

That They May Be ONE

John 17:20-23

By Ysrael De la Cruz

Tragedy tends to bring people together very quickly; we are familiar with slogans such as “**united we stand**” “**Boston strong**” It is in those moments that we realize that unless we remain united we won’t survive. It is during those times that we stop being selfish and think of others; it is in those times that we see people for who they are and not based on their skin color, political preferences, social status, etc. All of a sudden, people begin to care for each other in ways you never thought possible. The disheartening thing is that this is the only time some people experience unity or benefit from it. In a few weeks or months, people will go back to their normal self, to lash out at each other on social media; to being self-centered again. *Jesus established a community on earth to teach the world what unity is all about.* The church. But even Christ’s church has struggled through the centuries to be one in Jesus. Jesus prayed that his followers be one, that they be unified in him.

Why did Jesus pray for this? John 17:20-21 Jesus’ prayer to the Father right before he is arrested and led to be crucified. Jesus prayed for his apostles, his disciples who would remain in the world.

-Jesus prayed for protection for his disciples while they remain in the world (v.11, 15)

-Prayed for their being sanctified or set apart through God’s word. (v.17)

-Prayed for future believers, those who would believe the disciples’ message. (v.20)

-For unity among his people. That they may be one. (v.21-23)

Unity among believers reflects God’s oneness. (v.21)

-Just like you are in me and I am in you. (v.21) // John 10:30 I am the Father are one.

Det.6:4 The LORD our God is one

Jesus wants his followers to come to complete unity; this oneness that exists in God, a triune God with three persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) They are one.

Unity among Christ’ followers reflect the unity of our Creator. When people saw Jesus; they saw God. Jesus’ prayer is that through the unity in the church people could take a glimpse at who God is. When the church is united there is evidence of Jesus in their midst.

Unity among Christians is a powerful testimony in the world. (“That the world may believe”)v.21. Disunity testifies against Christ in the world. However, unity is

a powerful testimony to the world. Jesus said, the world will know you are my followers if you love one another. Here he said, the world will believe in me when they see you united; it will be evident to them. *Why would the world believe our message when they see more separation than unity among God's people?*

Scripture talks about our union with Christ which was made possible by his death on the cross. **Eph.2:15-17** *Jesus made it possible for everyone to be able to be brought near God and united as one body. He created one new "man" out of two distinct groups Jews and Gentiles. They became one in one body.*

Paul echoed this on his letter to the Galatians **Gal.3:26-28**

All those who were baptized into Christ are children of God. Our faith and baptism unites us with Christ. Once we are united with him then we are also united with each other. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female for we are all one in Christ.

Unity in diversity (There were not the same, they were all different, they had different functions and abilities and came from different backgrounds and ethnicity, *but in Christ Jesus they can be one family, one body.*) This is what the world needs to see and it must be the church that would model this complete unity. Jesus prayed make them one so that the world may believe you sent me.

In a team, the members don't play the same position, they all have different shapes and sizes, they all come from different places, but they all come together for a common purpose. The success of a team is attached to their playing together, through their unity in spite what they go through during the season. *The church is God's team in the world and if we don't become one, we'll have a tough time succeeding in our mission.*

Unity among believers is a sign of maturity. Eph.4:11-13

Scripture teaches us that Jesus himself gave us leaders in the church to equip us for the work of service (ministry) for the purpose of building up the church. This will continue until we all reach **unity in the faith and unity in the knowledge of Jesus Christ becoming mature**, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. **Unity in faith and knowledge of Jesus is a sign of growth in person.**

Jesus prayed for his followers to be one in the world. The world will believe Jesus when they see God's oneness in us. May they be one; may they all be brought to complete unity.

Has Jesus' prayer been answered today? You can help answer this prayer by being one just as Christ is calling us to be.

