

Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

On the night before he died Jesus assembled his best friends. Jesus is about to surrender His earthly life and entrust His "mission" to this motley crew of 11 disciples. This prayer then is an incredible prayer, known as the great prayer during which Jesus is saying to His Father that he is passing the baton of His mission, the future Church here on earth, over to these 11 followers. Jesus' faith is not in the disciples but in the love of His Father. Jesus' habit of praying is frequently mentioned by the gospel writers but rarely is the content of the prayer given. This prayer that was intended to be heard by His disciples and subsequently by those throughout the ages. Why?

+ **Jesus prays for the protection of his disciples...** Firstly Jesus established with His Father that the disciples are a love gift from the Father to the Son... They were those given to him out of the world by his Father. It is the same then for you and I if we believe, then we too are a gift from the Father to the Son. Incredible! Secondly, the disciples were those who received the Son's words, who believed in his heavenly origin and his divine mission. In future Jesus is saying that the name of Jesus is not to be represented in the world by a series of religious doctrines, moral ideas, principles or programs but it is to be represented by a community beginning with His 11 friends!

Having identified his disciples in (6-10) Jesus now prayed for them in (11-19).

+ **The burden of his prayer is that the Father would protect them...** Look at verse 11 "Holy Father keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one just as we are one". Holiness and unity are no alternative options for the Church... they are integral to the church – the people of God - just as they are integral to God – the Father, Son and Holy Spirit – for we are all one. In 12 Jesus asked that the Father would now keep them as he had kept them during his time on earth. And in 15 Jesus asked that they would be kept from the devil. They need protection. The bible makes it clear that Satan is the Prince of this world and though He was ultimately defeated in Jesus overcoming death we still live in the aftermath of that defeat. Satan aims is to do anything which distracts or takes us away from our relationship with God. He can't abide us talking or praying with God. Just as Jesus was sent into a hostile world to declare God's word so they would be sent with the same purpose. Jesus had already promised them the presence of the Holy Spirit. Empowered though they were they still needed the Lord's protection just as we need the Lord's protection.

+ **The reason for his prayer was that they'd be sanctified, or set apart for the truth...** Jesus asks God to set His friends apart from the world – not to remove them from it. He is not intending that the disciples or indeed the Church sits in a Holy huddle or ghetto but to serve the world in mission as Jesus had.

This prayer reveals to us the total commitment, love and concern that Jesus has for His disciples and for us – and that both He and the Father are of one mind and heart with the Holy Spirit. Our triune God is dying to hear from us. **God – Father Son and Holy Spirit hears from us when we pray. Christianity is not about a religion – its about a relationship.** How often do you get asked "How are you?" Only to see the person asking you either not really meaning it or in too much of a hurry to wait for the real answer? Jesus is about relationship – he is the great High Priest – our mediator – he prays for us now – just as He prayed for His disciples then – He wants to know how we are! We, as believers belong to God, there is no separation from God – for Jesus consecrated Himself that we might find wholeness through Christ with God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Witness: questions to discuss

How does the message of this prayer challenge or affect your relationship with God?

Who do you share your thoughts with? Jesus called His disciples friends. How is your friendship with Jesus going?

What does it mean to be "as one" – just as Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit are one?

How does it feel to be a part of God's mission? How does that challenge affect your "small group life"?