

Jesus' Heart (John 17:1-26)

One of the most personal things you can do is come alongside someone as they pray, to be given permission to listen in as they express their greatest concerns and desires. That's exactly what we're invited to do in John 17. To hear Jesus' desires and make them our own - to hear Jesus' heart, what he wants most of all, and allow it to shape ours.

1. Jesus prays for himself (John 17:1-8)

We're invited into a conversation that's been happening for all eternity.

V3 "know" = not simply a head knowledge. An intimate, experiential knowledge of the one true God.

2. Jesus prays for his disciples (John 17:9-19)

V11 UNITE THEM
V15 PROTECT THEM
V17 SET THEM APART

John Stott (The Cross of Christ): *"He (Jesus) did not stay in the safe immunity of His heaven. Instead He emptied himself of His glory and humbled himself to serve. He actually entered our world. He took our nature, lived our life and died our death. He could not have identified with us more closely than he did... And now he calls us to enter other people's worlds, as he entered ours... We are called to enter other people's social and cultural reality: into their thought - world, struggling to understand their misunderstandings of the gospel, and into the pain of their alienation, weeping with those who weep. And this without compromising our Christians beliefs, values and standards."*

3. Jesus prays for those who will believe their message (for us) (John 17:20-26)

Jesus prays we would be "one" - that the overflow of our union with him and the love we've received, would shape our love for one another. The reason? VV21, 23

QUESTIONS (Pray, read the passage and pick 4-5 questions to discuss. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide.)

1. Read John 17:1-19. The first section of this prayer is a celebration and a request. What is Jesus celebrating and what is he requesting? What do verses 3 and 5 affirm about Jesus?
2. What particular concerns does Jesus bring before the Father regarding his disciples in VV11-17? Describe the three primary requests Jesus makes. Which one resonates with you most?
3. Why doesn't Jesus want to take his disciples out of the world? What does he mean when he says they are not "of" it? See John 17:14-16
4. Why is this prayer considered Jesus' "High Priestly Prayer"? See John 17:19; Hebrews 4:14-16
5. Read John 17:20-26. Jesus prays *"for those who will believe their message"* – for us! What specifically is on Jesus' heart when he prays for you and me and all his followers of every generation? Why did Jesus consider this so vital? See VV21, 23 and John 13:34-35
6. How have we as Christians today both failed and succeeded to live out this particular prayer? What specific ways can we show oneness with other Christians? What steps can we take to grow in unity (oneness) here within Local Church St. Pete?
7. In V26, Jesus prayed for the love he shared with the Father to be "in" his followers. Don't move on too quickly from that request. How does this request encourage you?
8. What one aspect of Jesus' prayer is impacting you the most or is most significant to you? Why? How would you like Jesus' desires and heart to shape yours?

Spend some time praying through the very requests Jesus made for his followers.

"Jesus, we want to live united, set apart and sent. We want your love to be visible and undeniable."