

Jesus Prays for All Believers

✦ to be one with God (vv.20-23)

✦ to see His glory (v.24)

✦ to experience true love (vv.25-26)

In the Name of Jesus, God's Gift of Love, dear family of God:

The God of the Bible created all things and is the only God who actually exists. That's what His Name the LORD (יהוה) means! God teaches us about His love using mother-love as an example. On this day when our daughter Katie is having her first baby, we see motherhood again as a great blessing. (Remember that sign? "Smile! Your mother was pro-life!") So just to be funny our son Joel sent Cindy a sympathy card for Mother's Day. It read: "May the beautiful memories that fill your heart help to bring you comfort..." – then added: "for having four ~~monkeys~~ children." He included a note of appreciation that they didn't get shipped off to Bangladesh, or worse, "even though we totally deserved it."

My Mom too has forgotten my childhood errors. What a great picture of God's grace! But God also takes His love to a higher level above mother-love. Through Isaiah the LORD says, "*Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hand....*" (Isaiah 49:15f NIV84)

Today we hear the last part of Jesus' High Priestly Prayer, and with it some sweet details about the eternal love between Jesus and His heavenly Father and us. **Jesus Prays for All Believers** first...

✦ to be one with God (vv.20-23)

To communicate His love to us God designed the Greek language of the New Testament for precision. For instance, the Greek New Testament has several words for "with." Set in our culture, you can be driving down the freeway "with" strangers – σύν. Or you're "with" a carload of friends discussing the best way to a ball game – μετά. Or maybe, Baby, you're cruising "with" your sweetheart on a date together – πρός. So the Holy Spirit says, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with (πρός) God, and the Word was God.*" (John 1:1 NIV84) The Father and Son are literally *turned toward* each other.

When **Jesus Prays for All Believers**, He keeps using another word sometimes translated "with," but literally, "in" or "into": "*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.*"

Several years ago there was a book and a movie called: *He Just Not That Into You*. It was supposed to be "The No-Excuses Truth to Understanding Guys." Instead of waiting by the phone and torturing herself over careless guys, according to the book she should realize, "A man who wants to make a relationship work will move mountains to keep the woman he loves." That's being "into" someone or something – always on your mind. You don't want to be away from the one you love.

Do you keep God at arms length? Only pick up the prayer phone when you need something? Don't think about your fellow Christians or God's house except when there's nothing else to do? Jesus is praying that we will have the same heart for God as He has for us. He's "into" us, as we say. God wants us to be "into" Him and "into" the family of God where we worship – **to be one with God**.

✠ to see His glory (v.24)

Sadly guys don't get it, but neither do gals. We are all blind to our relationship with God and the barrier that separates us from Him and each other. God has to show us the "no-excuses truth" about our rebellion against Him. He has to open our eyes to the way we want others to do for us, to how we can only see the world revolving around us, wanting the good life without God – as if that's even possible.

Against the dark night of our sin, we can better see the brilliant light of God's **glory** in Jesus' prayer: *"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."* According to the Biblical account of creation, no man has a right to think he's God's gift to women, but every woman can glory in her womanhood because woman is, by God's account, God's gift to man. At first we lost all that by the Fall into sin. Death would have stalked us and finally defeated every son and daughter of Adam and Eve. But just when all was lost, the LORD God, the Savior-God, promised the Seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head. (Genesis 3:15) He was turning on the lights for us **to see His glory**.

Did you hear it in Jesus' words? *"Father, I want those you have given me...."* Every baptized believer – man, woman and child – is a gift from the Father to His Son Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. You are the Father's gift to Jesus as surely as Jesus is the Father's Gift to you. Jesus is the Gift that keeps on giving as He prays for us to *"be with"* Him *"and to see my glory...."* This is more than Jesus' shining brilliance as God from all eternity. That would be spectacular beyond expression. But God wants us **to see** that **His glory** is to love us freely and openly in spite of our natural-born rebellion against Him. God wants to conquer our stubborn pride and win our hearts with His love. As surely as it is man's "glory" to win a woman's heart, to "marry up" as we say, to see his sweetheart blessed as a mom or comforted by God when that blessing is withheld – so it is God's **glory** to bring healing to broken hearts and homes. On the cross God paid the full penalty of our perversion. **See His glory** now risen and ascended for you...

✠ to experience true love (vv.25-26)

None of us were ever sitting by the phone waiting for God. We are all by nature running away from Him. God does not need anything from us, but the one thing He wants is our heart. And that by nature is the one thing we withhold. This makes it impossible for us without God **to experience true love**.

So Jesus prays: *"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."*

Because God the Creator is holy, He sets the standard for what is right and what is wrong. God decides and communicates His will to us in His Holy Word, the Bible, especially in the Ten Commandments. These are not "ten suggestions," but divine orders that carry the death penalty for every failure to keep them. God's **righteous** nature must punish every sin, every failure to love God with all your heart and soul and mind, and your neighbor as yourself. But here's the Good News: *"It is finished."* (John 19:30) God took the whole penalty of our perversion upon Himself in the Person of Jesus, God's own Son. He doesn't send us dying bouquets, but flowers of love that keep blossoming and growing.

God has been planting the seeds of His love in our hearts since the day He attached His promise to His Word-powered water of Baptism. He waters those seeds in Sunday School, shines the Son-light of His love in family discussions and devotions, fertilizes in life's challenges and brings them to full bloom in His Holy Supper. Your biggest mistake in life will be trying **to experience true love** from your wife, or your husband, or your family. Impossible! No fellow sinner can give you the **true love** for which your heart aches. But Jesus makes God's love known to us by experience, like enjoying cool water from a tall class on a hot day. But God does not stop when the glass of your heart is full. He keeps on pouring and pouring. What's in your heart is for you. The love that overflows is for you to give to others. Then you are God's gift, like moms are God's gift, **to experience true love** – first, last, always from God. Amen.

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