

## THE FIRST 15

Friday, May 10, 2024

Today is Friday, May 10 and we are studying the Gospel of John.

### OPENING PRAYER

*Blessed and Holy Lord God, I pause at the threshold of a new day and seek your presence. I quiet my mind and focus my entire self on you - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Give me your vision and inspiration for what lies ahead, journey with me in my comings and goings and be my companion on the way. Remind me that you are always working for good in my relationships, activities and conversations. Amen.*

### SCRIPTURE

***“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 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. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. 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. Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. 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.” John 17:20-26***

### REFLECTION

The seventeenth chapter of the Gospel of John is one very long prayer. Over 630 red-letter words spoken by a praying Savior ready to die for love of humanity. First, Jesus prays for his glorification at the coming crucifixion and resurrection. Then, Jesus prays for his disciples and finally he prays for all who will come to believe in him for centuries out into the future. After he finished praying, Jesus left the Upper Room with his disciples. They left behind the empty Passover dishes, the drained cup of the wine of the New Covenant, the basin of dirty water and the soiled towel that had been wrapped around his waist. They walked out of Jerusalem's city walls and crossed the Kidron Valley to the garden of betrayal.

The last thing Jesus did before his suffering death was pray for us. He prayed for me. One who has come to believe in him thousands of years later, thousands of miles away from Israel, and generations removed from those who walked with him and talked with him. He prayed for the people of the future who would come to believe in him through the message his disciples carried to far-flung nations across the world. He prayed for Christian unity. He prayed that his people would be one, that we would stay connected to him and connected to one another. Jesus said this unity among Christians would be a witness to the world that he is God's Son sent into the world to save it. Jesus prayed the world would know that God loves them.

This is the message of Christianity, that God so loved the world he gave his only son. We Christians are to be known by that love, a love that is real, that is sacrificial, that is dedicated to caring for the sick, helping the poor, reconciling the lost, and healing what is broken and torn. How well are we doing at living lives of love in the name of Jesus? Reread the above prayer from John 17:20-26 and ask yourself if the last prayer of Jesus has been answered? Who or what is preventing that realization?

**Ask:** How has the prayer Jesus prayed long ago come to be realized in my life? What might Jesus be praying for me now?

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, as you faced the suffering of the cross of Calvary, your last thought was to pray for me and generations of souls who would come to know you and believe in you. Let your prayer for unity among Christians and hope for mutual agape love be made known in this generation. Break down barriers, remove walls, challenge prejudices and fill us with your love. My prayer today is that the world will know we are Christians by the love we share. Amen.*