

The Church



His Own

People

Studies in  
Chapter 17 of  
John's Gospel

## Studies in Chapter 17 of John's Gospel

- 1) The Church – His Own People
- 2) The Church – a Demonstration
- 3) The Church – United Not Divided
- 4) The Church – Entrusted with the Word
- 5) The Church – Authorised by the Name
- 6) The Church – Made Complete Together

These studies originally took the form of a series of talks  
in July to September 1991  
at Main Road Chapel, Lapford, Devon, U.K.

Dave Taylor 2016

Further copies can be downloaded from [www.justonecandle.uk](http://www.justonecandle.uk)

## 1) The Church – His Own People

### 1. THE FATHER'S GIFT (to Jesus)

<b>John 17:2</b>	" . . . all those you have given him."
<b>6</b>	" . . . those whom you gave me out of the world."
<b>9</b>	" . . . those you have given me . . . "
<b>24</b>	" . . . those you have given me . . . "
<b>John 1:13</b>	" . . . but of God."
<b>1 Cor.1:30</b>	"It is because of him . . . "
<b>Matt.16:16-18</b>	" . . . revealed . . . by my Father in Heaven." " . . . on this rock . . . "

### 2. GIVEN OUT OF THE WORLD - INTO THE WORLD

<b>John 17:6</b>	" . . . those whom you gave me out of the world."
<b>11</b>	" . . . they are still in the world . . . "
<b>14</b>	" . . . they are not of the world any more than I am of the world."
<b>15</b>	" . . . not that you take them out of the world . . . "
<b>16</b>	" . . . They are not of the world, even as I am not of it."
<b>18</b>	"As you have sent me, I have sent them into the world."

The results are visible in **verses 21, 23** and **25-26** !

The Greek word for "church" is EKKLESIA, meaning "that which is called out" or "selected".

### 3. SET APART, EARMARKED, "HOLY"

<b>John 17:17</b>	"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."
<b>19</b>	" . . . That they too may be truly sanctified."

**1 Peter 2:4-10** includes a whole catalogue of "specialness":-

<b>5</b>	" . . . spiritual house . . . holy priesthood . . . "
<b>9</b>	" . . . a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God . . . "
<b>10</b>	" . . . the people of God . . . received mercy."

### 4. HIS MAIN CONCERN

Jesus' concern is for THE CHURCH first of all and THEN for the world.  
See **v.9** & **v.20** as well as:-

<b>v.11</b>	Kept in the Name
<b>v.11</b>	That they may be one
<b>v.13</b>	His joy made full in us
<b>v.14</b>	Given the Father's word
<b>v.15</b>	Kept from the evil one
<b>v.17(&amp;19)</b>	Set apart
<b>v.24-26</b>	His love to and through us

## 2) The Church - a Demonstration

### 1. AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR JESUS

The whole chapter carries the theme that Jesus is leaving his disciples in the world in his place, but see especially:-

- John 17:10** "... glory has come to me through them."  
**11** "I ... no longer ... but they are still ..."  
**14** "... they are not of the world any more than I am of the world."  
**16** "... They are not of the world, even as I am not of it."  
**18** "... sent me ... sent them into the world"  
**21** "... so that the world may believe ..."  
**23** "... to let the world know ..."  
**26** "... that I myself may be in them."

### 2. SHINING IN AND SHINING OUT

**John 17:6** "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world."

The word translated "reveal" really means "show what is really there", "shine out", "make obvious", "exhibit", "demonstrate". John uses it in his first letter, where it is also translated "appear". I have marked with a star (\*) where this word is used again in the following passages.

- 1 John 1:2** "The life appeared ... to us"\*  
**2:28** "... when he appears"\*  
**3:2** "... not yet been made known"\*  
**3:5** "But you know that he appeared ... "\*  
**3:10** "This is how we know" (It is OBVIOUS)\*  
**2 Cor 3:1-3** "... known and read by everybody"  
**1 Thess 1:4-10** "... become known everywhere."  
**2 Cor 4:1-15** Paul on "shining in and shining out"  
**2** "... setting forth the truth plainly.."\*  
**6** "... made his light shine in our hearts"  
**10** "... so that the life of Jesus may be revealed in our body.\*"  
**11** "... so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.\*"

### 3. THE FINAL REVELATION

- John 3:19-21** "... so that it may be seen plainly ... "\*  
**Eph 5:13** "... light ... makes everything visible.\*"  
**2 Cor 5:10** "... appear before the judgment seat of Christ.\*"  
**1 Cor 3:13** "... shown for what it is ... "\*  
**Rom 8:19** "... eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed." (= "unveiled")

### 3) The Church – United Not Divided

#### Introduction

Jesus' intense burden for the Church to be ONE comes strongly out of the whole chapter, but especially in these verses:-

**John 17:21&22** " . . . one as we are one."

**23** " . . . brought to complete unity to let the world know . . . "

This seems completely impossible, especially when we realise that he is talking about the WHOLE Church. It is difficult enough within a small part of that Church. Our relationships together are the key to Church life - little wonder that they come under fire so often!

