

John 17.20-26—Let the Nations Be Glad!

I. Introduction

- a. “Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.”
- b. “Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal of missions. It’s the goal of missions because in missions we simply aim to bring the nations into the white-hot enjoyment of God’s glory. The goal of missions is the gladness of the peoples in the greatness of God. ‘The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!’ (Ps. 97:1). “Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy!” (Ps. 67:3-4).”
- c. “But worship is also the fuel of missions. Passion for God in worship precedes the offer of God in preaching. You cannot commend what you do not cherish. Missionaries will never call out, “Let the nations be glad!” who cannot say from the heart, “I rejoice in the LORD...I will be glad and exult in you, I will sing praise to your name, O Most High” (Ps. 104:34; 9:2). Missions begins and ends in worship.” (Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad*, p. 17).
- d. Do you desire the nations to be glad in Jesus? If so, God has a word for us to hear that we might be one people who worship the One God and we seek to make his name known together as one people.
- e. But is it possible for us to rejoice in the Lord but not make his name known? Let’s hear this pray from Jesus and may it change us.

II. Main Point

- a. Jesus prays for all who believe to be one people for the purpose of making a name for God to all nations.

III. Outline

- a. Jesus asks that all who believe may be one so that world may believe
- b. Jesus gave his glory to those who believe that they may be one so that the world may know that Father sent the Son and loved them
- c. Jesus desires that those who believe be with him where he is to behold his glory (ref. 14:1-3)
- d. Jesus knows the Father and has made him known and will continue to make him known

IV. Exposition

- a. Jesus continues his prayer but this last part includes those who believe through the disciples’ word. He asks for those who believe to be one so that the world may believe that the Father sent him.
 - i. Right out of the gate, Jesus prays without any hesitation that there will be more sheep come into the fold. Thus far, Jesus has been the one giving the word and people receive it and believe.
 - ii. Here, we begin to see that the mission will continue through these disciples. They will give God’s word to be received and believed.
 1. Contrary to Isaiah’s call to the mission field and promise that no one would listen, Jesus claims the witness of these disciples will bear fruit.
 - a. And that’s been the case for centuries. Someone shared with us and we believed and we share it with the next generation and it continues.
 - b. Has anyone believed through your word? Are you commending Jesus to others?
 - i. If so, I understand the difficulties you face in this hard field of ministry. It feels like trying to convince those in Jerusalem that Jesus is the Son of God and the promised Messiah. Religious people are hard to reach.
 - ii. If commending Jesus to others isn’t something you do then you need to ask yourself why? Maybe your heart is dull and your heart isn’t burning with delighting in God. Maybe you are afraid. Maybe you could use some help knowing how to share.

1. I don't know the why for you but I would like to help. To be a Christian is to be a witness for Christ. God has given you a field of ministry and influence with some that you might make him known to them.
 2. You might ask, "Where do I start?" It's starts with getting your heart glad in the greatness of God.
- iii. The first thing Jesus asks for is that his disciples and those who believe in Jesus through their word, that they may ALL be one.
1. Notice the extent of the prayer. It includes all who believe in Jesus. When God came to Abram and called him to go to a land in which he promised to fill with Abram's children, he didn't know the extent of that promise.
 2. God's plan of salvation has always been not just Israel but peoples of all nations. Many of the psalms speak of this, even Ps 67 that we read earlier.
 3. God's plan was unique because as Abram got older and his wife Sarai was barren, they were not having any children to fill the land God gave them. So, God promised Abram (which means exalted father) that he would be Abraham (which means the father of many nations) would have a son. Through the seed of Abraham, God would bless the nations through this child that was promised and fill the land with worshippers!
 4. Of course, Paul makes a big deal out of this because it is. The seed of Abraham God had in mind was Jesus. He was not only a son of Abraham; he was the Son of God. (Gal. 3:27-29) ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.
- iv. What are all these different peoples of the nations to be one in? Verse 21 defines it for us. (Jn. 17:21) ²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you.
1. As we have been studying in our SS, the Father and the Son are distinct persons but they are one.
 - a. There is only one God. The One God is three persons.
 - b. The three persons of the godhead are in perfect union with one another.
 - c. They have one nature. One purpose. One mission. One Kingdom. They are of one heart, one soul, one mind. Their love is perfect.
 2. And Jesus goes on to say in v. 21 "that they (those who believe in Jesus) may be in us.
 - a. In what? How are we in the Father and the Son? We are in a personal relationship through the one gospel. Sinners forgiven and counted righteous by faith in Christ.
 - b. We have fellowship in God and with God and with each other—in the gospel.
 3. This unity should be observable. Let this be our disposition: (Eph. 4:2-6) ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call-- ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
- v. Why does Jesus pray for all who believe in him to be one? (Jn. 17:21) so that the world may believe that the Father has sent him.
1. How does being one in the Father and in Jesus, result in the world believing that the Father sent Jesus?
 2. I think if you follow Paul's argument in Eph. 4 that I just quoted, you will see that though we are one in all those things, the body is made of people with different gifts. And those

gifts are for the equipping of the body for the work of the ministry until we all attain the unity of the faith. No longer being divided over doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (Eph. 4:14-16)

