

The Evangelism of the World

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[0 : 0 0] Well, we're turning to our Bibles now, and we're going to read together. Edward, as you know, has been preaching through John chapter 17 in recent weeks, and we're! coming to that last section of that chapter this evening, but we'll read once again the whole of the chapter where Jesus in the upper room, just before he was betrayed and arrested, is teaching his inner disciples about the future, and having done so through chapters 14 and 15 and 16, recorded for us in John's Gospel, now he comes to pray to his Father in the hearing of the disciples. So John 17 and verse 1, when Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. You're as they were, and you gave them to me.

And they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me. And they have received them, and have come to know in truth that I came from you. And they have believed that you sent me. I'm praying for them.

I am not praying for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.

And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given to me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given to me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost, except the son of destruction, that the scripture might be fulfilled.

[2 : 5 1] But now I am coming to you. And these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

I have given them your word, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.

They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

And for their sake, I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just 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 have sent me. The glory that you have given me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one.

[4 : 12] I in them, and you in me. That they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me, and love them even as you love me.

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

O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know you, that you have sent me.

I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Amen. May God bless to us his word. Well, friends, good evening. Very good to see you all here.

[5 : 22] And let's turn to John's Gospel, chapter 17. And as you know, our passage for tonight is the last paragraph here in the chapter, verses 20 to 26.

And this is the last sermon in this short series. My title for this evening is The Evangelization of the World, because that is what Jesus is praying for in this final paragraph of the chapter.

Well, let me just take a moment first to remind you of the shape of this chapter and where it fits in the unfolding story of Jesus' life and work. It's the Thursday evening before Good Friday.

Jesus has just shared the Last Supper with his apostles, 12 apostles. But Judas Iscariot, at the end of the supper, has left the company.

He's gone out into the night to betray Jesus to the men who are wanting to take him away. And after Judas has left the company, Jesus instructs the remaining 11 apostles throughout chapters 14, 15, and 16, and he's teaching them there about their future life.

[6 : 34] And their work, their life after his departure. He tells them throughout this section not to be anxious. Their purpose, he says, will be to bear witness to him.

In other words, to speak about him and to speak boldly. Their job will be to commend him to the world. But Jesus makes it clear to them that they will be roasted for their pains.

The world will hate them, he says, so they'd better strap on their emotional armor. Some of them, he says in chapter 16, verse 2, will be put to death. But he also promises that the Father will send them the Holy Spirit to be with them forever.

And the Spirit will give them the energy and the courage to keep on speaking about Jesus. Chapters 14, 15, and 16 are massively realistic and yet massively encouraging.

Just look at the final two sentences of chapter 16. This is halfway through chapter 16 and verse 33. In the world, he says to them, you will have tribulation.

[7 : 46] That is, of course, exactly what they did have. But he goes on, take heart, I have overcome the world. So the world, in its antagonism to the gospel, he's saying to them, will not have the last laugh or the last word because it can never defeat Jesus.

On the contrary, Jesus has conquered the world. Now that final sentence in chapter 16 is not an expression of defiance towards the world.

Think for a moment of a rugby match. A rugby match between two fine teams. Let's call them New Zealand and Scotland. Now, if you're not a rugby fan, you might not know this, but the New Zealand team, they're called the All Blacks because they wear All Black.

But for many years, they've had a tradition of doing a kind of Maori war dance. Immediately before the match, it is called the Haka. And what they do is they spread themselves out, all 15 men across the pitch, facing the opposition.

They jump up and down. They slap their thighs. They stick out their tongues. They make a terrible grimacing view with their faces. And they shout loudly. And the whole thing is clearly designed to intimidate the enemy and turn their knees to water.

[9 : 04] Now, the opposition, the Scots, they stand there facing them, looking as cool and hard as a man can look. Look, each team, for a minute or so, is defying the other because the outcome of the match is in doubt.

Now, New Zealand do tend to win, but they don't always win. So what they're doing is loudly defying the Scots. And the Scots are silently defying the New Zealanders.

When Jesus says, take heart, I have overcome the world, he is not defying the world, because the outcome of his argument with the world is not in doubt.

He is simply asserting his victory. The final whistle has been blown. The match is over. The issue is settled. The world can hate him. The world can hate those who speak for him.

But he is the vanquisher of the world. He doesn't say, I will overcome the world at some future point. He says, I have overcome the world.

