

# My Heart's Desire

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, good morning. Let me begin by taking time to thank you for praying for me and my family on our break. We had some very wonderful quality family time together, and I had the opportunity to do some in-depth reading and praying.

We spent three of our weeks away camping. First, we went to Yosemite, and then we went to Prairie Creek, which is north of Eureka, where a herd of elk is protected in this large meadow surrounded by redwood trees.

And then we ended up at Jedediah Smith, which is the northernmost campground in the California system, where the kids and I enjoyed especially jumping off these big rocks into the Smith River. I'd like to just share one little story of our camping trip before I go to preaching. This took place at Prairie Creek. The campsite at Prairie Creek is down in a valley, huge red trees, and a lot of thick underbrush.

So much so that you can't see the campsites of those who are camping with you. One afternoon, we rode our bikes on the six-mile trail that goes through a very thick and lush forest.

[ 1 : 05 ] So thick and lush that I came back sneezing my head off and very congested. So I looked through my stuff that I brought along for some kind of allergy pill, which I haven't needed for a year.

And I found one, but I wasn't sure of the date of expiration of it. But I went ahead and took it anyway. I was so desperate. After doing the dishes and playing some games, we finally went to bed.

And at about 2 o'clock in the morning, I woke up because I needed to go to the bathroom. And inside the tent, it was pitch dark. I mean, totally pitch dark. I couldn't see my hand in front of my face.

And my first thought was, oh, no, Lord, I've gone blind. And the pill I took was defective, and it made me blind. And I panicked.

I started looking around. I literally could not see anything. And the next thought was, how much of Scripture have I memorized so I can keep preaching? And then I remembered that the flashlight was right over here in the area.

[ 2 : 04 ] So I fumbled for the flashlight and turned the flashlight on. And lo and behold, light came on, and I wasn't blind. But it was still terribly, terribly dark, totally dark.

Well, I needed to go to the bathroom. So I left the tent, and I looked down, and it was pitch dark. But I saw the light for the bathroom. So I made my way down to the bathroom, used the bathroom, turned around. And I figured I'm going to have to get my eyes adjusted because I've been in the light, and I know it was a little bit dark.

Stood there a while, letting my eyes get adjusted, and it was totally dark. I mean, I could not distinguish the, you know, when trees go up and then you can see the stars. I couldn't see when the trees stopped and when the darkness started.

I mean, it was pitch dark. I couldn't see. I remember there were four campsites backwards, and there were a van in each of the campsites. And I literally had to put one foot in front of the other and walked like this, hoping there weren't any of these elks coming across the path.

Well, anyway, I passed up our site, and somehow a little bit of light from a star reflected off the headlight of our van. And so I felt along the van, and then about three feet later felt my way into the tent.

[ 3 : 12 ] Sharon and I then laid awake in the tent. It's just totally dark. We're laying there just thinking about this darkness, and all of a sudden all the pots and pans outside are starting to fall. We can hear this footstep, and then only three feet away is our van.

I can hear the van starting to shake, and I can hear this scraping down the window. And so I clapped my hands and whatever it was left, and then we could hear garbage can after garbage can after garbage can being toppled.

And in the morning we discovered that our worst fears were realized, that there was a bear there. I could have run into that thing as I was making my way back from the bathroom. True. We left that campsite and made our way to the next one.

Otherwise, our camping experience was relatively uneventful, except for the brakes breaking down on the van and having to spend a half a day in the city of Ukiah, beautiful downtown Ukiah, and then the gangbangers who tried to accost our boys in the McDonald's in downtown San Francisco. But we had a great time. I had a wonderful time at Whitworth College. For a week of study leave, I got to sit at the feet of Elizabeth Ochtemeier, wonderful woman, and James Houston from Vancouver, British Columbia.

[ 4 : 26 ] But the highlight of my time at Whitworth was being able to spend a few hours every day in the library. And I had a chance to do a lot of journaling, and I wrote a mission statement for my life in terms of the way I want to live the rest of my life.

It's good to be home, and it's good to see each of you. Many of you have been asking me about my vision for our church. Where are we going in these next few years?

The important thing, of course, is not my vision. The important thing is Jesus' vision. And I have spent a lot of time praying and reading and reflecting and in conversation.

