

That You May Experience Such Perfect Unity

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Church: Fellowship and Unity; Union With Christ / John 17:23

Perfect Unity

When I say these words to you, “Perfect Unity”, it may seem impossible. We have relationships with family, friends, other Christian people, and then there are people in the world, some we choose to be around and some we really avoid whenever we can. But even in our closest relationships, we face challenges. Sometimes we argue and sometimes we are alienated. But sometimes we also have peace and enjoy and take away great memories of being together.

What we are talking about here though goes far beyond just being friendly and enjoying each others company.

This “Perfect Unity” only comes through Jesus Christ.

John 17:23 NLT

²³ I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.

Jesus Prayer

There are three parts to Jesus prayer here in John 17. The first is part is about his relationship with the Father and his work in the world. The second part is for protection of all that have been “given” to him. And the third and last part is about our place in the world.

Glorify Your Son

Lets read

John 17:1–8 NLT

¹ After saying all these things, Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son so he can give glory back to you. ² For you have given him authority over everyone. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him. ³ And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth. ⁴ I brought glory to you here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. ⁵ Now, Father, bring me into the glory we shared before the world began. ⁶ “I have revealed you to the ones you gave me from this world. They were always yours. You gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything I have is a gift from you, ⁸ for I have passed on to them the message you gave me. They accepted it and know that I came from you, and they believe you sent me.

From this we have some important messages:

The Hour Has Come

There is a time when God’s plans come to completion. Jesus recognizes that this is the end of his earthly ministry, but it is just the beginning of the fulfillment of God’s plan of redemption for mankind.

John 17:1 NLT

¹ After saying all these things, Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son so he can give glory back to you.

Authority Over Everyone

Jesus has had all authority as he demonstrated by healing people and forgiving sin, now Jesus also explains that that authority continues far beyond our mortal life.

John 17:2 NLT

² For you have given him authority over everyone. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him.

This Is Eternal Life

When we think of life and death, we think in natural physical terms. That we are born and come into a natural consciousness and relationship to the people

around us. When we die, those relationships are severed or end. What Jesus describes as eternal life is in

John 17:3 LEB

³ Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

Jesus says eternal life is “that they know you, the only true God”. Eternal life is coming into a conscious and lasting knowledge of who God is and entering a relationship with him. And to “know him” we must engage our minds and to enter into this eternal life, our will is involved. This relationship with God only happens through our choice here on this earth.

I Have Glorified You

Jesus said he has glorified the Lord on the earth in

John 17:4 LEB

⁴ I have glorified you on earth *by* completing the work that you have given me to do.

Jesus did this by “completing the work”. There was a plan, a purpose, for Jesus in his life. And there is a plan and purpose for each one of us.

Life is not random, useless, pointless.

And for those listening that are having these thoughts, God not only loves you, but created you for a purpose. There is a life that he has for you and suicide is not a part of it. Right now, I rebuke those thoughts of self destruction and I release the power of the Holy Spirit in your life to bring a new revelation, an understanding of the beautiful and wonder creation that you are.

They Have Believed That You Sent Me

Jesus not only came to complete the sacrificial work of giving his life on the cross for our redemption, he also came to deliver a message to us in

John 17:7–8 LEB

⁷ Now they understand that all *the things* that you have given me are from you, ⁸ because the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they received *them* and know truly that I have come from you, and they have believed that you have sent me.

We are not here alone, separated from God, lost and on our own in the world.

It says it this way in

Ephesians 2:12–13 NLT

¹² In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. ¹³ But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.

Protect Them By The Power of Your Name

This second part is for protection of all that have been “given” to him.

John 17:9–19 NLT

⁹ “My prayer is not for the world, but for those you have given me, because they belong to you. ¹⁰ All who are mine belong to you, and you have given them to me, so they bring me glory. ¹¹ Now I am departing from the world; they are staying in this world, but I am coming to you. Holy Father, you have given me your name; now protect them by the power of your name so that they will be united just as we are. ¹² During my time here, I protected them by the power of the name you gave me. I guarded them so that not one was lost, except the one headed for destruction, as the Scriptures foretold. ¹³ “Now I am coming to you. I told them many things while I was with them in this world so they would be filled with my joy. ¹⁴ I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁵ I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. ¹⁶ They do not belong to this world any more than I do. ¹⁷ Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. ¹⁸ Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world. ¹⁹ And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth.

