

A Prayer For His Own (pt. 2)

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Date: 03 March 2024

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[0 : 0 0] Amen. Thank you, Treg. Please take your Bibles and open them up to John chapter 17. John chapter 17. We're continuing this prayer of Christ in John chapter 17.

And this morning we'll finish up the chapter. I'll read John 17 verses 20 through 26. And I do ask, as I always do, have your Bibles open. I want you to see it with your own eyes, hold it in your own hands, in your lap, the Word of God.

As we walk through this passage together. And when you found it, John 17 verses 20 through 26, if you would please stand in honor of the reading of the Word of God. Jesus prays, I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word.

That they may all be one. Just 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 have sent me.

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 become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them, even as you loved me.

[1 : 2 8] Father, 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 loved me before the foundation of the world.

O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.

This is the word of God. Let's pray once more. Father, we thank you for this word. We thank you for this prayer of Christ, and we pray, Father, that it would be answered right here in this church.

God, would you make us one, even as you are one, Lord. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. Amen. What does Jesus want?

That's the question that we've been asking as we've walked through this prayer here in John chapter 17 together. We saw that in verses 1 through 5, he prayed for himself. Glory.

[2 : 4 0] Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had before the world existed. We saw last week in verses 6 through 19, he prayed for these 11 men, these 11 disciples.

So many precious gifts that he prayed for them. He prayed for their perseverance, that they might have his joy. He prayed for their protection. He prayed for their holiness.

And now, here at the end of this prayer, in verses 20 through 26, we see he's praying for all those who will believe in him through the word of his disciples.

This is a prayer for the global, universal church. It is a prayer for all believers from this point forward. This is a prayer for the Apostle Paul, soon to be Apostle Paul.

This is a prayer for Lois, and her daughter Eunice, and her grandson Timothy. It is a prayer for Ignatius, and Polycarp, for Athanasius, and St. Augustine.

[3 : 44] It is a prayer for Martin Luther, and for John Wesley. It is a prayer for Amy Carmichael, and Adoniram Judson, for Lemuel Haynes, and for Brother Yoon. It is a prayer for Pastor Chad Moore, at Life Park Church, for John Payne, at Christ Church PCA.

It is a prayer for me, and if you believe the gospel, church, this is a prayer for you. What do we learn about what Jesus wants for you in this prayer?

What does this passage teach us about what Jesus wants for all of his people? Well, to answer it in just one word, church, Jesus wants for his people to experience unity.

To say it another way, here's the main point of this prayer, this is the main point of this message, is that the gospel produces supernatural unity in all who believe it.

The gospel produces supernatural unity in all who believe it. And I want us to see this in two ways this morning. This will be our outline this morning if you're following along.

[4 : 52] The gospel produces unity both vertically and horizontally. Vertically and horizontally. Jesus wants you to experience unity both vertically and horizontally.

First, Jesus wants you to experience vertical unity with God. Now look with me starting in verse 20 to our passage again.

Jesus says, again, I'm not praying for the whole world. I have a particular people in mind here. I'm praying for those whom the Father has given me out of the world.

Now I've prayed for these 11 disciples and now, now I'm praying for all those who will believe in me through their words. See, Christ is on the road to the cross.

He is getting ready to die in the place of sinners. He's preparing to rise from the grave. And then, He's going to send His disciples out to go talk about this.

[5 : 50] To go tell everybody they come in contact with that there is a Savior who's come to the world that any who turn from their sins and trust in Him can be saved. They will be His witnesses, we're told in Acts 1.8.

Witnesses of the glory of Christ in Jerusalem and in Judea and in all Samaria. They will be commissioned, Matthew 28, commissioned to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And Jesus knows that as these disciples go out preaching the Word, scattering seed of the Word, guess what's going to happen? Men and women, boys and girls from all over the globe, from Jerusalem all the way here to all in all South Carolina, will hear that message and believe.

So He prays here for all those who will believe in Him through their Word. And what does He pray? What does He pray for these future believers? What does He pray for us? Well, He prays that they might know deep, profound, personal, supernatural unity with God Himself.

