend who asked him if he knew me. He answered "yes" and was directed here to the church and he and I had the first conversation together since high school. He does not see those events as coincidences. He sees the Holy Spirit at work in relationships. I think he may have a point.

- Conclusion

In conclusion, this great priestly prayer of Jesus addresses the love and servant's heart within the Godhead, but it moves to the lives of the church as is the Father's will. What this prayer depicts is the Holy Spirit forming the church of all ages into a single body guided by a single will. He develops unity as we draw closer to Christ, and He works in relationships. This is just a part of the prayer Jesus prayed for all believers.