[10 : 07] And those who belong to him, as chapter 17, verse 6 tells us, have been taken out of the world. And as verse 16 in chapter 17 tells us, they are not of the world.

Christians no longer belong to the world. We belong to Jesus, and he has conquered the world. Now, it sounds paradoxical. But according to chapter 17, we who are Christians live in the world, but are no longer of the world.

The world is our place of residence, and it's our workplace, as we shall see in just a moment. But the anti-God and anti-Jesus values of the world no longer grip us.

We are no longer part of the world, but we have a great responsibility towards it, as we shall see. Now, this phrase, the world, in John's gospel, means godless human society.

Human beings organizing their lives without reference to God, and resentful of the idea that they might in any way have to give an account of themselves to God. But God loves this godless world.

[11 : 22] He doesn't love its godlessness. But he's deeply concerned that men and women who now belong to the world should become believers and be rescued from the world.

That could be the need of some who are here this evening, if you're not yet a Christian. If that is your position, leave the world, come to Christ, and be rescued.

As John chapter 3, verse 16 says, God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him, whoever, should not perish, but have eternal life.

Now, our passage for this evening is the final section, verses 20 to 26 here. The whole chapter is a prayer addressed by Jesus to God the Father.

And what Jesus is asking for throughout the chapter is that the Father will accomplish his great purpose, which is to complete the rescue of his people from the power of the world and to bring them to eternal life.

[12 : 25] And the prayer falls into three sections, which neatly follow the paragraph divisions that we have here in the English Standard Version. So first we have verses 1 to 5, where Jesus asks that the Father will accomplish his plan of salvation through the completion of Jesus' ministry.

Then secondly, verses 6 to 19, Jesus asks the Father to accomplish his plan of salvation through the completion of the apostles' ministry. And then thirdly, verses 20 to 26, he's asking the Father to accomplish his plan of salvation through the ongoing future ministry of all Christians throughout all the further generations, which of course includes us in 2026.

Now I'd like to take this final section under two headings. Jesus is praying for his disciples of all generations, first, for their work in this world, and second, for their destiny in the world to come.

Now it's not an easy passage to navigate. So before we come to those two main headings, I'd like to spend a few minutes walking us through the passage so that we can begin to see what Jesus is really talking about here.

So what I want to do now is to read verses 20 to 26 out loud, but I'll pause every now and again and try and bring out the meaning and sense of what Jesus is saying.

[13 : 52] So perhaps if you can, you'd follow the text with me. Verse 20. I do not ask for these only. I'm not just praying for these 11, these my apostles.

I'm looking much further ahead, down the long road of future history. So I'm also asking, praying, for those who will believe in me through their word, through the preaching of the apostles.

And here is my request for all those future believers. Verse 21. That they may all be one. That they will grow together in a real unity of heart and mind.

And here's an analogy that Jesus uses. You and I, dear Father, we are entirely united to the point where you are in me and I am in you.

Now I'm not praying at this point that they should be in each other. I'm praying that they will be united to us and in us, in the Father and the Son.

[14 : 55] And the outcome of these believers being deeply united to the Father and the Son is that the world may believe that you have sent me. In other words, people in the world will make the connection between you and me and will realize that I am authentically your Son.

Not some loose cannon of a preacher who can be dismissed as an irrelevance, but your Son sent to the world on a rescue mission. Verse 22.

The glory that you have given me. The glorious gospel of sins forgiven through the work of the glorious cross. This wonderful message I have passed on to them for the same purpose as aforementioned, that they may be one with a unity like ours.

Namely, verse 23, I in them and you in me. Which means that Father, Son, and Christians are all bound together in a wonderful connection of love and belonging.

And the purpose of this, halfway through verse 23, is the same as the purpose expressed in verse 21. That the world may know that you sent me.

[16 : 11] But there's a further purpose as well. And that is that the world may know, and this is a mind-boggling truth, that you have loved these believers even as you have loved me.

Friends, just to break off from the text for a moment, isn't that mind-boggling? That the Father's love for Christian believers is the same as his love for Jesus. You would not expect to read that, would you?

But it is what Jesus says. We'll come back to that in a few minutes. Now back to verse 24. Father, I have another desire for all these new believers whom you've given me as my possession.