#### 1. BROTHERS AND SISTERS

It is vital that we know that we really have been made each other's brothers and sisters, whether we feel like it or not! See:-

**Eph. 2:11-22** " . . . through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit."

**Eph. 4:1-6** "There is one body and one Spirit . . . "

"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

#### 2. MENDING BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS

If we become aware that a relationship is broken, the responsibility is ours to start the mending process:-

a) If I have sinned and become aware of it. See **Matthew 5:23 & 24**.

b) If my brother or sister has sinned and broken the relationship. See **Matthew 18:15-17**.

#### THE AIM IS RECONCILIATION NOT BEING PROVED RIGHT.

Am I :- i) aware of my own sin against someone and I want reconciliation?

ii) aware of someone's sin against me and I want reconciliation?

iii) not aware of any problems between me and anyone else?

iv) aware of problems, but I do not want to face them, so I shall pretend to be like iii)

above?

If you are in i) or ii) above, you know what to do. It will not be easy to admit sin or to challenge it. If it seems easy to challenge it, you probably need to admit your own sin first. See **Matthew 7:1-5** . . . specks and planks!

If you are in iii), don't feel awkward because you think you ought to have problems! Know the security you have in the Lord Jesus and be ready to take the position of weakness if you are challenged. See **1 Cor.4:4**.

If you are in iv), you may be fooling yourself, but probably not the church, and certainly not fooling Father! See **1 John 1:5-10**.

#### 3. LOVE COVERS A MULTITUDE OF SINS

This is not an excuse or 'cop-out' to avoid confrontation. If the relationship has been soured, you cannot use this as a reason to avoid speaking the truth in love. Look at the context of **1 Peter 4:8** :- deeply, fervently, "in a stretched-out way". The ability to forgive and forget straight away when someone sins against us. Extending the grace of God with no resentment and no account kept. See **Matthew 18:21-35**. The alternative is . . .

#### 4. THE ROOT OF BITTERNESS

See Heb.12:14+15. If you miss out on the grace of God (i.e. his forgiveness and cleansing), you will become bitter, cause trouble and defile others. See also **Heb.3:12-13**. The deceitfulness of sin causing you to fall out of your living relationship with the living God and leading in turn to a hardened heart.

We need to repent and seek forgiveness of specific, named sin.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### HEARTS THAT ARE OPEN

Hearts that are open, love that stays true;  
Let there be no division in all that we do.  
We are part of a kingdom whose strength is in You.  
Let us live for the glory of God.

Break down the defences that would cause us to turn  
Away from each other, let us learn how to serve.  
Build us together, make us strong in Your love,  
As we live for the glory of God.

Chorus: One thing is certain, one thing I know,  
It's the love of the Father You want us to show  
To the hurt and the wounded wherever we go,  
Let it flow through our lives, let it flow.  
Let it flow through our lives, let it flow.

Lord, come re-awaken, let Your light shine,  
Join us together, one heart at a time.  
Make us a people who have learned how to give,  
As we live for the glory of God.

Copyright 1988 Dave Bilbrough

## 4) The Church – Entrusted with the Word

### Introduction

It is very clear from this chapter that Jesus has no other plan for the earth apart from the Church. He has committed everything to us, including the word of God.

**John 17: 8** "For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them."

**14** "I have given them your word and the world has hated them . . . "

**17** "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."

Our understanding of "the word of God" has often been confused and limited to a belief in the inspiration of Scripture. In **Ephesians 4:11-13**, Paul outlines 4 or 5 types of "ministry of the word" which have a vital place in the life of the Church:-

### 1. APOSTLES

Men who are sent out to establish, plant and put in the necessary foundations in local churches. See:-

**Acts 11:19-26** Barnabas was sent out by the church in Jerusalem to establish the believers in Antioch.

**Acts 13: 1- 3** Barnabas and Saul(Paul) sent off from the church in Antioch. The work to which they were called was to herald the good news and establish churches.

**Acts 18:27-28** Apollos was sent over from the embryo church in Ephesus to Corinth (in Achaia). Notice the part played in the development of his ministry by Aquila and Priscilla, ordinary people who moved house!

