

Communion Series/Missions Month

The Missional Prayer of Jesus

John 17:6-26

Previously, we looked at the “Majestic Prayer of Jesus”: the first five verses of a long prayer that showed His true character. The boldness of this prayer climaxed with the request of Jesus that the Father glorify Him again with the glory He had before the world began. The majesty of Jesus was simply because He was God, and will always be.

In the rest of the prayer, we see the missional heart of Jesus. He prayed for His apostles because they would continue His mission. Then He prayed for the believers today. In both prayers, we see principles that apply to all Christians today, because they are found in the rest of the Bible.

As we celebrate Communion and open Missions Month with the same sermon, it is good to realize that the heart of Jesus is really Missions, and that like the apostles, we are also sent to the world.

1. Jesus Prayed for the Apostles (vv. 6-19)

a. Jesus' affirmations about the Apostles (vv. 6-11a)

- Every believer is a gift from the Father to Jesus (*Ephesians 1:4-14*)
- Three characteristics of those who truly belong to God:
 - a) They accepted and obeyed the Word.
 - b) They believed that Jesus was the Messiah.
 - c) Jesus was glorified through them.

Similarly, you are a gift of the Father to Jesus. And you will know the genuineness of your conversion by the very same things that characterized the apostles. Are you certain you belong to God?

b. Jesus' requests for the Apostles (vv. 11b-19)

Jesus didn't pray generically. He prayed very specifically. He asked the Father

- To protect the Apostles, especially from Satan (*Matthew 6:13*)
- That they be united among themselves (*cf. vv. 21, 23*)
- That they might have the full measure of Christ's joy in them (*John 15:11*)
- To sanctify them through the Word (*John 15:3; Ephesians 5:26*) as they are sent to the world (*John 20:21*)

All these prayer requests of Jesus were in view of His intention in v. 18. Jesus has entrusted the mission to us—not to angels, or supernatural phenomena, but to frail, struggling, believers like us.

2. Jesus Prayed for All Believers (vv. 20-26)

a. Jesus' request for all believers (vv. 20-24)

- That we be brought to complete unity, so that the world will know not only that Jesus is the Messiah, but that Christians are loved by the Father with the same love He has for His Son (*1 Corinthians 1:10, Ephesians 4:13, Colossians 2:2*)

If this is the prayer request of Jesus, imagine how heart-breaking division in the church must be for Him. The currency of unity is mutual trust. The greatest cause of division in any church is simply blatant, unapologetic distrust.

- That we be in God, so that the world will believe in Jesus (*John 13:34-35*)

As the world sees us loving each other with the love Christ has for us and forgiving each other with the same forgiveness Christ offers us, the world is convinced that Jesus is someone they could never live without—a personal Messiah and Lord.

- That we be with Jesus to see His glory (*John 14:3, Matthew 25:21*)

When you love someone, you want him/her to be with you. Jesus wants to bless us with His visible, physical presence someday, so that when our faith becomes sight, we will worship Him who loved us first (*1 Peter 1:8*).

b. Jesus affirms His continuing goal: that the love of the Father for Jesus be in us, and He Himself be in us (vv. 25-26)

Jesus wants believers to be so transformed that God's love for His Son will be in them, as Jesus lives 'amongst them' (and displayed in their love for one another) and 'within them' (so that as individuals they become loving people).

Final Thoughts:

The affirmations of Jesus of those who belong to Him are exciting, but His prayer requests for them are simply staggering. Why? Because they WILL be answered. They will all be fulfilled. Jesus cannot pray and get a "No" from the Father.

Why did He ask for so much for us? "That the world may believe that you have sent Me" (v. 21) and "to let the world know that you sent Me" (v. 23). This is the missional heart of Jesus.