

It is the night of the Passover. Jesus has been talking very seriously with his disciples. He knows he is about to be arrested. He knows he is going to be killed and one last time he wants to show his disciples how much he loves them, and so he turns his face towards heaven and allows them to hear his prayer to his Father.

So many times, Jesus went away on his own to pray to his Father, and we don't know what was said, but **here** we get a glimpse into the most intimate conversation.

Jesus prays this prayer out loud for the benefit of his disciples

Jesus starts by praying for himself.

And then goes on to

pray for his disciples. And then

For those down the ages who will believe because of their message.

Jesus prays that God will bring him Glory. Bring Glory to the Son. But Jesus doesn't want glory just for himself. He wants glory in order that he may bring Glory to the Father.

As he prays this way, Jesus wants us to see his complete fixation with the Father's glory. All he did was to bring Glory, honour and praise to the Father.

His prayer for himself, is that he be glorified, but only so that the Father may be ultimately glorified. His prayer prepares him for being glorified through his death and resurrection, but only so that the Father may be ultimately glorified.

Jesus is only hours away from torture and crucifixion, yet His eyes are not fixed on himself or on his tragedy or even, at that moment, on his disciples.

They are fixed on the fact that God is his Father, that God's timing is perfect and that what really matters, is completing the Father's plan. To do God's will. And to bring Glory to the Father.

Jesus' whole life was focused on doing his Father's will. A will that wishes all to be saved.

Jesus will give eternal life to all who say YES to him.

But what is eternal life?

Eternal life is simply this – eternal life is knowing the Father and the Son?

So, **as** we turn to the Holy God who gives us eternal life, **as** we remember that we are here to bring Him glory, our focus turns to God and not in on ourselves.

So, Jesus first prays for himself with the focus on bringing Glory to God.

Then Jesus prays for the disciples,

He affirms they belong to God the Father

He asks God to protect them in the powerful name of Jesus.

And then we see the heart of both Jesus and the Father...he prays that the disciples will be one, just like he and the Father are one.

John 17:1-26 Sunday 17th September 2023 – Prayer 3

Unity amongst the believers is at the absolute heart of God.

Unity does not mean that you must all think the same about everything. ,
Nor is it a prayer to have our minds taken over like unthinking robots,
but here we see a prayer, with a great longing, for us to understand the very heart of God, his love, his goodness, his good and pleasing will for us, his heart of justice, and peace and above all complete JOY.

We find Unity when the focus of our prayers, and indeed all we do, is on God, on seeking his heart and longing to bring Him glory. It is then, we will be of one mind, and we will know his complete Joy, together.

So, Jesus has prayed for himself and then his disciples.
Finally, he turns to praying for future generations.

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me, through their message,

A new era has come,
Jesus' 3 year mission on earth was drawing to an end, he was soon to be crucified, but he confirms here in this prayer that his saving power is guaranteed for future generations.

And he prays that the disciples will pass on the message, so that others will believe.

I in them, and you in me *so that they may be brought to **complete unity**. **Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.***

Unity, there it is again! There is something infectious when church works in unity, in unity with God and with each other. It is one of the most attractive features of church. As we love God and seek his will, as we grow in love of others, as we pass on that message of love, unity and joy, others will come, will want to know Jesus.

If unbelievers see a church that shares the same thoughts, the same love, the same desires and the same mind as one another, they will take **more** note of **this** sign, than any other miracle performed by the Holy Spirit.

Disunity is one of the greatest tactics of the enemy. We may not agree on everything, but let us always strive to know God, to know Jesus, to put his mission first, rather than our own agendas, in all we do. For God's glory.

We see that word GLORY again...in our passage...But this time it says that *God has given us glory! How can that be?*

Let's just pause to take a look at Jesus's journey.

Before the creation of the world, Jesus, The Father and the Spirit 'were'. They existed in perfect harmony, giving glory and honour to each other in perfect unity and complete joy.

Jesus then laid aside his majesty, and came down to earth and as it says in Philippians 2
And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross.

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Jesus left his Glory and became a baby, growing up a humble carpenter. He was commissioned by God at his Baptism and spent 3 years teaching and calling all people to repentance and to be baptised. Jesus setting in motion a way for us to be united with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Jesus was then crucified, he died, descended to hell where he was utterly without Glory, utterly separated from God, then, on the third day, he was raised from the dead and God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name.
Jesus reigning with his father in glory once again.

But now, now, because of what Jesus accomplished on the cross, we too can enter into his glory,

V23 Father, I want those you gave me to be with me, right where I am,
So they can see my glory, the splendour you gave me,

We have access into heaven!

We can see the Glory of God, in Jesus right now.

It is only because Jesus gave up his glory and came to earth that we can be taken up to heaven and enter into the very presence of God.

So there we have it. This prayer reveals so much to us and what a privilege for us to see right into the very heart of God.

A God who sacrificed everything to allow us access to heaven and to bring us to eternal life.

We are called, in return, to seek him, to do his will and to live in unity with all in order to spread the message of God's great love and to give glory to the Father.

What is Jesus saying to you today about your relationship with the father and with one another?

Let's pause and listen. Amen