

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide
SB 07.16.2023

JESUS PRAYS FOR THE CHURCH – John 17:20-26

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles or observations stood out to you from this week’s message? Discuss with your group.

For the past several weeks now, we have been looking at the prayer Jesus prayed in the final hours of His life in the Garden of Gethsemane. We’ve already seen how He started His prayer by focusing on His relationship with His Father. From there, He widened the circle of His focus and began to pray for His disciples. As He wraps up the prayer, He fans out and begins to pray for ‘all who would come to believe in Him.’ (v. 20) In these verses, Jesus peers into the future and sees all the people who will come to faith in Him. This includes all the believers who have lived over the last 2,000 years, up until right now. That includes us! Let’s get into our lesson...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you most from Pastor Daniel’s sermon?
2. How does it feel when you realize someone is praying for you? What would you want a prayer warrior to pray for on your behalf?

We may be skeptical about others’ prayers for us, or we may depend on those prayers often. Wherever we fall on that spectrum, we often forget that Jesus is interceding on our behalf right now. Today we will look at Jesus’ prayer for His disciples in John 17. As His disciples, Christ prays for our unity with each other and with God.

Digging Deeper in God’s Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 17:20-26

Jesus prayed for His disciples, but His prayer was not for them alone. He included people who would follow Him in future generations: those who would believe in Him through their (the disciples’) message. Just as we are the recipients of the previous generations’ stewardship of the gospel, so are we to pass it onto the next generation.

1. Why is unity so important to Jesus? Why must this be one of the truths we pass down to the next generation?
2. How does our unity in the church, or lack thereof, either confirm the power of the gospel or deny it?
3. Why do so many churches struggle to be unified? What does a lack of unity communicate about the way we view God and the gospel?
4. Why does the Bible so closely link our relationships with others to our union with Christ?

We were created for relationship both with God and then with others. In fact, one of the most powerful apologetics for the gospel is the fact that so many different kinds of people can come together under one banner. One of the primary ways the gospel affects us is in those relationships. As we become the children of God, we also become the brothers and sisters of all those who believe.

“PROMISES” in 2023

1. Jesus also prayed for us to see His glory. What are some ways the glory of God might be displayed through us to the next generation?
2. Why is gearing our entire lives and schedules around our children counterproductive to displaying God’s glory?
3. What lesser glories compete in our lives and the lives of our children for the glory rightfully given to God?

God’s glory is on display all around us, but our senses and imaginations are often dulled to it. Our message to the next generation is that we were created for something more. We find that when we rightly see the glory in everyday life as pointing us to the ultimate glory of God.

1. What are some ways that love can be corrupted when wrongly expressed to the next generation?
2. What are some of the challenges you’ve personally face to appropriately communicate the love of the gospel to either your children or the next generation in general?
3. What, then, is the appropriate way we express the love of God in Christ to the next generation?

One of the most practical ways we can express the love of God in Christ is through our time. We invest in the future generation, modeling them the same kind of love we see displayed to us in Christ. We love our children fully with the intent that they grasp the greater love of God in Christ and become mature disciples themselves.

Applying God’s Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

☒ Sometimes we confuse unity with uniformity. They aren’t the same thing. Unity is not sameness. God doesn’t have a cookie cutter that he uses to stamp out disciples. He delights in diversity. When we get to heaven, we’re not all going to look the same. There will be people from every nation, tongue, kindred, and tribe, all worshipping together around the throne. As it turns out, thinking differently, looking differently, and feeling differently are not roadblocks to unity—they are ingredients of it. As Dr. Tony Evans points out, ‘The definition of unity is oneness of purpose, not sameness of being.’

1. What is one way you can pursue the kind of unity Jesus prayed for by sacrificing some element of your own preferences?
2. What are some practical ways you can make sure the things that bring you joy in everyday life point you and your family to the glory of God?
3. What are some things standing in the way of you investing your time in the next generation? How do your priorities need to reflect that investment?

PRAYER – As you close your Growth Group, pray that we would not hide the truth of God in the gospel from the next generation, but instead would take an active role in making sure they see the truth and beauty of the gospel. Pray for unity, that we may be one.

“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope at your calling—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.” {Ephesians 4:5-6}