

“Jesus’ Final Wishes” // John 17:1–26** // *The Whole Story* #36

(MUSIC PAD)

Summit Church, well, I don’t know if you have heard, but there is going to be a **pretty big election** happening in a few weeks.

- A lot of people want to know if we have a stance as a church, or recommendations on how to vote.
- **The short answer is: No, as a matter of policy, we don’t recommend who you should vote for.**
- That’s not, of course, because I don’t have opinions, but because I am a pastor, I don’t want an indication of what I plan to do to become the litmus test for fellowship at The Summit Church.
- I think Christians can, in good conscience, **come to different conclusions on this issue** and remain in close fellowship together.
- And **so I think it is important in this season** that we do as my friend says, “[give space and show grace](#).”

I don’t know about you, but after watching the first couple of debates, I was not encouraged in the Lord. The next day our Summit Bible reading plan was in Acts 4, and it so encouraged me: Acts 4 prayer

²⁴ And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, ²⁵ who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, ²⁶ said by the Holy Spirit, “Why do the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶ The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed’^(e)—

²⁷ for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate,

along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

²⁹ And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰ while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

³¹ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

When we are shaken by the authority of Jesus, we won’t be shaken by the chaos of politics.

Let me say it clearly: The **church does not depend on what happens in Washington.**

- Salvation does not come riding in on the back of a donkey or elephant.
 - I know technically Jesus rode in to Jerusalem on a donkey, but I don’t think that was some kind of political metaphor...
- **The hope of the world**, whether in the 1st century or the 21st, is not found in our political decisions, but in the power of Christ through his people.
- Because God is not building his kingdom in **Washington DC**, but in the church
- **The Republicans may rage**, and the Democrats may plot in vain, but **whoever becomes our president** in January 2017, one thing is certain: Jesus will be seated on the throne.
- **As John Piper says**, “One day America and all its presidents will be a footnote in history, but the kingdom of Jesus will never end.”
- Amen?
- People say, “But yeah, Pastor, who are you for?” I have publicly called for both of them to step down. That’s about all I’ll tell you.

- I'm wondering if we can just go with no one in Nov, stay single for the next 4 years, find ourselves.

PRAYER

Now, I'm probably **most thrilled to tell you** that **today's message has nothing to do with politics**; though, if you understand it, it will help you think about politics much better.

JOHN 17, if you have your Bibles.

- We had to cancel church last week here at the **Broadcast Campus** because the power was out due to the hurricane, and the CAMPUS PASTORS did an abbreviated version of this last week and we prayed.
- And I **thought about just leaving it there**, but there is just so much in this passage that is so timely for our church right now that I thought we should take deeper look.

When I first read it, I was overwhelmed how relevant it was to where we are right now.

- Even now, I feel like the **proverbial mosquito** at the nudist colony: *Oh, where to begin?*

This is the last recorded prayer that Jesus prayed, on the night right before he died.

- *I've never been with someone on the last night of their life when they knew it was the last night of their life—maybe you have. I've never heard some saint pray a final prayer knowing it was their final prayer.*
- *But I would imagine it is a time of great clarity.*
- *What would you ask?*

Here's what Jesus asks for you.

- **It's what Jesus prayed on the last night of his life**; thus, it is what you should be praying on every night of your life.

*And, let me say this as we get into it: there are **some things Jesus prayed in this prayer that belong uniquely to him**—he was the Son of God, the 2nd member of the Trinity—and so not everything applies to us, but **Louie Giglio points out that there are 3 major things** that Jesus prayed for in this prayer that serve as a pattern for how you should pray.*

I've lamented to some of you before how trite the average Christian's prayers sound. We fill them up with clichés and platitudes, spending most of our time asking God for things he's really already promised us:

- ***"God, be with us."*** And God says, "I promised you I would never leave or forsake you. Heb 13:5. Read your Bible. Stop asking me that."

Or, we **spend the whole time asking God** for things that are ok, but that really aren't supposed to be our main focus:

- ***"Lord, help me do well on test."*** The HS says, "Well, did you study? I'd rather you use the brain I gave you to study then for you to ask me to magically transmogrify the information into your lazy mind."
- ***"Bless this food."*** He's like: "You know, you're eating a ½ lb. hamburger topped with 3 strips of bacon and onion straws. I can't bless that. Go get some **broccoli**—they got a **pre-built-in blessing** you don't even have to ask for."
- ***"Give us traveling mercies."*** What the heck are those? Traveling mercies. I think God is probably like, *"Put on your seatbelt and drive the speed limit and stop texting when you drive. There's your traveling mercy."*

(**Not saying there's never** a place to ask for these things... but you get my point, right? What is supposed to be the *core* of our prayer? This passage can show you **how to pray like Jesus**.)