And I'll begin to unfold what I see on September 11th. I need to wait a few weeks because I want to make sure everyone is back from vacation. But today I invite you to enter into a text out of which any vision for any church needs to emerge.

In fact, I say that this is a text out of which any vision for our individual and family lives must emerge. I invite you today to enter a sacred text, John chapter 17.

[ 5 : 39 ] This is Jesus' high priestly prayer, as it is often called. And I'll be upfront with you. I really ought to be doing four or six different sermons on this text.

It's an audacious thing for me to try to cover it in one sermon, but I feel compelled to do so. In John 17, we are drawn into the very center of everything.

I've come to the conclusion that John 17 is the center of Scripture and thereby is the center of everything. Here we are taken up into the inner dialogue of the God who is Trinity.

Here God the Son, incarnate in our flesh, opens His heart as never before, before God the Father.

If you are able and willing, would you please stand for the reading of this text?

I was thinking I probably really ought to ask us all to take off our shoes, too. Hear the word of God. After Jesus had spoken these words, He looked up to heaven and said, Father, the hour has come.

[ 6 : 50 ] Glorify Your Son so that the Son may glorify You. Since You have given Him authority over all people to give eternal life to all whom You have given Him.

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I glorified You on earth by finishing the work You gave Me to do.

So now, Father, glorify Me in Your own presence with the glory that I had in Your presence before the world existed. I have made Your name known to those whom You gave Me from the world.

They were Yours, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they know that everything You have given Me is from You. For the words that You gave Me, I have given to them, and they have received them, and know in truth that I came from You, and they have believed that You sent Me.

I'm asking on their behalf. I'm not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom You gave Me, because they are Yours. All Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I have been glorified in them.

[ 7 : 53 ] And now, I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I'm coming to You. Holy Father, protect them in Your name that You have given Me, so that they may be one as we are one.

While I was with them, I protected them in Your name that You have given Me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to You, and I speak these things in the world, so that they may have My joy made complete in themselves.

I have given them Your Word, and the world has hated them, because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I'm not asking You to take them out of the world, but I ask You to protect them from the evil one.

They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth. Your Word is truth. As You have sent Me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes, I sanctify Myself, so that they may also be sanctified in truth.

I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in Me through their Word, that they may all be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

[ 9 : 07 ] The glory that You have given Me, I have given them, so that they may be one as We are one, I in them, and You in Me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them even as You have loved Me.

Father, I desire that these also whom You have given Me may be with Me where I am, to see My glory, which You have given Me because You love Me before the foundation of the world.

Righteous Father, the world does not know You, but I know You, and these know that You have sent Me. I have made Your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them.

My goodness. You may be seated. We know from all four Gospels of Jesus' habit of praying.

Indeed, at every critical turning point in His earthly career, we find Him praying. For the most part, the content of His prayers is not given to us. And every time we see Him praying, He's off by Himself alone, which is what makes John 17 so special.

[ 10 : 24 ] Here we are given the content of His prayers, and here Jesus prays in the presence of witnesses. Jesus prays in the hearing of His disciples.

He really wants them and us to hear what He is asking of His Father. In this prayer, Jesus reveals His heart's desire.

And I think that He prays it within the disciples' hearing so that they and we can be drawn into His heart in order that our hearts begin to beat with the same thing on His heart.

Jesus begins, Father, the hour has come. In John's Gospel, the hour refers to a very significant moment, a crisis moment, when Jesus is handed over to and by violent men.

The hour, therefore, refers to the moment of crucifixion, to the cross. Father, the hour has come. Which means, then, that John 17 is prayed in the valley of the shadow of death.

[ 11 : 32 ] Someone has said that it is when we face death that our ultimate concerns are revealed. In the face of death, all the non-essentials, all the fluff falls away, and we get down to the really essential matters.

Beneath the growing shadow of the cross, Jesus prays, and He reveals His ultimate concerns. He reveals His heart's deepest longings. Over the years, I have tried to find a pattern to this prayer.

Or I should say, I've tried to systematize this prayer. I try to systematize everything, but I try to systematize this prayer, rearranging it into some nice, neat categories. But I've not succeeded.

