

## A Prayer for All Time: Part 3

John 17:20-26

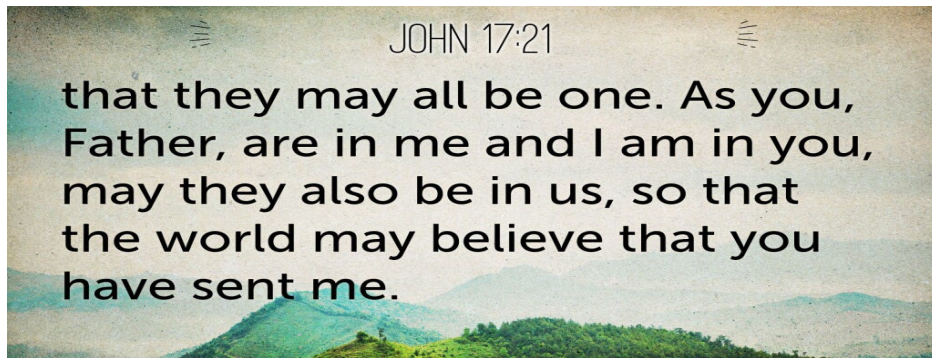
One of the most encouraging things a Christian can hear is “I’m praying for you!” It emboldens our hearts, strengthens our resolve, and uplifts us when we’re discouraged. Now get this: Jesus prays for us! This morning we listen in as He talks about us to His Father.

Missions and evangelism were on Jesus’ mind!

- “...those who believe in Me through their word.” (20)
- “...that the world may believe/know that You sent Me.” (21c, 23c)
- “...the world has not known You...these have known...” (25)

Jesus’ Prayer for Us

- “...that they may be one...perfected in unity” (21-23)  
*Not ecumenism: The model is Jesus’ relationship with His Father*  
  
*The “glory” Jesus received He has given to us – mission!*
- “I desire that they be with Me...(and) see My glory...” (24-26)  
*Two groups: Those who have not known, and those who have (25)*  
  
*Intimacy with Christ now, and forever!*



1. The closing verses of Jesus’ high priestly prayer in John 17 are for us! In the opening section of His prayer, He affirmed His obedience to His Father’s will, both in giving His life as a perfect sacrifice for the sin of all mankind (1-5), and preparing faithful disciples to take the gospel message to the world (6-8). In verses 9-19 He prayed for those disciples, and His prayer for them had us in mind, since those disciples were ‘models’ for us, and His prayers for them apply to us as well. But in verses 20-26, Jesus’ prayer is directed explicitly to future believers. Jesus foresees a community of believers on earth (21-23), and looks longingly to having an intimate relationship with them in time, and eternity (24-26). What expressions in these verses reflect that intimate relationship with us?
2. Ask a young Christian today what their career plans are, and they’ll likely list a garden variety of options – business, doctor, teacher, and the like. What is missing? The *one* career that *only* a Christian can fulfill: Someone who takes the gospel to the world! How important is this *career* to God? Read Matt. 28.19, Mark 16.15, and Acts 1.8! Now re-read Jesus’ prayer for us in verses 20-26. What expressions does Jesus use in these verses which show His focus on this mission for all Christians? *The key question for each of us to ask ourselves: What am I doing to fulfill the task that God has given to ME in this life?* Perhaps you are thinking, ‘I’d like to be a missionary, but I’m not able.’ Where were the disciples before Jesus ascended to heaven (Acts 1.4)? Where did Jesus tell them to start witnessing for Him (Acts 1.8)? Where should we start witnessing for Jesus? Read Rom. 10.14-15. What part can you play in sending missionaries to reach unsaved people around the world (even if you don’t go)?
3. The closing words of Jesus’ prayer are (no surprise here) confused and misused by some – but let’s try not to! In vv21-23, Jesus prays that Christians “may all be one.” How is this misused? What does it mean? In v22 Jesus says the glory His Father gave Him, He has given to us. What was ‘glory’ for Jesus (John 17.1, 4-5; 7.39; 12.23-24; 13.31-32)? What then is (and will be!) ‘glory’ for us? Reflect on this: The Father loves you just as He loves His own Son (23)!