Think about this. This is what it means to be a Christian. You believe the Gospel and the Gospel creates supernatural unity vertically between you and God.

[7 : 18] Well, what does this look like? Think with me as we walk through this passage about all that that means for you, Christian. To be one with God means that in a way that's beyond our comprehension, you are in Him and He is in you.

To be a Christian, to be united vertically with God through faith in Christ means that you are in God and God is in you.

Look there to verse 21. Jesus prays for all who will believe that just as you, Father, are in me and I in you that they, these believers, may be in us.

He says in verse 23, I in them and you in me. What He's praying for is this deep, personal unity with God through faith in Christ. You know, being a Christian is a lot more than just believing a few key doctrines, right?

You believe a few key doctrines, you check off the boxes of what you know you believe. There's a depth here that goes beyond intellectual acknowledgement of the truth. This is personal inclusion in God Himself.

[8 : 32] When you believe the truth of the gospel, you are brought into union with God. You're not made God, of course, that's impossible, but you are brought into unity with God, joined together with Him.

When you trust in Christ by faith in what He's done, that the sin that has separated us from God is done away with and now, in Christ, everything that Christ has done, He's now done on your behalf.

So we can say, as we witnessed last week with Bailey's baptism, we can say that, truly, we have been buried with Christ in baptism. His baptism is ours.

His death is ours. And we've been raised to walk in newness of life. His resurrection is ours. His new life is ours. His victory is ours by faith in Christ.

You are included in Him and He in us. Church, this is at the very core of what it means to be a Christian. Now, I want us to understand this because this isn't the only place that the Bible speaks about this deep unity between God and His people.

[9 : 43] John 14, 20, we saw, Jesus said, in that day, you will know that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you. You hear this union language?

John 15, we heard Him say, abide in me and I in you. 2 Corinthians 5, 17, if anyone is in Christ, He is a new creation.

The old has gone. Behold, the new has come if anyone is in Christ. Galatians 2, 20, Paul says, I've been crucified with Christ, therefore I no longer live.

Jesus Christ now lives in me. The life that I live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me. I'm dead and gone. I died with Christ.

Here I am living in Christ. Romans 8, 9-11, anyone who does not have the Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, does not belong to Him.

[10 : 40] But, if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Church, we should marvel at this. Amen? If you have believed the gospel, you are now united to God Himself in Christ.

He is in you. You are in Him. Not only this, but to be a Christian, to be united with God, means that you have received the glory of Christ.

Christ. You have received the glory of Christ. He tells us, verse 22, He says, the glory that you have given me, I have given them.

You remember last week from chapter 17, verse 6, He says, I have manifested your name to the people you gave me out of the world. This manifestation of the glorious name of God so that it might be seen and enjoyed and believed and trusted and worshipped.

[12 : 03] That's what Jesus came to do. And how did He do it? Verse 8, you remember last week, For I have given them the words that you gave to me. The words.

And they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you and they have believed that you sent me. He manifested the glorious name of God through words.

And so it is with us. God's people are made God's people. If you're a Christian, it's because somewhere along the way, somehow, the glory of Christ was manifested to you through words.

What does Romans 10, 17 tell us? Faith comes through hearing and hearing through the word. Word of Christ. Yes. The glory of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ was shared with you and by God's grace you heard it and by God's grace you were given eyes to see His glory.

By God's grace you received it. You were given a new heart to receive it, to love it, to trust it. By God's grace you believed it. You received the glory of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[13 : 19] So now what does that mean? Now, what that means is that you personally by faith in Christ you personally are now partakers of His life.

This is eternal life. That they know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. You have received His eternal life by faith in Christ.

Now, right now, we are partakers of His joy by faith in the gospel. These things I speak in the world that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

Verse 13 Right now, we are partakers of His peace through faith in Christ. My peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. The list goes on and on and on.

By faith in the gospel we are partakers, enjoyers, recipients of the glory of Christ right now. But you know, as wonderful as that is, all of that is just a small taste of the glory that's to come.

[14 : 27] Can you believe that? To be one with God, to be a Christian means that you have the hope of the glory of Christ.

Now in part, but then in full. Look there to verse 24. Verse 24. He prays, Father, 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 loved me before the foundation of the world.

Did you hear that prayer? Father, I pray, I desire that they would be with me where I am and that they would see the fullness of my glory.

What a hope that lies ahead of us, church. You know, when I was younger, to be honest with you, when I was a kid, when I would think about eternity, when I would think about what in the world heaven would be like, I would get my mind going and eventually if I thought long and hard enough, I would get to a point where I would be bored out of my mind.

Right? Am I the only one? You think about eternity, what in the world am I going to do with eternity? What am I going to fill my days with? What am I going to fill my time with?

[15 : 47] It sounded boring to me. Let me tell you something, church. Every single joy, every single treasure, every single bit of glory on this side of eternity eventually will get boring.

Either it will run dry or you will get tired of it. But the glory of Christ will never get boring.

And our enjoyment of the glory of Christ in eternity will be never ending. There's more to enjoy in His glory than all eternity can fill. We have all of eternity to spend drinking ourselves full of the glory of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That's what lies ahead of all who are united to Christ by faith. The invitation of the gospel to our non-believing friends is to turn away from all of these false, passing, fading joys and come find true, lasting life and joy in the presence of Christ now and into eternity.

What a gift. What a gift. Church, you know, gifts like this we know are not given flippantly. This is a gift of divine love.

[17 : 15] Last one here on this first point. Last one. To be a Christian, to be made one with God is to enter into and to be personally loved by God Himself.

verse 26. He says, I made known to them your name and I will continue to make it known. Why? To what end?

That the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in them. To know Jesus by faith is to know personally know the love of God.

To be a Christian is to enter into and to receive the very love that God the Father has for His own Son. Are you not blown away by that?

That ought to drive us to our knees in worship, church. To know that we're loved by God. It makes sense that God loves His own Son. He's perfect.

[18 : 27] He's flawless. He's eternal. He's God Himself. But to know that God loves sinners with that very same love ought to drop us to our knees. But that's what it means to be a Christian.

We are loved by God, united to Christ, adopted into His family. Ephesians chapter 1. In love He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the beloved.

In Him, do you hear that? In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of His will according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in Him, things in heaven, and things on earth.

Our union with God the Father is not just a legal formality. Our union with God the Father in Jesus Christ is the realization of a divine plan of divine love.

We are loved in the beloved. We are sons in the Son. Church, this is what it means to be a Christian. We are united to God Himself in Christ Jesus.

[20 : 08] What a glorious gift our salvation is. But sadly, for many believers, this is where it ends for them.

Sadly, for many believers, this personal, vertical, one-on-one relationship with God is where it ends for them.

But what I want us to see here in our second point in the rest of this passage together this morning, is that if you can believe it, Jesus wants even more than that for His people.

The aim of the cross of Christ is not just vertical union with God, although that is primary. The aim of the cross of Christ is also horizontal unity with all of God's people.

Let me say that again. The aim of the cross of Christ is not just your personal, individual, vertical union with God. It's that that union would spill over and produce horizontal unity amongst God's people.

[21 : 24] Let's see this in our second point this morning. Second, Jesus wants you to experience horizontal unity with His people. people. Now, this is supernatural, isn't it?

Right? It may be easier for some of you to believe that God can unite Himself to one sinner, that a sinner can be united to God Himself through faith in Christ.

It may be easier for you to believe that than that one sinner could be united to another sinner horizontally, much less one sinner to a whole group of sinners.

That sounds almost impossible. And I gotta confess to you that often the way the church behaves and speaks and acts makes it seem like this prayer just went up and hit the ceiling.

But Jesus Himself, He lived, He died, He rose, not just to make us one with God, but I think it's clear in this passage, He did this to make us one with one another.

[22 : 32] Perfectly one. He prays for it here, it is clear, this is His desire, and yet, church, you know this, don't? I'm not telling you anything you don't know. Churches often struggle with this unity thing, don't we?

This isn't a new problem, by the way. You read through your New Testament, you'll notice there has never been a church without issues here. This is why Paul instructs us, if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you don't consume one another, he tells the church in Galatia.

