

“The Desire of Prayer: God’s Intimacy” John 17:22-26

Introduction

When I was in England a few years ago I was struck by the fact that nearly everyone on the subway was talking on a cell phone. Now, that cell phone phenomenon has captured our country as well. Everywhere you go, people are on the phone. Why do we love cell phones?

Part of the answer is we are a people of community. We were created to know others and to be known. Phones keep us connected. Yet we have to wonder, how much of our new found communication is skin deep? What can you really communicate in a 20 character text message? In reality, we pass information, but seldom bear the soul.

God has personally declined on the new information age. You can't call Him up, send Him an email, text Him a prayer request or fax in your confessions of sin. And the reason is simple. God longs for your heart. He's not looking for a transfer of information – what can you tell an omniscient God that He doesn't already know? No, God desires your soul. He wants your love. He wants you to know His love.

Our intimacy with God slowly wanes unless we draw near to God. You can do good things, righteous things – you can read your Bible, attend church activities, do your weekly Bible study, even sit in worship week after week – and not know the

intimacy God desires to have with you. Only when we draw near to Him will we find the joy of His love and fellowship. Prayer is the means He has given us to draw near to Him.

This morning we are going to see that Jesus has given us everything we need to live in deep communion with him. In the conclusion of His high priestly prayer we find what is most on the heart of Christ, what He prays earnestly for is that we would grow and deepen in our intimacy with Him until these things are perfected in us.

[John 17:22-26]

In these closing words of Jesus' prayer we find that Jesus looks both to His present relationship with the disciples and the future aspects of it as well.

I. Jesus Has Given Us Everything We Need for Intimacy with God.

1. He's given us His glory.

The glory which You have given Me I have given to them. . ." How are we to understand this statement? Certainly we are comfortable talking about how we are to *give glory* to God. We have been well taught that this is our chief end. But how is it possible that we have been given the same glory that the Father gave to the Son? It's this comparison that is difficult to understand.

We don't think of ourselves as having glory. The glory of God has to do with His being, His majesty, His holiness, His essence. It's one thing to glorify Him by obeying and serving Him. But it's something else to share His glory. But that is exactly what Jesus says. So in what way do we share His glory?

When you think of His glory, think of His image. We were created in the image of God. We were created to reflect His glory – to demonstrate it. In that sense we were partakers of it. But the fall marred His glory in us. The work of Jesus Christ to redeem us is a work of restoration. *If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation.* The work of saving grace is a work of glory restoration.

Romans 8:29 -30 explains the process. *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.* Romans 8 is not looking to something in the future. It is telling us the realities of salvation. We are glorified.

II Corinthians 3:18 reveals the progressive nature of this glory we have received from Jesus. *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, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.*

The more this new nature of ours replaces the old nature, the more we walk in the heavenly places with Him. Colossians 3 shows the connection between putting on the new and our intimacy with Christ. We can walk intimately with God because He has made us to be like Him. He's given us His glory, His image, so that we – uniquely among all creatures – have the capacity to fellowship with God.

2. He's Given Us His Presence.

In verse 23 Jesus prays *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.* Here again is one of the great themes

of John's gospel - the doctrine of our union with Christ. The vitality and power of the Christian life is found in Jesus living within us.

But here's the question I want to ask you today. Why would Jesus dwell in you? Why would He want to be that near you? You are aware, better than anyone else, of your failings, your shortcomings, and your sin, of your undesirableness. Why would Jesus make His home in you?

In the Old Testament, when the people sinned, they were put outside the camp. They were separated from the presence of God. And if the whole camp of Israel sinned, God Himself would go outside the camp and separate Himself from them. Distance/separation was the dominating picture between God and sinners in the Old Testament.

But now we read Jesus' prayer and He says *I in them and You in Me*. Why? Jesus gives the answer at the end of verse 24. *You loved them even as You have loved Me*. Here is another astonishing comparison! Jesus wants to live in you because God loves you *in the same way* He loved His Son. He loves you. Not differently than He loves His own Son; not less often; not in smaller portions; not with less commitment. He loves you in the same way He loves His Son.

