

**John 17: This marvelous chapter of Scripture reveals the deep things on the heart of Jesus concerning all those who would place their faith in Him. If we want to know what it means to be the Church, we must look here.**

Religion is simply a set of values and practices that we view to be helpful to mankind. Everyone differs in their estimation of what values and practices are actually helpful and most people differ in their definitions of what in fact is 'good'. In this sense, every human being is 'religious' as every human being is attempting to live out the values and practices that they believe to be helpful to themselves and their neighbor. Most people spend their lives honing and refining their religious beliefs based on their experiences of success and failure. Ultimately, everyone is searching for 'what works' to achieve what they conceive of as 'good'. This is a problem.

*Religion is the only alternative to filling the vacuum created by not trusting in God because religion is nothing more than man's attempts to solve man's problems in man's ways.*

### **What is the difference between doing religion and being joined to Christ?**

Religion is done in the authority of people. To be joined to Christ is to be in His authority. Religion is done by way of the resources and strength of people. When we are joined to Christ, we receive His resources and His strength. In religion, people set the agenda and implement that agenda in ways that seem fit to them. In Christ, He sets the agenda and implements that agenda in the way that He sees fit. In religion, people determine the greater good through democracy and processes of trial and error. Of Jesus, the Father declares that He is the Righteous One and is pleasing in His sight. In Jesus, there is nothing good apart from Him.

Doing what Jesus did is not necessarily the same as being joined to Him. Living a 'good' and respectable life is not what it means to be joined to Christ. Until we receive the life that God gives through faith in Jesus Christ, we are completely dead. Our sinfulness condemns us before God to an eternal death and separation from Him. Our 'good' works, which might have the appearance of 'good', are actually dead and fruitless since the only work that is pleasing to the Father is the work of His own hand. Our works will never please him or even be acceptable to Him.

### **Jesus, praying to the Father:**

*"I ask that they may all be one, **just as** you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may **be in us, so that** the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even **as** we are one, **I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one**, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and **I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.**" John 17:20-26*

## A Community in Jesus: From Him, Through Him and To Him

- Jesus does not desire us to create our own brand of unity or community. Rather he prays that we would be brought into the unity that already exists due to the nature of the relationship between He and the Father.

*“that they may all be one, **just as** you, Father, are in me, and I in you, **that they also may be in us**” John 17:21*

- Jesus desires us to be one so that the world may know 1, that He was sent by the Father and 2, that the Father loves us as he loves His Son.

*“**so that the world may know** that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.” John 17:23*

- According to God’s Word then, the goal of Christians being together is not to discover how to enrich one another’s lives but rather to receive what God is giving us in Jesus Christ whereby the world comes to know that The Father sent Jesus and loves us as He loves His Son.

- Unity, fellowship, or community is a by-product that happens when Jesus gives us His glory that was given to him by the Father. It is not a commodity that we are to go take for ourselves according to our own desires.

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- Therefore, our attention must not be on the pursuit of ‘community’ or ‘unity’, but on Jesus and surrendering our lives to Him so that he might have His way with us.

***And what is the glory that the Father gave to His Son that He in turn is giving us?***

### Jesus, praying to the Father:

*“I glorified you on earth, having **accomplished the work that you gave me to do.**” John 17:4*

- Jesus glorified the Father through His obedience which culminated on a cross of suffering and death.

## Jesus prayed that we would be one in the same way that He and the Father were One (John 17:22). What does that look like?

### Jesus was One with the Father because...

- Jesus did not seek His own glory but the glory of the Father.
- Thus, the Father was pleased to glorify His Son.
- Jesus only did what He saw the Father doing (obedience).

#### Jesus:

"I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it". John 8:50

"If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me." John 8:54

"The Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing." John 5:19-20

"The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory, but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood." John 7:18

### Likewise, we will be 'one' with Jesus and the Father when...

- We stop seeking our own glory and seek the glory that comes from God.
- We stop doing our own works and step into the works of the Father according to His grace.
- We are living in obedience to the commands of Jesus.

"Because they do not regard the works of the LORD or the work of his hands, he will tear them down and build them up no more." Psalm 28:5

"We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work." John 9:4

"What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that **your passions are at war within you?** You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because **you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.** You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, **He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us?** But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. **Submit yourselves therefore to God.** Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. **Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.**" James 4:1-10

"He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, **tossed to and fro** by the waves and **carried about** by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way **into him who is the head**, into Christ, **from whom** the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, **when each part is working properly**, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love." Ephesians 4:10-16

# Sent by Jesus...

## How was Jesus sent by the Father?

- The Father sent Him because He loved Him.
- Jesus was sent for obedience whereby He would bring glory to the Father.

“For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing.” John 5:20

“The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me **because you loved me** before the foundation of the world.” John 17:22-24

“In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and **he was heard because of his reverence**. Although he was a son, **he learned obedience through what he suffered**. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.” Hebrews 5:7-9

## How has Jesus sent us?

*“Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” John 20:21*

- Jesus sends us because He loves us.
- Jesus sends us for obedience to His Word whereby His Father is glorified.

“Abide in my love. **If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love**, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, **that my joy may be in you**, and that your joy may be full.” John 15:9-11

“For **this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments**. And his commandments are not burdensome. For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? 1 John 5:3-5

**“If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”** John 15:7-8

• *The gospel is not a call to bring together our best efforts and ideas into a collective ‘unity’. Rather the gospel is a call to die to self and receive the Word of Jesus that endures into eternal life.*

• *The gospel tells us that **we have nothing to offer** and thus frees us from our slavery to ourselves and our fruitless efforts to create a ‘better world’.*

• *The gospel tells us that **Jesus is sufficient** and that we need not look any further than Him.*

## *Sent by Jesus... in the power of the Holy Spirit.*

### **How is the Holy Spirit sent by the Father?**

- 🌐 The Father sends to us the Holy Spirit because Jesus asks Him to.
- 🌐 The Father sends the Holy Spirit to us in order to glorify Jesus.
- 🌐 The Father sends the Holy Spirit in order to declare to us the things of Jesus.

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.” John 14:15-17

“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for **he will not speak on his own authority**, but **whatever he hears he will speak**, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for **he will take what is mine and declare it to you.**”  
John 16:13-14

### ***The work of the Holy Spirit...***

- ~ Convict the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8-11)
- ~ Guide us into all the truth [speak to us the words of Jesus and declare things to come] (John 16:13)
- ~ Glorify the Son by declaring to us what is His (John 16:14)
- ~ Be with us forever (John 14:16)
- ~ Dwell with us and be in us (John 14:17)
- ~ Teach us all things and bring to our remembrance all that Jesus has spoken (John 14:26)
- ~ Bear witness about Jesus (John 15:26)
- ~ Guarantee our eternal inheritance (Ephesians 1:14)
- ~ Lead us into the sufferings of Jesus (Romans 8:14-17)

*The Holy Spirit is both our guarantee (Eph 1:14) and assurance (1 John 4:13) that we are in Jesus. Yet those who are not led by the Spirit are not sons (Rom 8:14). We are exhorted to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith (2 Cor 13:5). Living by faith simply means that we trust the leadership of the Holy Spirit who can and will only keep us at the feet of Jesus. If we are resisting the work and leadership of the Holy Spirit, we are resisting the faith through which we are saved.*

The staggering miracle of the gospel is that God is inviting us (His enemies awaiting eternal death and torment away from His presence) to be in fellowship with Himself, [Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] for all eternity: “that they also may **be in us**”

A community in fellowship or unity is...

A community that is **centered around Jesus** is...



A community that is **suffering with Jesus as they obey His commands** is...

A community that **Jesus will glorify** is...

A community that is **in relationship with the Father and the Son as the Son is in relationship with the Father**. Namely:

- Sent by Jesus
- Obeying the commands of Jesus
- Suffering with Jesus in obedience while awaiting future glory with Him

**“If we walk in the light**, as he is in the light, we have fellowship **with one another**, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”  
1 John 1:7

“By **this** we know that we love the children of God, **when we love God and obey his commandments**. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.” 1 John 5:2-3

“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, Abba! Father! The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, **provided** we suffer with him **in order that** we may also be glorified with him.” Romans 8:15-17

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and **we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us**—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, **so that you too may have fellowship with us**; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.” 1 John 1:1-4

Many in our culture appeal for unity on the basis that we are all one people, we are all the same, we’re all part of one world. Let us then join hands in cooperation and celebration. All opinions and beliefs are valid and are contributed for the ‘greater good’.

The trouble with this sort of unity is that the ‘sameness’ or ‘oneness’ that all human beings share is our own sinfulness. The only outcome that our unity can create is our own eternal torment in death. Apart from Jesus Christ, our best hope is to be unified as God’s enemies. Our word cannot impart life. Our best ideas and pooled resources cannot save us from our impending death. Jesus’ faithfulness to the Father has resulted in a cosmic reversal on our behalf. In Jesus we have been transferred from a domain of darkness to a Kingdom of Light. The Body of Christ will know unity and fellowship when we are each surrendered to Jesus as the Head of the Body; Sent by Him, obeying His commands and suffering with Him in our obedience as we await future glory with Him in eternity. May Jesus receive all praise and glory as we “grow up in every way **into him who is the head**, into Christ, **from whom** the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, **when each part is working properly**, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” Ephesians 4:15-16

“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him **who called us to his own glory and excellence**, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.” 2 Peter 1:3-4