Pursue what makes for peace and mutual upbuilding, he tells the church in Rome. Bear with one another, he tells the church in Colossae. If one has a complaint against one another, forgive one another, as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

bear with one another, again, he tells the church in Ephesus, be eager to maintain the unity, he commands the churches, instructs us, maintain it, protect it, guard it, work for it, uphold it, pursue it, why?

Because sinners do not naturally drift towards unity with one another. It is supernaturally purchased for the church, and it must be supernaturally pursued by the church.

[23 : 54] True unity is not natural. All of these commands, they assume two things, don't they? One, it assumes that the church will struggle to experience unity, amen?

The church will struggle, this will be difficult, why else would he have to tell us to bear with one another? There's going to be opportunities if you get close enough to other Christians, if you rub shoulders enough with other sinners, there's going to be plenty of opportunity to obey these commands, to be patient, to forgive, to bear with one another, to pursue peace, to love one another, but you know what it also assumes?

It assumes that it's worth it. It assumes that that hard work of pursuing unity in the church, this man-to-man woman-to-woman, horizontal unity is worth the effort.

For Jesus, it was worth dying for. I'd be willing to bet most of you in the room, if I asked you to raise your hands, and I won't ask you to raise your hands, if I asked you to raise your hands, most of you in the room, I would be willing to bet have at least one story, probably more, one story where you have seen people in the church go after one another, and maybe you have been personally harmed and hurt and affected by Christians.

I know I have. You can't be a shepherd without getting bit by a few sheep. You can't be a shepherd without defending against a few wolves, right? But I know members, the church, this is not uncommon to be engaged in this disunity that so plagues the church, and it makes us say things like, well, I love God, but I got a hard time with his people, right?

[25 : 57] I love Jesus, but I don't really like his people. I don't really love the church, and I want you to know that if that is how you feel, it's okay to acknowledge that.

It's okay to acknowledge the harm that's come upon you. It's okay to acknowledge some of the barriers that you might have to this horizontal unity, but we also have to acknowledge that if that's how we feel, then our heart is out of alignment with the heart of Christ in this area.

It's the work of the Holy Spirit to take our heart and to make it align with the heart of Christ. And so if that's you where you say, I just want me and God, I don't want these other people, I would invite you to pray.

Lord, would you change my heart to look like the heart of Christ so that I might know the unity you've purchased for me on the cross. Listen again to what Jesus prays here, verse 20.

He said, I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us.

[27 : 08] Verse 22, the glory that you have given me, I have given to them. Why? That they may be one, even as we are one, I in them, and you in me, that they may become perfectly one.

How close do I have to get to these people? I don't know, how close is God the Son to God the Father? Let's start there. Jesus says, pursue that type of perfect unity in the church.

And you know what will happen when the church begins to look like that? The world will see and the world will know that God himself must have done that work.

Look at verse 21. Look at verse 21. He prays that they may be one just as you father are in me and I in you that they may also be in us so that what the world may believe that you have sent me.

Verse 23, I in them and you in me that they may become perfectly one. Why? So that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

[28 : 18] now I want to spend some time as we close asking the question what does that look like practically for you, for us?

Maybe you've attended church all your life and you've never thought about church in this way. Maybe church for you has just been an event that you attend on your calendar and you've never really thought about this horizontal unity that Christ wants you to experience.

I want to talk about four applications here. I think I'm going to have four. I had like 20 this week but I'm trying to trim it down this morning for your sake to just four.

Okay? Number one is to ask yourself. I want all of you to ask yourself this question. Am I connected with other Christians Christians in such a way that is only explainable by a work of God?

Am I connected with other Christians in such a way that is only explainable by a work of God? Is my connection to other believers unapologetic for the existence and the work of God?

[29 : 40] Is my connection to other Christians an easy on-ramp to conversations with my non-believing friends about the glory of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ? Do other non-believers in my circle say and wonder to see how they love one another?

That's a quote from a man named Tertullian. He's not from around here. Tertullian. He was an early church theologian in North Africa and he wrote an apologetic against the pagans in the area.

how distinct the church ought to be and he imagined what the pagans might say as they look in on the church and marveling to see how they love one another while all of us out here hate one another.

To see how they're willing to die for each other while we're killing each other out here. The love of the church for one another ought to be an apologetic for the glory of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

one point of difference between the love in the church and those outside of the church might be that you have deep love for others who are not exactly like you. Birds of a feather flock together.

[30 : 52] That's very natural. That's very worldly. But in the church, the world talks a lot about diversity. It talks a lot about unity. They have no clue what they're talking about.

In the church, we ought to have a true picture of unity in diversity. We're not gathered together because we all look alike. We're not gathered together because we're all the same age, because we have all the same preferences, because we belong to the same socioeconomic class.

We are gathered together because we are belonging to Jesus Christ as Lord. We are in Christ, vertical unity, and that unity spills over to produce horizontal unity amongst every tribe, tongue, and nation.

All who are in Christ by faith in the gospel. Application number two. Application number two. Speak well of other Christians.

Speak well of other Christians. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up as fits the occasion that it may give grace to those who hear.

[32 : 06] Ephesians 4 19. Speak well of other Christians. If our unity is meant to be an apologetic for the truth of the gospel, what does it say to the world when we tear each other down with our speech?

And this applies both inside our own local church here as well as outside towards all other Christians. Speak well of those who are brothers and sisters in Christ.

Now the early church, again, the early church had a saying. They said, in essentials unity, in non-essentials diversity, in all things charity.

Have you heard that before? In essentials unity, in non-essentials diversity, in all things charity. We need to understand what the essentials are that unite all Christians across the globe, what makes us brothers and sisters in Christ, those essential core tenets of the faith, the divinity of Christ, the sufficiency of the scriptures, the trinity, salvation in Christ alone, by faith alone, for example.

If you agree on the essential doctrines of Christianity, the apostles' creed that spells it out for us, we can disagree and we will disagree on a thousand other things, but we are family, like it or not.

[33 : 29] You are not my enemy. We share a common enemy and we serve His cause when we hit one another with friendly fire. We need to understand what the core essential doctrines are of the faith that unite all of God's people and we need to also understand and remember not everything is a core issue.

Not everything is an essential issue. Not everything is worth dividing over. There are issues worth dying for, there are issues worth dividing for, there are issues worth deciding for, and there are issues that don't really matter at all.

Worth discussing for. And the good news is, of course, when we make it to glory, all of this will become perfectly clear, we're going to be perfectly one, partially because all of us are going to be corrected in all the many ways we're all wrong.

But until we get there, we remain united in the essentials of the faith, but know that we won't be perfectly united in every matter of faith and practice.

That's why different churches exist. That's not a bad thing. What's bad is when these different churches that are brothers and sisters attack one another, bring shame upon the cross of Christ in the way that we hate one another and speak about one another and cancel each other over some article written ten years ago that we disagree with.

[34 : 54] I'm going to pick on my Presbyterian brothers for a minute, but only because I hope you know I love them deeply. In our theology, we're about 95% overlap.

Even our own statement of faith in this church, we have 18 articles in our statement of faith. That's what our membership agrees to believe. There's only two of those 18 that I know our Presbyterian brothers would disagree with.

We are united. If they're not my brothers, I don't know who is. That disclaimer out there. We disagree on who ought to be baptized.

Baptists, we claim that baptism is for believers, born again, regenerate believers, those who have professed faith in Christ and who the church affirms their faith in Christ. We baptize believers.

Our Presbyterian brothers believe baptism is for believers and their children. We disagree on that issue. Both of us have our feet dug in on this issue.

[35 : 55] We are not changing each other's minds. We love them. They love us. But I could not in good conscience become a member of a Presbyterian church on that issue so long as there's a healthy gospel preaching Baptist church in the area because that secondary issue is so important to the function of the church that I feel like I have to be a member of a church that shares my conviction on that issue.

But I don't cast stones in my Presbyterian brothers because we disagree on this issue. We agree on the essentials of the faith. This brings us to third application here.

Third application. I know I'm speaking mostly to those who are members of this church but third application is to join a church. Join a church where you align theologically in faith and practice with the elders and with the members.

