

His Prayer

John 17:20-23

(John 17:20-23 KJV) "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; {21} That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. {22} And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: {23} I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

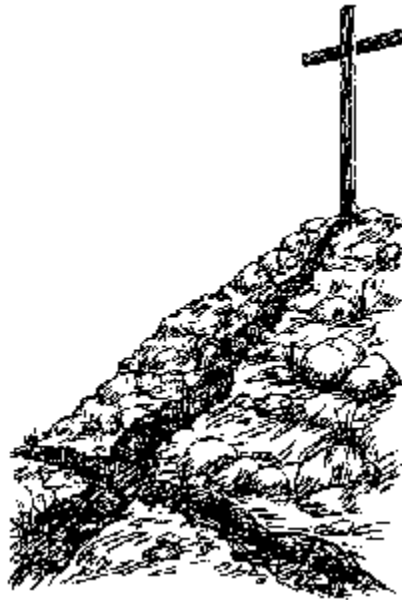
Just prior to His trial and crucifixion, our Lord Jesus prayed for the Church He was going to leave behind. Jesus would go to Heaven and be seated on the right hand of God the Father:

(Hebrews 12:2 KJV) "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Jesus *sat down* at the right hand of God the Father because His work, the work of Salvation, the work of the Cross, was finished. No man would be able to either add to or take away from that

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great Atonement. No man would be able to supplement the work that the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, did.

With His crucifixion looming our Lord Jesus knelt and prayed a prayer for His Church. Let's look at that prayer.

Jesus Prayed For Our Unity

(John 17:20-21 KJV) "Neither pray¹ I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; {21} That they all may be one²; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee..."

¹ Present Active Indicative erotao {pronounced er-o-tah'-o}, to beseech, to beg

² heis {pronounced hice}, numerically one, in union

Jesus prayed that His Church would be *one*, bound together and unified. Our Lord was not slack in praying, though - He never spoke to His Father without being *specific*. Jesus went on to clarify the oneness that He wanted for His Church by using Himself and the Father as an example. Jesus said,

**That they all may be one²;
as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee**

Think about that. Jesus prayed that His Church would be *one* or *in one accord* in the same way that He and the Father were *in one accord*. How was Jesus in one accord with the Father? Jesus and the Father were of one mind. Our Lord said:

(John 5:43 KJV) "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."

that He came *in the Father's name*. Jesus willingly submitted Himself to the Father so that the Father's Plan of Salvation could be fulfilled. Neither Father nor Son argued nor debated preeminence, but the Son submitted to the Father. The Father was the Planner of our Salvation, but Jesus was the *means* of our salvation. Both Father and Son worked together with the Holy Spirit of God to secure us who believe a Blood bought inheritance in Heaven.

How important is Christian unity in the Church? It is not just a thing we do - it is the *main thing*. The Father made a Plan of Salvation. The Son died

and rose again for us so the Plan could be fulfilled. The Holy Spirit indwells the Believer as a promise (**2 Corinthians 1:22**) that we are Blood Bought, that we are saved. Each Member of the Holy Trinity worked together to accomplish a common goal - the salvation of those who would believe.

If it is God's Will that His Church be united just as Jesus and the Father are united in one mind, and if Jesus prayed toward that end, then it is possible for the Church to reach that goal. In fact, every local Church *must reach oneness of purpose* before it can be fully effective for Christ.

I looked up the phrase “one mind” in my Bible dictionary and found some very interesting verses dealing with Christian unity. The Apostle exhorted the Romans:

(Romans 15:6-7 KJV) "That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. {7} Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God."

How is God glorified in His Church? When we *together* lift up the name of Jesus. Paul even gives

us a wonderful parallel to unity when he demands that we *receive one another* as Christ *received us* to glory. God is glorified when I submit myself to you in love, and together we submit ourselves to the Creator, Jesus Christ our Savior. The Apostle exhorted the Philippians:

(Philippians 1:27 KJV) "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;"

and again,

(Philippians 2:2-3 KJV) "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being of one accord, of one mind*. {3} *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*"

God has called and prayed for His Church, that it be *in one mind* and *in one accord*. Contrary to what the U.S. Army slogan says, no one can be *an army of one* - at least, not in God's army. We *strive together* to spread the Gospel message, to

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be God's light, a light that shines for Jesus in this lost and dying world. Everything that we do or say glorifies Jesus Christ our Savior, while at the same time warning man that he must *repent and turn to the Savior lest he be lost forever.*

(1 Peter 3:8-9 KJV) "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be pitiful, be courteous: {9}* Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."

The world is a hate filled place where, just as it was with Cain and Abel, brother strives against brother for supremacy. Yet the prayer our Savior prayed for us reminds us that the Church, unlike the world, does not strive against itself. Instead we strive against *a common enemy, Satan.*

This Unity Is Attainable

Jesus said:

John 17:22 "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one"

Jesus gave His Church the necessary resources to reach *one accord*, just as He and the Father are in one accord. Jesus gave us a *perfect example* of how His disciples should live. Our Lord and Master bowed Himself down and served His followers time and time again. He said:

(John 13:15-17 KJV) "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. {16} Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. {17} If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

Happiness for the disciple of Christ comes in serving one another to the glory of Jesus Christ our Savior. Walking as He walked, talking as He talked. Submitting oneself to the others of the Body, in order that the greater good - the Glory of God - can be achieved. We not only have Christ's *perfect example*, but we also have His *perfect Spirit*:

(1 Corinthians 2:14-16 KJV) "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually

discerned. {15} But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. {16} For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

The *unsaved* or *natural man* cannot understand the truths of God's Word. The unsaved man is not indwelt by the Spirit of God. The saved man, however, is indwelt by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit *knows the mind of Christ*, and guides us as we grow as a Church. If you are saved, you are indwelt by the Spirit of God. The Word of Life that I speak, they are nourishment to you, because the Spirit of God reveals the deeper truths of these words to you. You have the mind of Christ dwelling with you. If you are not indwelt by the Spirit, if the Spirit is not inside of you by faith:

(Romans 8:9 KJV) "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Then the Bible makes it plain that you are not Christ's. Jesus Christ gave glory to His Church so we could reach unity. Jesus Christ gave the Holy Spirit to us so we could be in one accord.

