

John 17:20-26

.²⁰ "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. ²⁴ "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. ²⁵ "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

Pray that Jesus' prayer is answered.

- 1. That his children would live in unity.***
- 2. That the world may know his love.***
- 3. That many would join him in heaven.***

As human beings we, in general, thrive on relationships. We crave them. We find happiness through them. We celebrate them. Like today, this Mother's Day, we celebrate the relationship of mother and child. Whether you yourself are a mother, or today you remember what your mother means to you, we celebrate these special bonds of humanity.

Envision knowing God like you know your mom or your child; having that close of a relationship. Generally speaking, mothers, you know what pleases your child. You know what his or her favorite food is. You know the things your children like, the things they don't like. Sons and daughters you know what makes mom happy. You also know what makes mom frustrated. You know each other; and the greater that bond grows, the healthier that relationship, the more you want to do the things that please the other and avoid those things that cause sorrow and frustration. The more the bonds of love and respect grow (sometimes that takes awhile) the easier it is to live in harmony with one another.

Jesus wants a similar relationship with all people. That's what he prays this prayer, which is often called his High Priestly prayer. And so with these words Jesus

goes to the Father with an unselfish request, he goes to the Father and he intercedes for his children asking God to give them faith and understanding. He goes to the Father and asks that God would grant unity to all of his children by granting them a harmony with their heavenly Father.

On the night that he was betrayed, before Jesus would go and pray in Gethsemane, Jesus would pray this prayer for all of his disciples. First he speaks to his father behalf of his current disciples (Peter, James, John and the others) and Jesus asks the Father to watch over these, his spiritual children. He asks God the Father to oversee and bless their work so that through them others might be brought to faith. He prays that the word would go out and that through their preaching, through the spoken and written record of their eyewitness accounts of his life and teaching, many more would be brought to faith. Jesus asks the Father to bless the work of this first batch of disciples so that many more would be brought into the family of God. ²⁰ ***“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.*** The Father would answer this prayer and the work of those first disciples would be blessed. The message would be spread throughout the world and by God’s grace it has reached us. Through faith the message of Jesus that they first shared and now has made its way to our hearts we are united in faith with Peter, James, John, and all the disciples and believers before us. Thanks be to God that Jesus’ prayer his disciples was answered.

Jesus then goes to the Father on behalf of you and me and those who would be brought to faith as a result of the apostles sharing the word of Jesus. In this holy word we learn that we are at one with the Father through Jesus and his sacrifice. As we learn about this saving truth, as we learn about our Savior, we learn about his love. When we see what great lengths he went for us the bonds of love and respect and honor are built and strengthened and it becomes easier to live in harmony with the will of the Lord. And when we live in harmony with the Lord the light of Jesus shines through us and people in this world see the difference that Jesus makes in our lives. They see lives touched and changed by God. They take notice and believe that Jesus was someone special and powerful and divine. When we live in harmony with God and when he lives in us Jesus’ prayer for us is also answered.

However, we are not perfect children. Often the harmony between God and his children is broken because of our sin. We are not perfect toward our earthly mothers and certainly not perfect in our obedience of our Heavenly Father. When we as God’s children break the bonds of love and respect with our Father and we sin our God is not pleased for we prevent his will from being done. For not only do we bring harm upon ourselves, not only do we break faith with God, but when we live lives of open and obvious sin, the world around us sees a relationship with God that

is lacking. When we are unloving toward our neighbor, or our fellow believer, those outside of our faith see a dysfunctional family relationship. When there is hatred and discord in our homes and our families, when there is conflict and friction within our congregations, this reflects poorly upon God our Father. He has certainly done nothing wrong, but the sin of the child reflects poorly on our relationship with our Father. Such dysfunction within the family of God does not encourage others to be united to us, but instead suggests that they would do best to keep away.

Jesus wants us to have a strong relationship with him and with God the Father. He wants us to grow in the knowledge of his salvation. He wants us to see and understand what he has done for us. For he knows that the deeper the bonds of love and respect grow between us and God the more we can live lives of appreciation for what God has done for us - especially for what God has done for us through our Savior's redeeming work. God wants us to live in gratitude for the forgiveness and salvation and happiness that Jesus brings. He wants us to love and forgive each other as Christ has, in love, forgiven us. Jesus wants us to live lives that reflect a respect for the Father's will. He prays that God would dwell in us and that the love of Jesus would make its home in our hearts. Jesus prays that we would live in peace and unity with God and each other. This pleases God, this benefits us, and this reflects well in the world as the happiness and harmony of a loving relationship is noticed by those around us. ***I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.***

This is the prayer of our Savior: that we would live as children loved by God. This is the prayer of our Savior that we live a life of love and harmony so that others may see the love and the peace and happiness that Jesus has given to us. In essence he prays that we would be his light in this dark world, that others may see our good deeds and praise our father in heaven. This is the prayer of our Savior that God would daily cleanse us of our hatred and discord and that he would grant us unity and peace so that others may see the love of God in us. Our Savior goes to the Father on our behalf and on behalf of those who do not yet know him (those who are still in unbelief) and he asks that his kingdom of love might be extended through love. ***I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*** The Lord, in his wisdom, has included us in his saving plan. We have been given the awesome privilege and responsibility of sharing the love of God with others. We have been given the wonderful honor of helping to bring others into the family of God, linking them to his love. God's love has been placed in Christ it has been given to

us and we then in turn are called to share the name and the love of Jesus with those around us.

In our part of the world it is hard not to know the name of Jesus, that is, to at least know who Jesus is. While there are many unbelieving people in this world, many especially in our nation know who Jesus is. By the grace of God the Bible is still the best-selling and most widely distributed book. Nowadays it is available in many different languages, you can access it online, you can read it or hear someone read it to you through an application on your computer or your Smartphone. The story of the Bible, the story of Jesus, and the story of the early Christian church has also been depicted in several different forms in video adaptations as well. The world knows who Jesus is, but many still don't know the love of God in Christ Jesus. That is what Jesus prays for in this prayer. He prays that many may know the love of God that comes only through him. Jesus prays that they might know the unity with each other that this love brings. He prays that they might be held in that love until they see his glory in heaven. Our dear Savior prays that many people might have a relationship with him and with our Heavenly Father that is blessed with love and peace in this life and then extends into eternity. ²⁴ ***"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.***

We don't have to simply envision a close and loving relationship with our God and our Savior Jesus - through faith in Jesus that is what we have already. This gracious relationship that Christ gives to us is certainly something to celebrate! ***How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! - 1 John 3:1***

Today as we celebrate the blessings of mothers, let us also praise God that he has brought us into a relationship with him that will give us happiness in this life and extend into eternity. And let us pray that many more would be able to experience such a relationship of love.

On the night before he died Jesus prayed that you and I would know and experience his love. Jesus knew what he was about to suffer and yet he was not thinking about himself he was thinking about you and me, he was thinking about his believers. On the night before he would pay for our sins, he prayed for you and for me. He prayed for all his children. He prayed for believers and unbelievers. Jesus prayed to his Father that the Word would go out into the world, that many would learn of his love and then share his love. Thanks be to God his prayer was answered.

As those who are richly blessed to be called God's children let us pray that Jesus' prayer would continue to be answered for us and through us as well. May the Lord keep us in his love for all eternity and may he help us as we share the love of Jesus with those around us. Amen.