And I've read every commentary there is, and I don't think any commentary has succeeded. Yes, there do seem to be three major divisions. Verses 1 to 8, where, as most commentaries put it, Jesus prays for Himself.

And then verses 9 to 19, where Jesus prays for the first group of disciples. And then verses 20 to 26, where Jesus prays for those who would believe through the word of the first disciples, namely us.

[ 12 : 47 ] He prays for us in those verses. But it isn't that neat. This prayer seems to wind in and out, in and out, up and down, back and forth, returning again and again to some fundamental themes.

As we can see in here, in this text, Jesus ends where He begins, with the theme of glory, and before the foundation of the world. I think, therefore, the best way that we can get inside the prayer, so that the prayer can get inside us, is to note that Jesus is working with three relationships.

His relationship with the Father, His relationship with the disciples, and His relationship with the world. In this prayer, Jesus is expressing His heart's desire for the Father, and for the disciples, and for the world, back and forth, up and down, in and out, Father, disciples, world.

We, too, can pull our lives together around those three relationships. Our relationship with the Father in the Son, our relationship with the disciples of the Son, and our relationship with the world

for whom the Son died.

It's good to regularly ask one another, how goes it with you and the Father of Jesus Christ? How goes it with you and the disciples of Jesus Christ?

[14:07] How goes it with you and the world for which Jesus died? However, I need to be more precise here, because although the Father, the disciples, and the world are all involved in this prayer, Jesus does not explicitly pray for the world.

Did you notice that? In verse 9, indeed, He says, I do not ask on behalf of the world. Why? Why does Jesus not pray for the world? Especially in light of John 3, 16, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.

Why does Jesus not pray for the world? Well, in John's Gospel, this word world has a technical meaning. The Greek word is *cosmos*, and *cosmos* refers to human society organizing itself without God.

Human society organizing itself without God. It's why the world is so dark. The world has rejected the light. World as world wants to go it alone.

World as world wants to live without reference to, without accountability to anything else. How should, then, Jesus pray for the world?

[15:17] Should He pray that the world be one? Should He pray that the world be protected from the evil one? C.K. Barrett puts it so well, the only hope for the *cosmos* is precisely that it cease to be the *cosmos*.

That it cease to be organizing itself without God. Raymond Brown says that Jesus does not come into the world to change the world.

He comes into the world to challenge the world. To challenge the world to no longer be the world.

The only hope for the world is for the world to surrender to Jesus' saving lordship, in which case it is no longer world.

It is no longer organizing itself apart from God, which is why, then, Jesus does not explicitly pray for the world. So what I will do, then, is draw all that Jesus prays in John 17 around two relationships, His relationship with the Father and His relationship with the disciples.

And we're going to ask, what is Jesus' heart's desire in these two relationships? Consider, first, then, Jesus' relationship with the Father. But before considering His heart's desire in this relationship, I want to invite you to consider Jesus' understanding of Himself, His own view of Himself that emerges as He prays.

[16:36] For instance, He knows Himself to be the Son, verse 1. Jesus of Nazareth, the real flesh and blood human being, self-consciously knows Himself to be the Son of the Father, the Son of God the Father.

As we see in the rest of John's Gospel, everything Jesus says and does, He does and says, conscious of His relationship with the Father. I only do what the Father, I see the Father doing. I only say what I hear the Father saying. This tells me that we cannot understand Jesus without understanding Him as the Son of the Father.

We cannot know the Father without Jesus, but I don't think we can know Jesus without understanding His relationship with the Father, which means, then, the church cannot discard Father language about God.

To set aside the Father language of God is to change the Christian faith. At the heart of the Christian faith, at the heart of reality, is this relationship between a Father and a Son.

[17:42] And we do not understand Jesus Christ without reference to this relationship.

Furthermore, He knows Himself to be the preexistent One. Verse 5, Glorify Me in Your presence with the glory I had with You before the world was.

Verse 24, To see My glory which You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world. The one with whom we have to deal in the Gospels, the one whom we encounter in the Gospels has been around a long, long time.

There was never a time when the Son was not. There was never a time when the Father was not a father because the Son has always existed. Furthermore, He knows Himself to be sent.

Verse 8, They believe that You sent Me. From the beginning of His earthly career, Jesus is conscious that He is on a mission, that He has been sent. Furthermore, He knows Himself to be sent out of the Father.

Verse 8, They know in truth that I have come from You. Literally, out of You. For you Greek students, it is the preposition ek, not apo.

[ 18 : 49 ] Sent apo means to be sent from alongside, the circle. Sent ek means to be sent from inside the circle. John the Baptist and all the other prophets were sent from alongside God.

Jesus the Son is sent from within God, out of the very center of His being, and therefore participates in His being. Which is why the Nicene Creed says, God of God, light of light, very God of very God, out of the very center of the Father.

Furthermore, He knows Himself to have been given authority over all humanity. Verse 2, over all humanity. We, the church, simply have not come to terms with this great fact, that Jesus Christ has been given by God the Father authority over every single human being.

Jesus Christ can do with any human being whatever He wants to do with them. Next time you're in a crowded elevator, and you go up that elevator, you know some things about those people even if you don't know them.

You know every one of them is a sinner. You know every one of them needs grace. And you know that Jesus has final authority over every second of every one of those persons' lives. Authority.

[ 20 : 04 ] Furthermore, He knows Himself to have authority to give eternal life. Verse 3. Did you hear that? Jesus has authority to give eternal life to those whom the Father has given Him.

Now, eternal life is not just long life. Eternal life is a qualitatively different kind of life. It's the life that God has. It's the life that God is.

God is eternal life. And the Father has granted to the Son the authority to give that to anyone. And in the prayer, Jesus defines eternal life.

Verse 3. This is eternal life, to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. Now, this word know in the Bible means a whole lot more than intellectual knowledge.

It means moving beyond intellectual knowledge to deep, intimate fellowship. It's the same word that's used is to describe the knowing that exists between a husband and a wife. Eternal life is knowing God in an even greater degree of intimacy.

[ 21 : 11 ] It's the blessing of the new covenant. Jeremiah 31, 34 says that when God cuts this new covenant with the blood of Christ, that all will know me. And it's this deep, tender word.

Jesus says, to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I think that it would be fair to translate that, to know you, the only true God, by knowing Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

It is the major purpose of the incarnation to make the invisible one visible. 2 Corinthians 4, 6. God who said light will shine out of darkness has shown in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Eternal life is knowing the eternal God by knowing the eternal God and His eternal self-expression in Jesus. It's the purpose for which we were created, to know the Creator and the Redeemer.

We are not truly human unless we know God in this way, which I think has profound implications for our therapeutic culture. It tells us that we find ourselves not by looking for ourselves, but by looking for the face of God in Jesus.

[ 22 : 27 ] Augustine said, you have made us for yourselves and our hearts are restless until we find our rest in thee. Eternal life is to know God and Jesus has the authority to give it to us and when He gives it to us, it's not the end of the journey.

In a real sense, it's only the beginning of coming to know the living God. Now, what is Jesus' heart's desire in His relationship with the Father? Verse 1.

Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You. What does Jesus mean by that? Glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You.

Clearly, Jesus is not thinking here egotistically because for Him to be glorified means the Father is going to be glorified. What is Jesus getting at here? To glorify means to honor.

But more importantly, to glorify means to manifest one's essential nature. Father, honor me that I may honor You.

[ 23 : 28 ] Father, manifest my essential character that I might manifest Your essential character.

Jesus' heart's desire is that His essential nature, which is the Father's essential nature, be honored and manifested before the world.

We will never really understand Jesus and will never really understand what it means to be His disciple unless we get this. Jesus lives to honor His Father.

He lives to show just how glorious, just how wonderful, just how faithful, just how praiseworthy His Father is. And the Father lives to do the same for the Son.

Verse 4, I glorified You on earth by finishing the work You gave Me to do. How? In His works of grace. Remember Cana of Galilee.

He turns the water into wine and John says His disciples saw His glory. His essential nature as the one who makes all things new was breaking through there. Think of the story of Lazarus too.

[ 24 : 35 ] When Jesus calls Lazarus back from the grave, Jesus had said to His sister, Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God? You would see God's essential nature as the one who overcomes death.

Yet in this prayer, Jesus seems to be praying for something more. The hour has come. Glorify the Son that the Son may glorify You, Father. I think that Jesus is saying that the ultimate moment of glorification is the cross.

When Jesus dies on the cross, that is the moment when God's essential nature is most gloriously manifested to the world. D.A. Carson writes, Verse 4, I glorified You by finishing the work You gave Me to do.

So resolved is Jesus to go to the cross to bring glory to the Father that He can speak of it as past, as already happened. On the cross, He cries out, It is finished. And in that moment, God's glory is finally revealed.

The limitless, ceaseless, self-emptying of God for the world is fully manifested. And Jesus' heart's desire is to give Himself away, to lay His life down for us so that He can manifest the divine glory, so that He can manifest the essential nature of the Father who from all eternity has spent His existence giving Himself away in self-emptying love.

[ 26 : 13 ] Jesus' desire is that the world know the heart of the Father and thereby receive eternal life. Behind everything in history, behind everything in history, is this great desire to display the incredible self-emptying of God.

Now consider Jesus' relationship with the disciples. In verses 9 to 19, He prays for the first group of disciples, and then in verses 20 to 26, He prays for us.

But because when we become disciples, we become like that first group of disciples, I think it's fair to take verses 9 through 26 as a prayer for all disciples at all time, and so I'm going to treat that as a prayer for us.

What is Jesus' heart's desire for us? Well, before looking at what He prays for us, let me just take a moment and look at His definition of us.

He identifies us. He tells us here what it means to be a disciple. He says, first of all, that disciples are people who have received revelation. Verse 6, I manifested your name to them.

[ 27 : 28 ] He isn't saying that He told the disciples some secret name for the Father. In Scripture, name refers to character. When you know someone's name, you know someone's character.

Jesus is saying, I manifested your character to the disciples. I showed the disciples who you are and what you are like. And Jesus is saying that being a disciple is being someone who God has manifested Himself to, broken through all the lies and all the darkness and made Himself known. And disciples are those who keep God's Word. Verse 6, They were yours and you gave them to me and they have kept your Word. Now, when I read that, I kind of chuckle.

Really? Those first disciples have kept His Word? Not in its entirety. But they have kept it in the essence of God's Word because they discovered that Jesus is God's Word.

And they did, in fact, get up and follow Jesus down the road and began the journey of obedience. Jesus is saying here that discipleship is all caught up in the Word and in being obedient to the Word.

[ 28 : 35 ] And He says that disciples are not of the world. Verse 14, They are not of the world as I am not of the world. Disciples are in the world, yes.

And Jesus does not ask the Father to take the disciples out of the world. They're in the world, but they're not of it. That is, they are no longer driven by the values.

They're no longer driven by the assumptions. They're no longer driven by the agenda. They're no longer driven by the authority of a world which organizes itself without God.

He's pointing here to the great tension of discipleship. He leaves us right in the thick of all of it, but calls us to march to the beat of a different drummer.

Furthermore, disciples, he says, are the means by which Jesus is glorified. Verse 10, I have been glorified in them. Wow.

[ 29 : 30 ] What a privilege to be the vehicle in the world by which God manifests His essential nature to the world. Further, Jesus says, His disciples receive His glory.

Verse 22, puzzling text. The glory that you have given me, I have given them. What does He mean? I think He means that we disciples get to experience His glory, this self-giving love of God.

But I think He also means that we disciples now get to live His glory. We get to learn what it means to be glorious beings in giving ourselves away too. We get to discover that our glory is also discovered on the way of the cross.

And then get this. He says that disciples are the Father's gift to Him. Verse 6, I have made your name known to those you gave Me from the world.

They were yours, and you gave them to Me. Jesus is the Father's gift to us. But we are the Father's gift to Jesus.

[ 30 : 40 ] Have you ever thought of that? Imagine that. I, with all of my warts, with all of my twistedness, with all of my brokenness, I am the Father's gift to Jesus Christ.

What a basis for self-esteem. And what a basis for holy living. I'm not my own. No one is really their own. But especially disciples are not our own.

We have been bought with a price. We are not our own. We are His. And as we see later in the prayer, He never loses any of His stuff. Now, what is Jesus' heart's desire for us, His own?

You ready? I'm going to plow now. All right? He first prays that we be kept in the Father's name. Verse 11.