That They Will All Be One

This third and last part is about our place in the world.

John 17:20–26 NLT

²⁰ “I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. ²¹ I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me. ²² “I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. ²³ I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me. ²⁴ Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began! ²⁵ “O righteous Father, the world doesn’t know you, but I do; and these disciples know you sent me. ²⁶ I have revealed you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then your love for me will be in them, and I will be in them.”

May They Experience Such Perfect Unity

John 17:23 NLT

²³ I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.

Offenses Will Come

Our message today is about perfect unity, but we live in this world, and Jesus did pray for our protection in the world. So, let's also look at what Jesus said in Luke 17:1.

We have been reading from the New Living Translation, which says in

Luke 17:1 NLT

¹ One day Jesus said to his disciples, “There will always be temptations to sin, but what sorrow awaits the person who does the tempting!

but here, the meaning is clearer with a more literal translation. In the Lexham English Bible it says

Luke 17:1 LEB

¹ And he said to his disciples, "It is impossible for causes for stumbling not to come, but woe *to him* through whom they come!

and this is nearly identical to the King James which says

Luke 17:1 KJV 1900

¹ Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe *unto him*, through whom they come!

We didn't need Jesus to tell us this, we know it by our own experiences. But what did Jesus say about these offenses? If we continue on in

Luke 17:2 NLT

² It would be better to be thrown into the sea with a millstone hung around your neck than to cause one of these little ones to fall into sin.

Now, there are two problems here:

First, if someone offends me, (Yes, I consider myself "one of these little ones" in God's Kingdom) Jesus says it would be better for them to drown in the sea. And our natural reaction when someone offends us is to pull away, separate yourself from them, don't have anything to do with them anymore. But their action toward you has sentenced them to something worse than drowning. Are you really willing to let them die?

Second, let me make this statement another way, if you do something that offends me, you have sentenced yourself to something worse than death by drowning. Now, I know in your mind, you are thinking about what they did or the circumstances that justify what you have done, but Jesus doesn't include any room for your defense.

Think carefully about this: Jesus is saying to us that we have a responsibility for the things we say and do to others. If you are stuck in that place of justifying why you did what you did, think again.

Rebuke Him, Forgive Him

Jesus doesn't leave this with an acknowledgement that offenses come, he tells us what to do about it in

Luke 17:3-4 NLT

³ So watch yourselves! "If another believer sins, rebuke that person; then if there

is repentance, forgive. ⁴ Even if that person wrongs you seven times a day and each time turns again and asks forgiveness, you must forgive.”

In the NLT, it says “if another believer sins”, and again here, I am going to read from the King James which says

Luke 17:3 KJV 1900

³Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

The difference here is “If your brother trespass against thee”, how do we define “sin” by someone against you? Well, I am going to use the word “offense” here because what is an offense to you may not be an offense to me. It is necessary for us to think about each other, to understand each other, to act with wisdom and kindness toward each other.

And, we are to forgive, not everything, he says forgive if they repent.

Here, Psalm 32:1-2 says in the Complete Jewish Bible translation

Psalm 32:1–2 CJB

¹ By David. A *maskil*: How blessed are those whose offense is forgiven, those whose sin is covered! ² How blessed those to whom *ADONAI* imputes no guilt, in whose spirit is no deceit!

and I have included this translation because we are not to hold back or hide anything. God wants us to face the things that have offended us and deal with them openly.

You Have Gained Your Brother

Before we leave this topic of offenses, there is one more place where Jesus addresses this in

Matthew 18:15–20 LEB

¹⁵ “Now if your brother sins against you, go correct him between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take with you in addition one or two *others*, so that by the testimony of two or three witnesses every matter may be established. ¹⁷ And if he refuses to listen to them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses to listen to the church also, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ “Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you release on earth will

be released in heaven. ¹⁹ Again, truly I say to you that if two of you agree on earth about any matter that they ask, it will be done for them from my Father *who is* in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in the midst of them.”

I have often heard people use these verses in the context of Church discipline. And, that usually ends in Matthew 18:17 “let him be to you as a Gentile”, let him be to you as an unbeliever, separate yourself from him.

If Your Brother Sins Against You

What Jesus says is this, in

Matthew 18:15 NLT

¹⁵ “If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back.

Let me read this in the Lexham English Bible translation.

Matthew 18:15 LEB

¹⁵ “Now if your brother sins against you, go correct him between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.

