

John 17: 20-26

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[0:00] I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, even as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they may also be in us, so that the world may believe that you sent me, the glory which you have given me, I have given to them, that they may be one, just as we are one.

I in them and you in me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them, even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, be with me where I am, so that they may see my glory which you have given me, for you loved me before the foundations of the world.

O righteous Father, although the world has not yet known you, not known you, yet I have known you, and these have known you that you sent me, and I have made your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Good morning, my name is Jordan. I get a chance to preach just the final passage, or the final few verses in the High Priestly Prayer. Before I start, I'll pray, and then we'll go.

Dear Heavenly Father, Lord, we're here today. God, we need you. God, there's some powerful things in this passage. There's also some things that are kind of hard for our feeble minds to fathom.

[1:29] Just kind of the union that we have with you, the eternal God. God, I just, you know, all throughout this week, just that truth has felt bigger than me, and bigger than my ability to comprehend or communicate.

But Lord, we have hope, because you've given us your spirit. It is the spirit that takes the things of Christ and gives them to us. And so, Lord, I just pray that your spirit would enable us to hear and understand and rightly apply and be rightly affected by your word this morning.

Amen. Amen. All right. So I have the privilege to finish up our time in the High Priestly Prayer. And we'll be going over verses 20 to 26 in John 17.

But before we get into the specifics of these verses, I'd like to give a few kind of contextual observations. Some of this is review. Some of this may be new. First of all, John 17 is a prayer. It is Jesus praying to God, his Father. During our recent sermon series on prayer, we discussed how the things that we pray for can reveal our hearts. What we pray for most often can reveal the things that we most desire.

[2:52] This is because prayer is a no-pretense conversation between man and God where we are encouraged to ask for the things that we desire most.

We recognize our needs and we bring those before the one who can meet them. We acknowledge our desires and bring them from the one before the one who can satisfy them. Prayer is a deep form of communication where a man is free to bear his heart before God who already knows all things.

We also know that our circumstances influence our prayers. If we are in a time of danger, it's right for us to pray for protection. If we are confused and we need to act, it's right for us to pray for wisdom.

But Jesus begins this prayer to the Father saying, My hour has come. The hour that Jesus refers to is the ominous hour of his impending suffering and death.

It is the hour in which he will suffer for the sins of the world. It is an hour where he will bear the full rate of God's wrath against all of man's unrighteousness. During this time, he will be rejected by the Father as he becomes the atoning sacrifice for the sins of this world.

[4:07] With this ominous hour quickly approaching, where are Jesus' thoughts? On what is his heart set? Well, he spends 75% of this prayer to the Father focused on his current and future disciples.

In short, he prays for his church. Wow. Wow. As he approaches the greatest moment of human suffering in the history of the world, he is thinking and praying for you.

He was praying for your protection, not his. He was praying for your growth in truth and holiness.

He prayed that you would have unity with both God and his church.

He prays that you would experience the Father's love, know the glory of the triune God, and be effective in your mission to model the reality of the new life that he's going to give you. It is amazing to see how others' focus Christ is.

When we suffer and when we're approaching something hard, we tend to turn inwards and focus on our needs or our plan. But not Jesus. He was approaching his hour, and his heart was on you, the church.

[5:19] And while everything I said about his focus on the church is true, I also want to clarify. Jesus does not pray for the church at the expense of his relationship with the Father.

No, Jesus prays for the depth of relationship that he has with the Father to be extended to us, his church. I take time here because it's important to recognize the heart of Christ and his love for the church, but we must be careful not to oversell that point and believe that Jesus is helplessly human-centric.

Yes, Jesus is love. He loves his church, and he prays for us here. But he prays in a way that keeps God at the center, and this is right and good. In God's glorious redemptive plan, he has chosen to make our rescue and inclusion into his life a means of his own glory.

And so for Jesus, a loving pursuit of the church is also a means through which he exalts the Father. It is a means in which he obeys the Father and is a way that he brings the Father glory by bringing more people into the shared revelation of his wonderful person.

This is eternal life, that they know the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. So I just think it's amazing, and we've seen this all throughout the Upper Room Discourse.

[6:39] Right? You kind of, in the book of John, you kind of have this ominous sense. The disciples don't quite understand it. Jesus keeps telling them, like, I'm going to go. I'm not going to be here. They're like, what does that mean? You know, they're filled with sorrow.