That means His love for you is perfect. It's unwavering. It's eternal – it won't end sometime or run out of gas. It's infinite, that is it has no limits, it's not conditional on anything you do, it's not tied to any kind of circumstances. His love for you is sacrificial. It's because of His great love for you that He saved you. It's why Jesus died for you. It's why He forgave you and took away your guilt.

And it's why He desires do be near you now. It's why He's made His dwelling place in you – why you have become His temple. He loves you!

And this is the stone upon which your intimacy with Him is built. You can have friendship and love for God because He loved you first.

- He's given you His glory – restored the fallen image in you so you have a common ground for relationship.
- He's given you His very presence, loving you so much that He lives within you.

3. He's Given Us Knowledge of God

Look at verse 25 and the beginning of verse 26 (read). The idea here is not that you have knowledge of God in the same way you might have knowledge of President Bush, or Mozart or Peyton Manning. What Jesus says is that He has made God's name known to us. The name of God in the Scripture represents God Himself. *Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.* When Moses was trying to figure out how to convince the Israelites of God's will for them, God gave him a name to communicate to them. *Tell them YHWH sent you. . . There is no other name under heaven given by which men may be saved. . .* The name of God in the Bible represents God Himself. Jesus has made the name of God known to us by causing us to know God.

I can make you know someone's name by telling you about them, or by introducing them to you. It is the latter idea that Jesus is expressing here.

Before Paul's conversion, He knew about God. He knew of God from a distance. He knew the Bible. He knew the acts of God. He was a Pharisee. He was a teacher of the Law. He knew

the attributes of God. But then on the Damascus Road he met God. And then everything changed. In comparison, nothing matter after that experience because finally he really knew the name of God.

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

If you are a Christian, Jesus has made known to you the name of God. He has introduced you to God. He has revealed God to you. Through Jesus Christ you have the highest privilege known to any man. You have the privilege of personally knowing and talking to, and serving the God who created the heavens and the earth – and who at the same time is your Father in heaven. If you're not a Christian, this is the invitation of the gospel.

So, as Christians, Jesus has given us everything we need for intimacy with God.

II. Jesus' Desire Is That Our Intimacy Would Deepen.

As we've said all along, this prayer is a beautiful window into the heart of Jesus. As He prays to His Father, we get to see what He really longs for. And in verse 24 the depth of His yearnings pours out as He says *Father, I desire . . .*"

Sometimes this word *desire* is translated *will*. But its true meaning lies in the idea of the longing of the heart. This is the word Jesus used in the Garden of Gethsemane when He said not my *will* but Thine be done. He was expressing His deep yearning.

So what does Jesus desire concerning us? What moves Him when He thinks and prays for us?

The answer, in a nutshell, is that He yearns for a deepening of the things He's already given to us.

1. He's already given us His glory. But He also prays (vs. 24) that we would see the fullness of His glory. Remember, on earth He laid aside His glory as part of His humiliation. In heaven, His glory will be uninhibited. And you know what? He can't wait for you to see it! Listen to this description from Rev. 22:3-5. *There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.*

2. He dwells with in us, but He longs for us to be with Him in heaven. A sign of love is a desire to be together. Verse 24 – *Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, **be with Me where I am**.* Earlier in this prayer, Jesus had prayed, *I do not ask you to take them out of the world, but to keep them from evil.* But we are not to think by that that Jesus does not look forward to bringing us to heaven. He longs for that. He anticipates showing us the place He is preparing for us. He desires that we would, at the right time, be with Him forever. That we would see Him face to face.

3. He has made the name of God known to us, but as verse 26 says, *he will make it known.* One of the immense pleasures of heaven will be the never ending joy of getting to know God better and better. Because He is infinite, there will be no end to this. But it will be unmarred by our current mental limitations. We won't misunderstand things as we do now. We won't bring faulty assumptions to our relationship with Him. There will be no wrong interpretations.

Jesus said *this is eternal life, that they may know You.*

So, brothers and sister, here is Jesus' desire for you. He really wants your fellowship. He truly is eager for intimacy with you. He loves you. He dwells in you. He invites you to pray – to pour out your soul to Him. I urge you – don't communicate with Jesus like you text message your friends. Take time in His presence. He died to draw you near to Himself.