

Prophetic Prayers of the Master Builder

by Denny Kenaston

God desires that people know He is the Lord, and the church must be built on Christ.

Duration: 1:12:04

Scripture: Isaiah 62:6-7, John 13:34-35, John 14:16-17, John 15:5, John 16:13, John 17:1

Topics: "Prophetic Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, Brother Denny emphasizes the importance of having a heart that is changed by God. He encourages listeners to allow God to work in their lives and to be zealous in their faith. He highlights the need for churches to be testimonies of God's saving power and to impact their communities. Brother Denny also emphasizes the importance of prayer and building our lives on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the free will offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. I was thinking about Brother Aaron's meditation and one little phrase caught my attention.

And it's the heart of God. It's always the heart of God. And ye shall know that I am the Lord.

See, that's all God wants. You know, we talk about church and we talk about building a church and having a church. You know, all God wants is that we will know that He is the Lord.

That's it. That's all He wants. And therefore, He has laid out very clearly in the Word of God the methods by which we shall follow that when that church is built, everyone will turn around and say, It's the Lord! It's the Lord! It's just the Lord! That's exactly what God wants.

Hallelujah. He doesn't want man to get any of the attention. He doesn't want man to get any of the glory.

He wants man to turn around and say, It's the Lord! It's the Lord! And God is pleased with that and looks down with a smile. So may God help us in these things. We want to continue to follow the theme that we began last evening, speaking about church principles in the New Testament.

I'm not exactly sure what title to give to it. But I was thinking about last night's message as we came through the day today and the definition that was given last night of a life that is in Christ. And surely I think we all know and agree that that's the only way that a church of Jesus Christ can be built is by a group of people who have a life that is in Christ Jesus.

That's the only way that it can work. You know, I thought about Christ. You know, we sing the song, On Christ the solid rock I stand, All other ground is sinking sand.

But, you know, I wonder sometimes if we don't sing that song more as a theology than a reality. You know, it's not just talking about a theology of Christ. It's not on Christ, the theology of Christ.

The solid rock I stand in is on Christ Himself. He is the solid rock that I'm supposed to be standing on. And if I'm standing on Him, He is the rock of my salvation.

He is the rock that was in the wilderness. He is the one that they drank honey out of. He is the one.

It's Christ Himself. Oh, we sing that song. I mean, we just love to whoop up the theology of that one.

It's Christ and only Christ. And it's His righteousness. And I'm justified in Him.

And that's true. I am justified in Him. But did you get the in Him lately? I'm justified in Him.

On Christ the solid rock I stand. Well, when Jesus said, On this rock I will build my church. He was talking about Himself.

Amen? He is the rock. He is the rock of Gibraltar. When you compare Peter with Christ, it's a little stone and a big rock of Gibraltar.

And He's the one that we're supposed to build the church on. On this rock I will build my church. You know, it says in Psalm 127 and verse 1, Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.

Oh, what a commentary of American Christianity today. They labor in vain that build it. They're spinning their wheels.

They're doing everything you can imagine to fill the building up with people. But that's not what God is looking for. They labor in vain that build it.

Except the Lord be in the midst and build the church. Beautiful word. And I studied that word labor in vain.

It means empty labor. Empty labor. Going through the motions.

Oh, may God deliver us from empty labor. You know, and I thought about it as I meditated my way through the day to day and I thought about some of the things that I said last night, you know. We're pretty tough on the evangelical Christianity last night, you know.

And everybody said, Amen. But you know what? There's some pretty dead churches around. In the plain churches too.

Pretty dead ones. No life. No fire.

No zeal. No burden for souls. Just kind of going through the motions.

Going to church. Singing the songs. Hearing the sermon.

Going back home again. Oh, I remember that beautiful testimony of the late George Brunk who is now in heaven. I remember the testimony that he gave.

He was a Mennonite minister and he went to church Sunday by Sunday and went through one of those dry services where everybody sang the same songs and he got up and gave the same old message. Only that Sunday, God had been working in his heart and he was up to here with a lifeless Christianity. He came home from the Sunday morning service and he told his wife, he said, I'm getting in my closet and I'm either coming out of that closet a different man or I'm not going to get up into the pulpit next Sunday morning.

Goodbye. And he shut his closet door. I'm not sure how long he stayed in there, but he stayed in there a long time seeking God for the reality of the grace of God in his life.

That old, that young man did. When he came out of that closet, God had changed him into another man. He was not the same and he was never the same ever since then.

And revival broke out in Mennonite churches all over the United States. And God breathed some life into some dead bones back in the 1950s and the 1960s. But that's a long time ago, brothers and sisters.