I desire that they may be with me where I am, after my ascension in the glory of heaven. I want them to be with me so that they can see my glory, the glory that is my native property, the glory that you gave me before the foundation of the world because you loved me.

I want them to see me as I really am. They've only seen the tip of the iceberg so far, but I want to complete their joy by having them with me forever so that they can see me and know how truly glorious I am.

[17 : 34] Verse 25. O righteous Father, righteous because the whole gospel is a revelation of your righteousness and justice. Even though the world does not know you, I do know you and these believers know that you have sent me.

The gospel is beginning to sink deep into their hearts. Verse 26. I made known to them your name. That is the truth about your character and your power.

But I haven't finished. I will continue to make your name known across the world through all the future generations because the love with which you have loved me is not our private secret.

It is for all these future believers too. And they will come to understand and to experience this love. It will be in them filling their hearts with sweet joy.

And they will know that it is not just our love that dwells in them, but that it is I myself, their Lord Jesus, who dwells in them.

[18 : 41] Well, I hope that that run-through of the passage will give us a bit more grasp of what Jesus is praying for as he looks forward down the generations of future believers.

We too are very much included because, as verse 20 puts it, we are among those who will believe in Christ through the apostles' words. Through the apostles' words.

If you're a Christian, that is how you came to believe, through the apostles' words. Now, it may be that you came to real faith through the words of a Sunday school teacher or a minister or your parents.

But what they were doing was taking the words of the apostles and explaining them to you. It's the apostles and the evangelists of the New Testament who continue to preach to us today.

The apostle John is preaching to us at this very moment as we study the words that he wrote down. Jesus' prayer in verse 20 is being answered every day all over the world as people listen to the New Testament and allow the New Testament to preach the gospel to them.

[19 : 47] Don't think that it's only 21st century preachers and teachers who bring people to faith today. 21st century preachers are merely instruments or channels of gospel communication.

It is the New Testament writers themselves who continue to preach to us and persuade us to put our trust in Christ. Well, as I said, I'd like to bring out the teaching of these verses under two headings.

And the first is that as Jesus prays for all his future disciples, he is praying for their work in this world. And that is their work of evangelism.

Now, you might want to say, but isn't he praying for their unity? Isn't unity the big thing that's going on here? Well, it certainly is a big thing in this part of Jesus' prayer, but unity is the means to an end.

It's not the end in itself. This is very clear from verse 21. Jesus says that they may all be one, just 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 have sent me.

[21 : 05] So unity in the disciples is the means, but the end or goal is that the world may believe. So Jesus is saying that unity amongst his disciples will be powerfully persuasive.

It will open the eyes of unbelievers who belong to the world. It will bring them to believe that the Father has sent the Son and therefore the Son is not an irrelevance but is the soul bringer of salvation to needy sinners.

What then is the nature of this unity for which Jesus is praying? Now that is a \$64,000 question. Some Christians reading these words have assumed that Jesus must have been praying that the different denominations of the Christian church should be all amalgamated under one roof so to speak so that the many institutions denominations which now exist should become a single united church which would mean no more Presbyterians no more Episcopalians Anglicans and so on but everyone united in one worldwide church in the middle of the 20th century there was a movement considerable interest in something that became known as the ecumenical movement and the idea of those who were involved there was to break down denominational barriers and hopefully in the end to produce a united worldwide church as an example of this in England in the 1960s the Church of England and the Methodist Church set up a series of discussions in which their senior leaders got together over a number of years with the aim of uniting those two denominations into a single denomination eventually agreement was not reached and the two denominations went their separate ways now I think we can be sure from what Jesus is saying in this prayer that that kind of institutional unity is not what he's thinking about or teaching in any case when Jesus prayed this prayer in about 31 AD there were no such things as denominations the New Testament knows only the universal church and the local church what Jesus is teaching here is a very different kind of unity from a unity of institutions what kind of unity is it then well look again at verse 21 and it becomes clear that they may all be one in what way well here's the analogy just as you father are in me and I in you now think of what that means throughout John's gospel

John himself and Jesus teach that the son is in the father and the father is in the son now that is a level of relationship that simply has no parallel in ordinary human life nothing that we can experience is comparable you might have two very close friends who know each other like the back of their hands but they remain distinct from each other you can have a man and his wife who have been happily married for donkey's years and know each other very well and love each other well but they remain decidedly different he is he and she is she there's an element of aloneness in each of them which can never disappear but with God the father and God the son there is a complete and indivisible unity look again at verse 21 just as you father are in me and I in you I asked you last week to turn up chapter 14 and I'd like

