I. **INTRO:**

A. 2 announcements; & Present 2009 Christmas Program:

B. **Wed night topic** (Brushing up on Basics Series): “Lord, do You hear when I pray?”

C. **Intro Illustration:** In his sweep of world domination, *Alexander the Great* was marching to Jerusalem. The citizens of that city waited in terror, grimly aware of the might of Alexander’s army & the trail of blood it splattered in its wake.

The *Jewish historian Josephus* recounted the details of that fearful moment when the Greeks met face-to-face with the Jews. Outside the walls of Zion stood *Jaddua*, the high priest, surrounded by many priests & citizens, all dressed in solid white robes. Jaddua wore a liturgical headdress bearing the name of God on a golden plate.

Unexpectedly, Alexander called his army to a halt & approached the high priest, intrigued not by the man’s office but by the name he so prominently displayed. Puzzled, Alexander told the priest that he had *dreamed this very scene*.

From an old sheath, the priest drew out a well-worn scroll. He showed Alexander chapters 7 & 8 of Daniel’s *prophecy*, written over 200 years before. It was a prophecy which, in symbolic language, foretold that the Greeks would defeat the Persians & that their leader would become great.

Alexander was seeing his own reflection in that prophecy. In a moment of understanding & awe, he not only spared Jerusalem from being pillaged but treated the Jews there with dignity.¹

1. Just as Alexander saw himself in Daniel’s prophecy, so we can see ourselves in Jesus’ prayer in Jn.17.

2. *He doesn’t call us by name, but it is clear that He had each of us in mind* (20)

   a) Scripture talks about us! Let’s eavesdrop on an ancient prayer in our behalf.

II. **JESUS’ 3-FOLD PRAYER FOR YOU!**

A. **INTRO** (20)

B. Here, Jesus’ prayer turned specifically to those who *would come to believe* in Him through the disciples message & testimony. You & me (if you’re a believer)

   1. Jesus prayed for Himself(1-5); prayed for the disciples(6-19); for us(20-26).

¹ Charles Swindoll; John introduction, pg.43.
C. Prayer is pivotal to the spiritual life, as spiritual men of the bible inform us:

1. Jesus instructed us, men always ought to pray and not lose heart.
2. Paul lays out prayer’s priority, first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men.
3. James practically exhorts us, Yet you do not have because you do not ask.
4. Samuel, the godly judge of Israel, declared, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.
5. Paul instructed the Ephesian church, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.

D. Outline: Unity In Diversity, Now! - Diversity in Community, Then! (in heaven)

E. UNITY IN DIVERSITY, NOW! (21-23)

F. In this prayer Jesus asks the Father for unity among His followers.

G. Phrase 3 x’s: “that they all may be one”.

1. We recognize diversity you & I have within us. What we need is unity.
   a) Which became the greatest search in the big 3 (Socrates, Plato, & Aristotle).
   b) Which is why Universities were created, to find “Unity in Diversity”.
   c) Why our coins say “E pluribus unam” “Out of the Many One”.
2. But what Unity is He speaking of here? He’s speaking of a unity of belief. A unity that originates from shared convictions!
   a) In the narthex of an impressive church in Berkeley, Calif, hang huge portraits of influential human leaders: Ghandi, Lincoln, Jesus, Luther, a president, a philosopher. Engraved in bronze above them is a quotation from the bible. It reads, “Ye are all the children of God.” The quote is from Gal.3:26. But the last part of the verse is omitted - “by faith in Christ Jesus.”
   b) Show picture:
   c) I found this t-shirt design which features the symbols of 7 world faiths to express the message “Unity In Diversity”. From left: Crescent Moon(Islam), Dharma Wheel (Buddhism), Omkara (Hinduism), Star of David (Judaism), [Cup of Coffee for Starbucks] Fire (Zoroastrian), Yin-Yang (Taoism), & the Christian Cross.
   d) Belief is what binds us together. Not a vague, nebulous faith, but a very specific faith in Jesus Christ.