That's a long time ago. Maybe some more of us preachers need to crawl into our closet and say, I'm not going to come out until God anoints me with the Holy Ghost and changes me into another man. And I'm not sure why I'm saying all of this.

None of it's in my notes. But I'm sure the Lord knows what we need to hear this evening. You know, the Lord is not building every church, is He? We fool ourselves if we think that that dry, lifeless form is the church of Jesus Christ, the church that Jesus built.

We fool ourselves. We deceive ourselves. It's not.

So, while we're tough on the evangelicals last night, it's good for us to take a little evaluation ourselves, brothers and sisters. You know, there's two sides of the ditch on the straight and narrow way. Two sides.

You can fall off and go into liberalism. You can get off on the other side and go into dead formalism. And I'm telling you, both of them are off the straight and narrow way.

The straight and narrow way is a holy walk with a holy God. That's what it is. That's the straight and narrow way.

And until we get there, I don't care how many things we do right. We're off! It's a holy walk with a holy God, with a fire burning, a holy fire burning in our souls. That's the straight and narrow way that Jesus talked about.

Hallelujah! Every mile of that straight and narrow road has two miles of ditch on it. Don't forget it. You can go either way you want.

And there are many examples. Then I thought as we were meditating a bit about the words of Jesus who said, on this rock I will build my church. And I thought, who is the I? Think about that for a moment.

Who is this I who said, I will build my church? Who is this? He's the King of Glory. He's the Ancient of Days. He's the God of Heaven.

He's the Creator of all things. He's the King of the Universe. And He has some credentials.

Look around you. Gaze up at the stars, some beautiful starry night. Look around at the creation around you.

I mean, this God who said, I will build my church, He's got some good credentials. He knows how to build. And when you begin to realize, who God is, and His power, and His grace, and His unlimited ability, it seems a very small thing for Him to build a church upon the earth if He only has some yielded vessels.

It's a very small thing. And I thought about this too. He's the architect.

He planned the whole thing out. He's the blueprint. It's all found right in here.

He's the foundation. Other foundation can no man lay. He's the chief cornerstone by which every other part of the building fitly frames together.

He is the building. And He is the builder. Why? That Christ may be all and all.

That's it. Oh, the sooner we learn that, brothers and sisters, that this whole matter of the Christian life, this whole matter of the church, this whole matter of the testimony of the church upon the earth, it's all about Jesus, and it has nothing to do with us. All we are is simply servants.

All we are is simply vessels that can yield to the Master's hand and be a vessel in His hand that He can use, that He can work through. That's all what it is. And wherever God finds that, He can do something.

I'm telling you, He can do something. So this evening, we want to just continue our theme and want to follow this line of thought this evening. We want to look at the prophetic prayers of the Master Builder this evening.

The prophetic prayers of the Master Builder. Do you know that? Do you know those prayers? Have you ever looked at those prophetic prayers? That the Master Builder prayed? Jesus prayed a prophetic prayer. Jesus prayed a prayer in John chapter 17, which has a lot to do with this whole matter of church life and building church.

He prayed a prayer there in John chapter 17. But this prayer was a prophetic prayer. He was prophesying as He was praying, prophesying into the future, and that prophetic prayer reaches all the way down to us in 2004.

It's a beautiful prayer. We want to look at it here this evening. So if you want to, you can open your Bibles to John chapter 17, and let me just read a couple of verses for you while you're turning there.

I believe that the prayer that Jesus prayed in John chapter 17, it's also a promise. Because when Jesus prays, He gets His prayers answered, and therefore if His prayer is answered, that thing's as good as gold. It's already ours if we will only believe it.

It's like all the other promises in the Bible. They're all yea and amen in Christ Jesus, brothers and sisters, tonight. But these words come to my heart out of 2 Peter 1, where Peter says, Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, according as His divine power hath given unto us.

All things that pertain unto life and godliness, all things, brothers and sisters, that pertain to life and godliness, they're already given unto us according to or out of the divine reservoir of His power. It's given unto us through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises. We want to look at some of those this evening, brothers and sisters, some of the exceeding great and precious promises that are given to the children of God in this New Testament age.

Now, we're going to read John chapter 17 and then we're going to meditate our way down through the chapter. But I want you to consider before we read John chapter 17 what John 17 is. You could put it in a whole.

You could take John chapter 13 and go all the way to John chapter 17 and say, this is one whole sermon. Christ is spending the last few hours with His precious disciples. John chapter 13 is the Last Supper.

John chapter 13, He washes His disciples' feet. John chapter 13, He teaches them about love, the kind of love that they need to have in this New Testament day. He gives them the new commandment of love that they should love one another as He has loved them.

