

What is Jesus' desire for us?

If we could think of Jesus praying for us today, what do you think he would pray for you? Have you thought about that?

What would he pray for you and why?

It would be interesting to know what kind of prayer he would pray for you.

If you want to pray for someone who is sitting next to you, what kind of prayer would you wish to pray?

Can you guess what prayer your next person would pray for you?

Or if you pray for your church now, what would you pray for the church?

To become a prosperous church, pray for the church to grow in numbers and spiritual growth? What else? That would be an interesting practice.

We know what we want from God. But what Jesus wants from us might be different from our perspective, unless he tells us.

There are many occasions that Jesus prayed during his time of ministry.

He prayed at the different places and different times of the day. Early in the morning, daytime, and nighttime. He prayed alone and prayed with his disciples.

Today's passage is one of the longest and most important prayers that Jesus prayed just before he faced the crucifixion and death on the cross.

We can find out that in chapter 17, he prayed for himself, he prayed for the disciples, and he prayed for future disciples, including us.

This prayer is regarded as a fine example of intercession prayer of Jesus.

We would know what Jesus prayed when he prayed his intercession prayer.

He prayed for himself first that he would glorify God by glorifying himself on the cross. Jesus regarded that the death on the cross is a way of glorifying God because it is the will of God.

So that he prayed to God that he would complete his work on the cross.

Also, Jesus prayed for his disciples to be one. Not only the disciples, but the unity of the future disciples as well, which is us.

This would be his last prayer before his death and ministry.

It is still a part of the Lord's Prayer; and unity would be the last thing that Jesus prayed for the disciples and us.

We, his disciples, must be ONE as He and the Father are one.

Also, as God dwells in us, we together must dwell in Him.

Oneness, unity is his central prayer point for us before He walked to the cross.

To be one with God, one with others, and God would be one another as well. So that all are one and one is in all.

This relationship between three is interrelated with each other.

John uses an image of Jesus' relationship with the disciples to explain unity in John's gospel chapter 17.

First, God offered us a relationship through Jesus. Whoever wishes to come to Jesus could have the relationship with God. So, Jesus came into the world.

And through the death of Jesus on the cross, we have the relationship with God. through this relationship, we become one with God, one with Jesus.

So that as the Father and he are one, so we ought to be one with one another in our church or in our community.

When John mentioned the unity, it means inclusiveness in which no one and nothing is left out.

Even if what we affirm is different, even if our opinions are different and our background is different, the level of faith is different, but no one is left out, no one is behind, no one is left out by the grace, mercy, and forgiveness of God.

That is what unity is about. It is not one of the political parties that represent Australia. But this is what Jesus prays for us.

It is not a spiritual or intellectual unity only. But it is to be as embodied as God was in Christ.

It is more than saying that we are in one boat, but we are connected and interrelated on the basis of the event of Jesus Christ.

Do you know what is the best relationship in the world, the most precious relationship ever? The relationship through the blood.

We are related with God through the blood of Jesus on the cross, through the blood that he shed on the cross for us.

One of my favourite things is a tree, especially a redwood tree; I personally have seen tall redwood trees in Korea. Also, there are big, huge redwood trees in California National Park, and I have seen them on TV.

Anyhow, the huge redwood trees in Korea and California are amazing.

They are the largest living trees on Earth and the tallest trees in the world.

Some of them are 300 feet high and more than 2,500 years old.

You would think that trees that large would have a tremendous root system, reaching down hundreds of feet into the Earth.

But that is not the case. Redwoods have a very shallow root system.

The roots of these trees are, however, intertwined. They are tied in with each other; interlocked. Thus, when the storms come and the winds blow, the redwoods still stand.

With an interlocking root system, they support and sustain each other.

They need one another to survive. I love these redwood trees. I love the way they interact together for living.

God has given us His Church, which is the body of Christ on earth. When one is baptized into Christ, one is baptized into the body of Christ. Through Christ, we are bound together in a community of faith. Belonging to Christ, we belong to each other.

Fellowship with Christ means fellowship with each other. Community of faith. This is our God-given support system.

In this system, we are called to be one so that the love that is in God may be in us.

And Jesus will dwell in us, and we are in Him. We are there for each other in our community.

Jesus prayed for us to be one, one with Him and one with each other; and He desires for us to have a strong connection with love and forgiveness.

How do we continue to be united, or be connected to God and to each other, and how would the world know that we are one and we are uniting disciples of Jesus?

There are many ways we can be united and stay connected in unity. But what Jesus insists on in his passage is when we recognize Christ in one another, accept and serve each other in Christ's name. That is when we can increase our unity, which Jesus prayed for.

The unity is not an option that we can choose for life; it is not an extra that is needed for a good lifestyle, but it is the essence of what it means to be in the fellowship of Christ.

This shared life is not something that we save for the life hereafter, but it is the life that needs to be found where we live.

And our challenge is how can we extend the fellowship of Christ to be lived out not only in our relationships, but also in our communities.

How can we be a witness of Christ among the community that we are called upon?

That is Jesus' last prayer for us. That is what Apostle Paul sees and tells in Acts 1:8. "When the Holy Spirit comes, you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

It is something that we need to demonstrate for people who may not know the love and generosity of God.

The unity is a way of telling others that we belong to God and that God is in us.

The word this morning tells us that we should pray for ourselves, and it gives an idea of what we should pray about the church.

I have a clear mind about what I should pray for my children and the person next to my seat?

To be one with God and with each other. We shall pray that Jesus continues to live in us, and we live in him.

So that we have a life in Jesus, the love of God may dwell in us continually, and people might see Jesus as well as the love of God in us through our actions and our being.

Jesus said that we, the disciples, should be one, as the Father and he are one, that is what Jesus desires for us in his prayer for us.

Amen.

