

In The Name of The Lord

John 12: 12-15

"The next day the great crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the King of Israel!" Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written: "Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt." JOH 12:12-15

As Jesus sat on that donkey that day, entering Jerusalem, I wonder if He understood all that was about to take place? We know that His Father knows everything, but in our minds we might wonder did Jesus know the full facts about what was happening that day? When Jesus entered Jerusalem, a series of events begin to take place, which would eventually end with His death and shortly after, His resurrection.

What I would like us to consider right now are some of the events, or, actually, one of the events, which took place in between the time He enters Jerusalem and prior to His execution. This event, was a prayer!

Let's read a very special Prayer Jesus voiced for those who followed Him, including all of us.

Read John 17: 20-26

*"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will **believe in me through their message**, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. **May they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.** I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: **I in them and you in me.** **May they be brought to complete unity** to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*

*"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. **Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me.** I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for Me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."*

What was Jesus praying? Why was He praying it? So many key statements...

As you read this chapter, you can see that Jesus begins by praying for Himself. He knew what was ahead of Him, and what He needed to do. He then prays for those who were His disciples, His followers. He prayed for the added strength they would need as they were to come under persecution for following Him. Finally, the part I want us to consider, Jesus prays for all of the believers. So, let's look just a little closer at what He prayed.

First - Prayer for unity!

*"My prayer is not for them alone. **I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message**, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you."*

The Lord was concerned about how the world was going to see Him and how the world would attack them and try to pull apart His followers. He states, that because of them being under the pressure of living in this world, many might slip away from Him - not only Him - but each other. Jesus knew that even though we may not have come from the same mother or father, in this world, we are all part of the same body, the body of Christ.

Paul wrote in Ephesians 1: 9-10

“And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.”

It was God’s desire, and plan, that we are to come together under one head, one guiding leader, that being Jesus Christ. (***Live in Unity***) Function as one body of believers. Not many factions, often working against each other - or at the very least - not work hand in hand. Rather, we would be His followers, standing as one body in Christ! As it is stated, ***“Bring all things - in heaven and on earth, together under one head, Jesus Christ.”***

Jesus was going to be leaving this world, physically, very soon. He knew this! Thus, He was establishing His plan through His prayer, that God would continue to bring His children together, so that through them, even greater, more mighty works of His power would be proclaimed. That people would see the hand of God working. ***Just as Jesus and the Father are one - so would we be one in Him, Jesus our Lord and Savior.***

Putting into practical terms, what Jesus was suggesting:

- 1. That we would love each other** - even when we don’t agree – that is difficult.
- 2. That we would stand with each other** - even if we are from various and different cultural backgrounds and points of view, we are standing as one.
- 3. That we would seek for ways to build each other up** - not do as the world does, tearing people apart and down.
- 4. That we might support the work of the body** - His kingdom, even the work of those who might not act, dress, look or sing the songs we like. Yet, as long as the Word of God is lifted up and Jesus is being preached, they are our brothers in Christ.
- 5. That we would pray for, give toward, and do what we can** to make certain God’s work succeeds, no matter what country, nation or portion of this world it is in. Part of unity!

Let me stress - Unity does not mean uniformity! Each of us has something slightly different to bring to the Lord. God knows us and created us to be unique individuals.

As we stand upon His Word and teaching, God is intending, that we use our uniqueness, to mutually support each other for the betterment of God’s kingdom and His glory. For when we are weak, then He is strong - simply means, that other portions of the body are called upon to add strength to the weak areas, when needed. And vice versa.

Illustration:

General George Patton once said to his staff, **"If we are all thinking alike, somebody isn't thinking."** (repeat) **We have a brain and life to use for His kingdom.** God wants us to use our uniqueness, to help support each other in ways they need to be supported, not just what we want to do, or for our own desires. Think of what others need, in an effort to help build them up in Christ! Not building in worldly theology, rather, by and with the Word of God. **Pray for Unity of the believers...**

Second - Why Unity? To witness His glory!

"May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world."

Why unity?

- So that the world may know that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to give man hope.
- So that all men would know that they are loved by God, and
- So that all who follow Him might witness His glory.

There is a desperate need for people to be loved. Far too many have died, and are dying, due to the lack of being loved. People are starved for love. Real love. Love in Action!