I. In his final prayer... Jesus prayed for himself (17:1–5)

17:1, “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.”

- It might strike you as strange that **Jesus opens up this prayer praying for himself.**
- But the key is in *why Jesus is asking God to glorify him.* Glorify me so I can glorify you.
- **We often have a wrong view of Christian humility.** We think it means not seeking prosperity.
 - But **Jesus asks God to bless and glorify him.**
 - Let me **introduce to you a phrase** Louie uses: *Me for you.*
 - God, **I’m asking you to bless me,** but so that I can glorify you.
- Humility is not, “not seeking prosperity;” it is a decision to use whatever prosperity God sends me to direct people’s attention toward God.
 - I pray for God to raise up and glorify the Summit Church. But not for the sake the Summit Church. I ask that he do it for his glory.
 - You can ask that, too, about your own life.

You say, “Well, that sounds convenient.” *You and God both getting glory. How can you know when you say that, that it’s not really all about you?”*

Great question! Here are a couple of ways:

- **When God gets glory for himself by exalting someone else beside you,** you can see whether you are more concerned about God’s glory than yours.
 - I have told you **where God revealed to me** that I wasn’t doing this—my adulterous prayer. Me for me.
- A **second way** you can know it’s about God’s glory is what you do **when he sends suffering to you**—like he did Jesus.
 - **Sometimes God brings glory to himself** by how joyously believers suffer; how **confident you remain** even in pain.
 - It is true that God gets glory when **sick Christians get well,** but he gets glory when sick Christians *die well,* too.

- **When we are able to say, even in the midst of pain,** I have a treasure greater than health or earthly benefits.
- **When we say in the midst of confusion and disappointment,** I trust God and his loving purposes for my life. And people say, “Why?” And you say, “Because God showed he was trustworthy at the cross. I can trust him here.” That brings him glory.

In his final prayer, Jesus prayed first for himself, but it was “*me for you.*”

- Listen: **Most of us pray as if the point of prayer is to get God on our side.** Newsflash: The gospel tells you that he already is. You are his child; he is for you; he has promised to prosper you.
- The question is not whether he is for you—that’s been settled; it’s whether you are for him.
 - Are you asking me for me, or me for you?

II. In his final prayer... Jesus prayed for his disciples (17:6–19)

17:6, “I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word... **11 Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name,**

- The **bulk of Jesus’ prayer** he spends here. He is thinking specifically of the 12 disciples, minus Judas. (*You can see in vs. 12 that he excludes Judas because he knew Judas was going to betray him*).
- The **best correspondence to this** is probably your small group, or those **4–6 people in your life** you pray intimately and daily for.
- (And unlike Jesus, I **don’t think you should feel pressure** to identify who in your group is Judas, and exclude him from your prayers. Taking it too far)

(Before we look at what he prayed for these guys, could I just really quickly say something about the importance, here, of Christian friends?)

- **Christian friendship is maybe the greatest earthly gift** that God gives to us.
- **Everyone should have 2–3 really close friends** who know you and love you enough that they pray for you daily.
 - Let me make a **bold statement**: I have yet to see a healthy, vibrant Christian who didn't have those, no matter how spiritually mature they were.
 - This is **on my mind because** there has been a slate of high profile pastors who have all fallen out of ministry recently. *They all had this in common.* They were **isolated**.
 - Things that grow in a secret garden always grow mutant.
 - An isolated man (will begin to seek) his own desire, and (will) rage against all sound judgment (Prov 18:24).
- **You need close Christian friends.**
 - OK, HOW? Two action steps: Join a volunteer team—best way to quickly get to know others here at TSC; join a small group!

Now, here's what he prays for these guys: 11 Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name... 15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. (in the world).

He prays not that they would be taken out of the world, but that they would be kept by the power of God in the world.

I point that out because there is a **warped version of Christianity** that seeks to remove itself from the world, that believes that isolation is the only way to avoid corruption.

