

“That All May Be One” (John 17:20-22)

For Your Life in Christ the Week of the Seventh Sunday of Easter

June 1st, 2014

Saint Paul’s Lutheran Church of Irvine, CA (LC-MS)

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Introduction: What did our Lord pray for before He ascended and sent the Holy Spirit?

- A. It is an important question, because it would seem to address what is ***most important to our Lord Jesus Christ***, concerning us before His crucifixion!
- B. And be sure to know this: ***Jesus prayed for you, not just the first-century disciples!***

John 17:20: “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word.”

- C. That is, Jesus prayed “for those who will believe in me through [the apostle’s] word” = that includes YOU!
- D. OK, so we know He was praying for you, but what was He praying for ***specifically?***

Part I: What Jesus Asked For...For You!

John 17:21: “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.”

- A. Two little words to take note of:
 - 1. “all”
 - 2. “one”
- B. R.C.H. Lenski wrote, “though so many in number all believers are to be one unit, one body, one spiritual whole.” (*The Interpretation of John*, 1155)

1st Corinthians 12:20: “As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.”

- C. There is almost universal acknowledgement that oneness is a necessary attribute:
 - 1. On Sport’s Teams: During play-offs, commentators often consider which team is playing as a team, instead of – for example – just depending on star players.
 - 2. Businesses and corporations: Need synergy, unity, common goals, and a common vision.
 - 3. Governments seek oneness and unity for the people they serve. This is the reason why there is a fundamental division in our great country:
 - a. There are those who insist that God is primary.

Alexis de Tocqueville wrote about America in 1831: “*There are an innumerable multitude of sects in the United States. All differ in the worship one must render to the Creator, but all agree on the duties of men toward one another. Each sect therefore adores God in its manner, but all sects preach the same morality in the name of God...Besides, all the sects in the United States are within the great Christian unity, and the morality of Christianity is everywhere the same.*” (*Democracy in America*, Mansfield & Winthrop, eds. 278)

- b. In 2014, however, this no longer holds true. There are now many who insist that God is secondary or entirely unnecessary. This fundamental breach represents a culture war & oneness is limited.
 - 4. Oneness is crucial for marriage, especially during crisis.
 - 5. Oneness is vital for good parenting.
- D. But the oneness Christ prayed for is infinitely greater than all of the forms of the world’s oneness:
 - 1. First, consider the comparison: our oneness corresponds with (Jesus prayed): ***“just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you”*** = the **ONENESS of God!**

2. How could we ever achieve such oneness? We can't! But God can!
3. Second, this is a ***spiritual oneness***.
4. So by God's work, we become spiritually one!

Part II: How Does God Make Us One?

- A. By giving us Jesus Christ and His glory! (glory = dignity, honor, praise, worship).

John 17:22: *"The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one."*

- B. Be clear: there is only one "glory" of God; the exaltation and radiance of the One and Only Savior, Jesus Christ.

John 1:14: *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."*

- C. This glory of Christ:
 1. Was given to Him by the Father (John 17:22)
 AND
 2. Jesus gives it (His glory) to His disciples ***by giving to His disciples HIMSELF***. The glorious one is given to us. His glory, His dignity, His honor, His radiance is shared with His people.
- D. Think of Moses:

Exodus 34:29: *"When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking to God."*

2nd Corinthians 3:7: *"...the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory."*

Part III: He Makes us ONE through His Glory Today:

- A. Given to you through the Word (John 17:20).
- B. Through the Word of Christ, we receive the glory of Christ in us and we become one with Him and each other!

2nd Corinthians 3:18: *"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."*

- C. The Holy Spirit leads us to see the glory of Christ through the Word, through His Sacraments, & through one another as we love each other and worship in spirit and truth.
- D. Through this oneness with Christ and one another, we experience tremendous results: like having truth:

"Consider the times in which we live. Our age ridicules the notion of truth. The idea that particular statements are absolutely correct and others false has never been more unpopular. Pontius Pilate's cynical question, 'What is truth?' (John 18:38) seems to be the motto of our age. Most people say, 'You have your beliefs, I have mine. You have your truth; I have mine. Let's leave each other alone, and we'll both be happy.'...It's ironic that in this day, when absolute truth is almost universally denied, people still yearn for it. However, because they believe that truth is unattainable, they suffer through discontented, unfulfilled, and disquieted lives, wishing for a firm place to stand against the chaos....God, however, is no cynic...God has provided for the removal of uncertainty we might have concerning our relationship with Him...God sent His Son – the truth in human flesh – to bring us

the truth (John 14:6)...Jesus says: 'If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free' (John 8:31-32)." (Preus, *Why I Am a Lutheran*, 19-21)

- E. As ONE we believe that Jesus lived for us!
- F. As ONE we believe that Christ died for us!
- G. As ONE we believe that Christ rose for us!
- H. As ONE we believe that Christ reigns & intercedes for us!
- I. As ONE we believe that Christ is not far away, but is here with us, in the Church, in the Sacrament, and in us! Let us now share His glory by sharing His Word; let us celebrate our oneness by holding to the ONE Word of the Lord, His Word that makes us one with God and each other!