

Lessons from the Gospel of John (20): Life's Prayer (2)—The Believers Built Up into One to Glorify the Triune God

Bible reading

You may find it helpful to also read the entire case found in John 17:1-26.

John 17:6, 11, 14-15, 21-22

6 I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world. They were Yours, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.

11 And I am no longer in the world; yet they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given to Me, that they may be one even as We are.

14 I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world even as I am not of the world.

15 I do not ask that You would take them out of the world, but that You would keep them out of the hands of the evil one.

21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

22 And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one.

Introduction

In John chapter 17, after the Lord prayed for the glorification of the Triune God (see Lesson 19), He then prayed for the believers to be built up into one. The genuine oneness of the believers is revealed in three stages: in the Father's divine life, in the Triune God through His sanctifying holy word, and in the divine glory to glorify the Triune God. When this oneness is realised practically, God can accomplish His eternal purpose to express Himself.

Bible study reading

Please prayerfully read through the following portions of ministry related to this lesson.

In the last message we covered the subject, the central thought, of the Lord's prayer in John 17. In this message we come to the second part of this prayer. The first part, verses 1 through 5, gives us the subject of the prayer, and the second part, verses 6 through 24, deals with oneness. The purpose of oneness is for the glorification of the Son that the Son may glorify the Father. The people in this oneness include all the disciples, all those whom God has chosen and given to the Lord Jesus, all those to whom the Lord has given eternal life. (*Life-study of John*, msg. 39, section 1)

The first aspect of oneness, which is the building up of the believers, is the oneness in the Father's name by His divine life. In this aspect of oneness the believers born of the Father's life enjoy the Father's name, that is, the Father Himself, as the factor of their oneness. We are one because we have one Father. (*Life-study of John*, msg. 39, section 5)

The oneness in the Triune God through sanctification by the holy word is the second aspect of the believers' oneness. In this aspect of oneness, the believers who have been separated from the world unto God enjoy the Triune God as the factor of their oneness. In order to maintain this oneness, we must firstly take care of the reality of the divine life and then of the sanctification of the holy word. The holy word separates us from the world and restores us to the Father and to the Father's home. (*Life-study of John*, msg. 40, section 2)

The third aspect of the believers' oneness is the oneness in the divine glory for the corporate expression of the Triune God. In this aspect of oneness, the believers, having their self fully denied, enjoy the glory of the Father as the factor of their perfected oneness to express God in a corporate, built-up way. This is the oneness of the divine commission which fulfills the Son's prayer that He be fully expressed, that is, glorified, in the building up of the believers, and that the Father also be fully expressed, glorified, in the Son's glorification. Hence, the ultimate oneness of the believers is in the eternal life (in the Father's name), by the holy word, and in the divine glory to express the Triune God for eternity.

Now we see that our oneness has a goal—to express God the Father in His fullness, even during this dark age on this corrupted earth. Sometimes in the local churches we have experienced this glorification. We have been in His holy glory, in His divine glory, expressing the Father in all His fullness. As we read the Lord's prayer in John 17, we need to see that genuine oneness is by His life, by His word, and in the divine glory for the expression of God. (*Life-study of John*, msg. 40, section 4)

Going deeper

Please read or listen to these materials for an in-depth study of this lesson.

Further reading:

[*Life-study of John*, msg. 41](#)

Radio broadcast link:

Broadcast 44, [*Life's Prayer \(4\)*](#)

Footnotes from Recovery Version of the New Testament:

John 17:6, footnote 1

John 17:11, footnote 2

John 17:21, footnote 1

John 17:22, footnotes 1-2

Questions for personal or corporate study:

References in brackets indicate readings or broadcasts that may be helpful in answering the questions.

- What are the three aspects of the believer's oneness seen in John chapter 17?
- How does the picture of the boards in the tabernacle in Exodus 26 help to illustrate the oneness of the believers? (Broadcast 44)

Next week

Life Processed for Multiplication—The Life-releasing Death of Christ

Oneness amongst the believers can only be accomplished by the Triune God with the Father's divine life, in the sanctifying holy word, and in the divine glory. When we experience this oneness, we can be built up with one another, and God's eternal purpose to express Himself will be fulfilled. Next week we will come to John chapter 19, which presents the death of Christ in a way quite distinct from the other Gospels. The death of Christ was not only for redemption but was a process for Christ to release Himself as life into us.

Works Cited

Lee, Witness. *Life-study of John*. Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1985. www.ministrybooks.org

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