I'd like you to turn to it again if you will please chapter 14 verse 7 where Jesus says to the apostles 14 7 if you had known me you would have known my father also from now on you do know him and have seen him now this piece of information baffles poor Philip he thinks to himself but we haven't seen the father in fact anyone who knows his old testament at all knows that God is invisible so he says to Jesus in verse 8 Lord show us the father what can you possibly mean by saying that we have seen the father so Jesus says in verse 9 Philip you are as slow as a tortoise have I been with you now for three years and you haven't spotted what is going on whoever has seen me has seen the father now when Jesus says that he does not mean that he is the father in his teaching the father is the father and the son is the son so he goes on in verse 10 do you not believe that I am in the father and the father is in me and in the next sentence he unpacks his meaning further the words that I say to you all the gospel that I've been giving to you now for three years these words do not originate in me

[26 : 34] I do not speak on my own authority I have not a word to say that is independent of my father's teaching as I speak the father who dwells in me does his works you might expect him to have said as I speak the father who dwells in me speaks but he doesn't he says the father who dwells in me does his works you see Jesus' words not only teach truth they also have power to accomplish works to heal the sick to raise the dead so for example back in chapter 11 Jesus has raised Lazarus from the dead simply by speaking it was his words that produced the result Lazarus come out and out he came who could resist the voice that wakes the dead now that was an example of the father who dwells in me doing his works through Jesus' words as it's put in verse 10 father and son then do more than work together as partners they are in each other and they love each other look at verse 24 and verse 26 of our chapter 17 and you'll see how

Jesus speaks of the father loving him but their indwelling of each other and their love for each other is not kept as a kind of sublime secret in the heavenly places it is expressed it shows itself it bursts onto the world because father and son have a purpose towards the world and that is to bring salvation to whoever is willing to receive it the unity of father and son is seen in the arrival of Jesus on the earth to bring peace and reconciliation with God now this is why the angels at Bethlehem remember that they were so overjoyed when Jesus was born you know the scene well the captain of the angels spoke first and he said to the shepherds don't be afraid because I bring you good news of a great joy which will be for all the people for to you is born this day in the city of David a savior who is Christ the Lord and at that point the whole host of the angels cannot restrain themselves they burst out with glory to God in the highest and on earth peace which means not peace between nations but peace between

God and those from whom he has been long estranged so the mutual indwelling of father and son is not a private experience for the father and the son to enjoy together in heaven it is revealed to the desperately needy earth as the son of God indwelt by his father takes on human flesh in order to be offered as a sacrifice for our sins so that those who are willing to repent and trust Jesus have their lives everlastingly turned around so that they leave the road to hell and are taken by the grace of God to walk the road to heaven now we're working away at this question of what Jesus means when he prays that the disciples will be one so look with me again at chapter 17 verse 21 that they may all be one just as you father are in me and I in you involved in this glorious rescue mission which is the gospel so that second half of the verse they also may be in us so the unity of gospel purpose that holds the father and the son together is a unity into which the disciples are also drawn they begin to share the same agenda they learn from the father and the son what is really important they learn why the son came into the world they begin to understand how

God has expressed his love for the lost human race by giving up his son to slaughter to sacrifice so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life these disciples learn that Jesus has come to rescue men and women from perishing perishing they learn to believe in the reality of hell and condemnation they begin to understand that Jesus did not come into the world just to model a wholesome lifestyle of kindness or to be a model human being to be imitated they come to realize that he came to salvage people to pluck them out of the burning to prevent them having to face the righteous anger of God in short they come to realize how serious the gospel is they are involved in the father and the son they come to understand what Jesus means when he cries out across the world repent and believe the gospel it's not just about lifestyle it's about our eternal destiny so when Jesus prays in verse 21 that they may all be one we realize as verse 21 unfolds that he's not thinking primarily about