And He's going to show us in just a few chapters how He does love them when He goes to the cross. His heart overflows to them as He teaches them in John chapter 14 about the Holy Ghost, about how the Comforter is going to come and how they're going to need to stand in the midst of all kinds of trials. He moves into John chapter 15 and gives them that beautiful teaching about abiding in the vine and tells them, I am the vine.

He moves on from there to John chapter 16 and gives them some more teaching about the things that are to come and some more teaching about the Spirit of God and the Holy Ghost coming upon them. And then, after all those things that He teaches them, it's like, okay, now it's time for the closing prayer. And it's interesting, you know, if you've ever noticed closing prayers, you know when a preacher prays at the end of a message, he often prays and lightly touches him his way all the way through the sermon that he just gave.

You study 13, 14, 15 and 16 and then go through and study John chapter 17 and you'll find out that the preacher prayed his way through the sermon that he just finished in those four chapters before. Beautiful! I just meditated my way through those chapters this afternoon and saw, there it is, there it is, there it is again, there's some more of what he prayed, and all the way through those chapters I saw Jesus was praying the very things that He taught His disciples there in the last hours of His life. So we want to look at those this evening.

Let's begin by reading in John chapter 17. These words speak Jesus and lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, Father... He lifted up His eyes and Jesus did that a lot, you know. He knew His Father so well that He just talked to Him with His eyes open.

He talked to Him without bowing His head. He talked to Him while He was just walking down the road. He just kind of went in and out, talked to His disciples, then He talked to His Father, then He talked to His disciples, then He talked to His Father.

And this is one of those situations. He just lifted up His eyes and said, Father, the hour has come. Glorify Thy Son that Thy Son also may glorify Thee.

Notice the motivation of Jesus all the way to the end. It's not about Jesus. It's about His Father.

As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. Brothers and sisters, it hasn't changed today.

This is life eternal. Not that you do these certain things or that you don't do these certain things. This is life eternal.

Not that you go to church every Sunday. Not that you keep the rules and the regulations of the church that you go to every Sunday. This is eternal life.

Jesus said, what is eternal life? That they may know Thee. That's eternal life. We must measure our experience by the words of Jesus.

Do we have eternal life? Sixty million people in America claim to have eternal life. I said that last evening. What is eternal life? That they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.

It's beautiful. We'll read you another verse here. The same John who wrote those words recording the prayer of Jesus wrote these words in 1 John 5 and verse 20 in conclusion of the book that we started looking at last evening.

And we know that the Son of God is come and has given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true. And we are in Him that is true. Even in His Son, Jesus Christ.

This is the true God and eternal life. Isn't that beautiful? But listen to the last words that Jesus gives, that John gives in 1 John. After making that beautiful conclusion, He says these words.

Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen. And may I just give you a modern translation of those words.

Keep yourself from anything that keeps you from being in Him who is eternal life. That's a modern translation of those words. Keep yourselves from idols.

Oh, if there was ever a day in an age when we need to re-evaluate what is idolatry, it is this day that we live in in America. We have very sophisticated idolatry in America. Oh no, we don't dance around an idol like they do in Africa and places.

We don't do that. We don't paint our faces with all kinds of stripes and ugly things and put weird looking hats on our masks over our heads and dance around these idols. No, no.

We are very sophisticated heathen here in America. But nevertheless, very much given over to idolatry in many, many ways here in America. And we that are in this room are not exempt from those temptations

brothers and sisters.

That which takes my heart away from that sweet and beautiful knowing relationship is idolatry. Too strong? It's the truth. It's the truth.

So Jesus goes on. I have glorified thee on the earth. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

It must have been a beautiful, satisfying word to give to the Father. I have finished the work that you gave me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Awesome words. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world. There's the ecclesia, brothers and sisters.

The men that thou gavest me out of the world. That's the ecclesia. The called out ones.

Called out of the world. Called unto Christ. Called out of the world.

Called into the assembly of the Christians. Those that you've given me out of the world. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.

And they have kept thy word. Now, they have known that all things whatsoever thou has given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.

And they have received them and known surely that I came out from thee. And they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them.

Look at those beautiful words. I pray for them. And look at verse twenty, before we go back.

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also, which shall believe on me through their word. That puts us in the prayer, brothers and sisters. I pray for them.

I pray not for the world, but for them which thou has given me. For they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.

And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world. And I come to thee, Holy Father. Keep through thine own name those whom thou has given me.

Now, that's the first prophetic prayer that Jesus specifically prayed for these men. Look what he prayed for them. I pray, Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou has given me.

Jesus promises to keep us. He promises to keep us. Oh, you say, sometimes my life doesn't feel like Jesus is keeping me.

