

The Greatest Request

Tyler Velin | June 17, 2012 | John 17:20-26

We are working on finishing up Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. It has taken us three weeks to get through it, but by taking our time working through it we have gotten some unique looks at the relationship between the father and the son. That relationship will have a huge weight on what we are going to look at today.

Because as we read on today, Jesus is selling to us the benefits of joining the father and the son. As I was reading this I couldn't help thinking about our country's fascination with exclusivity.

American Express has a new campaign going on where the slogan is "The Membership Effect," boasting the exclusive care and options it gives its members. Facebook, Twitter, Pintrest, Spotify, even the old standby of ESPN.com, all of these offer either all of their features, or more features only to those with memberships.

Stores have caught on. There are REI, Sam's Clubs, and Safeway cards. Out on North Reserve is the mecca of Membership warehouses, Costco. Where apparently there are different levels of members because the guy with the gun always scans your card and tries to take you out of costco laity and sell you costco royalty.

Yet we love it. We love membership, we love exclusivity because in it we find little bits of identity, we belong to something bigger.

Each and everyone of us seeks to identify with something. That identity shapes the clothes we wear, the language we use, the cars we drive, and the way we spend our time. We are shaped by whatever aspect of culture we belong to. Even if you see yourself as a non-conformist individual who makes your own clothes out of recycled materials, there are droves of others who dress just like you.

But today, Jesus is going to talk to us about the only membership effect that can save our lives. This is what we want to subscribe to. And Jesus does a pretty good job of explaining why. Let's Pray.

John 17:20

Before we get going here, we have some pronouns we need to figure out. "These," "those" and "their," who is Jesus referring to here? Well if we go back to **17:9,18**, we see that Jesus is talking about his followers, and that he has sent all of his followers, his disciples, Christians out on mission.

Christians seek to spread the worship of Christ through missions. That is the goal that Jesus set us towards. You are on mission in your homes, in your families, in your classrooms and in

your workplace. No Christian is exempt from mission.

So now we have defined the pronouns of verse 20. These are Christians, “those” are people who will become Christians, and “their” refers to the gospel preached by Christians.

John 17:20-26

I had to take public speaking classes in high school and in college and each class stressed the same thing: if you want to make a point, repeat it. We just read six verses and in those six verses Jesus repeated on point seven times, and that point was unity with the Father, Son and believers.

I want to read those verses again and I want you to just look at how intentionally Jesus is praying for us to be brought into the fold of the Father and Son. **John 17:20-26.**

Jesus is inviting us into the ultimate relationship here. The Trinite relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit. We will talk about that in a minute, but first I want to talk about our heart in relationship.

Our heart seeks to worship. And depending upon the object of your worship, there lies your identity. Jesus gives us this truth in **Matthew 6:21-24**, now in this specific instance Jesus uses money as an example, but we you cannot limit the amount of things we can ascribe worship to.

What Jesus was saying in that Matthew passage is that we all worship at 100%. The question isn't “Do you worship?” it's “What do you Worship?”. Jesus also makes to point that what you worship, becomes your Master.

So on one hand we have a worship of the world, which makes you a member of the worlds Kingdom, where you receive the benefits of the world's membership, and your identity becomes increasingly tied to those benefits.

What does this look like? What does the world offer, how does the world rule, and what are its benefits?

To use Biblical language here, anything that you worship other than Christ is an idol. The Bible has a lot to say about those idols.

Ps 115:4-8 Your idols do nothing, and when you worship them, you become like them, able to do nothing. Idols give no perks. There is no salvation, there is no redeeming value, but rather the more you serve and worship them, the more you become enslaved to them.

My most blatant idol growing up was football. Now if you asked somebody “What is your idol?” and they said football, you might be relieved. Right, I could have said porn, I could have said drugs, or gambling, or pride...but football, that's pretty harmless. Well let me elaborate.

As Jesus invited us to become one with the Father and Himself, I became one with the Tennessee Titans. I ate Titans, breathed Titans, slept Titans and worshipped the Titans.

I became enslaved to the Titans. If the Titans lost, it would ruin my week. I would feel ashamed. If the Titans won, I would feel happy for the remainder of my Sunday, but then Monday morning rolls around, and I would begin to worry again that the my Idol would potentially lose again next week. You see, I had no freedom.

This is power a simple game had over me. Now I want to stress this point because I want you to realize there is no such thing as a safe idol. Whether you worship your facebook page or an empty bottle, I am telling you that there is no joy in the service of idols. There is no benefit to the world's membership. Idols kill.

This is the best the world offers. Many of you are enslaved to this vice. Mastered by the world, held by empty promises and fleeting hope. Left unsatisfied and dead.

Col 2:13a The world offers you death in your trespasses. That is membership package one. If you want fuller definition, you can turn over to **Ephesians 2:1-3**

Membership package two, is what Jesus is pushing for. Now Jesus is inviting us to join the father, the son and the spirit here. So first I want to touch on the nature of that relationship. Now Ephesians 2 describes the attitude of the worlds relationship. There it uses terms like passions of the flesh, desires of the heart, children of wrath. Those attributes do not birth a positive relationship.

But God is different. The Trinity lives in perfect harmony. The Father, Son and Spirit exist in the highest relationship ever. Perfect harmony, the highest of love, basking in the glory of each other. That is a good starting place.

So the starting point of the Trinity is already a better place to start than that of the world's membership.

1 John 4:8-13 gives us the basis of the Trinity. God is love. Christ is love. The Holy Spirit is love. Those are far better terms than idols with no mouths, passions of the flesh, desires of the sinful heart, children of wrath, dead in your trespasses.

I want you to get this. Jesus is praying to his father, and he is asking, over and over again, for the joy Jesus takes in the father, to be given to us. Jesus is enabling us to have access to the greatest, most intimate relationship there is. Again let's read this John passage: **20-26**.

Do you see the love of Christ in here. Do you see that Jesus is out for our good and his glory. Do you see that it is all about the glory of Christ. Look back at vs **24**. You see our greatest joy comes from seeing the glory of Christ.

In the glory of Christ we see the love of God. In the glory of Christ we see freedom from our sins. In the glory of Christ we see life. In the glory of Christ we find identity. In the glory of Christ we see God the father.

But here is the problem. Because we want to be in the glory of Christ, we want that love, we want that worship, we want that satisfaction. But look at what the last half of **1 John 3:5**, look back at **Col 2:13a**.

A sinful people do not get access to a sinless God. God is too pure to tolerate sin. To loving to let it taint the relationship he has in himself. And so in our sin, we are dead, in our trespasses we are without Christ. In our folly the best we have is lame, blind, mute idols.

We cannot have access to Christ. That relationship is off limits to us. We are not worthy. We are not loving, we are not glorious, we are idol worshippers who deserve to die an idolaters death.

Now immediately after Jesus prays this prayer, he is arrested. In Luke we see Jesus praying before his arrest and he is so intimately making intercession that he is sweating blood. I want you to get this. By praying this prayer, pleading with the father to give us access to salvation, Jesus is condemning himself to the cross.

Without the cross we have no right to dabble in the relationship of the trinity because we stand as sinners. Yet with the cross something else happens.

Look back at the full text of **Col 2:13**. God made us alive together with Christ. Again look at the full verse of **1 John 3:5**.

Jesus himself said earlier in John, "I am the way the truth and the life. No man comes to the father except through me."

Jesus wants us to be worshippers, Jesus wants us to be glory givers, Jesus wants us to bask in the wonder of the Father, the Son and the Spirit and for the joy set before him endured the cross so that we may have access to such an exclusive and satisfying salvation.

We were dead to our sins, unable to save ourselves, but now the blood of Christ makes intercession for us, so that those who are covered by it may drink of the riches of the mercy of God. May we stand with unveiled face as we are transformed from one form of glory to another.

Right now Jesus is asking for our salvation, in a couple days he will secure our salvation as he dies for our sins.

This is a better relationship. I am here to tell you that I have drank from the well of idolatry and I have been found wanting, but by the grace of God I now know the depth and the wonder of the glory of God, and to him and him alone to I ascribe all glory and honor and praise.

Our God is a God of salvation, and when that glory hits us, we cannot help but share the good news with others. I want to hear Jesus say to me as he said to the man in **Matthew 25:21**. Enter into the Joy of your maker.

I want to invite those you in here tonight, to enter into the joy of your maker. I want you to throw off your sin, and bask in the glory of Christ. I want you to put off sin, because no sin stands in the presence of God, I want you to tolerate no idols because greater is the joy, and fuller the life at the alter of Christ.

Come and meet Jesus, come and seek Jesus, he is the one who was and is and is to come. He is the one in whom there is no darkness at all, he is the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. He is Jesus Christ the righteous one.