3. We must be eager to work on this and maintain it. It is an impossible apart from the work of the Holy Spirit.
4. If we are going to make any progress in being one, we must begin thinking of ourselves as one.
 - a. When I got married, it took some time to stop thinking of my life as two, meaning I do my thing and she does her thing. Marriages do not normally last long doing that. I recall a growing up moment after playing in my high school's Turkey Bowl football game on Thanksgiving. The game was fun but violent. I was so sore I couldn't hardly walk for several days. I realized that I didn't need to do that again. I had to think of providing for my wife. The risk of getting hurt wasn't worth it.
 - b. We must think in similar ways as a church family. Your decisions affect others. What are your priorities and purposes in life? If you are part of this church then we should have a shared responsibilities to which we need to think seriously about. We must think ourselves as one. We are in this together.
- b. Now, the second point is much like the first. Yet, this point further unpacks the first. Here, Jesus gave them his glory that they may be one. And again, being one is for the purpose of the world knowing that God sent his Son and loved them (which sounds a lot like John 3:16 doesn't it?).
 - i. The first question that probably comes up in these verses is what does Jesus mean by glory and how did he give it to the disciples?
 1. As I mentioned in the sermon on verses 1-5, glory is "God's infinite perfections going public." It is the making known of God's character and ways.
 2. The mission for which God sent his Son into the world was to make God's glory known. Jesus made God's glory known with its climax being the cross and resurrection.
 3. Jesus put the love of God on full display. The giving of his only Son and the cross were the stage on which God unveiled the supreme acts of love.
 4. Jesus disclosed God to these disciples. What the cross and resurrection accomplish is nothing less than the full payment and promised eternal life to all who believe in the Son.
 5. That's the glory that Jesus gave to them. And he did all of that in order that they may be one.
 - ii. How much did Jesus give so that we would be one? If what Jesus gave is worthless then we will not value being one. But if this glory was of infinite worth, then we should value unity supremely.
 1. Of course, being one is again described as Jesus being in us and we in Jesus.
 - iii. Additionally, Jesus added in that they may be perfectly one.
 1. Could you agree that we aren't what we need to be?
 2. Could you agree that we aren't who we used to be?
 3. We are what we are by the grace of God. Let's press on knowing these promises:
 - a. (Phil. 1:6) ⁶ And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.
 - b. (1 Jn. 2:5) whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected.

- c. (Heb. 2:10) ¹⁰ For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.
 - iv. We will not naturally or automatically be perfectly one. We must trust that God has given us the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scriptures and each other to make progress together.
 - 1. If you didn't eat for 3 days, would you know it?
 - 2. If you didn't take in God's word for 3 days, would you know it?
 - a. (Matt. 4:4) "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"
 - 3. Hearing the word and being changed through suffering will cause us to make progress.
 - v. But again, this section ends with the same purpose: (Jn. 17:23) that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.
 - 1. Our being one in Jesus is supposed to reveal that (Jn. 3:16) God so loved the world, that he gave/sent his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
 - 2. Not only that, our being one is Jesus shows the world that God loves those who believe in his Son just as he loves his own Son. That is an unbelievable statement!
 - a. Do you believe that the Father loves you just as he loves Jesus, his Son?
- c. These last two points will be brief. We have covered most of this already. But there's a few things we need to see. We have already heard this at the beginning of this farewell in chapter 14. It's amazing that Jesus ends the same way he began. Yet here he adds something amazing! He tells the Father that he desires that those whom the Father had given him may be with him THAT they may see his glory.
 - i. I am certain that the Son and Father have the same desire and that desire is certain to be fulfilled.
 - ii. You might ask, is this glory something different than they have already seen and been given?
 - 1. The answer is, YES!
 - 2. They have seen the Father in Jesus. They have seen all the works and miracles of God's divine omnipotent power through Jesus. They are about to see God's love displayed through Jesus on the cross.
 - 3. But what they haven't seen is Jesus' glory unveiled as God. That glory he had before taking on flesh to accomplish the mission for which he was sent.
 - 4. His glory as the Son of God is sort of "undercover." But one day, we will see his splendor and majesty unveiled. In other words, we have only seen the Lamb but one day we will see the Lion!
 - iii. All of this is only possible because God is Triunity. For God to be triune is for God to love. And the Father loved the Son before the foundation of the world.
- d. And finally, to encourage them and us to continue the mission Jesus began, it says he will continue to make the Father known!
 - i. (Jn. 17:26) I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

V. Response

- a. Let's think about it like this to respond: Do you remember the story in (Gen. 11:4-6) ⁴ Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth." ⁵ And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. ⁶ And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.
 - i. What drew God's attention? Was it the amount of people? Was it their resources?

- ii. No. God states the reason. They were one people.
 - 1. What if we were one people with the purpose to make a name for Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit?