

The "Dance" of the Trinity

Community--part 1

January 4, 2015

We exist to enjoy and share the message of God with everyone.

DAY 1: "One" with God and with one another

1. Just before Jesus is arrested and crucified, He prays. He has already prayed for the twelve disciples. In our passage this week He prays for all believers who come after Him.

John 17:20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,

John 17:21 ... 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.

2. There are four parts we'll look at in John 17:21.

"...that all of them may be one..."

3. Of all the things He could have prayed for us, why do you think this is the first thing He prays?

4. Have you ever had close fellowship with a few other believers? Did it approach "oneness?" If so, what was that like to have that kind of connection? What "made it happen"?

"...one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you."

5. The oneness Jesus prays for His followers, including you and me, is the same kind of oneness Jesus enjoyed with God the Father! Here, Jesus connects "oneness" with the preposition "in." What is the significance of "in"?

"May they also be in us..."

6. Here, Jesus connects the oneness He desires for us, with us being in "us." Something wondrous is happening in the Father-Son relationship that Jesus wants us to taste and enjoy! What strikes you from this? Does the word "included" take on added significance for you?

"...so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

7. The love we are to enjoy is not a dead end love. It is meant to be seen by people who don't believe, yet. Why?

DAY 2: The relational glory of God

John 17:22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:

1. When we think of the glory of God, most Christians think of God's holiness, splendor or majesty. While that is true, it falls short of Jesus' meaning of glory. Let's refer back to the beginning of this prayer...

John 17:1 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.

² *For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.*

³ *Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*

⁴ *I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.*

⁵ *now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.*

2. In John 17:1, Jesus prays that the Father would "Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you."

a. What do you think Jesus has in mind with His prayer, "Glorify your Son?" (Hint: the cross is looming ahead).

b. What is the longing of Jesus' heart in John 17:1? What does He pray will happen through His crucifixion, as relates to what comes back to God the Father?

3. John 17:2 and 3 are the directed targets of God's glory--that people might come into (a) a stunning relationship with God, a kind of relationship and (b) life they can find nowhere else.

a. "Eternal life" is found in two places in our passage. Underline them.

b. "Eternal" here means "to the full, abundant, overflowing"

c. How does someone come into a stunning relationship with God? How does Jesus say that happens (John 17:2)

d. "Eternal" life is defined in John 17:3. Re-write this verse in your own words.

e. Most Christians associate "the abundant life" with abundant "blessings." What would Jesus have to say to those who think that way?

4. How did Jesus bring glory to God in John 17:4? How might you bring glory to God?

5. What do you think Jesus is praying for in John 17:5? What is driving Jesus the most?

DAY 3: Relational "unity"

John 17:23 "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."

1. Jesus again prays for unity for His followers. For years, I assumed He meant unity of theology or unity regarding a church's direction. Those are good things, but fall far short of what He's praying for you and me!

2. To get a better of idea of what kind of oneness He's praying for, He illustrates it in several ways.

"I in them and you in me."

a. How would the fact of Jesus being *"in them"* (us) make this kind of unity and relationship possible?

b. How would God the Father being *"in me"* (Jesus) also make this kind of unity and relationship possible?

c. How are we "connected" to God the Father?

"...have loved them even as you have loved me."

3. How should we perceive the kind of relationship God wants us to have with Him? With our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ?

"...complete unity to let the world know that you sent me."

4. Trying to have relational unity is difficult, simply because of our sin nature. What conclusion should unbelievers reach when they see the kind of relationships Jesus hopes we will have?

5. Why should believers think that God was behind this kind of love and unity? Is there any other place where that kind of love and unity is seen?

6. How are you doing with this kind of unity in your relationships? End today with prayer.

DAY 4: We are called to enjoy and participate in the love of God--"with"

John 17:24 "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."

1. Remember, this is Jesus' last public prayer before His arrest, torture and crucifixion.

"Father, I want..."

2. The verb, "want" in the Greek language is intensive, which means, *"I strongly and earnest desire..."*

3. What is it Jesus "strongly and earnestly desires?"

4. What He earnestly prays for is three things:

"that we would be with Him."

5. "With" is the strong word in this phrase. What does it mean to be "with" someone? I'm talking about something more than just someone's physical presence. Is there someone you really enjoy being "with?" What is it about them or the relationship that makes being "with" them so valuable?

6. Now extrapolate that toward your relationship with God. What do you think Jesus desires for you and He to experience in relationship with each other?

"I want those you have given me to ... see my glory..."

7. In this verse, the glory of God the Father and the Son is *relational glory*. It is the stunning kind of love only God possesses, free of any tinge of self or self-interest. It is freely given, not earned, and can't be lost. It's a kind of love for which we all hunger here on earth, but find so difficult to experience--except in relationship with God! What strikes you about this kind of love?

"...the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world."

8. Just in case we missed it, Jesus spells out relational glory. The magnificent love that God has and is, existed in Him and was experienced by God the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit. It is a joyous kind of love that may be expressed, in one small sense as a joyful dance. YOU are invited to participate in "the dance!"

DAY 5: Love expressed and enjoyed as "in"

John 17:26 "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."

"I have made you known to them..."

1. Jesus starts this verse off with His mission statement.
 - a. What of God the Father do you think Jesus "made known" to His disciples?

- b. How did Jesus make God the Father known to them, *besides teaching* them?

"...will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them..."

2. The point of making God the Father known to the disciples was so that _____

_____.

3. It's easy to think of how much God the Father delighted in His Son. It's quite another thing to realize that Jesus' intention and mission was so that *you and I* would carry around *in* us the *same kind of love* God the Father has for the Son!!!

4. What thoughts go through your mind, here?

"...the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

5. Earlier in this John 17 passage we looked at the preposition, "in." Jesus was describing a relationship so close that "in" one another is about as close as it gets.

6. Jesus comes back to "in" again. His "earnest desire" is that He be so close to us, that only His INdwelling (sic) presence would suffice!

7. Jesus' prayer for all of us, in John 17 has to do, at core, with the kind of relational love He longs for us to enjoy and participate in. It is the "dance of the Trinity," the love that God the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit enjoy and delight in every moment. Jesus invites YOU into the "dance," to be as much a part of that dance as any human being ever could!