

179. The Gospel of John 17:11-13

With Jesus Behind The Veil-Part 13

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(5-1-22)

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In our study in John's Gospel, we have come to Chapter 17 and **a deeply personal and intimate prayer between Jesus and His Father**—the true 'Lord's Prayer.'

This prayer is divided up into 3 main parts:

1. **Jesus Prays for Himself—verses 1-5**
2. **Jesus Prays for His Disciples—verses 6-19**
3. **Jesus Prays for All Believers—verses 20-26**

We are currently in the second main part of this prayer—

2. Jesus Prays for His Disciples—verses 6-19

This section of Scripture contains what Jesus was most concerned about for His disciples on the night before His crucifixion—and so, Jesus' prayer for His disciples is made up of 3 things:

- A. **That the Father would give grace so that their lives would bring Jesus glory—verses 9-10**
- B. **That the Father would keep them—verses 11-13**
- C. **That the Father would sanctify them—verses 14-19**

So far we've studied Jesus' prayer that The Father would give His disciples to bring Him glory. Today we'll be studying Jesus' prayer for the Disciples in verses 11-13 and 15.

B. That the Father would keep them—verses 11-13, 15

John 17:11-13, 15 (NKJV)

¹¹ Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as *We are*. ¹² While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³ But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves... ¹⁵ I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one [the devil].

Jesus' prayer to His Father that He would keep His disciples from the devil falls into 4 basic parts or requests:

1. **That the Father would Keep them from Damnation** (that they would be eternally secure)

2. **That the Father would Keep them from Death** (that Satan would not be allowed to kill them until their work for the Kingdom was finished)
3. **That the Father would Keep them from Division** (that they would always be in unity with one another)
4. **That the Father would Keep them from Defilement** (pure from the defilements of the world)

We've already looked at the first 2—which now brings us to number 3:

3. That the Father would Keep them from Division

John 17:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.

So, Jesus here is praying that the Father would **keep His disciples in unity**—“**that they may be one as We are (one).**” Notice how the Lord connects **unity** in verse 11 with **joy** in verse 13 (which we'll look in a minute)—but listen, to say unity is important is an understatement:

Psalm 133:1 (NKJV)

¹ Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* For brethren to dwell together in unity!

- **Unity leads to joy and victory**—*whereas division leads strife and defeat.*
- **Unity is of the Holy Spirit**—*division is of the devil.*

It is the **devil's goal to create disunity and strife** because he knows they create **division**—and division will destroy families, churches and even nations:

Matthew 12:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ ..."Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house [family] divided against itself will not stand.

Mark 3:24-25 (NLT)

²⁴ "A kingdom divided by civil war will collapse. ²⁵ Similarly, a family splintered by feuding will fall apart.

The family is the building block of the Church, and the Church is the building block of society—that's why Satan's strategy has always been to—“**divide and conquer.**” In other words, divide, conquer and destroy anything that God has created that brings joy, stability, and blessing into our lives. That is why God has such strong admonitions and condemnations for those especially who sow discord and disunity in the Church:

REFLECTION: Why is “unity” so important in our Christian walk?

Proverbs 6:16-19 (NKJV)

¹⁶ These six *things* the LORD hates, Yes, seven *are* an abomination to Him: ¹⁷ A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, ¹⁸ A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, ¹⁹ A false witness *who* speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.

James 3:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For where envy and self-seeking *exist*, confusion and every evil thing *are* there.

Because **unity is essential for victory** (over the devil—i.e., ‘spiritual warfare’)—God commands us to do all that we can to *promote* unity in the Body of Christ:

Ephesians 4:3 (NKJV)

³ endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

In the Greek, Ephesians 4:3 literally reads—“*Being eager to maintain, or guard, the unity of the Spirit.*” The verb used here is a present participle which means—“***we must constantly be endeavoring to maintain this unity***”—Why? Because it will constantly be under attack from the devil.

Let me tell you something about *unity*—it is impossible without humility.

What Is Biblical Humility?

First of all, understand that humility is listed as **one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit** in Galatians 5:

Galatians 5:22-23 (NKJV)

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness [humility], self-control...

- When Jesus walked on the earth, **He bore all of the fruits of the Holy Spirit in His life**—including and especially *humility* which He manifested *before* His incarnation upon the earth:

**“Let me say it again,
*unity would be impossible without humility—
and humility would be impossible
without a relationship with Jesus Christ.***

**That is because humility is
*an attribute of God...***

**An attribute that Jesus manifested
on the Cross when He laid down
His life for sinners.”**

Philippians 2:5-8 (NLT2)

⁵ You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. ⁶ Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. ⁷ Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, ⁸ he humbled himself [further] in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.