I'm not speaking of starving from lack of food, although that may be part of the real need today, I'm speaking of the heart's desire and need for someone to find love for one another. The symptoms are obvious, as we see children and youth screaming out for attention, day after day. Often their own parents don't even see this need. Husbands, wives, widows and widowers all seeking for love and to give love. That's right, not only wanting to be loved, many of them need and want to give love away, and don't know how, or where to give it in a proper way.

It seems weird to me, that so many people struggle with something so basic, yet, are so confused by where, how and what to do when it comes to – Loving others.

Our society is telling people that if you love me:

1. You will give me what I want now, because I want it, then I'll know you really love me. That's not Godly love.

2. If you really love me, you'll give me this or that, do this or that, then leave me alone. That's not Godly love.

Paul helps us by describing God's love: (**listen to his words**)

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not

delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails... 1CO 13:4-8a

Why did Jesus pray for us to discover His love? Because He knew that this world has twisted the concept of love, until no one truly understand what it is, or, if they truly love another. We are to measure our love by His standard, not the worlds.

I heard someone say once,

"Love is what is left in a relationship after all the selfishness has been removed." (repeat)

Illustration:

The date was May 1, 2001, 9:30 AM. Twenty-four-year-old Chandra Levy's internship at the Federal Bureau of prisons had abruptly ended. She had decided to head for California, so she logged on to her computer that morning, checked out some travel web sites, sent some e-mail and then logged off three hours later-and vanished. That sparked one of the largest manhunts or searches in recent history. But for just a moment, take the focus off of Chandra and Gary Condit and put it on Chandra's poor parents.

Yellow ribbons were attached to the fence posts in their front yard. Every day waking up, hoping against hope, that this may be the day their daughter is found, willing to pay whatever is necessary, to do whatever needs to be done in order to find their daughter.

Now think of another search, a search described by the three parables in Luke 15 of the three lost things: the lost lamb, the lost coin, and the lost son. In each of these parables, something very valuable was lost, and an all-out search is going on. Earlier in that chapter Jesus describes that search. ***"For the Son of Man has come to seek out and save those who are lost."***

If we could only capture the heart of our Savior, and catch His passion for searching His lost ones, I think we would be doing more to share our faith, so that others might find His love for themselves. Working together to spread His love. ***Working hand in hand, in Unity! NOW!*** Someone is lost and needs to be found... Someone in our own neighborhood...

Third - Continue to Make Him Known!

"Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me, may be in them, and that I myself may be in them."

Jesus promises to make God known to us, reveal God to us. That through this, we might continue to experience God's love. In the same way, we are being called in this passage to continue to share the Love of God, with as many as we can, as often as we can, whenever we can. That we keep on spreading, talking, teaching, living for, Jesus every day.

There are far too many people in this world who are counting on us entering Jerusalem, so to speak. People who still do not understand, who still do not know Him personally. Far too many people who are lost - for us to stop, or even slow-down in our efforts.

Just as we need to keep allowing the Lord to reveal God to us, so that His love might reside and grow within us, we need to keep reveal God's love to others, so that His love might reside in their hearts. The need is overwhelming. There are people all around us, lost, wondering, ignorant of His love for them. Though the world does not know Him, we know Him.

This is why we must do something, and start doing it now, to reach the lost for Christ.

What were Paul's words in I Corinthians 9?

"Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible." 1CO 9:19 Paul could have lived anyway he wanted to. Yet, his very motive for living was to see people come to Christ. This is why Jesus entered Jerusalem.

That causes me to consider a question:

"What are we doing, what sacrifices are we making, on a daily basis, for His Kingdom?"

Have you ever asked yourself that question? Then seriously considered the answer?

Most of the people would probably say, ***"I'm doing what I can for my family."*** Praise the Lord, keep doing it. That's selfless, considerate, and a good thing, but is that the only motive for living?

Some might say, ***"I'm doing what I can to get ahead!"*** A little more self-centered, and often cause us to feel as though we never have enough. Let me ask you again: ***"What are we doing, what we are doing on a daily basis?"*** If we don't know why, or, our answer is difficult to formulate in our minds and hearts, then perhaps we need to consider ***"Who it is that has given us life? Why He gave us life? Why He created us in the first place?"***

In simple words: To honor and bring glory to Him.

Our calling is to continue to reveal the truth of God's love to everyone who will listen, in season or out, easy or not. This is why Jesus entered Jerusalem and why we must make every effort to live for Christ today!

So, what are we going to do, right now, because of what Jesus did so many years ago for us?

- ***Prays for Unity*** - stand together
- ***To discover His love and glorify Him***
- ***And to continue to make His kingdom known***

Prayer: