

aired on KALS February 17, 2004

John 17:18-23

The following is a portion of Jesus' prayer just following the Last Supper with His chosen disciples.

quote:

18. "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

19. "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

20. "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;

21. that they may all be one; even 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 sent Me.

22. "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;

23. I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me."

In this prayer Jesus first prays for the apostles to be sanctified by the truth, saying, "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth." Then Jesus prays for unity--not only for the apostles, but for all believers, as He puts it: "I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who

believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us.”

Notice Jesus expects that unity between believers would be attained through His Word, as people are sanctified in truth. This unity or “oneness” of all believers based on the Word, would result in, as Jesus states, “That the world would believe that You (God, the Father) sent Me.” So the world turning to Jesus depends on His Church being unified by means of the Word of truth given through the apostles--which we have in the New Testament Scriptures. (Ephesians 2: 19-20)

So how are we doing, Church, in response to Jesus’ prayer for unity from the Word of God? Presently there are over 120 different churches in the valley, who claim to be Christian. All teach a variety of doctrines, with various degrees of disagreement with each other and portions of the Bible. Most have decided to “agree to disagree.” The more “liberal” or “compassionate” bodies, depending on your perspective, have adopted an “I’m okay, you’re okay” perspective. The “conservative” or “intolerant” folks often argue, condemn, or ignore other believers who do not hold similar convictions.

Most frustrating to me is when people who call themselves Christians refuse to even discuss Bible doctrine or study with believers from other churches. II Timothy 3:16 states: “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for

training in righteousness.”

The word doctrine here means “teaching”. Isn’t that what Jesus wants us to do--use the Word of God to reprove and correct one another, so we are one in Bible doctrine?

Listen to the words of Scripture from the apostle Paul:

1. “Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.” I Corinthians 1:10

2. “Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus; that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 15:5-6

3. “Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.” Philippians 2:2

4. “There is one body, and one spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all....”

Ephesians 4:4-6