Unity comes when we *humble* ourselves by dying to self in loving and forgiving those who have wronged and hurt us—and choose to be in unity with them.

- “But I just can’t forgive them for what they did to me.”—well, then forgive them for Jesus’ sake.
- Are you going to deny Jesus His last request—the request He prayed for just hours from the cross that His disciples would have unity with one another?

Many Christians do deny Jesus His last request because their **pride** won’t let them forgive those who have hurt them—they are filled with anger and a desire for revenge.

REFLECTION: How does humility and pride affect our relationship with Jesus?

Andrew Murray—

“I cannot too greatly impress upon my readers the need of realizing the lack there is today of humility within Christian circles. There is so little of the meek and lowly Lamb of God in those who are called by His name.

Let us consider how our lack of love, indifference to the needs and feelings of others, even sharp comments and hasty judgments that are often excused as being honest and straightforward, are thwarting the effect of the influence of the Holy Spirit on others.

Manifestations of temper and touchiness and irritation, feelings of bitterness and estrangement, have their root in nothing but pride. Pride creeps in almost everywhere and the assemblies of the saints are not exceptions.

Let’s ask ourselves what would be the effect if all of us were guided by the humility of Jesus, that the cry of our whole heart, night and day, would be, “Oh, for the humility of Jesus in myself and all around me!”

- Let me at this point define for you what true humility is. True humility **is not** going around putting yourself down. I say that because a lot of Christians think that being humble means that you go around putting yourself down all the time—“I’m nothing, I’m nobody, I’m a worthless worm...”

Sometimes this is nothing more than pride *masquerading* as humility!

Jesus said, “Learn from Me for I am meek and lowly in heart...”

Jesus was the epitome of humility—but He certainly wasn't a worthless worm! He didn't go around putting Himself down to everyone He came in contact with!

- Humility isn't self-loathing—it's not beating yourself up all the time.
- Humility isn't the same as low self-esteem.
- Genuine humility doesn't focus on self at all—it doesn't put self-down, and it doesn't lift self-up—true humility simply ignores *self-all-together* while it focuses on others.

Humility has both a *vertical* and a *horizontal* dimension to it.

1. Vertical Humility—Our Relationship To God

Vertical humility is simply the quality that understands - "*I am nothing and I can do nothing apart from God.*" (John 15:5)

This causes me to **depend on Him for everything**—and my motto becomes, "*When I am weak, then I am strong!*"

This is a truth that takes humility to accept—without it, **pride** takes root and we become **'self-reliant'** and not **'God-dependent!'** The result is, God will put us on a shelf, and no longer use us in the work of building His Kingdom upon the earth.

REFLECTION: What is your "relationship" with God?

2. Horizontal Humility—Our Relationship To Others

Horizontal humility simply says to those we come in contact with and minister to—"*You're more important to me than I am.*"

That is exactly what Paul the apostle commanded believers in Philippians 2:3—"*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*"

When you **constantly put others above yourself** and do what's best for them and not yourself—you'll discover how easy it becomes to walk in unity with others. The reason is because by you **dying to self it circumvents any attempt by Satan to use pride, selfishness, and self-promotion to get in your way and in the process cause strife and division.**

- Earlier, I brought to your attention how the Lord connects **unity** in verse 11 with **joy** in verse 13.
- I can tell you as a pastor—**I have no greater joy than when our church is loving one another and walking in unity.**

REFLECTION: What does “dying to self” mean to you to?

One author said,

“A church walking in unity with its members is probably the most powerful testimony the church can have, because unity is so contrary to the selfish attitudes and the disunity manifested in the world and by the world.”

But let me say that the reason that **unity brings such joy is because unity is almost a by-product of walking in the Spirit**—which produces the fruit of the Spirit in our lives—of which **joy** is one.

The Christian life doesn’t promise perpetual *happiness*—it promises everlasting *joy*.

- **Joy is an inner unchanging quality of the heart**—whereas happiness is a frame of mind based on outward circumstances.
- Again, **joy is a fruit of the Spirit** (Galatians 5:22)—which means **it’s an attribute of God**.
- We can’t produce the fruit of the Spirit through the **works of our flesh**—through hard work and raw determination.
- **The joy of the Lord is a divine attribute only found in the nature of God**—we can “fake it” but we can’t “make it”.