- In high school I went to a private Christian school whose **sole goal** seemed to be to keep us as isolated from the world as humanly possible. We weren't supposed to go see Christian movies because we might be tempted to see R-rated movies, and even if

we weren't, others might see us at the theatre and that might tempt people to see worldly movies.... We **weren't allowed to dance**, because dancing would make you want to, you know... We **didn't listen to rock music—even Christian rock music**—because that would make you want to dance.

- **Veronica loosened me up** after we got married, because she had grown up Presbyterian, and you know how they are: they're free in Christ all over the place.
 - When we got married I baptized her, made her quit drinking, and consented that it was all predestined to happen. That was our compromise.
 - She **even got me to start dancing**... then, after a while, she asked me to stop again.

Their goal was a good one: to keep us from being corrupted from the world. But *true discipleship it is not isolation from the world*, as Jesus says here, it is living like Jesus within the world.

- **Our friend David Platt our mission** is not to **disinfect Christians** and put them on a shelf, but to **disciple them and put them** into service.
- *Because what happens when you remove yourself from the world?*
- You lose your evangelistic witness, which is the very reason God leaves in the world!
- You become part of this inbred subculture that only knows how to talk with each other and nobody on the outside.
 - **Do you know** people outside the church, and are you engaged actively in their lives? Can you **speak the language of culture?**
 - A **holiness that is disconnected** from the world is no holiness at all!

Which leads to vs. 17 **17 Sanctify them Sanctify means “set apart,”** or “made holy” How? By isolation? **by the truth; your word is truth.**

- Jesus wanted us in the world, but he didn't want us to be shaped by the world.

- How do we develop a holy heart and life within the world? By knowing God's word.
- The **greatest way to avoid a lie, after all**, is to know the truth.
- **Your success in the world, spiritually**—and the success of your kids—will *not* be based on how well you isolate them from lies, but in how much they know the truth.
 - **(Many of you, in this political season**, on both sides, demonstrate that what you think about politics is shaped more by your culture than God's word.)
- **Do you want your life to be a success?** Do you want it founded on a rock? Do you want to be wise and avoid the deceptions of the enemy?
- Do you want your **kids' lives to be a success**? Let me **speak as a dad to other parents**: Our family takes this very seriously:
 - Memorizing Scripture: I pay
 - Reading books: I pay
 - Doing devotions
 - We are involved in programs at the church: my kids love sports. *But we won't do things that negatively impact their opportunity to learn God's word.*
 - It's unlikely they will ever play a professional sport or dance for a living—it is 100% likely that they will go to heaven or hell.
 - So I'm going to make sure they are prepared for that.
 - I'm also 100% sure that God has a plan for their lives, so we are going to **Matt 6:33**....

Notice, specifically, he is concerned about 2 things in regard to the truth: THE FIRST WAS *that they recognize that these words had divine origin.*⁷ Now they know that **everything you have given me comes from you.**

- **I want you to have the confidence** that this book we learn from every week is from God. *"This is not practical life lessons from uncle J.D."*

- This is always under attack, in our culture and sadly, in the church.
- People who say, **"Well, Jesus seems legit.** I want to be religious and have a relationship with God, too. But everybody knows that not everything in the Bible is true. It was written by men, after all, and is full of errors." Not true.
 - **No, like I showed you a couple of weeks ago**, Jesus equated his teaching with what his Apostles wrote, because he promised his Spirit would preserve them in the accurate recording of it.
 - **In this prayer**, he wants his disciples, and those of us who receive their testimony to know it comes from God.
 - It is **not just a collection of enlightened thoughts** about Jesus, or even a reliable guide to God; it is the **very words of God.**

His second concern was that they internalize these words. Vs. 8, ⁸ **For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them.**

- I can teach these things to you, but **you alone can take** them into your heart.
- **Why we want you to do a quiet time**: that's a place for you to **internalize the Word of God**. To take the promises of Scripture and think about your situations through them.
- Same reason we want you to be in **small groups**. Some things about God's words better learned in circles than rows

****III. In his final prayer... Jesus prayed for his church (17:20–25)**

²⁰ "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, (that was me and you and people all over the world yet to hear!) 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.

A COUPLE OF OBSERVATIONS. First, notice, Jesus does not pray for the world, but for the believers in the world.

He had said quite plainly, vs. 9, I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me...