That's not his fault. That may be our own fault. That may be that, you know, like we said last night, maybe things aren't very good for us right now, and in the midst of that we are wondering why we are not being kept by the power of God.

But Jesus prayed, keep them whom thou has given me. These prayers are sure for us today. They are not just for those back there.

They fall upon our own hearts and our own lives this evening. And as we consider the whole subject of church and having church and what is the church, it's good to know that a prayer was prayed, a prayer that was answered already, a prayer that is being answered even up until this day, a prayer that God will keep us. We need to be inspired by that.

We need to be encouraged by it. These beautiful prayers are still being released today. Keep them, Jesus said.

And that word keep means to watch guard. It means to watch guard over them. And God does watch guard over His church.

The Bible says the church is the apple of His eye. It's very precious to Him. The church is a bride for His Son.

The Father is going to watch guard over His church. Why? Because the church is the apple of His eye. It's a prophetic prayer to preserve the church of Jesus Christ.

You say, it doesn't seem that way when I look around me. Well, that may be so. We live in sad times.

But that doesn't change the prophetic prayer that Jesus prayed. It only causes us or it should cause us to stop and say, Lord, why aren't You preserving us? Amen? Why aren't You preserving us? You know, there's a lot of things that we can do with all the things that happen in church, you know. We can say, well, it's just not the way it used to be.

Well, the people don't want to do what they used to want to do. Well, people are just gospel hardened, you know, and they don't want to hear the truth. And, well, the standard's too high and the people just won't come to us.

Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Let's get honest and say, if these things are not so, maybe there's something wrong with us.

It's so easy to point to the guy that walked out the door and say, yeah, well, he just didn't want and he didn't and they didn't want this and they refused that. Oh, wait a minute. Maybe it's us.

But Jesus prayed, keep them. He said, well, we had a bunch of young people that just left and went out into the world. Jesus prayed, keep them.

Watch guard over them, Father. You say, well, it's sad to look around us. Yeah, it is sad to look around us, but let's look at the Word of God.

Because if we will be in him, all the promises in the book are mine. Every dot, every title, every line, they're all amen in Christ Jesus. Amen.

But we need to define what in Christ Jesus is, don't we? A promise, a prophetic prayer. Keep them through thine own name. And there's power in that name.

I'll tell you there's power in that name. Those who thou has given me that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name.

Those that thou gave us me, I have kept and none of them is lost but the son of perdition that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee and these things I speak in the world that they might have joy. There's the second prayer, prophetic prayer that Jesus prayed.

Give them joy. Not only do I ask you to keep them in the midst of this confused world, but I'm asking you also, Father, that you will give them joy in the midst of this confusing world. Oh, what a powerful testimony joy is.

Joy is magnetic. Joy is drawing. Joy is like salt that creates desire in the hearts of those who don't have it.

Give them joy, Jesus prayed. Give them joy. And oh my, I was so thrilled as I, remembering some of the things I said last night about joy and then meditating my way through chapter 13 and all the way through 17 this afternoon, I found it again and again and again in there.

Joy! Joy! And it's the joy like Kenny was talking about last night and again this evening. It's that joy that's deeper than a feeling. It's a joy that's there even when you lost your loved one.

It's a joy that's there even when you're having some financial setback in your life. It's that joy that is there even when things don't go the way you thought maybe they should go. It's that kind of joy that does miraculous things in the heart of a world around us.

Joy that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. Beautiful. I have given them thy word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world even as I am not of the world.

Let's go on to the next one. What does Jesus pray? He speaks about them being in the world, and it's true. We've been taken out of the world, but yet we have a promise that he will keep us in this world.

Amen? It doesn't mean that we're supposed to run to the mountains somewhere and hide from everybody. No! Listen to what Jesus prays. I pray, verse 15, not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

Listen to that. That prophetic prayer that Jesus prayed. You say, that's not my experience, Brother Denny.

That may be so. The world is a powerful draw to me, Brother Denny. It may be so.

I have real struggles when I go out into the world. That may be so. But Jesus prayed, I pray, Father, that thou wouldest not take them out of the world.

You know why? Because he loves souls. Amen. He loves souls.

He's left us here so we can win souls. He's left us here that we might walk in this world, that we might win the people of this world because God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. So, it's very clear here.

Don't send them to the mountains. Don't stick them in a monastery somewhere. Don't make them so separated that they can't reach out to a world around them.

Don't do that, Father. I pray this instead, Father. Keep them from the evil while they're in this world.

Now that's a testimony of the grace of God. Keep them from the evil while they're in this world. You say, well, it's not that way for me.

It's not that way in our church. It's not that way with our people. That may be so.