**2 Tim.1:11** Paul was a herald, an apostle and a teacher.

**2 Cor.5:18-21** The ministry of reconciliation.

### 2. PROPHETS

An important foundation ministry, along with apostles (see **Ephesians 2:20 & 3:5-6**). Like the Old Testament prophets in the way that they speak God's word for now. See:-

**Acts 11:27** Agabus brings prior warning from the Lord of future troubles. Famine relief plans drawn up!

**Acts 13:1-4** The prophetic word was the decisive factor in the start of Paul's apostolic work.

**Acts 21:10-11** Agabus again! Now he is able to inform Paul of his coming arrest.

See also **1 Cor.14:4,6,24,29-31** for more details on prophecy.

### 3. EVANGELISTS

These are simply people who are given the ability to tell the Good News effectively and with the power of God. Nothing necessarily to do with standing on platforms in tents! See:-

**Acts 8:4-8** Philip started preaching. He was appointed as a deacon, not an evangelist! He just got on with it and God was with his ministry.

**Acts 8:26-40** Evangelist to one man and a whole nation.

**Acts 11:19-21** More ordinary people at work. This was the start of Paul's home church at Antioch.

**Acts 21:8** By now, Philip's ministry is recognised as he has continued to evangelise.

**2 Tim.4:5** An evangelist's work was part of Timothy's task as an apostle.

### 4/5 PASTORS & TEACHERS

Normally considered to be one ministry, not two. The only ministry that seems to be particularly applied to elders, but not exclusively even then. Pastoring = caring & feeding, as a shepherd. Teaching = instructing. The two are obviously closely linked. See:-

**Acts 2:42** New believers devoted themselves to teaching.

**Acts 4:2** Preaching by teaching.

**Acts 11:25-26** Paul's initial ministry was as a teacher alongside Barnabas.(See also **Acts 13:1**)

**Acts 18:26** Personal instruction - good old Priscilla and Aquila again!

**Acts 20:28-31** Shepherding as a particular responsibility of elders. "Keep watch over yourselves and the flock . . . "

**John 21:16** Peter told to be a shepherd.

**1 Peter 5:1-4** Peter encourages shepherding; eager to serve, not lording it, examples to the flock.

## **6. EVERYBODY IN THE CHURCH**

We each have a part to play in the ministry of the word of God . . . plenty of action by ordinary people in Acts! See also:-

**Eph.4:11-16** Each part of the body has an essential role to play in seeing the Church built up.

**1 Cor.12:4-11** Gifts for the general good of the Church.

**Eph.5:18-20** Compare with **Col.3:16-17**.

**GOD'S PURPOSE IS TO SHOW HIMSELF AND HIS WORD THROUGH THE CHURCH.**

**See Ephesians 3:7-11**

## 5) The Church – Authorised by the Name

### Introduction

The Name of Jesus and the authority of Jesus are closely linked. As he was praying, he knew the sequence of events that was to follow. He looked beyond his crucifixion, his burial and even his resurrection to the moment when he would sit down at the right hand of the Father in glory.

**John 17:2** ". . . authority over all people . . ." Compare with **Matthew 28:18-20**.

**6** "I have revealed you (lit."Your name") to those whom you gave me out of the world."

**11** Lit."keep them in your name which you have given me, that they may be one . . ."

**12** Lit." . . . I was keeping them in your name which you have given me . . ."

**22** "I have given them the glory that you gave me . . ."

**23** "I in them and you in me."

**26** "I have made you (lit."your name") known to them, and will continue to make you known . . ."

### 1. THE NAME GIVEN TO US

We need to know that the Lord Jesus has committed himself to us totally. This recurring theme of **John 17** is picked up in many other places in Scripture. See:-

**John 15:16** Jesus has chosen and appointed the Church to bear lasting fruit and use his Name.

**John 14:9-31** The connections between the power of the Name of Jesus, Jesus going to the Father and the giving of the Holy Spirit. Especially see **v.20 & v.26**.

**Romans 6:3** Baptised into Christ Jesus: united with him in his death, burial, resurrection and glorification at God's right hand.

**1 Cor.1:30-31** Our Father has placed us in Christ Jesus.

**Eph. 1:3-14** Our inheritance in him. (Guaranteed – see **vv.13+14**)

**Eph. 1:15-23** His glorious inheritance in the saints.

### 2. STANDING BEFORE THE FATHER

Once we appreciate what God has done for us in placing us in Christ, we begin to realise the power of the Name which has been committed to us. It is not a magic phrase to be tacked on to the end of prayers but carries weight before God as the Name above all other names. See:-

**John 16:13-28** Again the close link between the coming of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Name of Jesus. See especially **v.23 & vv.26-27**. Beloved in Jesus. (**Rom. 8:39**)

