

FOR THE GLORY OF GOD  
(Jesus' World Mission Report)

John 17:1-26  
Key Verse: 17:1b,4

#43

"Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son that your Son may glorify you...I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do."

God sent his Son, whom he loved, as a missionary to the world. This prayer has been called Jesus' high priestly prayer. But it is also his world mission report to God. In this prayer we find that Jesus lived and worked for the glory of God. This must be the life purpose of all of us. Jesus glorified God by his obedient life. He glorified God by finishing the work God gave him to do. That work was to accomplish world redemption by his obedient death and to raise disciples who would bring the good news of God's love and victory to the whole world. From this prayer we can learn Jesus' missionary principles, and especially, we can see how he raised his disciples.

First, Incarnation and sacrifice. In his prayer Jesus said, "Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began." Jesus laid aside that power and glory and came to be with us. He raised disciples by being with them. Jesus did not sit on his high throne and rule from a distance. He came. He is Immanuel, God with us. Hudson Taylor of the China Inland mission understood this principle. He was an incarnational missionary. When he dressed Chinese he was despised by fellow missionaries at first, but he made friends and later converts of the people he had come to reach. Our lay missionaries also seek to follow the principle of incarnation. We do our best to learn the language and adapt to the customs of the mission land. Kathy Kang of Bulgaria entered the University of Sophia as a freshman and has almost finished a degree in the Bulgarian language and culture. She and M. James have a fruitful student ministry. Dr Samuel Lee ate a Big Mac every day for lunch for 8 years in order to learn to like American food. (I don't think he ever really liked it.) Peter and Monica Park of Nigeria moved off of the Embassy compound to live in the village where students lived. Their children cried. It was hot and dangerous. But God took care of them and blessed their ministry.

Last year I visited India. I met three beautiful women missionaries. They were graduates of top universities in Korea. They gave their marriages to God and went to India to marry Indian Shepherds and establish missionary homes. Missionary Rebecca Bai, a UBF graduate from Pusan, established a missionary house church with Matthew Bai of Papua New Guinea. These are truly incarnational missionaries. Incarnation is sacrifice. The cross is ultimate sacrifice.

Jesus said, "For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified" (19). Jesus sanctified himself by his death on the cross. His blood makes us clean. Through his

sacrifice we are forgiven and made holy. He taught his disciples saying, "If anyone would come after me he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me."

Second, the Bible and obedience. Jesus said in verse 6, "I revealed you to those you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word." Verse 8 says, "I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you." Jesus lived by the word of God. He fulfilled God's word by his life. He taught the word of God to his disciples. Jesus began his ministry by reading from Isaiah, announcing that he had come to fulfil Scripture. His triumphal entry was an enactment of God's word in Zechariah's prophecy. He taught the Bible in the synagogues. He taught the word of God by the seaside and on the mountains; he challenged the religious leaders with, "Haven't you read?" and "the Scripture says...." and "It is written..." When we go to share Jesus with others all we can do is to give them the word of God. The Holy Spirit works through the word to change a person. God's word purifies the heart and mind. It makes one like a fruitful tree planted by streams of water (Ps 1). Jesus prayed in verse 17, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."

Obedience comes from an absolute attitude toward the word of God. Verse 6 says, "they have obeyed your word." Jesus told his disciples. Teach them "to obey everything I have commanded you." Making disciples means helping those who come to Jesus obey his word. It is not easy to teach obedience. Obedience does not come naturally. Jesus himself learned obedience through suffering and became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him (Heb 5:8).

Obedience to God's word is costly. Jesus said, "I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world." (14) When we go to live in another country we naturally gravitate to ethnic communities. We like our own food, we like to speak and worship in our own language. We like for our children to marry our own kind of people. When missionaries deny their own culture and ideas and really try to live according to God's word, they develop a Biblical culture that challenges the world.

Third, Mission and Vision. Jesus sent them into the world as God had sent him. He prayed, "They are not of the world even as I am not of it. ...As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world." (18) When Jesus called his first disciples to follow him, he promised to make them fishers of men. He appointed them to be disciples, learners—to be with him. And he raised them to be apostles—to go out. His last command was "Go and make disciples of all nations." They were to make disciples who make disciples. Jesus' mission gives us vision and direction. When we began teaching the Bible to students in Kwangju in 1961, we found Jesus' world mission command. It seemed impossible to obey. Everyone thought that to be a missionary required a lot of money and that only Americans or Canadians could be missionaries. Korea could not be a

missionary sending country. But when the students began to pray that God might use them as missionaries, and to offer their 5 loaves and two fish to God, something happened. God worked in their hearts. They began to overcome despair and the beggars' mentality that had been planted by war and poverty. God blessed their obedience to his command. He opened doors. He sent them out as missionaries. God's vision for the world changed their lives.

Fourth, oneness and love. Jesus prayed that God protect his disciple from the devil so that they might be one. (11) He prayed for all future disciples, including us, "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." (21) We need God's protection because the devil is always trying to break the love relationship of Jesus' disciples. The oneness that Jesus prays for is not political or organizational. It is the unity of believers who have repented of sin and who have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus; believers who have God's word in their hearts. It is a unity that is accomplished by Jesus when he comes with the Father and the Holy Spirit to dwell within us. He commanded his disciples to love one another. Love is the glue that makes us one in Jesus. Love is a decision, not a feeling. (13:35). It is love that binds Jesus' disciples into one. Jesus was praying for a miracle. I must die to myself in order to love someone I with whom I can't agree. It requires a daily decision of faith to trust and build up others. Co-working is one of the most difficult challenges we face on the mission field. But when we look at Jesus and ask his help, he will work in us to give us love and unity. Then the world will believe.

Jesus' command to disciples to love one another and his prayer topic for oneness are not optional. This past January I visited Jerusalem. From the 4th Century to the 12th century Jerusalem was a Christian city. But in the 12th century the Muslim General, Saladin, conquered Jerusalem. He did so easily because the various Christian factions were fighting one another instead of loving one another.

These days Muslims leaders have declared that their goal is to conquer the world with the Muslim religion. It is a threat that we should take seriously. We are at war. We must fight the battle in Jesus' way—with the word of God, with obedience and with love. May the Spirit of God work in us through his word to enable us to be one in Christ.

Fifth, Jesus prayed for his disciples. Verse 9 says, "I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me." As we have seen, he prayed for their protection and unity. He prayed that they be sanctified by the truth. We cannot change anyone. So we must pray for those with whom we study the Bible. This is how Jesus made disciples. He taught the Bible and prayed. The Holy Spirit works through God's word. God answers prayer. God changes hearts.

Sixth, Hope in the Kingdom of God. Jesus promised that he would continue making God known to his disciples; that he would be in them to fill them with God's love. But the great

hope in his heart was expressed in his prayer: “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.” Our ultimate hope is to be with Jesus in the kingdom of God—to be with him where he is and to behold his glory.

Praise Jesus who glorified God. Praise Jesus who died and rose so that we might have eternal life. Praise Jesus who raised disciples and sent them out to make disciples of all nations. Praise Jesus who glorified God by finishing the work God gave him to do.