But that doesn't mean that God's wrong. It means we have to go back to the drawing board and say, Lord, what's wrong? Why are we losing our young people to the world? When Jesus prayed, I pray that thou wouldest keep them from the evil. That's a promise, brother.

Sister, keep them from the evil. I saw the title to a book some time ago. It was kind of a plea.

And maybe it's your plea too, but here was the title of the book. How in this world can I be holy? That was the title to the book. How in this world can I be holy? There's only one way.

There's only one way. God has us in a corner. We're going to do it His way or it won't happen.

But you can be holy in this unholy world. It's the in Him experience of the believer. Keep them from evil.

Or and keep them from the evil one. I like the words of Jesus when He said, the Prince of this world is going to be judged. And there's nothing in me.

He has nothing in me. Can we say that tonight? The devil has nothing in me. That's God's will.

That's God's will. That you walk through this world and it's not a powerful magnet that's constantly drawing you. You see what people do when they go through the world like that and they have experiences like that.

Then what they tend to do is just run off and hide. Run off into the mountains. Go far away from everybody else.

Get way out in the country. Stay out there. Go to town once a month.

That's not the answer. You can't run away. You can't change your life that way.

That's not the answer. You need God to do something in your heart. God can keep you from the evil.

And it's His will to keep you from the evil in the midst of an evil wicked world. And we'll say more about that tomorrow evening. So I'll force myself to move along here.

By the grace and power of God we have a promise to preserve us in the midst of this world. Do we believe it, brothers and sisters? Let's believe this prophetic prayer. It's already been answered.

Do we believe it? Number four. Notice in verse 17 through 19. Sanctify them.

I'm sorry. Let's read verse 16. That's good.

They are not of the world even as I am not of the world. God help us. Then He goes on and prays another prayer.

And this is His prayer. Sanctify them. Sanctify them.

Wow! Not just keep them from evil, but make them holy in the midst of this world. Sanctify them. And that word sanctify means set them apart.

Make them holy. Set them apart for your use and for your service. Sanctify them.

Jesus prayed. And that's a beautiful prophetic prayer. And I don't know where you're at tonight as you sit here, but you know, if you're one of those who, like Jesus spoke about there in the Sermon on the Mount, who's hungering and thirsting after righteousness, that's good news.

Sanctify them. Make them holy. Jesus prayed.

Through thy truth, thy word is truth. And also I'd like us to notice verse 19. This is precious.

Listen to the heart of Jesus. And for their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth. How did Jesus sanctify himself? He went to the cross.

That's what he's speaking about there. I am going to the cross. Why? Oh, so that you can all go to heaven when you die.

That's why I'm going to the cross, so you can all go to heaven when you die. No! Praise God! We will get to go to heaven. But Jesus said, I sanctify myself so that they may be sanctified through the truth.

Jesus went to the cross that he might produce through his death, through his burial, through his resurrection and ascension a holy people upon this earth. That's what he was after. Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word.

This is it. The word is truth and we have it. We have the whole thing, not just a little, not just a page, not just a chapter, not just one book.

We have the whole thing. The whole thing. All these chapters belong to me.

I have a Bible and Jesus said, sanctify them. Jesus also said, teach them because we are sanctified through the truth and the word is the truth. But if we don't understand the word, we are not going to be sanctified.

So Jesus also prayed, teach them. Teach them the truth and set them apart by the truth. That's a prophetic prayer.

You know, many times we say, Lord, you know, I want the truth. I want to understand the truth. Teach me the truth.

Listen, he's already prayed the prayer. All the truth you want, you can have. All you have to do is open up your heart to it.

The truth of the word of God. And I'll tell you what, you'll be in for the adventure of your life if you give yourself to the truth that are in this book. This book will change your life.

It will change it. We're going to say more about that tomorrow morning. But Jesus prayed a prayer that they would understand the truth and that they would be sanctified by the truth.

And that prayer, it's been answered. We just need to believe it. We just need to receive it.

We just need to enter into it. We just need to be in the place where we can receive it. With an open heaven, receive the word of God.

Sanctify them and teach them the truth. Alright, let's move on. We read verse 20 already.

So, we realize that this prayer is for us also. But let's look at verse 21 now. Because he's praying something else.

He prays also that they all may be one. As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. Think about that.

A prayer for unity was the prayer that he prayed. He said, well, we don't have unity at our church. He said, well, I don't even have unity in my home.

Jesus said that they may be one. You know what I've often thought many times, brothers and sisters? You know, I hear a lot. I hear a lot about a lot of churches.

Ah, this church is having problems, and this church is struggling, and this one is going through real problems, and had so many people leaving, and you hear those things all the time. Don't you hear them too? Let me see your hands. You hear those stories? Many times I've wondered, what would happen if everybody would just take a week and seek the face of God with fasting, and with prayers, and with tears, and with brokenness, and if everyone would get thoroughly right with God.

