



## ***Family Service 16<sup>th</sup> May 2010 – Reading***

### **John 17**

#### **Jesus Prays for All Believers**

<sup>20</sup>"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,

<sup>21</sup>that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

<sup>22</sup>I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:

<sup>23</sup>I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

<sup>24</sup>"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

<sup>25</sup>"Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me.

<sup>26</sup>I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."



## **Family Service 16<sup>th</sup> May 2010 – Talk**

***"Lord, may the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be pleasing in your sight"***

***Please be seated...***

I don't know about you but I found that reading very hard to follow, I had to read three different versions of it to fully understand it.

The best and easiest interpretation I found for me was in the street bible, I hope you will excuse me if you do not like the language but I find it puts the message very concisely and is easily understandable

INVITE STUART BACK TO READ IT

*But not just them! All the thousands that'll opt back into your way 'cos of what my squad tells them. I've got one big ask – keep them together, united, one huge team living the way you and I relate. But doing it down here. Keep them plugged into us, so it'll be obvious that you sent me..."*

*"And one thing – these new squad members, I want them to see the real me. They missed me this time round, but please, work it so they see me glowing with the love you've had for me since we made their planet"*

There it is simple and clear. All the people that are to come, that is all the people in the future that are to follow as disciples, keep them together, united and connected to Jesus.

Looking at more traditional bibles for those struggling with the text and the phraseology the interpreter had added their own subtext and this is worth looking up when you get home. It is also worth looking up the previous and subsequent sections of what the bible says for context.

Jesus is alone he knows he is about to be betrayed and consequently will be crucified. But what does he do? He prays.



What would we do in these circumstances? Are we able to stop when things are looking so bleak and desperate and think of others? Jesus does what he has always done throughout his life he stops prays and reflects.

The sub title for this section is

***Jesus prays for his future followers***

This is of course preceded by ***Jesus prays for his disciples***

and prior to this ***Jesus prays for himself.***

So ... **Jesus prays** What a time to pray. You would expect Jesus to be too busy or too worried, but he finds time to pray for himself, for his friends and for us.

CIRCLES START SMALL AND THEN GET BIGGER

**Jesus prays... for himself.** Not that he will be brave or escape, but that God's glory will be seen in him. What he really wants is that people will look at the way he behaves and see what God is like: forgiving, loving, kind.

Then **Jesus prays... for his disciples** – Peter, James, John, Matthew and all the others. He prays that they will be protected from harm, be united (stick together), be joyful and belong to God. He wants them to be ready to do the special job that he has for them: telling everyone about him. Jesus knows that the next few weeks will be very difficult for them, that after his death they will be scared and confused. He knows too that after he has come back to life they will be amazed and confused. So he prays for them.

Finally **Jesus prays... for us.** He prays that we will be united, kept safe and know that he is living in us. Isn't it great that when Jesus prayed he wasn't just praying for those who were his friends and followers at the time but also for us?



Jesus prayed for all who would follow him all that would be his disciples "these new squad members" as they are described in the street bible. But these new squad members aren't the clergy the bishops the priests and the vicars they are you and me.

God loves everybody

We are all here together as Gods disciples and Jesus prayed for us. By our very presence here we are demonstrating our love for Jesus and our intention to give our lives to him by developing his mission and worshiping him together.

When I was younger and during my confirmation classes we spent a long time on prayer and how to pray. The key acronym was JOY pray in that order

**Jesus**

**Others**

**You**

Jesus was the most important and we should always pray for him first. We were then allowed to pray for others. Finally only when we had dutifully prayed in that order could we pray for ourselves.

Looking at the order on which Jesus prayed he firstly prays for himself, well that is praying for Jesus. Then he prays for his disciples that is our 'others'. Then finally he prays for his future disciples that is YOU me and YOU. That is the You in my little acronym.

So Jesus did follow that acronym but in reverse order when looking back at it now! Was that a coincidence?

Jesus also prayed for unity and protection from the evil one. Jesus chose as disciples men who were radically different in temperament, personality and political philosophy. It was because of their glaring differences that their unity was so evident. Unity, then, does not lie in us all being the same, but in being a true believer. Unity should not be



hindered between two believers who hold differing views concerning the details of Jesus return and how we should worship him.

Too many Christians think of unity only in terms of those who think and act alike. Often unity is expressed only within a church or a denomination, if at all.

We need to pray for all other Christians and build people up we also need to work together in humility give time and money to exalt Christ and above all else not to get sidetracked arguing or debating about disparate and divisive matters

Jesus great desire for his disciples was that they would become one. Following Jesus wishes we need to become unified proving a powerful witness to the reality of God's love. We all have different ways of doing it and each have a different but equally important part to play. Part may seem small, insignificant almost, but when brought together become much bigger, more colourful and the church as God meant it to be

By just being here we are helping to unify the body of Christ and the church but we need to pray for all those who aren't here, those who cannot be here or do not feel they can be here. Those who have lost their way in faith or have never discovered their way in faith.

Jesus prayed for unity among the believers based on the believer's unity with him and the Father. Christians can know unity among themselves if they are in union with God.

My final point is the other important message here. Jesus and God are there praying for us more than 2000 years ago.

Before we, our parents our grandparents and our great great great grandparents were even born he was praying for us. He knew then who and what we are already, with all our faults, and still he prayed for us. When we didn't worry about the future he was praying for us. When we were in wars when we were hurt when we were in pain he was praying for us.



He thought us so important that he gave up time in his final few hours in his earthly form to pray for us all of us.

God loved us

he loves us

and no matter how bad we are feeling no matter how bad we have been no matter how thoughtless we have been no matter if we haven't thought about God for as long a time as it takes .... he loves us.

God's love is unconditional and is given to us and it is for us.

We can stand or sit here and proudly say we chose to come here because we are people of God or people of faith and be very proud of the fact. We proudly say that we believe in God and that we love God and that may be true and we should shout it from the roof tops.

But God loves us more.....

God loves us more than we love him.....

God chose us before we chose him.....

And his love is unconditional, it is all enduring and it will last forever.

So when we are feeling down and have lost all faith when we are worried about the future when we think that things are so bad that there is nothing that can be done about it we need to remember that we are loved we were prayed for

God loves us, he loves everyone

Amen

*Alan Swan 11/05/10*