H. Jesus doesn’t pray for uniformity (absolute similarity of organization, style, personality, appearance)
   Jesus doesn’t pray for unanimity (absolute agreement of opinion w/in a group of people)
   Jesus doesn’t pray for union (absolute coalition or tight affiliation w/in the ranks of Christianity)
   Jesus prays for unity (oneness of heart, of faith, & of purpose)
1. Fellowship of the new birth transcends all historical & denominational boundaries.

2. Merill C. Tenney (General editor, Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary) in his commentary on John said, “Paul of Tarsus, Luther of Germany, Wesley of England, & Moody of America would find deep unity w/each other, though they were widely separated by time, by space, by nationality, by educational background, & by ecclesiastical connections.”

3. Jesus didn’t pray for uniformity of practice or unanimity of thinking or union between all religious organizations. He prays for unity...a oneness which only the Holy Spirit can bring about. And that can’t be achieved through committee or consensus. Only through faith in & love for Jesus!!!

I. DIVERSITY IN COMMUNITY, THEN (in heaven)! (24-26)

J. In this prayer Jesus asks the Father to secure our destiny.

1. Q: Can you think of a foundation more secure?

K. His prayer was that we be with Him in heaven, where He would be surrounded in glory.

L. The promise of our glory is the promise, almost incredible & only possible by the work of Christ.

1. That Jesus would be pleased for us to be with Him. Imagine with me...the thought that any of us could possibly be a real ingredient in the divine happiness of Jesus! [He so wants us with Him!]

2. We are loved by God, not merely pitied, but delighted in, as an artist delights in his work or a father in a son.

M. Canadian writer Douglas Copeland in his book Life After God wanted to abandon God, & decided he would. But in the end he said, “I’ve come to the conclusion I still need Him. I don’t know how, but I need Him.” At one point he tells the story of him walking in a Botanical Garden. He heard some voices, he saw a group of blind women who were out for a day in the Garden. Then one said, “Am I hearing somebody here?” “Yes maam, I’m here, but don’t be alarmed, I’m just walking by.” She said would you do us a favor? Would you take a photograph of us? For a moment he put his head back & thought is this a joke or what? One woman rummaged through her purse & took out a camera & gave it to him, & they all came next to each other positioned themselves. He took their photo & walked away scratching his head, what was that all about?

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2 Charles Swindoll; John; pg.45

3 Podcast Ravi Zacharias; “What does it Mean to be Human”; 11/25/09 Part 4 of 4.
1. Do you know what that’s all about? They’ll probably get that developed & show it to somebody with eyes. Somebody with eyes will tell them what they were wearing & what they look like, because they’ll remember what they felt & who they were with.

2. One day we’ll stand face to face with God, & look at this world through His eyes. It’ll all make sense. He’ll tell us what we look like & the reflection will be glorious that He made us in His own image. And we’ll remember what we felt & who we were with & finally it will all come together.

N. (25,26) The Father loves the Son. The Son loves us. And we in turn are to love others.

1. This is to be a love that flows deep & wide & passes over any rocks of petty differences.

O. Christian love is visible & tangible. God not only tells us He loves us, He shows it.

1. Rom.5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

2. True love demonstrates, illustrates, proves, confirms, itself!

P. Alexander the Great had a flash of understanding when he caught a glimpse of himself in Scripture. But the glory of personal triumph outshone the glory of God in his eyes, & his moment of clear thinking never blossomed into a lifetime of Christian commitment. :

1. James 1:22-24 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

a) Don’t be an Alexander who takes only a passing glance into the mirror of Scripture. Look diligently into God’s Word & allow it to change you.

2. (25) But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

III. COMMUNION:

A. Bread & Wine: Earth has given & human hands have made.

1. In the R.C. Liturgy of the Eucharist it says:

2. Priest: Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life. All: Blessed be God for ever. 

Priest: Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become our spiritual drink. All: Blessed be God for ever.
a) J.C. (the bread & wine) the source of spiritual life!

3. In 1646, over 100 puritan divines drew up the Confession of Faith in Westminster (thus called the Westminster Confessions). It presents one of the finest concise statements of the Christian faith.
   a) Regarding The Lord’s Supper it says, “Hence it is a badge of Christian profession - a mark of allegiance of a citizen of the kingdom of heaven.”

4. John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace & truth.

B. Unity = oneness of heart, of faith, & of purpose!