Our first action when there is an offense is to talk personally, face to face, with the person that has offended us. How many times has a simple misunderstanding been blown out of proportion when it could easily have been settled between two people.

If He Does Not Listen

We can’t always get to a place where we agree easily. We often remember what happened differently and having a neutral third party in the conversation can often help as it says in

Matthew 18:16 LEB

¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take with you in addition one or two *others*, so that by the testimony of two or three witnesses every matter may be established.

And, the way this is written, the conversation can easily end here, “established” so that all agree.

If He Refuses To Listen

There are times when we absolutely have a difference that can't be resolved in

Matthew 18:17 LEB

¹⁷ And if he refuses to listen to them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses to listen to the church also, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

I say it this way because it isn't just that someone has sinned against God, but it has happened so often in the Church that someone has taken a hard doctrinal position that they refuse to yield and they then separate themselves.

But Jesus then went on to say

Whatever You Bind On Earth

We have authority, because Jesus gave it to us. Jesus said it this way in

Matthew 18:18–20 NLT

¹⁸ "I tell you the truth, whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven. ¹⁹ "I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. ²⁰ For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them."

So how is it that the Spirit of God can move in different denominations? We have separated ourselves from each other by our doctrines, but Jesus promised that he would be there wherever "two or three gather as my followers". God is working by his Spirit to bring us all to "the knowledge of the truth"

1 Timothy 2:1–5 LEB

¹ Therefore, I urge first of all *that* petitions, prayers, requests, *and* thanksgiving be made on behalf of all people, ² on behalf of kings and all those who are in authority, in order that we may live a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. ³ This *is* good and acceptable before God our Savior, ⁴ who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For *there is* one God and one mediator between God and human beings, the man Christ Jesus,

And to bring us all to "the fullness of Christ" in

Ephesians 4:13–16 LEB

¹³ until we all reach the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to a measure of the maturity of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be infants, tossed about by waves and carried about by every wind

of teaching, by the trickery of people, by craftiness with reference to the scheming of deceit. ¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow into him *with reference to all things*, who is the head, Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined together and held together by every supporting ligament, according to the working by measure of each single part, the growth of the body makes for the building up of itself in love.

This did happen in the early Church in

Acts 2:46–47 NLT

⁴⁶ They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—⁴⁷ all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

May They Experience Such Perfect Unity

As we close, this was the prayer of Jesus for the Church in

John 17:23 NLT

²³ I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.

One purpose, each applying their gifts and abilities, to accomplish God's will, love, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Prayer of Salvation

Pray: If you have been listening and have never accepted Jesus Christ as the Lord of your life, simply say this prayer with me.

"Dear God,

I know I'm a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness.

I believe Jesus Christ is Your Son. I believe that He died

for my sin and that you raised Him to life.

I want to trust Him as my Savior and follow Him as Lord,
from this day forward. Guide my life and help me to do your will.

I pray this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen."

If you prayed with me, I want to seal that with a short prayer for you.

"Father,

I thank you for these that have accepted Christ today. Lead them by your Holy Spirit to a local Church where they can learn more about you and your plan for their life, In Jesus name, Amen

Commission Prayer for Christian

Pray: For those of you that are Christians, we have a commission to stand together, united in Christ, as one body, pray with me now.

"Father,

I come to you in the name of Jesus Christ.

Father, I know it is your desire that all would be saved and come to know the truth.

And as Jesus prayed, let me take my rightful place in the body of Christ that we all may experience perfect unity so that the world will know that you sent Jesus Christ, not only for us, but also for them.

I pray this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen."

For those of you that prayed with me, would you please go to prayny.org and add a prayer request so that we can connect with you and continue to pray for the fulfillment of God's plan in your life.

End Notes

Thank you for this time on <http://omegamanradio.com> and thanks to our friend Rev. Joseph Cohen

- Eric and Noemi Ross
- The Master's Hand Christian Fellowship – <http://the-mastershand.org>

- Prayer Line – 712-432-6110 Code: 379947 6:00-7:00 am Eastern Time
- <http://prayny.org>
- <http://mymarriageentors.org>
- <http://www.nationaldayofprayer.org/>
- Rev Joseph Cohen – <http://newhopeinthelord.com>

[1] Eric R. Ross. (2017). *Eric's Public Messages*. Omegaman Radio.