Christians loving each other and getting on well together though that kind of fellowship is always very important he is thinking about our involvement with the saving work of the father and the son the father and the son are in each other and we are to be in them and in their work understanding it committed to it carrying it out and when that happens what will be the consequence we'll look at the final part of verse 21 that they also may be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me otherwise the world will not believe that Jesus has been sent by the father the world will look at Jesus but will not make the connection between Jesus and the only true God the world will by nature relativize Jesus they'll look at him in relation to other religious teachers they'll say oh he's just one of a group of influential teachers let's compare him with Muhammad and with the Buddha with Confucius with

[33 : 02] Moses let's taste a bit of the teaching of all of these and we'll rank them in order of excellence as if we're tasting fine wines and wanting to decide which are the best but verse 21 when Christian people are truly and deeply involved in the father and the son the world will be forced to notice them and the world will see something which commands the world's attention the world will look at the Lord's people and the world will say what is it that binds these people together and gives them such a united sense of purpose yes they love each other that is charmingly obvious but they're committed to a message which we cannot ignore that's where their real unity lies they are showing us from the Bible that Jesus is not just a any other religious teacher who is advising us how to live a better life he has come to rescue us from eternal perishing and he is the way the truth and the life and no one can come to the father except through him he is unique therefore God has sent him and he has sent no one else so there's only one real Christian unity and that is unity in the gospel message and the work of the gospel unity with the father and the son in their mission and the gospel message is defined and described by the teaching of the apostles it is the message of the new testament and this shows us that trying to bring various denominations of the church into a kind of unity is impossible because the different denominations are so undecided about what they believe I worked as a church of

England minister for many years church of England congregations are grouped together in what are called deaneries and a typical deanery consists of a dozen or 15 parish churches and the ministers of a particular deanery are asked to meet together regularly to give each other support and encouragement at least that's the idea but I soon discovered that in a group of a dozen or 15 ministers usually there were only one or two others who really held to the apostolic gospel of the new testament so real fellowship with this group of ministers was simply impossible at our meetings we would share we would share coffee together we would share chocolate biscuits together but we could not share the gospel because we didn't all believe it I quickly found that I had real fellowship real unity outside the church of England denomination with Baptists and free church evangelicals and so on that's why it's such a joy for our church the Tron church to be part of a group of churches now a presbytery where we really are united in the gospel the very name of our presbytery speaks of our unity we are the didasco presbytery and didasco is a fine new testament greek word which means I teach and what we teach in our churches is the new testament gospel it's that that unites us so the purpose of real Christian unity is not to be an end in itself it is the means to an end and that end is that the world may come to recognize Jesus for who he really is that he has been sent by the father and when people who are not yet Christians come to see that the father has sent Jesus to be the savior and that there is no other savior they will put their trust in him and then they will find that they no longer belong to the world that is under

God's judgment they belong now to Jesus and to eternal life but there's a further consequence of real unity among believers look on to verse 23 which initially sounds like a repeat of verse 21 I in them and you in me that they may become perfectly one so that the world may know that you sent me now that's almost word for word a repeat of verse 21 but then Jesus adds this further thought and it's an amazing thought not only that you sent me but also that you love them my disciples even as you loved me in a human family that has two or more children parents realize if they've got any sense that it's very important to give each child the same level of love if parents show more love to one child than to another the family suffers the children suffer there's jealousy and there's bad feeling dad you love Vanessa more than you love me no I don't yes but you do now Christians are forgiven sinners but we're still sinners sometimes we're very much aware of our sinfulness aware of the the teeming thoughts that fill our minds which are always a mixture of the good the bad and the ugly we are often and rightly aware of our moral frailty and of particular sins that we may have committed and sometimes quite rightly we are ashamed of ourselves and at times like that we may think does God still love me when I've just done what I've just done or thought what I've just thought the last words of verse 23 assure us not only that he does love us but that he loves us as he loves

Jesus we would expect him to love us frail sinners far less than he loves his perfect and wonderful son it would be no shock to discover that in the father's estimation Jesus was at the top of Mount Everest and we were at the bottom of the dead sea but it's not so as the old hymn puts it we are loved with everlasting love you frail sinner and me frail sinner we are endlessly and intensely loved by God the father if it were not so Jesus would not have been prepared to die for us and the father would not have been prepared to send Jesus into the world to die for us it's because God loved the world that he gave his son to be sacrificed so that you and I could have eternal life life to be lived with him in glory he wouldn't want to share his glorious home with those that he didn't love very deeply well there's our first point