I wonder what would happen to their church problems, their church splits, their problems, their young people who left. I wonder what would happen if the whole church would do you know, like they used to do in the Old Testament day? They'd just call a solemn assembly, you know, for three days, and we're just not going to eat anything. I mean, they got serious in the Old Testament, you know? We're not going to eat, and we're not going to drink anything for three days! And we're going to stay in our face before God! But instead, we just throw up our hands, oh well, that's the way it is! And away goes a dozen young people.

Off goes another youth into the world. Jesus said, Father, make them one. But did you notice the text there? How that one takes place.

That they may be one in what? In us! In the Godhead! There's oneness in there! There's oneness in there, there's a glue in there, there's a unity in there that you cannot tear apart! Look at the early church, and that's the way it was with them. They couldn't be divided. The enemy tried everything he could, he couldn't divide them.

Tried to persecute them, couldn't divide them. Tried to scare them, couldn't divide them. Threatened them, couldn't divide them.

Beat them, still couldn't divide them. Why? They were glued together. Why? They were one in the Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ.

And that is power. Unity. A prayer to unify them.

Four or five times in this text as we're reading, it talks about unity and its importance. That the world may know, that the world may know, that the world may know. Unify us, Lord.

That the world may know. You know the devil, he attacks unity. He waits, he watches for this one.

He attacks unity. He sees a group of believers that are moving forward, and they're unified, and they've got a oneness of heart there, and they have the unity that the Spirit of God gives, and the devil watches that, and you know, and that's about all he can do is watch it, but he watches it. He watches, and he waits,

and he watches, and he waits, and he watches, and he waits until there's a little bit of a crack over here, maybe some cardinality settling in, in a group here, or some here in the church.

He watches for that, sees that cardinality, sees the fire beginning to simmer down, you know, and cool, and then he's right there to get in, and what does he do? Divide it! Just divide it! That's all he wants to do, just rip that thing apart! Then the world will not know that that's what he's after, that the world will not find out the glorious liberty of the children of God! So he watches, and he waits for his opportunity. And by the way, when we are unified, that's all he can do, is watch. Huh! Can't do anything else! I get a kick out of it, you know, as I meditate my way through the book of Acts, and see some of the things that happened there, you know, and I mean, the early church, they had the council, and the Sanhedrin, and all those guys, they had them wringing their hands, those guys didn't know what to do, you know, they were pacing their floors, and what shall we do? I mean, a notable miracle was done! What are we going to do with these guys? You know, I just get a kick out of that, but you know, sometimes I think there's another scene behind that scene, that you have to look a little deeper to see, and it's the devil and his angels, and they were doing the same thing, pacing the floor, thinking what are we going to do? We thought we had him, and now he rose from the dead, and he poured out his spirit, and now there's not one of them running around, there's thousands of them running around! What are we going to do with these guys? Can't do anything, just watch, and wait, just watch, and wait, until the fire begins to cool, and some carnality begins to slip in.

Ah, a little more time, and we'll take care of this church, and split that thing right in two. Then the world won't know. But Jesus prayed, oh, Jesus prayed that they would be one.

And that prayer has been answered, brothers and sisters, we just need to make sure that heaven is open over our lives. Ah, let's move on here. He also prayed that they would have union.

In verse 21, that they all may be one, as thou father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. That's union. Union with the Father and with the Son.

That the world may know that thou hast sent me. He prayed that. Bring them into union.

Bring them into that John chapter 15 relationship. Bring them to that place where they are vitally connected to the vine. Bring them to that abiding place in their hearts and in their lives.

And this is prayed for all of these men. This is a prayer that Jesus prays for the church. And, oh, listen, talk about a dream, talk about a vision, a goal, a desire.

My dream, my goal, my desire, is to see a whole body full of believers that are all consecrated, dedicated to God, and completely in union. And they all know how to walk with God in that abiding relationship. What a power that would be! Sorry, it's not that way at our church.

There's people struggling. There's people trying to find their way. But as a pastor, I long for that.

God, bring this whole assembly into union and communion with God. Maybe it's not that way with you tonight. Jesus prayed.

Bring them into union. Father, nothing's going to happen if you don't bring them into union. And I know not everybody can be in the same place, but we can all be sold out to God.

So, some of you can be sold out for five days, and some of us can be sold out for 30 years. But we're all supposed to be sold out to God. Amen? That's the way it ought to be.

God, help us. Bring us into union. That abiding, in Him, relationship.

That makes the body function right, doesn't it? The union is that reality of close fellowship with God. And number nine, he also prayed, put glory on them. Look at verse 22.

