

Small Group Notes (John 17:20-26)

Jesus prays for all who will believe in Him.

The heart of the Lord Jesus is on display in His prayer here in John 17. What are His desires? What does the Lord Jesus long for on the very night He will be betrayed and soon crucified? We find here at the close of His prayer that Jesus prays not only for the Apostles, but for all who will believe in Him. He prays for our unity. He longs for the day when we will be together with Him and behold His glory.

Discussion: Jesus has been very clear about the fact that someone will betray Him and that they all will scatter from Him in His darkest hour. Yet He prays for **“those who will believe in Me through their word.”** How will there be people who believe in Jesus when His disciples will fail Him?

***Thoughts:** Jesus prayed for those who would come to faith by the testimony of these disciples because He knew His intercession for them would prevail. This shows that Jesus expected that the disciples’ soon failure would only be temporary. Jesus went to the cross knowing His work would endure. He didn’t have a vague hope in what the Father would do through the disciples. Jesus left His earthly work full of confidence in the work of God through the disciples.*

Jesus prays for the unity of His people.

Jesus prays that those who believe in Him **“may be one.”** Think of all who have believed already and those who will believe. Not only is that an astounding number, but it includes people from “every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Revelation 5:9). Jesus prays that such an incredibly diverse group of people will be “one.” This is a supernatural unity that can only be accomplished by the power of God. It is the type of unity that exists within the Godhead. That is, a unity of perfect love and purpose. This unity is a reflection of glory.

Discussion: Twice Jesus prays for the unity of His people so that the “world” would believe Jesus was sent by the Father. How does our unity give that message to the world? And why is it sometimes so difficult to demonstrate such unity?

***Thoughts:** The love that is at the core of this unity is not of this world. It is love rooted in the Godhead. The radical sinfulness of humanity is on display everywhere, but especially in the way we are selfish, divisive, and hateful. The unity of Christians speaks to the power of God in our lives—to the reality of God. It is difficult sometimes because we are not perfected yet. We can and do sin. We can be selfish and divisive even as Christians. It is also difficult because sometimes there must be criticism, correction, and rebuke in the name of love.*

Jesus wants His people to see Him in all His glory.

So sure is Jesus that He will complete His Father's work and so great is His love for His people, that He speaks as if He is already seated at His Father's right hand. He prays that His disciples will behold His glory "**where I am.**" What makes this "glory" different from the glory Jesus just spoke of in verse 22? The glory He will have when He returns to His Father is the glory He had before the foundation of the world. Whatever Christ's divine and resurrected glory looks like—that's what He wants us to behold!

Discussion: What must that glory be like? Why is Jesus so excited for us to see Him that way? What does that tell you about God's love for His children?

Thoughts: *There is a desire we have as creatures created by God in the image of God that can only be fulfilled by God Himself. That desire is to see Him and to know Him. For all of eternity, those who believe in Christ will enjoy that vision and that relationship. God is a relational God. He is full of terrifying majesty and yet He is preparing us for the day (for eternity!) when we will not only be able to endure Him in all His glory, but to enjoy Him!*