- Is that because Jesus didn't care about the world? No, Jesus came into the world to save the world.¹
- It's because the hope for any community is found in the believers in that community.
- So, if you want to pray for some group, the best strategy is to pray for God to raise up and strengthen the believers within that group.
 - So yes, we pray for America, and the Triangle, but we should mostly pray for the health of the churches in the Triangle.
- You say, "Well, that feels selfish."
 - **Think of it like this:** You know on the plane, when they tell you in the case of a loss of cabin pressure to put your oxygen mask on first. I've always thought that if I were in that situation, and was finding it hard to breathe, I would find it hard to put mine on first... but I know that my being alert will determine whether my kid makes it.
 - **We pray primarily for God to raise up and strengthen believers in the church** so that they can point people to Jesus.
 - **The church is God's plan A for working in the world.** It's the main thing Jesus prayed for on the last night of his life.
- And btw, if you are one of those people who are like, "You know, I'm kind of fed up with the church, bunch of hypocrites. I just want to reach people for Jesus, apart from the church."
 - You are really out of step with Jesus.
 - Jesus more than anybody knew how messed up the church would be.
 - Judas was a part of this group and he was an outright liar, thief and betrayer. He probably pulled for Alabama Football.

¹ John 3:16–17

- Peter would turn out to be a coward who folded under pressure, and 10 years after being appointed head of the church he was still partially racist. And like we saw last week, Jesus even called him Satan once.
- James and John were constantly concerned about whether they were viewed as #1 among the Apostles.
 - Thomas wasn't even really sure if he believed.
- So, yes, he knew the church was messed up, yet he prayed for this church as the greatest and only hope for the world to know the truth.
 - So quit trying to be holier than Jesus. Yes, the church has problems—newsflash: So do you. Quit being so self-righteous.
 - ~~"Oh, the church has so many hypocrites." You should thank God for that, because that means there is room for you.~~
 - Hospital for sinners, not a spa for the saved...
 - If you find a place where everyone looks perfect, run away because they are just hiding it.
 - That means when you look close here (at me), you'll see things you don't like!
 - BRIDE

Let me back to the main point: When we pray for our world, the main thing we should pray for is the spiritual vitality of believers in the world.

- So, yes, in this season, pray for the election. Pray for the candidates go have a genuine conversion experience.
- But pray mostly for the church. Pray that the church will be healthy and bold during this time, focused on and clear about the gospel.

Now, second observation... The one dominant thing from this section that Jesus prays for is that we would internalize God's love.

[26] ...that the *love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.*"

He's praying that we would a) *love Jesus the way that God loves Jesus* (read from text), and we would *love others like Jesus loves us (I in them)*. Because when we do that, people will know that he is real!

[23] I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me...

How does the world know God is real? By how well I preach? How loudly you worship? Miraculous answers to prayer? By how we all vote? No. By how you love.

Here's how I see it: Do you remember the **Superhero show *The Invisible Man***? As a boy, I loved superheroes. I used to dress up in the costumes. I still do, but not as much because it freaks the neighbors out when I **run around outside as your** friendly neighborhood Spiderman.

- **The one superhero whose disguise I could never quite master** as a kid, however, was the Invisible Man. (The closest I could come was going into my sister's room when she was away, messing her stuff up, and telling her the *Invisible Man* had done it.)
- **When you want to make the Invisible Man visible**, they would pour paint on him or throw dust at him. Then you could see his shape and track his movements.
- **The love in the local church is the paint** that makes the Christ visible to our community.

That love shows itself in primarily two ways:

In how we serve our community.

The love Jesus has for us just spills out into the streets. Several years ago we got involved in one of these underperforming schools...

- Renovated classrooms
- Bought supplies
- Tutored kids
- "We've always known you Christians said to love your neighbor. We've never known what it looked like until now."
- One of my proudest moments as your pastor... **MLK story.**
 - "I'm not sure we're talking about the same guy!"
 - *Making the invisible Jesus visible.*
- When we take in foster children and love prisoners and serve refugees and befriend political enemies—when we make *the invisible Jesus visible*.

Here's the **second way** his love inside us shows itself: *****Through a unity in Jesus stronger than anything that could divide us.***

*****[23] I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me...***

When we lose our unity in the church, it's because something has become more important to us than Jesus.

I've pointed this out to you with: ***Simon the Zealot vs. Matthew the Tax Collector***

- They had more **unity in Jesus** than disunity in politics

Some of you, **by the tone of what you put on your Facebook wall during this season**, demonstrate that you care more about politics than you do about Jesus.

- *I know **Christians who cannot fathom** how a believer could ever vote for Trump because of terrible and repulsive character he often displays, and they like some aspects of Clinton's platform so they'll vote for her...*
- *Others say, **"Yeah, but how could you vote for Clinton in light of her position on abortion and who we know she'll appoint to the Supreme Court, and the disastrous implications that will have for***

religious liberty... so **maybe the best way to stop her is just to hold my nose** and vote for Trump.”

- And **others who can't fathom how a true Christian could vote for either**, so they're going to vote 3rd party,
- and others are like, **“I'm just going to write on my ballot, Jesus please come back soon”**, which may be the best option.

My purpose is **not to adjudicate** between those, or to say they are not important, or that you shouldn't talk about them, just that when you do, you should do so with spirit of love and unity and that declares that what we have in Jesus is greater than any opinions we have about secondary or tertiary matters. You give space and show grace.

- And even **our tone should communicate that!**

Summit, as best I can, I **refuse to let opinions on any secondary issue** separate me from those who love Jesus or inhibit my ability to talk about the gospel.

- **Like I've told you: I might be wrong in what I think about the helpfulness or unhelpfulness of state provided health care.** But I'm not wrong about the gospel, and I refuse to let the way I hold my opinions on the former keep you from hearing me on the latter.
- **Disunity in the church happens not because we care about politics too much; but because we care about Jesus too little.**
- *You know, when I find out that I'm talking with someone who agrees with me politically, I tend to relax. 'Oh! Whew, we can really talk now.' And it made me think, 'Why don't I feel that when I meet another Christian? Shouldn't I have that same relief and comfort with every believer?'*

SUMMIT! *If we lived this way—in loving unity, with the Spirit of Jesus—our evangelism efforts would get a whole lot more effective.*

Did you see what Jesus said? *“If they do this,* ²³ **“Then the world will know that you sent me.”**

- **Write this last thing down: Love on display in the church is the church's most powerful apologetic.**

John 13:35, in this final discourse Jesus gave to his disciples, he said, *“By this will all men know you are my disciples. By... **how loudly you praise?** But by **how you love each other!** How you love and forgive and forebear with and serve each other and refuse to be divided from each other.*

Summit, if we did this, we wouldn't have to invite people to come to our church. They'd be beating the doors down to come and see what is going on. **Who is this powerful, invisible superhero that fills and empowers your church?** And then we'd tell them about Jesus.

- Interesting, **consistently in church surveys:** The # 1 answer when asked, *“Why do you come back to a church after having visited?”* The answer is not music (#3) or preaching (#2). **It's whether they felt loved.**

Conclusion/ MUSIC

Well, let me wrap this up by saying: *If Jesus was praying for these things on the last night of his life, you ought to be praying for these things every night of your life.*

And here's why you can pray these things with confidence (and this is an awesome thought) –

- Jesus **didn't stop** praying this in chapter 17.
- He **went from this prayer to the cross to make each** of these things possible,
- and **the book of Hebrews tells us that after he resurrected**, he went and sat down at the right hand of God constantly making intercession for us. **Guess what he's praying as he intercedes?** *These 3 things.*
- Which means we are not so much praying *to* Jesus in these things, as we are praying *with* him. Do you want your prayer life to take off? Stop praying *to* him and start praying *with* him.

- My **old pastor, Dr. Sheehan**, used to say to people in the church I grew up in, “I’m praying for you. Even more important, Jesus is praying for you.” Even as a young kid, I thought that was awesome.
- He’s praying John 17 over you right now. Join him!

So we’re going to do that again this week.

- On the last night of his life, when Jesus prayed this prayer: they took the Lord’s table (that’s when Judas left), and then Jesus prayed these things and they sang a hymn together.

So that’s what we’re going to do. We’re going to take the Lord’s table, pray and sing.

- (And that means if you leave early this week, that just shows everyone that you are Judas! So this is not the week to get a head start to the parking lot.)

Our teams are going to come forward and begin to serve.

- As they do, as always, **if you are not a believer**, these are not for you. Let them pass you by.
- **But please don’t feel like we’re being exclusive**, because *what is for you* is what these represent. Jesus’ death on the cross given as a substitutionary payment for your sins.
- **You can receive him today** if you never have, by simply opening up your heart and saying, “I receive you!”
- **You can experience the outpouring of God’s power** on your life in these 3 areas we discussed today right now if you open your heart to receive him!
- So **you do that now as our teams pass the bread and cup** out to the church.