The closest we can come to reproducing it is—the fragile, fleeting and easily lost feeling of *happiness*, which I’m not putting down, but when compared to the joy that comes from God—is a cheap substitute to be sure!

But listen, that’s the closest we can get to joy in our human nature. You see, because joy is part of God’s nature—the only way for joy to fill our hearts is if God Himself fills our hearts. **The only way for God to fill our hearts is when the Spirit of God lives inside our hearts—which only happens when a person receives Jesus Christ into their heart by faith.**

The Apostle Peter tells us in his second epistle that we who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ have been made—**“partakers of the divine nature.”**

This means we can now experience the fruit of the Spirit (the attributes of God) in our hearts— “Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”

So to say it again, joy (along with all the fruits of the Holy Spirit) is an attribute of God available only to those who are “in Christ” (salvation).

There is no true joy apart from God and His Son Jesus Christ—and understand that that joy can only be constant and unbroken thru our abiding in Jesus every day.

John 15:9-11 (NKJV)

⁹ "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.

REFLECTION: Unity brings Joy: what does Joy mean to you?

Jesus prefaced verses 9-11 by first saying in verse 7, "*If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you...you will bear much fruit*"— or in other words—you will have "*much joy*".

Abiding (remaining, continuing) in the Word of God is the key to Jesus' joy remaining in us and overflowing our lives. But that doesn't mean we are to just be 'hearers' of the Word—but we must also be 'doers' of the Word as well. (James 1:22)

Jesus commanded us to obey His commandments—and when we do that His joy would remain in us, and our joy would be constantly full.

- *What were the commandments He commanded us to obey?*
- Well, certainly the Ten Commandments—but I think in particular the new commandment He gave His disciples in the upper room earlier in the evening, the night before His crucifixion.

John 13:34 (NKJV)

³⁴ **A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.**

How did Jesus love them? How did Jesus love us?—***by going to the cross and dying for us!*** That's how He wants us to love one another—by going to the cross and dying (not literally but figuratively) for one another—that's what's *new* about His command to love under the New Covenant!

Yes, the Old Testament is filled with commandments and exhortations to love—"...*you shall love your neighbor as yourself.*" (Leviticus 19:18)

But Jesus here makes everything new when He says, ***"Love one another as I have loved you" or in other words, love others more than or above yourselves!*** (Philippians 2:3) That's how unbelievers will know we are children of God—

John 13:35 (NKJV)

³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love [agape love—God's love] for one another."

- Loving people *as you love yourself* (Old Testament or Old Covenant love) implies placing them on an *equal* footing with yourself. ***But loving them as Jesus loved us means—to place them above yourself by dying to your needs and making their needs supreme.***

➤ **This is the greatest kind of love—the love of God (sacrificial, supernatural love) manifested in the lives of His people—**

John 15:12-13 (NKJV)

¹² This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

Let's read John 17 verses 11 and 13 again and then we'll close—

John 17:11, 13 (NKJV)

¹¹ Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are...¹³ ...and these things I speak...that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

We are living in a world where the love of many is growing cold. A world where unity with one another is for the most part becoming a thing of the past. A world where happiness is being drained away from our lives because our outward circumstances are growing more and more difficult, distressing, and depressing.

But while outward happiness is waning—**our inward joy should be consistent and even growing.**

Why? **Because our joy is based and built upon the never changing reality of Jesus living in our hearts** (eternal security)—the One Who is the same “yesterday, today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). **Therefore, joy in the heart of a Christian is not like the always and constantly changing outward circumstance of happiness.**

Which is why the Word of God says that **“The joy of the Lord is our strength!”** And *that* is why Jesus prayed to His Father that His disciples would be kept in unity—**because unity, not only brings victory (over the flesh and the devil)—it also brings joy!**

It is tragic to see the devil being allowed to destroy marriages, families and churches thru bickering and backstabbing, thru fighting and unforgiveness which is causing division and destroying the unity that God desires His people to walk in and Jesus died to make possible.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NLT2)

⁹ Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. ¹⁰ If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. ¹¹ Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? ¹² A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord [a husband and wife and God] is not easily broken.

REFLECTION: How would you describe Joy in your Heart?

Don't let the devil destroy your marriage and family because of your selfishness, pride and a lack of humility.

**Honor Jesus' request and die to self, forgive, and promote unity in your marriage,
family and church - for Jesus' sake!**

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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