Holy Father, keep them in your name. Again, name means character. Holy Father is probably the best summary of the character of God in Scripture. Holy. Other than awesome, pure, but Father, tender, caring, compassionate.

[ 31 : 46 ] Keep them in your name. Keep them aware of who you are and what you are like. It's Jesus praying that we will never drift into any false ideas of who the Father is.

Boy, that's an empowering prayer. Verse 12. I was keeping them in your name, says Jesus. He's telling us that it is His passion that we really know God as God is.

Not as we imagine Him to be, not as we reimagine Him to be, but as God really is. Holy Father. Father, don't let them develop erroneous images of you.

Keep them focused on who you really are. Isn't that good? And His desire is that we be kept from the evil one. Verse 15. I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to keep them from the evil one.

For the world's sake, we must be kept in the world. But for the world's sake, we must also be kept from falling into the schemes of the evil one. Jesus is not asking here that we be kept out of struggle or out of danger.

[ 32 : 54 ] In the nature of case, it can't be that way. To follow Him is to follow Him at the intersection of the clashing of kingdoms. We're going to get hurt there. He is asking here that the Father guarantee that the evil one gain no victory over us.

That He not win in His desire to divide disciples and to undermine our confidence in the goodness of God. How empowering it is to know that the Eternal Son prays that we be protected in the battle. Furthermore, He desires that we be set apart. Verse 17. Sanctify them, Father, in the truth. Your Word is truth. Now, sanctify simply means to be set apart by God for God.

Set apart by God for God. It's the same word from which we get the word saints. Saints are not the pure ones, not the arrived ones. Saints are those whom God has taken and set apart by Him, for Him, for His self.

Set apart from the world, from their selves, for the living God. Father, set them apart for Your holy purposes. Set them apart in the truth. That is, by causing the truth to break into their lives and by bringing them into a whole new worldview.

[ 34 : 13 ] Your Word is truth. I think that's Jesus' way of praying. Father, help them to live their lives day in and day out out of the pages of the Bible so that they are always looking at the world out of truth, seeing the world as you see it, hearing the world as you hear it, thinking as you think and feeling as you feel.

And set apart, not simply to be on the sidelines, but set apart to go into the world as ambassadors for Him. Jesus is saying here to be sanctified by God for God is to become a missionary, to be sent

back into the world as a source of truth in all those sectors in which we live.  
There's more. His desire is for us to experience real joy. His joy. Takes my breath away.  
Verse 13. I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in them.  
Did you hear that? That they may have my joy made complete in them.  
Not happiness. See, happiness is too tied up with happenings, which are too vulnerable to change.  
And not pleasure because pleasure is tied up with all kinds of glandular factors which come and go.  
[ 35 : 28 ] But joy, which goes deeper, much deeper and is more stable than either happiness or pleasure. Jesus Christ desires us to experience His joy.

The joy that He has in the Father's goodness and faithfulness toward Him. There's more. His desire is that we who name His name may be one.

Verses 11, 21 and 22. Even as we, Father, are one. The great passion of the Savior is to bring human beings together in unity around Him.

Notice He doesn't say to become one, but to be one. The unity is there in Him. He wants us to realize it and to experience it. And it's not a unity in church structure.

It's not a unity in mission. It's not even a unity in doctrine. It's a unity in a person. It's a unity as a result have been drawn into the personalness of the triune God. Our oneness with one another flows out of our oneness with the Father and the Son.

[ 36 : 34 ] And as you can see, this heart's desire of Jesus has a world focus. For Jesus says that this unity in Him will finally prove to the world that He was sent by the Father.

He's saying that what finally convinces the world that it can cease to be the world is when it knows the unity manifested in His disciples.

Which is to say that the church not only tells the good news, the church is to be the good news. Even as, that's the key word here, even as we are one, Father, you and I are to be one even as the Father and the Son are one.

United in purpose, united in vision, united in mercy and grace and truth. Bruce Milne of Vancouver, British Columbia puts it this way. Our churches are to be love centers where relationships between members are a persuasive reflection of the mutually supportive, utterly loyal, and eternally accepting love of the Father and the Son.

That's His passion for the church. That relationships be marked by the same quality of relationship that is within the Trinity. There's more.

