

Sermon: **The Power of Christian Unity (John 17:20-23)**

Date: **November 20, 2016**

We live in a day and age that is characterized by division. Division seems to mark every area of society. Increasing divorce rates, ongoing racial issues, and widening political gaps are just a few examples that speak to the divisiveness of our culture. In the midst of all of this division, the church has a real opportunity to show the world a better way. In a world that is marked by disunity, the people of God need to be united. We need to tangibly demonstrate the transforming power of the gospel by living as one. As we study John 17:20-23, we will see Christ's heart for the unity of his people. Moments before his death on the cross, as Christ prays for all of his sheep, he is primarily concerned with our oneness. He prays for our oneness three times in these four verses. We will see that Christ desires that we be one with each other *for the sake of the gospel*. He prays for our oneness because the credibility of our witness to this broken world hinges upon it.

What you need for this study: Bible, Notebook, Pen

Individual Bible Study

1. Please read John 17:20-23 and ensure that you have listened to the sermon.
 - a. What is significant about the phrase "*for those who will believe in me*" in verse 20? How does this passage guarantee the success of the ministry of the apostles?
 - b. What does "*their word*" in verse 20 refer to? What is the relationship between "*their word*" and our belief?
 - c. How does this passage show both the oneness of the Father and Son as well as their distinction in role and function?
 - d. Why is the call to unity not a call to uniformity? What does the relationship between the Father and the Son teach us about the type of unity that we ought to have with one another?
 - e. What enables us to live with one another in a way that reflects the unity of the Trinity?
 - f. What does Christ mean when he says, "*The glory that you have given to me I have given to them,*" (v. 22)?

- g. Our union with God empowers our unity with each other. How should this truth affect the way we live?
- h. What is Christ's desired result of our oneness (see v. 21b and 23b)?
- i. Why is oneness among God's people a compelling reason to believe that the Father sent the Son into the world?
- j. In verse 23b, Jesus restates what he says in verse 21b and then adds this, "*so that the world may know that you...loved them even as you loved me.*" What does that mean? How does our unity with one another put the love of God on display to the world?

Group Discussion Questions

1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you through the sermon and the Bible study this week?
2. Why is it important to remember that we are first and foremost united through our common faith in the gospel? What would happen if we united around something other than the gospel?
3. How can we use our different spiritual gifts and abilities to serve our common mission of making disciples? In what ways are you currently serving the church now and how might they contribute toward our common mission?
4. There is a correlation between our unity and the credibility of our gospel witness. How does our oneness testify to the power of the gospel? How does this truth motivate you to pursue oneness with God's people?
5. How can we grow in unity together as a small group? What "one another" commands in Scripture do we need to grow in as a group? For example: Love one another (John 13:34-34), serve one another (Galatians 5:13), forgive one another (Ephesians 4:32), pray for one another (James 5:16), welcome one another (Romans 15:7), bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), confess your sins to one another (James 5:16), etc.

Accountability Question

Is there someone you would like to invite to church so that they can "come and see" what God is doing?