

John 17:20-26

The conclusion of our Savior's great, High Priestly prayer turns its full intent, ministry and benefit to the believers who would come to know and believe in Him through the word of the apostles! Jesus mission would succeed: He would die and be raised. He would send out the Holy Spirit. The apostles would be filled, would preach and teach, sinners would repent, believing, and be saved! The church would be formed and built!

Here's where we're going
today

Quick flight, bird's-eye view of John 17			
The 3 Great Words in John 17		The 4 Great Doctrines in John 17	
Glory	vv1-5	Salvation	vv1-5
Kept	vv6-19	Preservation	vv11-16
One	vv20-26	Sanctification	vv17-19
		Glorification	vv20-26

v20, Consider Exodus 28:9-12, 21-29. Israel's high priest **carried the stones bearing the names of the 12 tribes of Israel** before the Presence of God in the tabernacle and later the temple. Now Jesus, our great High Priest – a priest forever, prays intelligently and personally for each of us... future believers not yet born, but personally seen and foreknown by the Father and the Son and the Spirit, and carries our names into the righteous and holy Presence of His and our heavenly Father.
 (See Rev 2:17. And Hebrews 7:24-8:2)

Ponder this: Each one of us, because of the prayer and crosswork of Christ, will be able in glory to talk to and fellowship with each person in the long chain of gospel salvation, from the person who shared the gospel with you, tracing back to each believer in your history, back to the 12, and to one individual apostle that led their first convert to Christ!
Who is in your believing ancestry? Be ready to thank them!

V21, The prayer is for the unity of all believers, as well as for the unity of the Eleven (v. 11). As Constable notes, This unity *rests* on adherence to God's truth, and it *reflects* the unity that really exists between the Father and the Son. Furthermore, it *is union* with the Father and the Son: "that they also may be in Us" (cf. ch. 15).

The initial answer to this prayer occurred on the day of Pentecost, when He, via the Spirit, united believers with Himself in the body of Christ, the church (cf. 1 Cor. 12:13)

Importantly, this is not first-in-order a call for institutional unity, rather it is first a prayer for genuine personal love and unity between individual believers. Out of that personal love and unity in Christ arises the institutional local church. The order is important. Christ-energized self-sacrificing, self-denying, self-emptying love for one's brothers and sisters is the true heartbeat of koinonia and thus the life of the church.

V22-23, In what way or sense do believers share God's glory? Jesus speaks here of the glory the Father has given to the Son. This likely refers to the glory of the cross. As believers received, and meditated and dwelt on the significance of Jesus' atoning work and God's redemptive plan and purposes for them (that they may be one), they saw the glory of the unity of the Father and Son in that divine plan and work.

The unity of believers with one another, and with God, in love and truth has two purposes:

1) That the unbelieving world of lost sinners would see and know and believe in the mission of the Son in coming from the Father's side into this world.

2) That the world will perceive and be impacted in this way: That the Father's love for believers is deep, personal, intimate and enduring as is His love for His only-begotten Son. (See v26 for more on this).

V24, Don't miss out on the verb tenses here. Jesus prays about us future believers (v20) as having *already been given to Him by the Father in April, AD 33!* We are special because we are comprehended both in the giving and in the loving! And that goes back and long, long way.

On the topic of *seeing our Savior's glory*: John 14:3, Colossians 3:4, 1 Thess 4:17)

v25-26, Jesus prayer for believers, the apostles and all of us that descend from their ministry, ends with his call to the Righteous Father, and it is a call of praise to His Father for His revealing Himself in the coming and incarnation and work of the Son. Sadly, the world is dead wrong. It shrugs off the knowledge of the revelation of the Eternal, Righteous Father in the coming of the Son. But we are not of the world, and so we are not wrong. Because we do revel in the love and knowledge of the Father shining in our hearts in the light and power of the Son.

The **justice** and **holiness** of the Father was shown in the sacrifice of the Son on Calvary. The **love** of the Father for the Son is shown in resurrecting Him in great glory from the grave. *We who believe are personally comprehended in the sweep of all these glories!*

The progress of the gospel in history and in the world and in our lives rests not on a program, but on the four personal priestly petitions of Jesus to the Father on our behalf:

- 1) Our Preservation (kept) (v11)
- 2) Our Sanctification (v17)
- 3) Our Unity (one-ness) (v11, 21-22)
- 4) Our participation in the Glory of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Son of David.

We would do well to end this sermon series by remembering the glorious and royal office and relationship we possess and will possess into eternity: 1 Peter 2:9