And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them. That they may be one, even as we are one. Now, that word glory, as I've studied it in the Bible, all the way through the Bible, it means the manifested presence of God.

The glory of God is the presence of God. You know that? You talk about the tabernacle in the Old Testament, the Bible says, and the glory of God filled the tabernacle. Everybody had to get out.

That's the manifest presence of God. Jesus prayed, put your presence on them. It's the glory.

It's the enthusiasm. It's where God's people get their enthusiasm. It's not the power of positive thinking.

It's not the power of an enthusiastic person, but it is the presence of God which creates a God enthusiasm, an inspiring enthusiasm inside of our hearts. Put the glory on them. Good prayer.

Oh, what a prayer for us to pray. Father, put the glory on us as a church. You ever pray that? It's a precious promise.

It's already been answered. Lord, have mercy on us tonight. Well, let's move on here.

We have a few more things to look at. What else did he pray? He prayed, make them a testimony. Make them a testimony.

Are you a testimony, my friend? Are you? Make them a testimony. Hear these words. That the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them and thou hast loved me.

Make them a testimony so that the world can know that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. That's it. A testimony.

Something different. Believe me, something different. Oh, you say, I don't want to be different.

Listen, friend, if you don't want to be different, you can't be a Christian. Can I be that bold to make such a statement as that? If you don't want to be different, you can't be a Christian. Because a Christian is the most otherworldly thing that walks on this earth.

And if you're going to be otherworldly, you are not going to be like this world. Father, make them a testimony. Something that the world can look at.

Something the world can see and say, Wow! Look at that! The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. And look what He did in Him. Hallelujah! That's the way it's supposed to be.

God wants to so change our lives by the way He works in our lives. By the fire that He puts in our hearts. By the zeal that we have in our own lives.

That a world looks on and says, Wow! God did something there. That guy is not the same. Amen, brother? Amen? I mean, I know Him.

I know what He used to be. I know how He used to be. I know how He used to act.

I knew the way He used to be. He is so changed. Yeah? The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

And I am a testimony of that. Make them a testimony, Jesus said. God is so concerned about His testimony upon the earth.

Are you willing to be one of those testimonies? Are you willing to have a church that will be a testimony that the Father sent the Savior? Sent the Son to be the Savior of the world? Are you willing to be one of those kind of churches? That shapes the community where you live? Where souls get saved? Where if somebody comes hanging around the church, they get born again in a couple of weeks? Are you willing to have a church like that? Make them a testimony, Jesus prayed. A testimony that honors the Father and the Son and represents His holy character. Make them a testimony, Lord.

That's what Jesus prayed. Ah, there's so many ways that we can look at this little prayer that was prayed. We could say, this is the will of God.

Or we could say, this is already done. The God who calls the things that be not as though they already are has already called these things into being. Let's get in the right place and stay there.

We shall have it. And if you don't believe that, I challenge you to meditate your way through this chapter and then lay it beside the book of Acts and just go through the book of Acts, chapter by chapter, and see how many of these prayers were answered in the book of Acts just a few days later. Every one of them are so beautifully answered in the book of Acts where Christ began to build His church.

Every one of them has been beautifully answered. That'd make a good Bible study for you too, wouldn't it? I like what Isaiah said. I think it's in Isaiah 62.

I will give Him no rest until He makes Jerusalem a praise or a testimony upon this earth. I like that prayer. That's a prayer that we could pray.

I will give God no rest until He makes our church a praise and a testimony upon this earth. And I think that's talking about prayer. Well, let's see what else He prayed.

He prayed that the Father would take Him to heaven. Amen. Well, we do get to go to heaven, don't we? Amen.

We do get to go to heaven too. That's beautiful. Verse 22 and following, In the glory which Thou gavest me, I have given them that they may be one even as we are one, I and them and Thou and me, that they may be made perfect in one, that the world may know that Thou hast sent me and hast loved them and Thou hast loved me.

Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which Thou hast given me, for Thou loves me before the foundation of the world. You know what He's saying? Father, not only do I pray all these prayers for these men that You've given to me, but I also pray that You will take them where I will be so that someday they can see all the glory that You gave to me

before the world even began. Brothers and sisters, you know they talk about streets of gold and mansions and rich places to live and all of those things, but my friend, that's not what heaven is all about.

It's Jesus! We get to see Jesus in all of His glory and it'll last for all of eternity! Hallelujah! We get to go to heaven when all this is done. Glory! Yes, we do! We do get to go to heaven. It's alright to want to go to heaven, but Jesus didn't just come and die so that you could get a one-way ticket to heaven.

He came to change us. He came to change our lives. He came to use us to raise up a testimony upon this earth.

He came to fill us with His Spirit. He came to pick us up and use us. He came to use us that we might win others to Christ, and yes! Hallelujah! When it's all said and done! Glory! We get to go to heaven! If we're faithful, if we're faithful, and we love God with all of our heart, and we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.

Hallelujah! Amen? I mean a lively faith in Jesus Christ. You know? Maybe your faith is kind of a twiddle-your-thumbs kind of faith, you know? Hmmm... Hmmm... Waiting to go to heaven! Someday I'm going! Hmmm... No you aren't! You're not going! If we hold the beginning of our confidence and rejoicing steadfast to the end, we're going! I praise God! When it's all done, we get to go to heaven! Amen? Amen! It is there! Heaven! For all eternity! Jesus! Precious Jesus! In all of His glory! We'll get to know Him like we've never known Him! It'll take us an eternity to get to know the many beautiful sides of the Lord Jesus Christ, and all of His beauty, and all of His attributes, and all of His glory, for all of eternity! It's going to be ours someday! Hallelujah! Take them to heaven, Jesus prays. And some of them got to go in the book of Acts, didn't they? Remember Stephen? I see heaven opened in the Son of Man, standing at the right hand of the Majesty on High! Wow! He got to see that glory right off, didn't He? Well, let's enter into that prayer also, brothers and sisters.

And number 12, the 12th thing that He prayed, and maybe there's a few more in here that you could find, but I found 12. He goes on to pray, O righteous Father! Oh, it's just like His heart is overflowing here! The burden of His heart! O righteous Father! The world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me. And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them.

The last thing He prayed there is, Father, fill them with love. Give them the love wherewith You have loved Me. Give them that love also.

That's a sacrificial love. That is an affectionate love, by the way, also. It's an affectionate love that goes so deep, that it's a sacrificial love, that it's willing to die.

A sacrificial love, an affectionate love, a love that is seen, a love that accepts the love that the Father had for Him, Jesus prayed. Give that to them. This was so sweet to me, I just read it to you.

In John 14, He said these words. John 14, 23, Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him. That's beautiful, isn't it? The love that the Father had for the Son, the Son now also has for you and I. And that love needs to go out this way.

It needs to go out to a world around us. That's the kind of love. Now, this is a beautiful picture of a church, isn't it? We could say, wow, that's a church, and that is a church.

What we've been looking at this evening is a definition of what the church of Jesus Christ is supposed to be. Consider with me in conclusion here this evening three points of affirmation, three points in the book of Acts. This very prayer was clearly answered, and we see it all the way through the book of Acts.

Number two, open up the history books and read of revival, of revivals in history, in the past, when God stepped down from heaven and was in the midst of His people. Guess what? All these points are always there. And number three, go across the ocean with me to the church in Russia or the church in China, which, by the way, in China is a persecuted church, and guess what you find? You find God fulfilling every one of these points in the midst of that persecuted church.

There is such a oneness there. There's such a love there. They have such a power there.

There's such a strength there. They go out into the world there. They reach out to a world.

They're told to keep their mouths shut, but they cannot help themselves. They're filled with joy while they sit in a prison cell. They're full of love.

They know God. They don't really care where they go soul winning. They go out into the world, even as Jesus went out into the world.

They're sent just like Jesus was sent. And if they get thrown into prison, it doesn't bother them. They just say, praise God.

My next evangelistic field has just opened up in front of me. You know, it's just like being sent to a mission field, you know. You're going to be sent to Africa.

You're going to go to Indonesia. You're going to go to China. You're going to go to Germany.

Well, they just find themselves in a prison cell and say, praise God. I just got my next assignment from the Lord. Time to get busy.

Praise God. We're going to win souls while we're here in the prison. Hallelujah.

How could they be like that? This prayer was being answered in their lives. And I'm here to tell you tonight that this prayer becomes a reality wherever there is a group of people who will build their lives on the Lord Jesus Christ like we said last evening. This prayer becomes a reality.

And to the degree that we build our lives or we don't build our lives, to the degree that our hearts are filled with love for God and love for souls, to that degree, this prayer is being answered in our lives and in our midst. If we're in a church, it's being answered. That's the way it works.

Do you ever hear the term praying through? How many ever heard that term? Praying through? You know what it means to pray through? It means you pray till you know you got through to God and that God is answering your prayer. Jesus prayed through on this one. It's already been answered.

Oh, that we would just get underneath the bucket of the blessing of the answer to this prayer which has already been prayed and received the inspiration and the encouragement and the instruction and be established in it. This is the prophetic prayer of the master builder and he prayed through and he already got the answer. My friend, what are we waiting for?

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