The *operation of the Spirit* is vitally important to the Church of Christ. When I speak of the operation of the Spirit I am not talking about the excesses of the Charismatic Movement. Each believer has, by order of God, a *spiritual gift* or *ability* that they can exercise in the Church. It is so necessary that we as Christians seek out and discover our area of giftedness. The Devil will try to throw disharmony into the Church in an attempt to keep us from discovering where God the Holy Spirit has gifted us. Each believer must resist the disharmony, and open your hearts to God's leading, so we can reach our full potential in Jesus.

When I look at my Body I see ten fingers, two hands, two feet. Each member submits to the other in order that the whole Body be edified or built up. It would be foolish for me to put my shoes on my hands to stand on them. My hands were designed by God to hold things, my feet to take me places. The unity of the Body makes every movement fluid and purposeful. Unity with one another and unity with Christ's Spirit brings us to our fullest potential as His Church.

Jesus also gave us *grace and truth*, the Precious Word of God, to build us up in one accord.

(John 1:14, 16-17 KJV) "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. ... {16} And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. {17} For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

It is the Word of God that unifies the Church. It is the Word of Truth that gives us common purpose. There are denominations today that have wandered away from the revealed Word of God to *another glory*, and as they wander they fall away from Jesus.

Unity at any cost is not the unity Jesus prayed for. Jesus prayed that we be One, *just as He and the Father are One*. Those who got together and built the Tower of Babel were *in one accord* with one another, but they were far away from God. In like manner many Churches today unify and grow apart from the written Word of God. There may even be mega-Churches that fall into this category. If growth comes by compromising the Glory of God, is that growth of any value? Not really. The Church of Christ was designed with one goal in mind:

The Harmony Of The Church Proves Christ

(John 17:23 KJV) "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

The Church was designed to be a model that the world looked at to see Christ. How does the world know that Jesus Christ was sent to die for our sins? Because the Church works together in harmony. How does the world know that Jesus Christ is the *only Way* to the Father (**John 14:6**)? Because a mighty cloud of witnesses in the Church have joined together for the glory of God our Savior. How does the world know that God loves them? Because the world sees the love of God operating in us.

You see, the world will not believe that Christ really came unless they see that redeeming love in action. As the old saying goes, "The proof is in the pudding". If Jesus Christ really does change lives, and if Jesus Christ is the love of God Who came down to save us - then the saved of God will be loving creations of God. Here's another old saying, "The fruit seldom falls far from the tree". Jesus placed His reputation in our hands. What a

solemn and weighty stewardship we have! He said, "The world will know that I came from Heaven down to earth, dear Father, when the world sees the Church I so love work together in perfect harmony.

This is not the first time Jesus made such a statement. He told His disciples:

(John 13:34-35 KJV) "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. {35} By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Love proves Christ's disciples in the eyes of the world. The antithesis of love, *confusion* and *disruption* are tools of our enemy Satan. The Bible says:

(James 3:16 KJV) "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."

(1 Corinthians 14:33 KJV) "For God is not *the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.*"

Where confusion is, God is not. Where strife is,

Christ is not. Where love is, Christ is. Where unity is, the world can see Jesus in us.

Conclusion

Our Lord Jesus Christ designed His Church to work as a single, uniform unit. The Church is called "Body" in the Scripture (**Romans 12:5**) for a reason. Our strength lies in our Oneness with One Another and our Oneness with Christ. Satan will certainly try to disrupt that unity - we must be aware that, as a Body, each part is *important to the overall work*. I do not wish to become a castaway, nor do I wish to shame My Lord. I will stand shoulder to shoulder with you all for the glory of Christ my Savior.

(2 Corinthians 13:11 KJV) "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

As I grow older I see with more perfect clarity the struggling of humanity. Men and women strive with one another for dominance. Yet the Church is designed to be a Body of Disciples, each member loving the other in spite of our imperfections. God help us all to make the prayer

Jesus spoke a reality in our lives, and in our world.

in the name of Jesus Christ,
Brother David Buffaloe, Pastor
Rock Hill Baptist Church

family oriented Bible believing Church - Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever! Our Pastor, Brother David Buffaloe, will answer any questions you have about our Church if you contact him at 731-845-6104, or through his website at bibleteacher.org; or e-mail him by writing

webmaster@bibleteacher.org

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Rock Hill is an independent Church affiliated with the Tennessee Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptist Convention, and is a regular contributor to missions through the Cooperative Program.

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Rock Hill Baptist Church is located between Parsons and Lexington, Tennessee, on Highway 412. Look for our sign! We have services on Wednesdays (Adult, Youth, and children's Bible studies) at 7:00 PM, Sundays at 10:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Rock Hill is a