

The Gospel According to John “Jesus’ Prayer for His Church”

John 17:20-26



The structure of Jesus' prayer.

Jesus prayed for the manifestation and fulfillment of God's glory.

Jesus prayed for His Apostles.

Jesus prayed for His Church.

John 17:1-5

Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven,
He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son,
that the Son may glorify You,
even as You gave Him authority over all flesh,
that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.

This is eternal life, that they may know You,
the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished
the work which You have given Me to do.

Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself,
with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”

John 17:6-8

“I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.

Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me.”

John 17:9-12

“I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You.

Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are. While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.”

John 17:13-19

“But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.”

John 17:20-23

“I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.”

John 17:24-26

“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

Main Idea

Jesus prayed that His Church would be formed by His word, perfected in real unity, and brought safely home to eternal fellowship with Him in His final glory.

Jesus' Prayer for His Church

What forms the Church
for which Jesus prayed?



What forms the Church?

The word of Christ

John 17:20

“I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word.”

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It is the word of God, given to the Apostles by Christ, that brings life to dead souls and that forms His body, the Church.

John 6:63

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”

John 17:8

“For the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me.”

John 17:14 and 17-18

“I have given them Your word...Your word is truth.

As You sent Me into the world,
I also have sent them into the world.”

Romans 10:17

So faith comes from hearing,
and hearing by the word of Christ.

If it is the word of Christ
that forms the Church, then
we must be faithful to take hold
of and preach the word of Christ
as He has charged us to do!

1 Thessalonians 2:13

For this reason we also constantly thank God that **when you received the word of God which you heard from us**, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

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The word of Christ

Faith in Christ's word

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You must believe the words of Jesus
that testify that He is the Christ,
the one sent by God to save the world;
and believing, you are brought
into the Church, the family of God.

John 1:12

But as many as received Him,
to them He gave the right to become children of God,
even to those who believe in His name.

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Jesus' Prayer for His Church

What forms the Church for which Jesus prayed?

What is the unity for which Jesus prayed?



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and You in Me, **that they may be perfected in unity,**
so that the world may know that You sent Me,
and loved them, even as You have loved Me.”

What is this unity?

It is our shared union with Christ.

John 17:21

“...that they may all be one;
even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You,
that they also may be in Us.”

John 17:22-23

“...that they may be one, just as We are one;
I in them and You in Me.”

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The emphasis is upon the unity of the Godhead
that corresponds to the unity of all believers.

“It is not the union of nature which is referred to, but the union of plan, of counsel, of purpose—seeking the same objects, and manifesting attachment to the same things, and a desire to promote the same ends.”

Despite differences, true believers are united to the same Lord and share the same peace and the same enemies, the same hopes and the same joys, the same goals and the same destiny.

What is this unity?

It is our shared union with Christ.

It is our shared participation
in the divine nature.

John 17:2

“...even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.”

John 5:21

“For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.”

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So what does this mean?

2 Peter 1:4

...He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

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John 15:5

“I am the vine, you are the branches;
he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit,
for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

As life flows from vine to branches,
so the life of Christ flows from Him to us;
we are all branches of the same Vine,
deriving the same life from the same source.

Because we share in this divine nature,
the fruit we bear is of *the same kind*.

It is the fruit of righteousness that
works itself out into the complex
circumstances of diverse believers
indwelled by the same Spirit.

It is the fruit of love, joy, peace,
patience, kindness, goodness,
faithfulness, gentleness, and
self-control worked out in life.

What is this unity?

It is our shared union with Christ.

It is our shared participation in the divine nature.

**It is our shared participation
in Christ's glory.**

John 17:22

“The glory which You have given Me I have given to them,
that they may be one, just as We are one.”

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“The glory which You have given Me **I have given to them,**
that they may be one, just as We are one.”

The glory the Father gave to the Son
was in respect to the hour of His glory,

“Father, the hour has come, glorify Your Son.”

This glory, or the effects of it,
Christ has given to us.

John 17:22

“The glory which You have given Me I have given to them,

that they may be one, just as We are one.”



The unity for which Jesus prayed was a unity that would flow out of the practical realities accomplished by Christ at the cross--the realities of our transformation from one degree of glory to another.

2 Corinthians 3:18

But we all, with unveiled face,
beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord,
are being transformed into the same image
from glory to glory...

As we are transformed, we grow in our love
for Christ and in our love for one another.

What is this unity?

It is our shared union with Christ.

It is our shared participation in the divine nature.

It is our shared participation in Christ's glory.

**It is our shared participation
in Christ's mission.**

John 17:21

“...**that they may all be one**; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.”

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“...**that they may be one**, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.”

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have loved Me.”**

We all share a mission to declare the good news of the love of Christ and to display the truth of His transforming power.

This will be for the salvation of those who believe but for the condemnation of those who do not.

Jesus' Prayer for His Church

What forms the Church for which Jesus prayed?

What is the unity for which Jesus prayed?

What is the future for which
Jesus prayed?



What is the future of the Church?

Eternal fellowship with the Son.

John 17:24

“Father, I desire that they also,
whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am,
so that they may see My glory which You have given Me,
for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.”

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John 14:3

“If I go and prepare a place for you,
I will come again and receive you to Myself,
that where I am, there you may be also.”

John 17:24

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whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am,

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John 17:5

“Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself,
with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”

The future for which Jesus prayed
is a future of glorious fellowship
with the glorified Christ.

What a future that will be!

What is the future of the Church?

Eternal fellowship with the Son.

Final glorification in the likeness
of the Son's final glory.

John 17:22

“The glory which You have given Me
I have given to them.”

Romans 8:29-30

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined
to become conformed to the image of His Son,
so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;
and these whom He predestined, He also called;
and these whom He called, He also justified;
and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

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and these whom He called, He also justified;

and **these whom He justified,
He also glorified.**

Just as our justification has been secured
by Christ, so has our glorification.

We will be remade in the likeness
of the glorified Christ who is
the perfect image of God.

1 John 3:2

Beloved, now we are children of God,
and it has not appeared as yet what we will be.
We know that when He appears, we will be like Him,
because we will see Him just as He is.

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Conclusion

It is the word of Christ that forms the church,
and it is the word of Christ that forms you.

Take hold of Christ through His word and
declare and display Him to the world.

Rest in the assurance of the whole salvation
that Christ has accomplished and trust that
He will bring you safely home to Himself.