

John 17:20-23
A Prayer For Unity
(pt. 2)

INTRO: Unity in Christ for the sake of the Gospel!

John 17:20-23 Sermon Outline

1) The Goal(s) of Jesus' Unity Petition.

(John 17:21-23; note last Sunday's sermon)

2) The Recipients of Jesus' Unity Petition

(John 17:20; 17:9-10)

3) The Result(s) of Jesus' Unity Petition

(John 17:22c-23)

For Further Reflection/Application: *Lord help us to be doers of the Word and not just hearers!*

What is the most important thing you heard today? What do you want to study further as a result of today's message?

In what sense has Jesus' prayer for unity been fulfilled? In what sense is it "perfected" (Jn 17:23)?

Though the unity Jesus prays for is spiritual, rather than organizational, such oneness should manifest itself externally. How might the Body of Christ demonstrate its common salvation and unity in Christ (note Eph. 4:1-6; Gal. 3:26-28) before a lost and often divided world? What attitudes, actions, and words contradict/undermine our spiritual unity in Christ? (note last week's sermon) Why does the NT give so much attention to relational harmony among Christians? List a few of those key passages. How can you help LCBC better reflect the common salvation/fellowship/unity/mission that we have in Christ?

"I do not have anything in common with these Christian believers." What is unbiblical about this thinking? How does this way of thinking impact our attitudes/actions within the church?

We need to be careful though. "A rigid push for (unbiblical) uniformity can actually be on one of the most disunifying forces in a church because it denies the reality of the Spirit's unique gifting (cf. 1 Cor. 12:4-6)" among other things.

Having received a unique commission, the original disciples served as foundational witnesses. These men testified that "*We followed the Messiah for three plus years.*" "*We were with him before the cross and we personally interacted with Him for 40 days after the resurrection!*" Paul makes a BIG deal out of this in 1 Cor. 15:5-8. As Divinely appointed apostles, the Spirit of truth moved these eye witnesses (2 Pet. 1:20-21) to author the N.T. and to proclaim the gospel! Through their word (notice v. 20) the msg. went forth- and continues to go forth, to this day. 1 John 1:1-3. *What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you may also have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.*

John 17:23 - The unity that we presently enjoy has not been *fully* realized. Jesus prays to the Father, "*Give them common shared life in Me! Make them ONE Father!*" "*Help them as they strive for complete unity THAT the world may know that you didst send me (the heaven-sent Savior) AND that they'll KNOW that You LOVE THEM, even as You love me.*" There are countless benefits of being united to Christ. One author explains it this way, "The gift of sharing in his sonship (adoption) is perhaps the most extravagant gift of them all. When we are joined to Christ by the Spirit, we come to share in the love between the Father and the Son—the very same love the Father has for his beloved Son (John 17:23). As such, God the Father loves us dearly... This love is the love of all loves: it is indissoluble, it brooks no opposition, and is endlessly and everlastingly life-giving and joyful. In Christ, we really and truly are the sons and daughters of God forever."

Read Psalm 133; Ephesians 4:1-6; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Romans 12:18; and John 17:20-26.

The unity of the church is not an end in and of itself. How is true (Christian) unity related to biblical evangelism? A divided world needs a spiritually united witness. How so?

Jesus' prayer petitions assume that believers will "be IN the world but not OF the world." Explain.

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