

*He Loved Me...*

*He Loves Me Lots*

*The Gospel of John*

Text

John 17:20-26

Topic

Jesus prayed for believers to be “made one” in Him and in the Father.

Title

***“One is the Onliest Number that You’ll Ever Know”***

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**I know what you are wondering: Why don’t Anastasia and Drizella recognize Cinderella?**

Or her step-mother? Why doesn’t the prince recognize Cinderella?

Her transformation was so dramatic, so fantastic, that they did not make the identification.

**Every Christian tells a Cinderella story.**

- Christians go from rags to riches. Before a person is saved, they are described in the Bible as dressed in “filthy rags,” inappropriately for Heaven. When you are saved, the Lord takes away your filthy garments, replacing them with a robe of righteousness. Incredible, eternal riches await us.
- We will make a dramatic, fantastic, entrance in the future: “When [Jesus] comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed” (Second Thessalonians 1:10).

“That Day” is the Second Coming of Jesus to Earth, ending the Great Tribulation. The Bible Knowledge Commentary says, “Jesus will be glorified through the lives of believers whom He has transformed by making saints out of sinners.”

Jesus finished His prayer for the disciples by looking forward to the success of their mission. He prayed “for those who will believe in [Him] through their word.” All those who have believed until now, and those who will believe until His Second Coming.

**That includes you and I...Jesus prayed for you.**

I’ll organize my comments around two points: **#1 One Day We Will Be One**, and **#2 Today We Are Won To Win**.

### **#1 - One Day We Will Be One (v20-24)**

**It is common to apply these words of Jesus to Christian unity.**

One very excellent commentary says, “Jesus requested **unity** for future believers. He was praying for a **unity** of love, a **unity** of obedience to God and His Word, and a **united** commitment to His will.”

Scan verses twenty through twenty-six. Which verse uses the word, “unity?” That’s right; *it’s not there*.

Let’s talk about unity for just a moment. Take a guess how many times it occurs in the Bible.

In the NKJV, it is used three times, once by David in the Psalms, twice in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> Both of those are in the Book of Ephesians:

- The apostle Paul said that we should “[endeavor] to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (4:3).
- He said we will “all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (4:13).
- In the verses in-between, he described the local church being equipped for the work of the ministry by its members serving harmoniously together in the exercise of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>1</sup> In some translations, “unity” can be found once in Colossians and once by Peter.

Christians don't make unity. We "keep" it in "the bond of peace." We are bound together by the Holy Spirit indwelling each of us.

Temperament, theological outlook, worship style, personality conflicts, and so on, are things that can undermine unity.

J.C. Ryle writes, *"How often Christians have wasted their strength in contending against their brethren, instead of contending against sin and the devil! How repeatedly they have given occasion to the world to say, 'When you have settled your own internal differences we will believe!'"*

As much as it is possible, be at peace with your brothers and sisters, thereby maintaining unity.

Scan the verses again. What word is repeated? "One." Being "one" with God is different from the unity of believers.

Joh 17:20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;

Jesus called the Gospel "their Word." Once they believed, it became theirs to share with others.

The message never changes. We are saved by grace, through faith, plus nothing. Old & New Testament saints were saved by grace through faith.

Many of you have traced your ancestry. Do you wonder who your spiritual ancestors might be?

We all trace back to Peter, in that he preached the first sermon that produced born-again believers. They shared with others, who shared with others, until the Gospel was shared with you. I'd like to know the particular people through whom the Gospel came to me.

Jesus prayed for you. He continues to pray for you. Add to that the indisputable fact that the Father always answers Jesus' prayers and you can conclude that all things are working together for good in your life, to bring glory to God.

Joh 17:21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

"One," "one," "one," "one," "one." Twice here, then three more times, Jesus referred to "one." Must be important.

A.W. Pink declared, *"Who is competent to define the manner in which the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father! As this wondrous prayer stretches forward into eternity, only in eternity will it be fully understood."*

Before we begin to define or describe "one," glance at verse twenty-three, the phrase, "that they may be made perfect in one." Now glance at verse twenty-four, the phrase, "[that they] may be with Me where I am."

**You will be "one" with God the Father and Jesus when you are "perfect...with [Jesus], where [He is]."**

Jesus was looking to the future, when believers will have been made "perfect." It is then that we will be "one" with Him and God the Father.

**What we will be in the future impacts how we live in the present.**

Again quoting A.W. Pink, *"Though the actual bestowment of the glory be yet future, it is presented for faith to lay hold of and enjoy even now."*

The apostle Paul understood this impact when he said,

*"Whom [God] predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified" (Romans 8:30).*

These inspired words tell us that God looks at us as *already* being "glorified," even though we won't be until we are with Jesus. Knowing that I am predestined to be glorified, I want to cooperate with God the Holy Spirit in transforming me day-by-day to be like Jesus.

A quick word about predestination. *No one is predestined to be saved, or to perish.* After you are saved, you are predestined to be made like Jesus, until you are glorified. H.A. Ironside explained, *"You will note that there is no reference... to either Heaven or Hell, but to Christlikeness eventually. Nowhere are we told in Scripture that God*

*predestinated one man to be saved and another to be lost. Men are to be saved or lost eternally because of their attitude toward the Lord, Jesus Christ."*

Throughout His prayer, Jesus emphasized He was "one" with God the Father. So much so that He told Phillip, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father... I am in the Father, and the Father in Me" (John 14:10-11). Today we might say that Jesus and the Father were perfectly 'in synch' with one another.

Illustrations fall short, but maybe this will help. Pairs figure skating is defined by the International Skating Union as *"the skating of two persons in unison who perform their movements in such harmony with each other as to give the impression they are one."*

When Jesus was on Earth, He voluntarily set aside the use of His deity and lived as a man. The whole time, He was perfectly in synch with His Father. By doing what His Father told Him to do, and saying what He wanted Him to say, the world saw God the Father.

Since God the Holy Spirit is in you, you are capable of being in synch with Jesus and with the Father. Just as Jesus revealed the Father, so can you.

Have you ever tried to watch a movie whose sound was out of sync?

### **We can become out of sync with our Savior.**

It can be on account of sin, or spiritual sleepiness, or something else. I think it is often because we refuse to believe. When we read a command in the Bible, often our first question is something like, "How do I do that?" We tend to default to our own energy rather than yield to the indwelling Holy Spirit.

"That the world may believe that You sent Me." "World" is the unbelievers who inhabit Earth. "One" with God is what He is making us. Unbelievers ought to be able to look at a believer and conclude that we are so different in Christ, Jesus must have been sent by God from Heaven.

Joh 17:22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:

We defined "glory" earlier in this chapter as 'making the invisible God visible.' It's what Jesus did, and it is what we are empowered to do.

The apostle Paul said something that simultaneously terrifies me and inspires me. "Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ" (First Corinthians 11:1). If you've seen Paul, you've seen Jesus.

I can imagine someone saying, "If you've seen Pastor Gene, you've seen Bozo the Clown." Or maybe Barney Fife. Super Chicken?

### **Who do nonbelievers see you as?**

God, in His grace, covers for us as He is working on us. This does not mean we do nothing. "Let go and let God is not accurate. F. Leroy Forlines writes,

*In our relationship with God, we are both dependent and independent. We are dependent in the sense that we need His help and cannot be what we should be without His help. We are independent in the sense that, even though we cannot be what we should be without God's help, in a real sense, our actions are our own. God does not treat us like puppets. We have latitude for obedience and disobedience.*

Joh 17:23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

"Perfect in one" comes later. The first application of these words is for the future.

We mentioned our return with Jesus at His Second Coming. We will be perfect, and all unbelievers who survived the Great Tribulation will realize Jesus was the Heaven-sent Savior. They will see what God intended for them, to be made perfect. But it will be too late to be saved.

Joh 17:24 "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

Those whom the Father "gave" Jesus are the church - all the believers of the Church Age, which began on the Day of Pentecost and ends with the resurrection and rapture.

I see nothing in the giving that limits the Gospel when it is preached. Jesus draws **all** men to Himself, and **whosoever** will believe in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. God is not willing that **any** perish, but that **all** come to salvation.

