

# believe

A STUDY OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN



## Jesus Prayed for Us: Part 2

*John 17:20-26*

**Main Point:** Jesus prayed for what we need to continue his work in the world.

**Jesus' prayer emphasized unity for his work and our witness in the world (20-26).**

- *Unity in our church impacts our witness for Jesus in the world (20-21).*
- *Unity in our church reflects Christ's glory and God's love in our lives (22-23).*
- *Unity in our church is motivated by the fact that we will be with Jesus forever (24).*
- *Unity in our church is possible by God's love and presence in our lives (25-26).*

As Jesus prayed for his disciples who were with him that day, all of the applications of the truths in his prayer still extended to those of us who are his disciples still today. However, Jesus didn't end by just offering an indirect prayer for those who would believe in him through the ministry and work of his first disciples. Jesus extended his prayer to focus on all who would believe in him, which includes those of us who are believers today. What a blessing to have the record of a direct prayer from Jesus that's focused on his church today! What did he pray for? In general, he prayed for the same things that he prayed for his disciples who were with him that day. He prayed for what we need to continue his work in the world, and the one thing that he emphasized most in his prayer for you and me today was unity. Jesus' prayer emphasized unity for his work and our witness in the world.

In verses 20-21, Jesus reinforced the task of being his witnesses in the world. He prayed that we (believers) would be one as he and the Father are one. In other words, just as the Son and the Father are in perfect unity and shared focus in their purpose and work, so we – believers who are the church today – are to be in unity together in the Lord's purpose and work. Why? Jesus gives the answer, and it's profound: "So that the world may believe that you have sent me." In other words, Jesus' prayer re-emphasized that unity in the church impacts our witness for Jesus in the world.

1. In our church, how do you see unity or oneness in Christ? In what ways do you see the witness of that in our congregation, and how have you experienced unity in our church?
2. What are some of the most common distractions and discouragements to unity in the church? How have you contributed to these problems? What things can you do to help resolve or address disunity?
3. What are some issues where division is necessary in the church (or between churches and denominations)?

In verses 22-23, he went on to say that he gave us his glory that we may be one. He said that the reason he did that and desires that in our lives was for our work as his witnesses in the world. Unity in the church reflects Christ's glory in our lives. The opposite is also true. Disunity in the church distracts from the glory of Jesus through our lives. Jesus also said that unity does something else in its witness in the church. Unity reflects the love of God in our

lives. Unity is a reflection of God's love for us and in us. Jesus prayed that we would be one in such a way that would display his glory and God's love in the world, drawing hearts to know that Jesus is Lord!

1. How does unity in the church reflect Christ's glory? How does disunity detract from Christ's glory in his church?
2. How does unity in the church reflect God's love? How is God's love required to pursue and attain any true unity?
3. Jesus prayed for these things so that others in the world would come to know him! Why is our purpose as witnesses so important? How can we make that the focus and reason behind everything we say and do to pursue unity in our church?

In verse 24, Jesus shared with the Father his desire that we would be with him where he was going. Jesus was preparing to return to his Father, and in heaven, he would be crowned with all the glory that was his before the foundation of the world. His desire was simple: He wants us to be with him and to have the joy and blessing of seeing him in all his glory! What a gift. This is Jesus praying for our eternal life that he has the power to give us. This is the Lord giving us a hope and a focus for today, which is Jesus Christ in all his glory. The prayer of Jesus – that's sure to be answered – reminds us that unity in our church is motivated by the fact that we will be with Jesus forever!

1. Use [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org) to do a word study of the word "desire" in this verse. What does it mean, and what are some other examples of how it's used in the New Testament?
2. Where is Jesus going? Where will he physically be after he completes his mission on earth? Where will the fullness of his glory be revealed? Jesus said that he wasn't asking his Father to immediately remove his disciples from the world, so what's his desire in this verse? When will it be accomplished?
3. How does the promise of eternal life and the expectation of the joy of seeing the fullness of Christ's glory help to focus us on his work and unity in his church today?

In verses 25-26, Jesus closes his prayer, focusing on his work in revealing and manifesting God to the world. He said that he would continue to do that work, and connected to that purpose was the powerful promise of God's love and Christ's presence in the lives of those who believe. Jesus would continue to make God known as he would go to the cross to die for sin. He would continue to make God known as he would be buried in a tomb and rise from the dead on the third day. He would continue to make God known as he would ascend into heaven in the very presence of his disciples. He would continue to make God known as he would be in those who believe through the wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit. He would continue to make God known as the Lord's love would be confirmed, experienced, and shared in the hearts of his followers. He would continue to make God known through the witness of those who would believe! Jesus' prayer reminds us that unity in the church is possible by the Father's love and Christ's presence into our lives.

1. How does it strengthen you to know that the love of the Father for the Son is the same love of God that is in you? Do you know someone who needs God's love? How can you share his love in Christ with them this week?
2. How does it encourage you to know that the presence of Jesus is in you? How does that change the way you think about sharing him with others? How does it impact who you rely on and who you rest in when you witness for Jesus?
3. Break into small groups of 3-4, and pray for faithfulness to continue Christ's work in the world!