

**Subject: *Christ's Prayer for All Believers***

**Scripture: *John 17:20-26***

The Gospel of John tells us that Jesus does many things for us. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. He is the Bread of Life and the Light of the world. He is the Door of the sheep and the Good Shepherd. He is the Resurrection and the Life. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is the true Vine and we are the branches drawing our life from Him. In John 17 He is also High Priest interceding for us.

John 17 has been called the Holy of Holies in the Bible. We hear Jesus praying for Himself (vs. 1-5), His disciples (vs. 6-19), and for all believers (vs. 20-26). He prayed for us. This prayer has a vast reach. His prayer reached from earth to heaven. It reached around the world, and it reached over time. His prayer includes believers worldwide and covers all believers since the time He prayed some 2,000 years ago. As we come to the conclusion of this magnificent prayer we find Jesus praying for two things: the unity of all believers and the glory of all believers.

### **1. JESUS PRAYED FOR BELIEVERS TO BE UNIFIED**

He prayed only for believers, not the world (vs. 9), and He prayed that we might be one. This is a spiritual unity based on a common belief in Christ. I recently saw a young woman working in a drive-thru window with a one-word tattoo on her forearm – “Believe.” I asked her what, “What do you believe?” She said, “Everything.” We are united because we believe on Christ through the word (testimony) of the disciples. This refers to the truth of the gospel and the whole New Testament. We believe in the Son of God through the Word of God.

**Romans 10:17** *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

**2 Timothy 3:15** *And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

Believers are one just as Jesus and the Father are one. It is a real, spiritual unity that is based on our union with Christ. It is something Jesus prayed for so it must be important. It is something that can be known and seen by the world (vs. 21, 23). The Bible describes our union with Christ in several ways. He is the vine and we are the branches. He is the foundation and we are stones in the temple. He is the husband and we are the bride. He is the head of the body and we are the members. We are forever united with Him and in Him.

Our unity is *not based* on our physical location (being together inside the church building).  
Our unity is *not based* on our programs and projects (working together in ministry)  
Our unity is *not based* on our personal preferences (style of music, formal or informal, dress)

Our unity exists in spite of our difference in age, race, gender, background, education, finances, or any other social factor. In Bible times people were deeply divided along three lines: Jew and Gentile, slaves and free men, male and female. In Christ all three divisions came down and there was unity. **Galatians 3:28** *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.* Since we are one in Christ, we are one with each other. Christian unity is not based on feelings, but it is based on faith and fact. Our unity is based on Christ, on the Gospel, on the Word of God, on our salvation, and the Holy Spirit living in us. Paul spoke of unity in terms of being baptized (immersed) into the body of Christ and drinking one Spirit.

**1 Corinthians 12:13** *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

He spoke of the word fellowship which means sharing together in a common life.

**Philippians 1:3-5** <sup>3</sup> *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,* <sup>4</sup> *Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,* <sup>5</sup> *For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.*

John spoke of the same fellowship in Christ.

**1 John 1:3** *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

Why are believers not united? Why is there so much division instead of unity? There are at least two reasons why believers are not unified:

- Believers are ignorant of God's Word and His will

Of all the messages I've seen on church signs, I think this one might be the best:

"Satan's greatest weapon is our ignorance of God's Word."

- Believers are immature and self-centered

**1 Corinthians 3:1-3** <sup>1</sup> *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.* <sup>2</sup> *I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.* <sup>3</sup> *For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*

Instead of focusing on the big things, the really important things, we sometimes focus on trivial, secondary issues.

**Ephesians 4:1-6** <sup>1</sup> *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,* <sup>2</sup> *With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;* <sup>3</sup> *Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* <sup>4</sup> *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;* <sup>5</sup> *One Lord, one faith, one baptism,* <sup>6</sup> *One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

## **2. JESUS PRAYED FOR BELIEVERS TO BE GLORIFIED**

All believers are called to salvation and that is a call to glory. **1 Peter 5:10** *But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

**Romans 8:28-30** <sup>28</sup> *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* <sup>29</sup> *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.* <sup>30</sup> *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

**2 Thessalonians 2:13-14** <sup>13</sup> *But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: <sup>14</sup> Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The glory of believers is something that affects the present and the future. Believers are glorified now because Christ is in us and we reflect His glory in this world (vs. 9-10, 22). Believers are “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4). As we are being sanctified we reflect more and more of Christ’s glory.

**2 Corinthians 3:18** *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* We see the glory of Christ in the Word and little by little we are become more and more like Christ. The goal of the Christian life is to become like Christ.

In the future believers will see Christ in all His glory and we will share His glory (vs. 24).

**Romans 8:18** *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

**2 Timothy 2:10** *Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*

Believers share in God’s glory now by the Holy Spirit living in us and we will share God’s glory to a greater degree when we have a glorified body and live with Christ in glory forever.

**Philippians 3:20-21** <sup>20</sup> *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: <sup>21</sup> Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

**1 John 3:2** *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

Jesus prayed that believers would be glorified and that glory involves *a present reality* in Christ and *a future destiny* with Christ.

This prayer in John 17 is profound, but it is not complicated. Jesus asked for three things: that we would be sanctified, unified, and glorified. That’s what He wanted, and that’s what we should want. We should want to be sanctified (set apart for God and set apart from the world). We should want to be unified in heart and mind and purpose. We should want to be glorified so that others would see Christ in us.