

Jesus Prays for Oneness John 17:20-26

April 8, 2020 ~ Gretel Roberts

In John 17:20, Jesus prays for “all who will believe in me” -- that’s us! Jesus prayed for us over 2000 years ago, and Jesus continues to intercede for us from his throne in heaven (see Romans 8:34). Notice what Jesus prays for (or *doesn’t pray for* in this instance). Jesus doesn’t pray that His believers would build large churches, although it’s awesome to see people come together to worship God (I’m already dreaming of the incredible worship we will participate in when we’re back together again!) Jesus doesn’t pray that we would accomplish great works, although good deeds are certainly byproducts of life in the Spirit. Jesus doesn’t pray that we live comfortable lives, although He promises us peace in the midst of any circumstance.

Jesus prays for oneness and unity. I have always read this passage to mean that Jesus wants believers to be unified with one another. Jesus does indeed want us to be unified as a people, but as I read John 17:20-26 more closely this week, it seems to me that the unity Jesus is talking about is oneness with the Father and with Jesus. The “oneness” of living fully connected with God.

As we become one with the Father (as Jesus is one with the Father), our lives become a place where the Father’s love dwells and where Jesus Himself lives. Our lives essentially become a home for God.

Jesus prays that, when we live out of this oneness with God, the world will take notice. “May they [that’s us as Jesus’ followers] be brought to complete unity to let the world know that God sent Jesus; that God loves us just as God loved Jesus; and that Jesus lives in us” (paraphrase of John 17:26). This strikes me as an invitation to have as intimate of a relationship with God as the Trinity does within itself. We are invited into the unity that God the Father, the Son and the Spirit experience! When we find our home in God and are unified with God, the world will want that kind of relationship too. As Jesus says in John 13:34-35, “the world will know you

are my disciples by your love". Our love for one another spills out of our oneness with God himself and through allowing the Spirit to live in us.

No matter where we go (even as we're stuck in our physical homes!), our true home can be found in God. We can become a dwelling place for Jesus through His Spirit. Jesus prayed that it would be so. And Jesus prayed that the world would be changed because we, as Jesus' followers, are united with Him!

In Paul's description of the church in Ephesians 2:22, he says that "we too are being built together to become a dwelling place in which God lives by His Spirit". As we each become one with the Father, we are corporately joined together to become the dwelling place of God on earth. During this difficult time in the world, may people see God dwelling in us individually and in us as a church! May they know that God loves them and offers them hope! And may we be poignant messengers of God's love for the world!