

The Final Days of Jesus
JESUS PRAYS FOR YOU

Wednesday, March 25
Reading: John 17:14-26

John 17:17 "Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth. **18** As You sent Me into the world, I have sent them into the world...**20** My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, **21** that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me."

Jesus has prayed for His disciples' SALVATION (17:6-8) and their SECURITY (17:9-13). He continues by praying for their SAFEGUARD (17:14-16). Since they now belong to Christ, the world will hate them. Jesus prays not that they be taken from the world but that they be protected from the evil one. Finally, Jesus prays for His disciples' SANCTIFICATION (17:17-19). Jesus had set them apart to deliver His word. While His mission on earth was about to conclude, their mission was about to begin. These verses are the first hint of the Great Commission Jesus would give after His resurrection.

Having hinted at the task of evangelism that lay ahead, Jesus now focuses on those of us who would believe in Him through their witness (17:20-26). First, Jesus prayed for our UNITY (17:20-23). Just as the Father and Son are one, so Jesus prayed that all believers would be united as one. The reason for this unity is "so that the world may believe that You have sent Me." When God's people stand united in Christ it is like a sign pointing people to salvation. When we fight and bicker, Christ is ignored and rejected.

The second theme of Jesus' prayer is our UNION with Him (17:24-25). It is easy to see why we long to be with Christ in heaven, but it is amazing to realize that Jesus longs for us to be with Him as well. His prayer is that all believers will spend eternity with Him and see His glory. Those who love Christ should be united on earth because one day we will be united together with Christ for all eternity.

LESSON ONE: "They are Not of the World." The old song says, "This world is not my home. I'm just a passing through." God's plan is not to remove believers from danger and opposition but to preserve them in the midst of conflict. We are to be witnesses to God's truth amid the lies and deception of Satan. We are not to live as hermits or cloister ourselves in little "Christian" communities. We are to remain in meaningful contact with the world and stand for Christ despite opposition and persecution. Does your life reflect your heavenly home or do you "blend in" with the world? Are you living for Christ or living for yourself?

LESSON TWO: "That They May Be One." The unity of believers Jesus prayed for not only shows the world the love of Christ but also shows them God's love for the church. The world cannot see God, but they can see His people. What they see in us is what they will believe about God! When Christians are united in love and obedience to the Lord, people will be drawn to the Savior. How united is your church? Are you helping or hindering the unity Christ wants us to show? When the world looks at you and your church, what would they believe about God?