[ 37 : 55 ] His heart's desire is that we be where He is. Verse 24, listen. Father, I desire that these also whom you have given me may be with me where I am.

It's a strong word Jesus uses here, this word desire. It means desire in the sense of will with all of one's being. It's the strongest desire word you can get in the language.

Jesus is saying He really wants me and you to be where He is. He really wants our company on that day when the veil is lifted and now.

He really wants our friendship, which says so much about those quiet times that we set apart for ourselves. He wants those times with us infinitely more than we ever could.

Father, this is my heart's desire that those for whom I died might be with me. There's more. His desire is that we see Him for who He really is.

[ 38 : 59 ] Verse 24, Father, I desire that they may be with me where I am to see my glory. We have already seen something of His glory in His works of grace like at Cana and the raising of Lazarus and we've seen it chiefly in His crucifixion and resurrection.

But He's saying here that there's more to be seen and His desire is that we see it. Romans 8, 18, the glory that is yet to be revealed. It's what we were made for.

It is why after having everything the world could give Him, Moses' most earnest prayer is show me your glory. That'll be enough. Just show me your glory.

And Jesus says in this prayer, Father, I desire that they see my glory. I cannot begin to tell you what that little line in Jesus' prayer means to me.

For the last 10 years or so, my deepest passion has been to see Jesus Christ as He really is. I will not settle for anything less than seeing Him as He really is, stripped of every inadequate image.

[ 40 : 11 ] What John 17 is telling me is that my desire to see Him is nothing compared to His desire that He be seen by me.

There's more. Jesus' desire is that we experience the love the Father has for Him. verse 26. So that the love with which you have loved me may be in them and I in them.

Now there's a concept as they say. It's awesome to contemplate. There's no love in the whole universe like that which the Father has for His Son.

We see that in the Gospels at the baptism where the voice comes from the cloud. Look, there's my beloved Son. What do you think? Isn't He neat? The transfiguration. Look, there's my beloved Son. There's nothing like the love the Father has for Jesus Christ.

And Jesus desires that we mere human beings, that we mere sinful human beings, now live our lives in the context of that same love that we might experience from the Father the love that He experiences.

[ 41 : 21 ] Again, this is why we were created. And this is why we were redeemed. in eternity past, the Father and the Son enjoyed this incredibly delicious quality of love.

And I imagine at one point that they said, this is too good. This is too good to be kept to ourselves. We need to share this. And so God made us. God made us to share in the Trinitarian love.

And when we in our foolishness turned away from all of that, God kept after us. God came to us in person as one of us and has done everything that needs to be done in order for us to come back. And then Jesus prays, Father, I desire that you keep them in your name and that you keep them from the evil one and that you set them apart for yourself and that you let them experience the joy that I have in you and that you make them one like we are one and that you let them be with me so that they can see me in all my glory and that you let them experience the love that you have for me from the foundation of the world.

My, that's good stuff. How do you respond to Jesus' prayer today? What's going on with you? I could tell you two practical implications that come to me while being immersed in John 17 and as you can probably tell I immersed myself in John 17 the last few weeks.

[ 42 : 49 ] Two practical implications of living out of John 17 the first is that now nothing else really matters.

Nothing else now matters except living in the intimacy between the father and the son. First things first they say. I read a book entitled First Things First this vacation.

First things first. My heart's desire for me for the rest of my life and my heart's desire for my wife and for my kids and for my parents and for my in-laws and for my brothers and their wives and their kids and for the staff and their family and for you and for your family my heart's desire is simply this that we will realize to the full extent Jesus' heart's desire for us.

Nothing else matters but that. Whatever doesn't square with that is just going to be irrelevant. It is irrelevant. All that matters is experiencing his heart's desire.

The second implication that comes to me is there is now no reason to ever be afraid. Everything God is doing in our lives is now unto the end of fulfilling this prayer.

[ 44 : 10 ] And everything else that happens in our lives God will take towards the great end of fulfilling this prayer. There is nothing to fear. Nothing is going to get in the way of this.

Certainly the Father is going to honor the request of His Son. Certainly. And besides, because He lives in the Father's heart, Jesus' heart desire is the Father's heart's desire. and it's going to be fulfilled. Amen.