He recognizes that they're filled with sorrow. You know, but it is Jesus that is about to bear the cross. Right? And just to see his intentionality to lead his disciples and to pray for them and to consider us, now, as he looks to the future, it's just incredible.

You know, he's about to have the weight of the world's sin laid upon him. And his thoughts are consumed with love for us, praying to the Father that we would be secure in his love, that we would understand that love, and that we would, like, thrive in the relationship that he's given us with the Father.

Right? And so it's just really beautiful. I'd also like to, this is a super minor point, I'd also like to point out that as we kind of get this High Priestly Prayer, it's cool because a lot of the themes from the Upper Room Discourse are kind of reiterated in this.

And this is probably kind of annoying, but it's neat. Like, it's not one of those, like, do as I say, but not as I do things. You see that Jesus is committed to what he's been teaching the disciples, and then he's praying that those things will come to pass.

[7:54] And Mike mentioned this last week, right? And five times throughout the Upper Room Discourse, Jesus gives us confidence that when we pray according to his name, in accordance with the Father's will, that the Father will answer.

Right? And so we have Jesus here praying on our behalf, praying for us. Right? And so we should have so much confidence that Jesus will answer his prayers.

So despite the difficulty of life and the ebbs and flows of discouragement in your Christian walk, you ought to find confidence in the requests that Jesus is making on your behalf in this chapter, for they will come to pass.

All right. Oh, I forgot the slides. Oh, title. That the church may be one, even as God is one. All right.

So with the introductory comments complete, let's look at John 17, 20 through 26. That's what we're focused on today. In this section, we're going to look at who Jesus prays for, what Jesus prays for, why Jesus prays for these things.

[8:59] So who, what, why. Simple enough, right? All right. Who Jesus prays for? All right.

I didn't know it did that. Who Jesus prays for? Well, we're going to see that in verse 20. He says, I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word.

Right? So in Mike's section last week, in John 17, 6, we see that Jesus is saying, I have manifested your name to the people who you gave me out of the world, right? And so those are the people, those are the disciples that Jesus lived and walked the earth with.

Right? And now as Jesus continues his prayer, he's, he's looking forward. He's looking forward to those who will believe through their word. Right? So through the testimony of those first generation Christians, Jesus is praying for the people who will believe in his name after them.

Right? And so second generation Christians, third, fourth, all the way up until this day. Right? And so it's cool to sit here and be like, yeah, God answered that prayer. Right? Right? We are sitting here because God answered this prayer that Christ has here.

[10:08] Right? And Christ's prayer continues in our lives. Right? And so we ought to have confidence that he will continue to reproduce his life in and through us. So who, who does he pray for?

The church. Those who will believe. What does Jesus pray for? Well, he prays for Christian oneness or unity. We see this in verses 21, 22, and 23 in the blue text.

That they may all be one. That they may be one even as we are one. That they may become perfectly one. Right? And so this is kind of the main theme of this first section is that Jesus is praying for our unity.

That we would be one. That we would be one. Okay.

Sorry, I lost my place. So that's pretty simple. But what is this oneness based on? Right? So this is, I guess, it's not simple.

[11:17] This is where I think it, alright. Christian unity is based on a shared belief in Jesus. Right? And so we get this from verse 20. For those who will believe in me through their word.

Right? So, you know, at its basic level, you know, our oneness is rooted in a shared belief that Jesus is the Christ.

That he came to reveal the Father and that it is through him that we have access and restoration to God. Right? So in short, oneness is rooted in the gospel message of Christ.

He is the only way to God. He is the only way for us to join the life of God. He is the only way for which we will be unified through God. Okay. Jesus prays for Christian oneness.

He prays that, and he teaches us that Christian unity is rooted in the shared life of God. So we see this in verse 21, 22, and 23.

[12:20] It says, Just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us. The glory that you have given me I have given to them. I in them and you in me.

So for me, this is where I got to the text. This, you know, over the last week because I'm like, man, like, how do I comprehend this language?

Right? I'm going to read it again. That they may be one just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us. The glory that you have given me I have given to them that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be perfectly one.

So sometimes I think when we hit texts like this that just seem too, you know, too wonderful for us to comprehend, it's good to slow down. So I'm going to rephrase it.

Jesus prays that we here today may be one. Just as the Father is in Jesus and Jesus is in the Father that we also may be in them.

