

Jesus Prays for Unity
John 17:20-23
August 9, 2026

The history of the church is largely a story of disunity.

Is there such a thing as Christian unity?

Jesus prays for me! v. 20

Will Christian unity ever happen? There is hope in verse 20.

The work of the disciples will succeed.

Jesus prays for us. (Zechariah 1:12; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 9:24)

What does Jesus pray for? v. 21

1. Our Unity, “that they may all be one.”
2. Our Witness, “that the world may believe.”

Here is a scary thought: OUR UNITY IS OUR WITNESS!

We are united to Christ and are in Christ.

We have unity with God - the infinite, personal God.

How can we preserve this unity? v. 22-23

By entering more deeply into the glory of God.

Meeting in Cincinnati for a family vacation.

We don’t focus on unity with this or that individual Christian.

If you want unity with other Christians, grow closer to God.

There is growth in our unity with other believers.

What does the world learn from Christian unity?

1. The Father sent the Son.
2. The Father loves the disciples as He loves the Son.

Meditation

Jesus Prays for Us

Christ’s intercession stops all internal accusations against us by procuring everything that we need for salvation. As a result, He brings us “quiet of conscience, notwithstanding daily failings” (Romans 5:1–2). In spite of indwelling sin, we can come to God with full assurance of faith, “with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:22). This is because He gives us “confidence [to] draw near to the throne of grace” (Hebrews 4:16), where we can find grace for the forgiveness for sins and the power for subduing sin.

Christ intercedes for us so that God accepts our service as well as our persons (1 Peter 2:5). God not only accepts our persons as a reconciled Judge, but He accepts our service as a loving Father. He is the God of adoption as well as the God of justification and sanctification. Is it not remarkable that with so many faults tainting even our best works, Christ will say one day, “Well done good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord” (Matthew 25:21)? Is it any surprise that we will say, “Lord, when did we do these things” (Matthew 25:37)? God ignores the dross in our works and sees the pure silver of Spirit-wrought righteousness because Christ intercedes for us.

Christ’s intercession makes our prayers, and all other acts of service, pleasing to God. Should this not make us eager to pray, diligent to serve, and confident to pursue glory?

Ryan McGraw