

## UNITY: THE POWER OF ONE – JOHN 17:20-26

**Illustration:** When we first moved to Texas the house that we lived in had an insect problem in the backyard (Ants, Spiders, Beetles, you name it we probably had it). This is problem because we have a little one who loves to go outside. In this case she had to stay locked up in the house because we could take the risk for fear of being bitten or stung by one of the aforementioned pests. I decided that I needed to take care of this problem by going to the store purchasing a hose and some insect control spray. When I got home I hooked up the hose, attached the insect spray, a turn on the water but much to my dismay nothing came out of the hose. As turned around, I noticed that there were kinks all throughout the hose which was preventing the water/insect spray from coming out. I noticed when looking at the hose closer that hose wanted to almost naturally bend in the other way which was causing these kinks. I had to go back undo the kinks and allow the water to flow through to fix the problem. This at times was frustrating because there were so many kinks, but I had to remember why I was doing this in the first place. Why? So my daughter can be free to go outside and play. This I feel can be a picture of the church (us). Sometimes we want to do our own thing which hinders the most important thing (the glory of God) from being revealed in order people may know God and be set free from sin.

Over the last (2) weeks we have looked at the prayer of Jesus in John 17 in relation to UNITY which I believe is essential for the gospel (Good News) of Jesus Christ to be carried out. John 17 is a picture of Unity, first focusing on Jesus praying to be glorified (Fulfilling His purpose/The cross) so the Father can be glorified (His Character Revealed, Known), Secondly, prays for his disciples that continue on with the Mission that Jesus has started, and third we will see today that Jesus prays for future believers who will also be responsible for carrying out that mission the disciples upheld. This is a beautiful picture of building a legacy of unity and the process of unity all beginning and revolving around Jesus.

**Living Hope Bryan's Vision Statement:** "Unifying, Growing, and Serving Others for the Purpose of Proclaiming Christ." Much like the pattern and process of unity in John, Living Hope Bryan desires to have vision statement which mirrors the process found in Scripture (Explain: What the vision statement is and its process)

### CENTRAL IDEA: "Unity in Christ paints the masterpiece of His glory."

#### I. The Source (vs.20-23)

<sup>20</sup> "My prayer is not for them (The disciples) alone. I pray also for those (Future Believers) who will believe in me through their message (What is their Message?), <sup>21</sup> that all of them (Future Believers) may be one (The Goal), Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us (The Model) so that the world may believe that you have sent me. (The Reason for Unity)<sup>22</sup> I have given them the glory (The full revelation of God) that you gave me, that they (Future Believers) may be one as we are one—<sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me—so that they (Future Believers) may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Jesus in this text said that I am not only praying for my disciples who are presently with me but for all those (Future Believers, Us) who will believe in me through their message. From this I want you to see (3) things that we need to be unified in?

**Unity in the Message of Christ** – What is their message? Jesus Christ, God's Son came in the flesh but still maintained deity (The God-Man). He lived on the earth tempted in every way that we were, yet did it without sinning. As a result of this, Jesus served as a substitute sacrifice for our sins. The sacrifice of Jesus for our sins was sufficient for God's wrath against sin. Jesus did not only die, but (3) days later Jesus Christ arose symbolizing the victory we have over sin, death, hell, and Satan. This victory is available to you if you place your faith and trust in Jesus Christ by confessing (Agreeing with God), repenting (to turn from, change of heart which leads to a change of direction) of your sins, and believing that by the name of Jesus Christ we are saved. This is a non-negotiable. **A CHURCH THAT IS UNIFIED MUST BELIEVE THE HEART OF THIS MESSAGE.**