[13:28] Jesus also says that the glory that God gave Jesus, Jesus has given to us that way, that we may be one even as the Father and the Son are one. Jesus in us, the Father in Jesus, that we may become perfectly one.

So Jesus has brought us into the shared life of the triune God. He has manifested to us the glorious character of the eternal God. And this ought to produce unity in us because we are in Christ and God is in us.

It is likely that the in us language here kind of refers back to John 15, the vine, that we are to abide in the vine. John 15, 4 says, abide in me and I in you as a branch can outbear fruit in itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

I am the vine and you are the branches whoever abides in me and I in him. He it is that bears much fruit. From apart from me you can do nothing. So in this passage, the fruit that we're focusing on is unity within the church.

Right? And John 15 tells us we got no shot at unity if we are not abiding in Christ. Right? Because it is this shared life of God that produces in us unity with one another.

[15:00] Right? And it's like a big concept but it makes a lot of sense. Right? If we are going to Jesus for the source of life and others are doing the same, if we are pursuing his purposes above our own, if we are loving sacrificially as he has loved sacrificially, if we are walking in his joy, if we are doing all those things being satisfied in him, we are going to also be unified with one another because we are all headed in the same direction.

Right? We are headed towards God through Christ and through his power at work in us. Right? And so I guess the big point of this is we don't really have a shot at unity outside of this relationship with God.

Right? And the depth of that relationship that God is doing in us, making us, remaking us into his image will then produce unity in and amongst us. Right?

And I think it gets big because you're like, man, the Father and the Son in me and I in them. Right? And I think, you know, we have trouble kind of comprehending that because this is the eternal God. This is Jesus through whom the whole world was made. He was the agent in creation. God spoke this world into the existence. He controls everything. He is all-wise, all-knowing, all-powerful, completely holy.

[16:29] And it is this God who says, I am in you and you are in me. And this depth of relationship is to be shared amongst all of my people.

Right? And it is to produce unity in you. Right? And it's just this amazing thing and we can't wrap our minds around it because God is infinite. And he is holy and he is good and he is powerful and he has so many things that we are not.

Yet he sent Jesus to condescend, to take on our human frailty, to become sin for us, that we might be restored and brought in to that beautiful, eternal relationship of the Father and the Son.

Right? We get in here later and he talks about how we can know the love. The love that God had for Jesus is ours. Right? That ought to blow our minds. Right?

In eternity past, the Father loved the Son. Right? The Son completely submitted to the Father's will all the way to the cross to bring the Father glory. Right?

[17:27] And in that beautiful, purposeful relationship, God is bringing us into. Right? And Jesus is like praying for that and he is excited that it will produce a supernatural unity amongst the members of his church.

church. Okay. So what is the purpose of this unity that we have in shared relationship with the Father and the Son?

So we see this in the blue. So the world may believe that you have sent me so that the world may know that you sent me. Alright, there's a little bit more, but we'll start there.

So the purpose, according to Jesus' prayer, for our supernatural unity, is to validate the reality that Jesus came from God into this world. Right?

And so the quality of our unity should speak to the world that Jesus is real and that he's having effect in our lives. And that makes sense, right? Because if God is bringing us into this shared relationship with the Son and the Father, from eternity past, bringing us in through Christ, that's gonna bear fruit in our lives and that fruit is gonna produce unity in us.

[18:45] And the world should be able to look at God's church and say, wow, that is a unified people and there is no way that people could have that much unity without the supernatural work of God.

Right? And so it's very clear. So the world may believe that you have sent me. So he's talking to the Father. My church will be unified so that the world who don't know me will recognize that you Father sent me to the world.

And so that is the effect that Jesus should have in our hearts to produce that unity to validate the reality of his existence. Right? And that blows our mind. Right? So weak and feeble are we. And so quick to be set off course by things that don't matter. Right? But Jesus says, no, your unity will be a testament to my reality before the whole world.

Right? That is a beautiful and a heavy thing for us. Right? Jesus cares about the unity of this church. Jesus cares about the unity of the churches in New London. Right? Jesus cares about the unity of his global church.

[19:48] Right? And he is praying to the Father for this now. Right? And we're kind of sitting in on this prayer. The church's display of unity ought to be so compelling, so unworldly, that our witness as who Jesus is becomes explainable, only because Jesus is the revealer for whom God sent.