Jesus prays for our unity unity in the gospel unity with him and with the father so that the world the unbelieving world that he loves should come to believe that Jesus has been sent by the father the world will notice our determined unity of purpose and we'll begin to understand who Jesus is so friends let's continue to roll our sleeves up and get the saving message of the gospel out into the world we're evangelists every Christian is a missionary and our missionary usefulness will be strengthened as we get the true apostolic gospel more and more deeply into our minds and souls now you'll be glad to hear that I shall be much briefer on the second point than on the first and that is this that Jesus is praying for our destiny in the world to come look with me at verse 24 verse 24 father I desire and just stop there for a moment what would we expect Jesus to be wanting or desiring just a few hours before his death on the cross we've all seen films where somebody is about to be executed there he is sitting in a condemned cell what does a condemned man want at such a terrible moment a good dinner a long hug from his mother a last-minute stay of execution now look at what Jesus desires at this critical moment father I desire that they also whom you have given to me may be with me where I am let's just pause there for a moment the final goal of the gospel is the reunion of man with God Adam and Eve rebelled against God and God dealt with them righteously by expelling them from his presence the gates of the garden of

[42 : 04] Eden were barred against against them there seemed to be no way back to God's presence but over the long centuries through the history of Old Testament Israel and the visions of the Old Testament prophets it began to emerge that God was at work to bring about reconciliation the temple in Jerusalem symbolized God's presence with his people though it's very structure barred them from entry into the holiest place in the temple but as you know when Jesus died the great curtain in the temple that concealed the holiest place was torn into from top to bottom indicating that access to God's presence was now being opened up the era of gospel preaching then began the good news of forgiveness and reconciliation from that point onwards has been announced all over the world but while we are assured of our forgiveness and we have God's spirit living in our hearts as a guarantee of our place in heaven the fact is we're not yet with him we don't see him we walk by faith and not by sight as Paul puts it we look up and all we see is the clouds or the stars if it's a clear night we don't yet see our Savior but in verse 24 he asks the father that all believing

Christians might be with him where he is and for what purpose well he goes on to see my glory the glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world Jesus came from the glory the glory was his native element his eternal home when he was on earth he laid that glory aside he was stripped of it he allowed himself to be stripped of it but then he ascended from the world which had largely rejected him and he is seated now in glory at the right hand of his father and we who are believers will join him in that glorious kingdom and we shall see his glory with our own eyes and the estrangement of God and man will be ended how can we be sure of this we can be sure because the father will certainly answer Jesus's request in the affirmative the father's will and the son's will are one will if the son asks for it the father will surely grant it father I desire that they may be with me where I am so this remarkable prayer prayed on the eve of good friday teaches us both how to live in this world and how to look forward to the world to come in this world we are missionaries and by means of our unity in the father and in the son and in the apostolic gospel we present Jesus to the world so that many from the world should come to him and be saved but Jesus lifts up our eyes to the glory of heaven to whet our appetite and to help us to long to be with him where we shall see him as he really is the glorious son of God we're almost done look finally at verse 26 I made known to them to my people your name the father's name the father's power and reality and over the generations says Jesus I will continue to make it known why to display truth well yes indeed for Jesus is the truth but there's another aim halfway through that verse that the love with which you have loved me may be in them and I in them this implies that our growth in unity and in our work of evangelism is immersed in the love of God the love that the father has for Jesus and that love according to this verse is the love that lives and grows in our hearts friends the whole of the Christian life is a glorious romance the father loves

Jesus and Jesus loves us he is the bridegroom and we are the bride I know that life is tough for us if you're young you're struggling to get going in life and work and to get established if you're in the middle years you're struggling to keep afloat and put bread on your table if you're old you're struggling to keep breathing and to keep smiling and both of those activities can be difficult but whoever we are if we are Christians we belong to Christ in this world and we shall be with him in glory that is the romance of the Christian life we are loved by him and one day we shall see him and on that day we shall receive all that we have ever desired well let's bow our heads and we'll pray our glorious Lord Jesus how we thank you we thank you for your willingness to take on to be on the human flesh to be subjected to the antagonism of the world and to be crucified so that we might be forgiven and reconciled to God sustain us we pray so that we can bear witness to you boldly in the world fill your church across Scotland with the resolve to make you known and may our united testimony to your grace bring many to see that truly the father has sent you we ask it for your name's sake amen amen