**Unity in the Person of Christ** – Who is Jesus? Jesus is God's son. Jesus and the Father are one. Notice that being one with God is based on His character and His identity. **A CHURCH THAT IS UNIFIED MUST BELIEVE IN THE DEITY/PERSONHOOD OF JESUS CHRIST.** May of us may say, "Yeah, yeah, I know that Jesus is God's Son", but do we really? As we have stated already Unity in Christ is not something you achieve, but in person that you must believe. **Often times we mistake our relationship with Jesus based on RESULTS rather than the REALITY of what God's word says and who Jesus is.** (Mathew 7:21-23) How do we do this? (Church Attendance/Membership; Church Programs, Behavior Modification) Our identity must be found in Christ, this does not mean that you have give up your personality, this means you give your purpose (Living for Self) (Luke 9:23) and surrender His purpose. **UNITY DOES NOT MEAN UNIFORMITY. IN CHRIST THERE IS UNITY THROUGH DIVERSITY.** This paves the way for the purpose of the church being united in Christ.

**Unity in the Purpose of Christ** – When the church (believers) is unified around one purpose (Jesus), then people will know (to take hold of, posses) that Jesus was sent to reconcile them to the Father because of His great love. Think about culture. In culture we are classified into socio-economic status, race, and gender just to name a few. In doing so, our culture has created narcissistic and inferiority complexes. People tend to operate inside these classifications with little to no concern with what is going on around them. If we are not careful we tend to fall in this same pattern within the church. **DOES THE CHURCH RESEMBLE THE WORLD IN HOW IT TREATS OTHERS?** This will not change unless we unify around Christ and His word. **Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."** **Colossians 3:11, "Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.**

#### II. The Request (v.24)

<sup>24</sup> "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. Jesus reveals his heart for those of whom the Father has given him. Have you ever heard the expression, "You just had to there." Typically this phrase is used when someone is describing an experience that only be fully understood unless they experienced it themselves. I came to understand this well when I became a father. When our daughter Grace was born, I knew only of her through pictures for the first four months of her life. They say pictures are worth a thousand words, but actually seeing the real thing must be worth a million words. When I saw with my own eyes and held my little girl with my own hands for the first time, I began to understand better what it meant to be a father.

This is what Jesus is saying, Father I want them to be where I am (to be in my presence), to see my glory (to witness with their own eyes your character). I want to them to know you .

Is this our request for others? When we are at school, on the job, at the store, at the park, or at restaurant? What does it say when don't communicate this to others? Does it say, that we are not impressed God? Does it say that the Glory of God is no big deal? I contend with today that if this is not your request, if this is not on your lips then you are not impressed with God and that your love for him has gone lukewarm or even cold. For us, it must move beyond a request. Our requests must lead to some type of action. This was not only Jesus request, but he followed through with a response. This seems to be our problem, the follow through. We say, we want people to come to Christ, we say we want this community to be changed for Christ, but what are you doing? We can't just be concerned for people without Christ, we have to carry them the message of Christ. **Matthew 14:14 - 14 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. Matthew 20:34, 34 Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him. Mark 1:41 - 41 Jesus was moved with compassion He reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Matthew 9:35-38 - 35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."**

#### III. The Lifestyle (vs.25-26)

<sup>25</sup> "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. What is the testimony others concerning yourself? Do people know that Jesus is your life, not a part of your life? Though the world did not believe, Jesus knew the truth, and truth compelled him to make His father known. <sup>26</sup> I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known Is this true of you? How is this going for you? Are you continuing to make Jesus known? **in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.**" Why do we do this? So they may know the love of God and have Christ. How do I this? (Matthew 28:18-20-<sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.") How does the church do this? (Acts 1:8-<sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.") What is Living Hope Bryan doing to make this a reality? Our vision statement states that "We will serve others for the purpose of proclaiming Christ." In a few minutes you are going to be able to visit some table in the church foyer which will show you how we are seeking to unify people in Christ, Grow in Christ, and Serve in Christ, so that He may be known. But before you can make Jesus known, you have to be known by God .I pray today that you would by the grace of God, trust Christ with your life and be a part of the global mission of making Jesus known.