



John: The Great "I AM" Gospel  
John 17:20-23  
From Sermon 3.23.25

Read *John 17:20-23*

Overview from Sunday's sermon: As the end of Christ's High Priestly prayer approaches, Jesus begins to summarize and conclude the necessary components of an effective Church. While spiritual and personal purity protection are still addressed, the overarching theme is unity. The Church is one living organism, spread out over time and space. What Jesus prays for 1<sup>st</sup> Century believers (and the Apostles) is just as applicable to all genuine believers today and all those going forward.

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1. In this prayer, Jesus has petitioned the Father on behalf of three parties. Who are they?

- Himself
- The Apostles
- All Future Believers: Us

2. How easy is it for you to distance yourself from the redemptive story? Various Personal Answers

2a. Why do you think that is? Again, various answers. But include: the Apostles are forever famous. We look at them as far different than us in calling, character, holiness, and hang-ups. We somehow think the world, the enemy, and the circumstances have changed. We can think that holy church work is for others.

3. What do we mean when we speak of the Church universal/catholic? 1) It is not referring to the Roman Catholic Church (although, there are certainly genuine Christians even in that faith). 2) Catholic is the Latin word for universal. The authors of the great, historic Christian creeds were proclaiming the same unity—transcending time and space—that Jesus Himself prayed for in John chapter 17.

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4. Taking the Unity doctrine further: Is God against denominationalism (define if needed)? It wouldn't appear so. There are some doctrines we can disagree on and still be biblical. Since worship styles, dress, and other non-essential components are not explicitly covered in Scripture, there is room for differences without judging the other groups.

4a. What is He against? Internal and external division over non-essentials. Staying unified when one party is clearly in non-repentant sin.

5. Discuss the example of Godly unity given by Jesus in His High Priestly Prayer. That of the Trinity. The Godhead is of one mind, one accord, and one voice, even while being three in distinct personhood.  
See also *Romans 15:5-6*

5a. Where are we in that Trinity unity group? In Christ and He in us. See also *1 Corinthians 1:30*

6. Read Paul's inspired text on the Church being a body found in *1 Corinthians 12:12-27*.

How does that further demonstrate our unity while retaining our uniqueness? We are all connected to the head (Christ). But, just as the human body has many parts with varying functions, each is dependent on all the others. Think also how this relates to the variedness of the Apostles themselves.