So, we don't quite get a picture of what this unity looks like, but we know that it's observable to the world. Right? So we get that from here. Right?

And we have other places in scripture that talks about the unity of the church and all of those things, but here, the big takeaway is that our unity should be observable to the world. Right? And so it's tangible.

It has real life, you know, it plays out in real life ways. All right. So, next slide. What Jesus prays for is our effective mission, right?

That's, you know, that we be unified and then that produces an effect in our mission, right? And so, Mike talked about this last week, right? Our holiness for God's glory, right?

[21:01] And Jesus prays, you know, earlier in John 17 that we would stay in the world, right? And that we would carry on his mission, basically. You know, Jesus is going to the Father and we're staying here to carry on that mission, right?

And so, our unity feeds that mission to carry on Jesus' work as he is returning to the Father. Right? So, Christian unity also shows the world that the Father loves you.

And we see this at the end of verse 23. I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so the world may know that you sent me, and love them even as you have loved me.

The unity of the disciples, as it approaches perfection, that is, the goal serves not only, so, we see here, I didn't talk about this earlier, but that we may become perfectly one, right?

And so, we kind of see this language of becoming, right? And so, Jesus is saying here, like, your church, my church, will be unified. I'm praying to the Father of that, right? I have died, and I have brought them into the shared relationship that the church will be unified, but it's not going to be perfect, right?

[22:09] And so, we are being perfected in that unity, right, as we continue to walk and dive into this shared relationship with the Father and the Son. Okay, so, our unity is being perfected, and then, so, we'll move on to this.

focusing on, but they love them even as you have loved me. The unity of the disciples, as it approaches the perfection that is the goal, serves not only to convince many in the world that Christ indeed is the supreme locus of divine revelation that the Christians claim, but that Christians themselves have been caught up into the love of the Father and the Son, secure and content and fulfilled because they are loved by the Almighty himself.

With the very same love he reserved for his Son, okay, I kind of, that was a quote from D.A. Carson, I stumbled all over it, but, Christians themselves have been caught up into the love of the Father and the Father for the Son, secure and content and fulfilled because they are loved by the Almighty himself, with the same, the very same love that he reserved for his Son, right?

So our unity is supposed to show the world that the love that the Father has for the Son is ours. And what D.A.

Carson says is it's hard to imagine a more compelling evangelistic appeal. Right? So what we are claiming as Christians here from this text, what Jesus prays, is that the eternal love that the Father had for the Son is ours.

[23:53] Right? And our unity helps the world see that the Father loves us. Right? And so we are calling people in, we are compelling them into the love of the Almighty Father.

so our unity ought to both validate Christ's claims and compel others towards him. So Christians here, would an outsider to the church be compelled towards Christ through how you treat other followers of Christ?

Christ? So just kind of the question. If people looked at your life, would they see unity with God's people and be intrigued and drawn in?

Right? So is that the details of your life? Are you walking with people, loving people, sacrificing for people within God's church in a way that the world's like, that doesn't make sense.

Why would you give up that much for somebody else? Why would you endure this challenge? Why would you volunteer to inconvenience yourself?

[25:02] Right? Would the world look at us, shoreline, and see something different here? That's what Christ wants for us. That's what Christ prays for us. So just the question, am I living my life in a way that if an outsider's looking at my life, they would see it ordered around the things that Jesus desires, which is the unity of his church?

Right? In our culture, kind of the church is like, that's like a side activity. It's a hobby, right? The world has lots of hobbies, right? And Jesus is like, no, this is the main show in town, my church. These are the people that I died for. These are the people that I care about, and you also ought to care about them and live in unity with them. Right? And we'll talk later, unity is hard. Right? And so, us doing unity well is a supernatural work of the Lord, and others should be able to see that.

Okay, so if you're here today, right, with that kind of challenge of the church, if you're here today and you're exploring Christianity, what we're saying is that you should be able to look at our lives and see something unique about the Father and how we treat each other.

Right? So, if you're not sure if Christ is real, according to this prayer, he's challenging you to look at the lives of his people to see the evidence of his life changing us and making us new and making us like his son.

[26:27] Okay. So, just some practical applications regarding unity. Is everybody tracking?

All right. We should pray for unity. I think this is pretty obvious. Jesus takes the time to pray for the church's unity.

Probably ought to be something that we're praying for regularly, right? We ought to pursue God. If our unity is rooted in the shared life of Christ, abide in him, in him will produce true unity.

Right? So, we kind of get at unity indirectly. Right? We get at unity when Christ and the Father are the ones that we pursue. Right? When we are experiencing depth in our relationship with the Lord, he's going to change us and make us into people that are unified.

Right? And so, that relationship is always primary. And as we abide in him, he produces the unity.

Right? Apart from him, we can do nothing. But in him, we can bear much fruit.

[27:43] Keeping God first in your life and your heart. So, in James 4, it says, what causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not that your passions are at war within you?

You desire and you do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot attain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive because you ask wrongly to spend it on your passions, you adulterous people.

Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose that it is to no purpose that the scripture says, he yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us, but he gives more grace.

Therefore, he said, God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Be wretched and mourned, and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourself before the Lord, and he will exalt you. So it's a long passage, but basically, disunity is often a byproduct of our idolatry.

[29:00] Right? When we start pursuing anything other than the Lord to be our supreme satisfaction in life, we should probably expect that we're not going to treat each other as well. Right?

Because no longer is God the object of our affection, or the object of our pursuit, something else is. Right? And when something else has our desires that we're pursuing, then our passions are going to take us towards that.

And it's going to push away anything and everything that's in its way. Right? And so if we are an idolatrous people, we ought to expect us to not be walking in unity.

Right? And so keeping that relationship right before the Lord, keeping him at the center, will produce the unity in us. Our unity should be rooted in him and nothing less.

The flesh and the world want us to unify around shared interests, hobbies, and life stages. But scripture teaches that true unity is from God. So I don't know if this is obvious or not, right?

[30:01] Because there's a lot of worldly wisdom that says, hey, like, you need to be with like-minded people. You need to do, you know, find people that you enjoy. Find somebody that you can connect with.

Right? And those things are true and those things are helpful. But Christian unity is not rooted in any kind of shared experience or shared hobby or shared earthly things. It is the fact that we share Jesus.

And Jesus is remaking us into his likeness. Right? And so our unity, and we ought to seek unity in Christ first and foremost as a church. Right? God may bring people into our lives that can uniquely speak to our situation because they've, you know, walked through something, you know, that we're going through before us or they have a similar situation in life.

And God can bring those relationships to us to help us. But I feel like it should be him that's doing that. And we ought not to be looking for, you know, worldly likeness.

World, I don't know. Some people like us in the world in order to kind of find that unity. Right? Our unity needs to be rooted in Christ. Okay? So if God, if the shared life of God is the source of our unity, trying to set unity up on anything else is going to fail.

[31:16] All right. Where are we at now? We need to persevere in unity. Unity is hard. Unity can be really hard, right?

We are different. We approach life very differently. We, you know, two people can look at this, two well-meaning Christians can look at the same situation and have different paths forward, right?

And because we're all prideful and we all struggle to kind of see life clearly, right? We then, I think C.S. Lewis talks about this. We always kind of like, you know, we set our strengths against other people's weaknesses and that's just so natural for our flesh to do, right?

And so we're going to see something and we're going to be like, oh, they must not believe this about God because they're doing that, right? And that might not be the conclusion, right?

They, you know, I think we have to, as a church, recognize that there's a difference between doctrine and practice, right? So we have, you know, the doctrine of God's word and then we have kind of freedom of how we practice things and we have to be really careful not to assume practice in, like, assume somebody else has poor doctrine because they practice differently than you, right?

[32:29] And so I think that's just an example of how it can happen in the church, but in anything, we're all different people and that's a beautiful thing and it's actually a strength of the church that there's differences in the church and that we're unified, right?

But it's also hard. So unity is hard, but the gospel not only makes it possible, but the gospel actually makes it expected.

Jesus died for our unity. While the unity of the church is a reality that will come to pass based on Jesus' prayer and completed work on the cross, it is also something that is being perfected in us and so we must fight for it now.

Sometimes unity is hard and this should not surprise us. In fact, the difficulty we experience in unity is part of the beauty of it. If it were easy, if unity were easy, then anybody could have it.

And if anybody could have it, then it wouldn't be a supernatural work of God and a mark of the true church. True biblical unity is only something that the church can display because it is rooted in the shared relationship with the eternal God.

[33:37] just because unity is possible doesn't make it easy and it doesn't mean that it comes natural to us. If it was easy and natural, we wouldn't have so much encouragement in scripture to pursue unity.

And if it was easy, then Jesus wouldn't be asking the Father for it, right? And so we should recognize unity is hard. It's not really natural for us. What's natural for us is to do things our way, to see the world our way, and to want everybody else to conform, right?

And, you know, and that's kind of like pride side of it, but there's also just a difference of perspective and background and the way that we think about life is so different depending on people, right?

And those are things that are hard to navigate and to pursue true unity in the midst of it. But we have hope because, you know, we know that we are unified in Christ. So the beauty of Christian unity does not come from uniformity, but through unity despite of difference.

And so this is just where I kind of want to focus on this. No matter what differences we have, no matter what confusing things you are going through, no matter how hard unity feels to you right now, please remember that the differences you have between one another pales in comparison to the difference that Christ had to you, right?

[35:03] He is holy and we were sinful. He is all-knowing and we were fallible and ignorant of the things of God. He is unchanging and we are fickle. We were dead in our trespasses and sins.

We lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind. We were by nature children of wrath. But God being rich in mercy because of the great love he had which he loved us, even we were dead in our trespasses and sins, made us alive together as Christ.

By grace you have been saved and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Jesus Christ, so that in the coming ages he might show the miserable riches of his grace and kindness towards us in Jesus Christ.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing it as a gift of God, not a result of work so that no one may boast. You know, so I think we probably have all been in those places where you're like, I don't see how this is going to work out.

You know, we are just unaligned on this particular thing, and unity feels really hard, and you feel that tension when you go home, and at night you're having trouble sleeping because you see differently on something important with somebody that you care about.

[36:14] Right? And I just want to kind of like put that in perspective. Right? The differences that we have that seem so big are small in comparison to the difference that either any one of us experiences between God.

Right? And so we have these small differences, but Christ was the eternal God, and he condescended and took on our weakness, right? And he bridged that gap so that we could be unified.

Right? And, you know, we are so far in our flesh from tracking the mind of God. We're far different in our thinking than he was, than we are to one another. Right?

And so that gap to our unity is so much smaller than Jesus' gap to us, which he bridged so that we can then be unified to one another. Right? And so we ought to have hope, and we ought to kind of dive into that gospel of Jesus.

Right? He deferred his desires to love. He took on. He burdened himself for us so that he might exalt us into the heavenly places with God.

[37:17] Right? And so we can do the same thing with one another. We can be patient. We can be kind. We can show love when we feel slighted. We can press on when unity gets hard.

You know, we can draw near to people who have hurt us, whether on purpose or inadvertently.

Right? Because Christ did all of those things on a much grander scale for us.

All right. Oh, sorry. We need to protect unity so we can protect unity by just kind of fleeing divisive thoughts. Right? You know, if Christ says we're to be unified and we're thinking things that just aren't helpful, we read that book Good and Angry, and he talked about like unproductive remembering.

Was it unproductive? You may remember that? Fruitless remembering. Right? And so we get in these situations and we just kind of rehash the situation. We're like, they're wrong. And now, you

know, you know, you get this. That's fruitless remembering.

Right? And so we can flee those things as a church. Right? And we can give grace and we can move forward and draw near to people in love. Right? And so one way that we protect unity is just by, no, I'm not going there.

[38:31] Right? I'm not going to let this confusion impact how I love this brother or sister. Right? So we can do that. We also need to, you know, protect unity by warning and avoiding divisive people.

So, read a couple texts for you. While the gospel gives us the ability to pursue unity, scripture also recognizes that not all in the church are true disciples of Christ.

So we are all encouraged to be on guard against divisive people who do not walk consistent with the gospel of Jesus. So in Jude 1, 18 through 19, it says, And the last time there will be scoffers following their own ungodly passions.

It is these who cause divisions, worldly people devoid of the spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in the most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of the Lord, Jesus Christ, that leads to eternal life.

Right? And so scripture recognizes, well, it pushes us towards unity. Scripture also is like, hey, not everybody in the church is going to be a true follower of Christ. Right? And you're going to see that in their lives, and they're going to be devoid of the spirit and the spirit's power.

[39:48] Right? And they're going to be pursuing worldly passions. And, you know, I think that's good for us to understand, right? Because we're not going to share unity. We're not going to be unified with that individual because they're not submitting to Christ.

Right? They're not living consistently with what Christ has called them to live. If true Christian unity is rooted in the shared life of God, we need to avoid the influence of those whose worldliness causes divisions.

Titus 3.10 says, as for a person who stirs up divisions after warning him once, then twice, have nothing to do with him. Right? And so we ought to warn folks in this congregation who are stirring up disunity.

Right? Right? And if you are warned, we should take that. Jesus is serious about our unity. Right? And so it's a warning. It should be a strong warning. And if somebody persists in that, it's basically like, hey, you know what?

Like, they're not exhibiting the heart of Christ. Right? So pursue unity with those who are his. You don't necessarily need to do that. You can't do that with somebody who is not in kind of this supernatural way.

[40:56] All right. What Jesus desires. So when we started this text, we kind of talked about how prayer, in prayer we kind of ask for things from the Lord, things that we need, things that we want.

And sometimes we just go to the Lord and we express our desires. And so I think it's really cool here. So it says in verse 24, Jesus prays, I desire that they also whom you have given me may be with me where I am to see my glory that you have given me because you love me before the foundation of the world.

Right? And so this is interesting, right? Because Jesus just earlier in this prayer prayed that, you know, the disciples would stay in the world and carry on his mission. Right? And now he's here. He's like, I want them with me. Right? And I just love this. Like, because it shows us Jesus' heart. He is with the Father. And he's like, man, this will blow their mind when they experience the glory of the Lord.

When they see his love for me and his love for them, it will blow their mind and I want them here. I want them to experience that. Right? And so I just think it's really cool how, you know, he simultaneously prays for our effective witness as we stay here on this earth, not being taken out of the world, but being protected from the evil one.

[42:13] But he's also like, man, but I can't wait until they're with me. Right? And so like, he loves us and he wants us to be with him for all of eternity to experience his glory.

Right? So 1 John 3, 2 says, Beloved, we are God's children now and what we will be has yet to appear. But we know that when it appears, we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is.

Right? And so Jesus is looking forward to that moment and he's like, God, I desire that they be here and experience this because it is good. Right? And when they see this, they will become like us. All right. But until then, Jesus will continue to make known the love of the Father. So we see this here.

Right? So he's like looking forward in the future, like I want him here, but that future is not now. Right? So then he's looking back into the now and he's like, I will continue to make it known that the love with which you have loved me may be in them and I in them.

[43:17] Right? And so in the meantime, while we're still here, right, while we're waiting to join Christ in his glory and the full experience of the Father's love, he is committed to actively making the Father known to us and making the Father's love known to us.

And that ought to encourage us. First Corinthians 3.8 says, and we all with unveiled faces beholding the glory of the Lord are being transformed in the same image from one degree of glory to the other.

For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. Right? So as we look at Christ and we see Christ and we understand him more, we become more and more like him and our faces can see and understand his glory more and more.

Right? And Jesus commits to doing that work in us. Okay. Okay. So that's all I got except for some practical tips.

All right. Is everybody tracking? I don't know. I can't. All right. All right. So embrace the love of the Father now. Jesus is committing to make his love known to you.

[44:29] So I just encourage you as you leave here, meditate on what that means. Think about it. Right? This is the God of the universe, the eternal Savior.

He's saying that he will make the love of the Father known to us. Is that something that we experience? Is that something that we think about? Is that a regular part of our day?

Right? It seems like it ought to be from this text. Right? Because this is something that Jesus is working in us. Share your life with others. Right? So we talk about our unity being based in the shared life of the triune God.

Right? And so it's natural for us then to share that life that he's given us with others. Right? He wants us to be unified. So if you're not living your life where you're actually sharing your life with others, I think you're kind of disrupting the flow of what God's doing in you, remaking you into his image.

Right? So he is making us more and more like him so that we can have an influence in this world to encourage and unify his saints and to speak to the world about his reality.

[45:38] Right? And if we're not actually diving into deep relationships with others, whether they be within the church or without the church, are we really doing that shared life thing? Right? And so, you know, I was, I was encouraged this morning.

So, so two things that kind of like recently, you know, there's, there's been this, this thing where there's like not complete unity in a, in a situation, in a relationship that's important to me.

Right? And that thing kind of eats away at you. You have trouble sleeping. You think about it. You want that relationship to be restored because you care and you love that person.

