

TUESDAY, AUGUST 24TH

DAILY READING ASSIGNMENT: **John 17**

SCRIPTURE John 17:13-17

OBSERVATION

Oh man, don't you wish you could just live in this prayer? It is so rich! It takes about four minutes to read it aloud. This prayer, prayed by Jesus on the evening before his death, is simply astonishing in its breadth, its themes, its inclusion!

Soon Jesus will be a corpse hanging on a cross – and he is spending these last hours with His disciples. In fact, beginning with Jesus washing the disciples' feet to this prayer for himself, and them, and us – this stretch between John 13 and John 17 shows us how Jesus would have us act and believe.

The chapters between John 13 and 17 are a conversation between Jesus and his disciples. Can you picture the scene – food on the table, basin and towel laid aside, an upper room – the men who are close to understanding fully. . . not quite – and Jesus praying?

He lists what he has been given by the Father – Abba – Daddy: eternal life, people out of the world, work to accomplish, a message, glory, and then He lists what He has given believers: eternal life, God's message, glory. All of this leads to an amazing prayer (ch. 17) in which Jesus prays for the unity of his followers (present and future).

At first (Jn. 17: 9-11) Jesus says he is not praying for the world. In other words, he is praying specifically for his followers – then and now! Go back and read vv. 20-24. Jesus is clearly praying for his followers in future generations. So go ahead and put your name in there: "I have made known to YOU) Ben, Larry, Pat, Susan, etc.) that the love God has loved Jesus with will be in you.

APPLICATION

Earlier in the Gospel of John, Jesus said – "Blessed is the person who lays down his/her life for a friend. Of course, I think of Jesus dying on the cross. . . for us. I think of martyrs who died in the cause of their faith, or the soldier who sacrifices himself for his friends. But also. . . think of this – you and I are daily laying our lives down. We don't get the choice not to. We do get to choose for whom or for what are we laying our lives down. This prayer asks that we might lay our lives down daily in unity and in love.

Look at Jesus' disciples – study them closely sometime – they were men, radically different in temperament, personality, and political philosophy. It was because of their differences that their unity was so evident – that people watching them interact and minister and love each other – were drawn to the message. How about us – Twenty first Century Christians. How are we doing on this front? Do we so love each other, that "the world" is drawn to us?

Think about this – if you are a parent – what do you want most for your kids after you die? Big bank accounts, lots of leisure – or do you want your children – brothers and sisters to (in spite of differences) really love each other, care for each other, and sometimes together celebrate the oneness of their family? And don't we want to see our children in eternity – with us? That's love!

It seems like this is what Jesus has in mind in this incredible prayer. He wants deep unity among his followers and He looks forward to our being with Him. But the comparison stops there in two ways. Jesus wants that for His followers SO THAT the world may know. In other words, the unity of followers of Jesus is a major testimony of God's transforming love to an unbelieving world. And His indwelling presence, to the extent we open ourselves, enables us to live in unity and harmony with other believers – who might be as different from us as the original disciples were from each other.

PRAYER

(Jesus' words from John 17) "Father, I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word that they may all be one, just as You Father are in Me, and I in You that they also may be in us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. . .

Oh righteous Father, even though the world does not know You, I know You and these know that You have sent Me. I made known to them Your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them. *Amen.*"

(John 17 selected verses 20-26)

OUR PRAYER: Let it be so in our lives Lord Jesus. *Amen.*

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