Jesus is the Savior of **all** men, but you must believe to be saved. God provides the grace to enable you to receive or reject Jesus.

**B**eing "one" with the Tri-une God is in your future. I'm sure there will be a mystical component to it, but we can only begin to understand what it means. Only in eternity will we fully know.

We are like the pairs figure skater who executes the jump in synch with his or her partner, but falls to the ice upon landing. He or she gets up, and back in synch.

Maybe you can't stick the landing; you've fallen, or keep falling. Get up, get back in sync.

## **#2 - Today We Are Won To Win (v25-26)**

"Sent" is another important word in Jesus' prayer for the eleven and their spiritual descendants. Jesus was "sent" into the world to show humans God the Father. Those who believe are "sent" into the world to tell nonbelievers God "sent" Jesus to save them. Once saved, He sends them. And so it goes.

Joh 17:25 O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me.

Jesus would shortly go to the Cross. He described His Father as "righteous":

1. Jesus' death on the Cross satisfied the penalty for sin demanded by the righteous, thrice-holy God.
2. His death on the Cross enabled God to declare believing sinners "righteous," to save you, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Another way this is put is to say that God is both *just* and the *justifier* of all those who are in-Christ.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary notes, "*The world failed to see God revealed in Jesus. But a few disciples did, and they believed that God had sent Jesus.*"

A "few" in each generation will likewise respond to the Gospel and be sent, and scattered, into the world of unbelievers.

The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. God's plan of salvation cannot fail to find its successful completion.

Joh 17:26 And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare *it*, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

Jesus "declared to them" for three and one-half years. His words and works were the words and works of the Father. They saw in Jesus the perfect expression of the Father.

He said that He "would [still] declare it." Jesus ascended into Heaven. He still declares the Father by the Holy Spirit Whom He promised to send after He returned to Heaven.

His "I will declare it" should not be limited to the current dispensation, the Church Age. Jesus will continue to declare the Father to us for eternity.

Everyday forever you will learn more about the grace, mercy, love, and justice of God. It is an inexhaustible well of discovery.

Jesus ended His prayer by emphasizing "love." The same love that the Father has for the Son, He has for you, if you are a son or daughter by the new birth.

Think of it this way. Jesus prayed, asking the Father to love His followers as much as He loved Jesus. The Father can't say "No" to the Son. You are so, so loved.

Jesus prayed, "I in them." He is "in them," in believers, by God the Holy Spirit taking up residence in our hearts.

God the Holy Spirit's fingerprints are everywhere in the Gospel of John. Typical of Him, He isn't always named, and doesn't draw any attention to Himself.

I am often critical of Pentecostals. Truth be told, I admire their passion for the Lord. It wouldn't hurt any of us to express more genuine joy. We must cautiously guard against drifting towards a cessationist attitude regarding the Holy Spirit and His gifts.

We identify the church in the city of Corinth as Pentecostal. In his letters to them, especially the first, the apostle Paul encouraged their enthusiasm, but wanted their expression of the gifts to be brought under control. He did not, for example, forbid them from speaking in tongues.



He taught them how to do it so it would minister to others as it was meant to do. Dr. Michael Svigel reminds us, *"Spiritual gifts are not simply what the Spirit gives to you. They are what the Spirit gives to the church through you."*

We can't commend the overly excessive exercise of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. It draws attention away from Jesus, and that is something that God the Holy Spirit will not ever do.

**M**aybe you've been at a service when a missionary was prayed for because they were being sent out.

**You are sent out no less than a missionary.**

God has 'sent' you to the places that comprise your world of unbelievers. You are there with the Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Jesus is "with you always" because the Holy Spirit is in you.

**D**on't stop believing that our individual bodies, and our corporate body of believers, is the Temple of God the Holy Spirit.

Christians do forget. The churches in the region of Galatia forgot. Paul had to exhort them to quit trying to live the life of Jesus in their own energy. They must return to life by the Spirit.

Go back before Jesus' prayer, to chapter fourteen, and read to 17:26. Read it more than once. Underline or highlight everything that you ought to believe.

Once you have a list, ask yourself of each thing on your list, "Do I believe it?"

**Then - Believe it.**