Join a church. If you want to experience this spiritual unity that Jesus prays for here you can wait until heaven or you can get your hands dirty and experience it in part here in the local church.

Yes we're spiritually united with all Christians everywhere. Yes we're part of the universal church of course. but that unity is seen and experienced most profoundly in the local church.

[37 : 22] Join a local church. Now I want to make sure you hear me say I'm not saying join this local church. And for some of you this may not be the right local church for you to join and that's okay.

Again join together with a church that preaches the gospel where you align theologically where you can sink your roots down deep and commit to the unity of the church.

Ask yourself do these people believe what I believe about God's word? Now again you might say well I'm a part of the universal church.

Why do I need to join a local church? Well that's a bit like saying I'm a part of the military. Why do I need a branch? I'm an NBA player. Why do I need a team?

Let me flesh that out just for a moment. Say you just turn 18. You decide to enlist in the military and now you can say I'm in the military but you know what the next question is going to come out of somebody's mouth when you tell them that?

[38 : 22] Which branch? Are you marines? Are you army? Are you navy? Are you air force? Sure you're all connected. You're all fighting for the same cause but there are specific groups and you have to decide what branch you're going to commit to and then well within that branch what division?

What company? What squad? Who are you accountable for? Who are you accountable to? Who's your general? Who's your sergeant? Nobody in the military second guesses this.

Nobody in the military says well I belong to the military I don't have to belong to a branch. I don't need a sergeant. I'm fine. I don't need anybody looking out for me. I don't need to look out for anybody else.

The military understands this but sadly many Christians do not. when you are enlisted in the people of God when you have believed the gospel you are now a part of the universal global church.

You are spiritually united with all of God's people but at the same time you are not equally accountable to all of God's people. You can't be.

[39 : 30] I am not a pastor of all of God's people everywhere. When I go to a coffee shop and I see ten people with their Bibles open. I am not all of their pastor. I am your pastor church.

And you are members of one another. So again not necessarily this church but join a local church. And when you do last application here last application commit to a local church.

Would you commit to one another in a local church? How often have you heard me say that the church is not primarily an event that you attend.

It's a family that you are invited to be a part of. When you join a local church, I hope you understand it's not like joining Sam's Club. It's not like joining a local gym.

You are becoming a member of a body. You are accountable now to the other members. you are integrated in. Your gifts are now serving for the good of the body and their gifts are serving you as we seek to build one another up in Christ.

[40 : 43] Join a church where you can plant yourself and commit. Again it doesn't have to be here. Not everyone will be wanting to join this particular church.

That is okay. But for our members here, we have a covenant that defines what membership looks like for us. I was looking at it.

It's hanging right there in the lobby as you walk in, our church covenant. And this spells out our horizontal commitments to one another. As people ask, what does it mean to be a member of Seaweed Bay?

This is what it looks like. I want to, as we close and prepare to come to the table together, remind ourselves of these commitments. Commitment number one, do you remember what it is? We will pursue unity.

Working and praying for the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. We will walk together in Christian love. We will regularly gather together.

[41 : 44] We will share Christ with those who have not yet heard. We will put each other's needs above our own. We will commit to holiness. We will follow God's design for his church.

We will be generous with our time and our treasure and our talent. And if we have to leave, we will go join another church where we can commit there in the same way we have committed here.

Church, don't you want to be a part of a community like that? Christ came and died and rose to create that sort of community.

That is what he wants for the church. I will simply ask as we close. Are you experiencing that unity right now? Do you know what it is to have unity with God?

Personal union with God himself through faith in Christ. Do you know what it is to be loved by God himself in the beloved? And if so, do you know what it is to love one another in such a way that it can only be explained by the truth and the work of God himself?

[42 : 55] Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for the gospel that brings us into relationship with you for all who believe.

And Father, we thank you, God, that you have brought us into a community, a family of believers. We thank you for the unity that you've blessed this church with, Father.

And we pray against any obstacles to it. We pray against any scheme of the enemy. We pray against any seed of division that might be stirring here. We pray that we would be perfectly one as Christ has prayed.

Now as we come to the table together, Lord, remind us again of all that Christ has done on our behalf. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen.