

GREATER

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF JOHN

GREATER: the book of John

SCRIPTURE: John 17: JESUS > DIVISION

John 16:33

33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Jesus knew that he was on a collision course with Calvary. Some of his final words to his closest friends and followers was for them to be encouraged and to keep the faith even after he leaves.

What is normally thought of as the Lord's Prayer (Our Father, who art in heaven...) is really what Jesus gave the disciples to pray, the model prayer. John 17 is truly Jesus' prayer...

John 17:1-5

1After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. **2**For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. **3**Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. **4**I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. **5**And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

At first glance, the beginning of Jesus' prayer seems a bit self-serving... *"glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you."* This is not a self-righteous, self-serving statement, rather it is the prayer of the one who knows exactly where he is headed, to the cross at Calvary.

It is the prayer of the one who recognizes that glory will come to himself and God the father as he wears a crown, not of gold and silver, but of thorns and pain.

It is the prayer of the one whose eyes are open... wide open to what will become the greatest selfless act that mankind has ever known.

The glory of the cross is in the fact that Jesus chose to endure the torture, so that we could have eternal life through him.

John 17:6-12

6 "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. **7** Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. **8** For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. **9** I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. **10** All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. **11** I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. **12** While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

Jesus appreciates his Father's gifts (those who have believed and followed him), and in appreciation essentially gave them back to God.

He did this in two ways. **First**, Jesus filled them with his Father's words (v. 6-8). He refused to speak on his own or promote himself. **Second**, Jesus clarified for his followers that he was merely a delegate, acting on another's authority. The apostles have now come to understand just how fully Jesus represents the Father (v. 7-8)

John 17:13

13 "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.

For the apostles, this is a farewell address; for Jesus; it is a homecoming.

After a long ordeal he is about to be reunited with his Father and even his own divine nature.

But in his joy, Jesus doesn't lose sight of the disciples' sorrow. They will need to have confidence, once he is gone, that Jesus did come from the Father and has indeed returned to the Father to make intercession for them. Such confidence allows the disciples of Jesus to share his joy even in the midst of persecution.

John 17:14-19

14I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.

15My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. **16**They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. **17**Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. **18**As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. **19**For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Remember John 13, Peter asks...

John 13:36

36 Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later."

Jesus will go to the cross and to the grave and when he returns to life, he will eventually return to the Father. And these disciples will not follow Jesus. Not now. It will be their job to remain.

Incidentally, that's our job. Until we are no longer in this world, we are to remain.

Remain faithful.

Remain connected to the vine.

Remain in Christ.

We have a job to do and it's one we have to do here. Remain.

Then Jesus prays for them and for us. For all those who are called to remain both then and now...

John 17:20-23

20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, **21** that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. **22** I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— **23** 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.

Jesus has prayed for himself (vs. 1-5) and for his disciples (vs. 6-19). He now turns his attention to those who will become Christians through the apostles' preaching.

Jesus prays for them to be one. To be unified.

And also for those who will believe through their message (that includes us today)

JESUS > DIVISION

Jesus' primary concern is for the unity of all believers.

The apostle Paul describes what unity looks like in the church...

Ephesians 4:1-6

1As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. **2**Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. **3**Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. **4**There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; **5**one Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6**one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

A UNIFIED CHURCH PROTECTS EACH OTHER.

John 17:15

15My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

Jesus knows that there will be persecution. That things will get dicey. And his prayer is that the church be unified.

Jesus doesn't pray that Christians be exempt from persecution or suffering, but that they be protected from the evil one. This is not a prayer for our bodies, rather for our souls.

Ephesians 4:1

1As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

As a christian we are urged to live a life worthy of the calling we have received. Part of that calling is to endure persecution. To REMAIN together through difficult times.

The enemy may attack our bodies, our incomes, our relationships, but he cannot touch our souls. Jesus is the guardian of our souls.

We have each other's backs.

We are there to support each other.

We look out for each other.

A UNIFIED CHURCH PRAYS FOR EACH OTHER.

John 17:20-21

20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, **21** that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Jesus prays for unity among the believers. Believers both then and now. That they may be one.

If Jesus' example means anything, we should pray for each other.

It's hard to hate on someone when you are genuinely praying for them

And I don't think that means to pray for someone else's issues. This is a genuine prayer for unity among the body of believers.

Galatians 6:2

2Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

A UNIFIED CHURCH LOVES ONE ANOTHER.

John 17:24-26

24 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

25 "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. **26**I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

Jesus is the conduit of God's love to us. We are the conduit of that love to others. And it starts within the church.

Ephesians 4:2

2Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

We hurt when others hurt
We share joy
We share sorrow

Colossians 3:12-15

12Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **13**Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. **14**And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. **15**Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Small Group Questions.

1. Did anyone go to the Mumfest? What did you do? Did you eat any carnival food? Did you take life into your own hands and ride any rides?
2. In the midst of all the things that Jesus was thinking about and what he was going to have to go through next, He prays for unity. Why is this significant? What causes divisions?
3. Read John 16:33. We see in this verse that Jesus has overcome the world. What does this mean?
4. Read Ephesians 4:1-6 - What are some things that stick out to you? Pick out a couple topics to discuss.
5. Read John 17:20 - 26 we see a theme of unity, God with Jesus, and Jesus with us. What does unity with Christ mean?
6. When we show unity with Jesus, what benefit and detriment could this bring?
7. Read Colossians 3:12-15 - How does this tell us to live? How do we do this in a practical way?
8. How do we protect one another? What are some ways we can make sure that the church keeps its unity?
9. Galatians 6:2 - praying for someone, sometimes means you have to help carry their burden. What does that mean? What does it look like?

10. This week, pray for, and reach out to someone you normally wouldn't.