Right? And then you step back and you're like, man, this isn't my family. This isn't my life. You know, like they're an adult. They can go do whatever they want. Like, why am I losing sleep over this?

You know? And it's like, no, that's the way the world thinks. Right? Check out when it gets hard because what I want is my easy life. I want me, satisfied me.

[46:43] As a church, we're like, no, we step into that challenge because we love and we want unity and we fight for it. And so, you know, and then, and then we go through those things and we see that relationship be restored and there's so much joy in that.

The other thing is, um, a brother this morning came and he shared, you know, it was something I've been praying for him for. Right? And he just stopped by this morning and shared that God had answered a prayer in a really profound way in his life.

And it's like, man, that just filled my heart with joy. Right? And so when we are sharing our lives with others, there's so much joy when we see God working in them and answering prayers and we get to be a part of that.

Right? And so there is just so much joy in sharing the life that God's given us with those around us. Right? And so if you're not walking and sharing your life with others in real profound ways, then, then, then we're not propagating that life of God in us.

Right? And, and, and, and doing kind of that one another work that I think he calls us to. Right? And we're probably missing out on a lot of joy and maturity and all of those things when we just kind of step back and avoid.

[47:54] Right? And so I encourage all of you to dig in and share your life. You know, and it can be hard to share our lives because not all things in our life are something we want to share. Right? We don't always want to own up to our weakness or our failure or our past or any of those kind of things.

But when we think about the gospel of Christ, where he makes us completely clean, he makes us new, he fills us with his love, we can have all the confidence in the world to go into any relationship and be vulnerable and to invest ourselves and to be invested in.

Right? And so, you know, you know, in our community group, we have, we have some relationships that are just thriving because they're, they're diving into unity. Right? And, and, and they're pursuing the hard conversations in love and sharing their lives, man.

And it's been so encouraging to me. Right? And so, you know, I think God calls us to a really beautiful life together. And so we ought to be availing ourselves of it and diving in and sharing our life with others.

Um, okay. Oh, and discipleship. Discipleship is a way that we share our life and other people.

[49:03] So just consider, are you discipling somebody? Is somebody discipling you? Right? That's just a way that you can kind of like share your life and have somebody else's life shared. Um, okay. Be willing to speak into others' lives and be willing to have others speak into your life.

Right? That's a little hard, right? Sometimes we don't like what other people are speaking in. And sometimes we just rather let it go. Right? We're like, ah, it's not a big thing. Whatever. You know? But that brother or sister could need a word from the Lord.

Right? And so if we observe something that seems inconsistent with their walk or their claim, like we ought to go address that. And if somebody sees that in my life, they ought to come and address it to me. And when we get in these situations, we need to be humble.

Uh, this is just a kind of a phrase that, um, Matt Coburn had kind of left with, with us. Um, he says, we need to have thick skin and soft hearts. Right? And so when we get into these situations and things are confusing, it's, it's going to kind of hurt as we wrestle through like understanding one another.

Right? It's going to hurt. We're going to feel misunderstood. We're going to feel misrepresented. You know, we're going to maybe feel all these things. Right? But we need to push past that and our hearts need to remain soft.

[50:10] Right? And so we can dive in and do the hard work of relationships because, you know, Christ has equipped us to it. But, uh, it's going to hurt a little bit and it's going to call us out. Um, but if we maintain soft hearts before others, I think the Lord will use that.

Okay. So not much for a conclusion, but that's, uh, that's all I got for today. Um, I hope it was encouraging. I'll pray and then we'll, we'll sing.

Dear Heavenly Father, Lord, we thank you that you have shared your life with us. God, that kind of blows our mind. We're not really sure what to do with it, but we know that what you've done for us and bringing us near and bringing us in to your life, um, ought to produce unity amongst us.

And that this unity ought to show the world that Jesus is real and that he loves us. And so God, I just pray that real simply you would do that work in this church here. That you would produce supernatural unity among us so the world might see unity and know that you exist and know that you are the true God and the only way to the Father.

And through you, they can have the love of the Father applied to their lives. And so Lord, may we just be a church that, you know, is missional about our unity.

[51:26] We're committed to our unity because it speaks to the glory of God. And so Lord, uh, do that work in us. We can't do it on our own. Um, but Lord just kind of write our paths and set us straight in pursuing you and produce the unity in us as a by-product of the fact that we are finding our satisfaction in you and you alone.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.