

Subject: *Christ's Prayer for His Church*

Scripture: *John 17:1-5*

This prayer of Christ is often referred to as his High Priestly Prayer because He intercedes to the Heavenly Father on our behalf. Christ was God's chosen One to fulfill the offices of prophet, priest, and king. As our priest, Christ offered Himself for our sins and He ever lives to make intercession for us at the Father's right hand. As part of His priestly ministry He prayed for His people.

This prayer has three parts. We are going to read all three parts, but we will focus on the third part of the prayer where Christ prays for His church. As we end the calendar year and begin another year of ministry and service we need to be reminded what is most important and that is reflected in Christ's prayer.

1. Christ Prays for Himself (vs. 1-5)

He has one main focus in this part of the prayer.

- Glorification

2. Christ Prays for His Apostles (vs. 6-19)

He mentions three things in this part of the prayer.

- Revelation of God and His words (vs. 6-8)
- Protection of apostles from the world and the devil (vs. 9-15)
- Sanctification by the truth (vs. 16-19)

3. Christ Prays for His Church (vs. 20-26)

He has one thing in mind as He closes this prayer, the unity of the Church.

- Believers united in truth (vs. 20-21)

We are all united by our faith in Christ based on the words (testimony) of the apostles. This unity is based on the apostles' spoken word about Christ when they were alive and their written words about Christ in Scripture. This is unity rooted in the apostles' doctrine, their teaching about Christ and what He commanded us to do.

Matthew 28:19-20 ¹⁹ *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:* ²⁰ *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

Acts 2:42 *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

- B. Believers united in spirit (vs. 22-23)
- C. Believers united in eternal destiny (vs. 24)
- D. Believers united in love (vs. 25-26)

The unity of believers in the Church is not weak and superficial. This unity is real, lasting, and evident for all to see.

Our unity with other believers based on biblical truth.
Our unity with other believers is rooted in our unity with Christ.
Our unity with other believers will continue in heaven forever.
Our unity with other believers is based on the love of God in us.

The very same things that Christ prayed for, we should pray for and long for.