

John 17:20-26

20"I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, *21*that they may all be one. As you, Father, 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.

*22*The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, *23*I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

*24*Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

25"Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. *26*I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Sermon:

A confession from the preacher: The first draft of this sermon was all about how unity doesn't seem to be working out. Typing and flailing away, a quote Captain America kept running through my mind, "I can do this all day". Then it was like the Holy Spirit stopped me in my tracks. "Bartster, you're missing the plot".

—I'm looking for something to hang on to in the wake of news from Uvalde, Texas where 21 people, most of them children were shot to death at Robb Elementary school.

Once again, politicians offer their thoughts prayers.

Meanwhile a BBC reports the millions of dollars many of these politicians receive from the National Rifle Association.

Meanwhile news sources show school pictures of the teachers and children murdered this week.

Our guts churn. Tears well in our eyes. We wonder if our prayers matter.

After massacres like the one in Texas, the quote from theologian Miroslav Wolf routinely surfaces on social media.

“There is something deeply hypocritical about praying for a problem you are unwilling to resolve.”

The abolitionist Frederick Douglass remarked more than 150 years ago...”I discovered my prayers needed legs”-our prayers need legs too.

Before legging our prayers, I think we need to know Jesus prays for us... there is something powerful in knowing someone is praying for you.

One of my favourite preachers, Joy J Moore, tells about a family from her congregation whose child was preparing to go to middle school after being home schooled. The night before that first day of school the family prayed as always. Just before lights out, the child said, mama “pray now”.

“What do you mean? We already prayed”.

“No mama, I mean pray with me like you do after I go to sleep.”

The child needed to hear those words and the prayers mom and dad prayed for their children. We need to hear what Jesus prays. John’s gospel seems to know that. If there’s something to hold on to it might be the “*so that’s*” that Jesus prays on our behalf.

21 -so that those who trust in me will be one

so that the world may trust that you have sent me.

21- so that they may be one, as we are one,

23so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

26 so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

Jesus' heart's desire is that we become united in purpose for the sake of the world God loves.

Jesus' prayers have legs

Jesus prays while Judas goes into the night to betray Jesus.

Jesus prays even as the disciples squabble for top billing.

Jesus prays this prayer the same night he has washed feet, welcomed, and served his disciples.

Jesus' prayers have legs and if I might keep on with the idioms, Jesus has skin in the game. He knows what's coming—the arrest, the execution....and still he prays.

And one more idiom—Jesus prays knowing the end game.

Another quote by Miloslav Volf spells out God's end game—"Our theology)god talk is not about the world, it is about God mending the world."

The UK based Bible scholar and pastor Meda Stamper puts it like this: "As Jesus tends, feeds, bears witness to, and breaks barriers for love, Jesus' own are called to do the same thing (15:27; 21:15-17)"

Thank you Pastor Meda, 'that'll preach'.

Let us who have ears—listen,

let us who have hearts ---resolve

let us who have body and breath—act- So we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

