

“Unity in Diversity & Diversity in Community!”

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 Daniels 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!!!**²
- 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?**³

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*!