**Eph. 1:19-23** Far above every title that can be given.

**Eph. 2:13** Brought near in Christ Jesus through the power of his blood.

**Eph. 5:20}** Even our giving of thanks to God the

**Col. 3:17}** Father needs to be in his Name.

### 3. STANDING BEFORE PEOPLE

This is certainly an area where all of us need to grow. For most of us, it is enough of a battle even to acknowledge the Name of Jesus in public, let alone to wield it with the authority which he commands. It is perhaps significant that the early church started to use the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ straight after the Holy Spirit was poured out. See:-

**Acts 2:38** Baptised in the Name. See **Matt.28:19**

**3: 6** Peter uses the Name with confidence.

**3:16** The Name has the authority and does the healing. Faith in the Name is the means.  
**4: 7** "By what power or what name?"  
**4:10** "the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth." See also **ch.4 vv.17,18,30, ch.5 vv.41,42, ch.8 vv.12,16, ch.9 vv.14,15,16,27,34, ch.10 vv.43,48, ch.15 v.26, ch.16 v.18, ch.19 vv.5,13-16,17, ch.21 v.13, ch.22 v.16, ch.26 v.9.**

#### **4. STANDING BEFORE THE ENEMY**

Just as we need to know the effectiveness of the Name of the Lord Jesus as far as God the Father is concerned, we also need to know that Satan yields when faced with the authority of the Name. Another area where the Church needs to grow, in both wisdom and boldness! See:-

**Luke 11:17-22** Jesus is the one who has overpowered the "strong man". See also **1 John 3:8.**  
**Acts 19:13-16** The Name cannot be invoked as a formula. Paul had authority to use it.  
**Eph. 6:10-17** Stand firm in the victory which has been won already.  
**Phil. 2: 9-11** The basis - Jesus has the Name above every name.  
**1 Peter 3:22** Angels, authorities and powers subject to him.  
**Rev. 12:10-11** Exercising the authority of the Kingdom of God.

We need to learn to stand  
in his Name  
TOGETHER.  
(**Matthew 18:18-20**)

## 6) The Church – Made Complete Together

### Introduction

We have already looked at unity from the negative side, i.e. seeing how to avoid disunity. This is a vital step that must lie behind our moving forward towards POSITIVE UNITY. We will need to go over the process of reconciliation and forgiveness of each other many times as we seek to be really joined together in Christ. In **John 17**, Jesus says much about unity but perhaps the most staggering aim that he has is shown in **verse 23**:-

"I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

Our Lord and Master certainly sets his sights high! Can we join him in that prayer and be prepared to be part of the answer?

### 1. UNITY IS NOT AGREEMENT

It is certainly a good thing to be in agreement, but it is not the basis for unity. See **Ephesians 2:11-22**. Paul is writing about the division that existed between Gentiles and Jews and he says that it has been abolished. The whole passage talks in the past tense about what God has already done to make us one. It relies on our relationship with the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ. The disastrous history of denominational division has been based on the notion that agreement (on doctrine, experience or practice) is necessary for Christian unity. We need to reverse the process and express our unity with those Christians with whom we cannot necessarily agree in every detail.

### 2. GROWING RELATIONSHIPS

The picture of the Church as the body of Christ is repeated through the New Testament. See **Romans 12:3-21, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Ephesians 4:11-16, Colossians 2:18-19**. Some points are very clear:

a) We are all different. Unity is certainly not the same as uniformity. Our Father has designed each of us to be unique; your contribution to the body is special!

b) Each member is vital to the body. There are no "spare parts" which are not really needed. If any one part is not working properly, the body is weakened and crippled.

c) No individual member can function properly alone. There is no room for the individualist who thinks he can do everything on his own.

d) The body is intended to grow in size and develop in function. A natural result of healthy life which has not yet reached full maturity.

e) Each member is joined to the Head. As this link works properly, the body grows. Your continuing and developing relationship with Jesus actually causes the whole body to grow. Also, because you are joined to the Head you are able to receive the benefit of other parts joined to him, as they function properly.

f) The proper working of each part with the other parts ensures that the body grows up into the fullness of Christ. This is the key to the Church being able to express the Lord Jesus Christ to the world. Each member working in right relationship with Jesus and each other.

### 3. PRACTICAL ACTION IN OUR LIVES

All this is so many words unless something really happens that is evidently God at work in our lives. What can we do? Here are some suggestions:-

a) Make sure that we keep short accounts with God. His grace is never-ending and he really is ready to forgive us at any time, so that the relationship can be restored when our sin has spoiled it. (See **1 John 1:9**)

b) Be ready to act to restore broken relationships with other believers. This will mean admitting our own sin and lovingly helping others to the same position.

c) Realise that our Father likes us. It is impossible to love others if we hate ourselves and reckon we have no worth. See **Romans 12:3**. A sober assessment of who we are and what we can and cannot do will help us to fit into the function of the body.

d) Affirm the gifts and abilities of others. Whether it is thanks for physical work well done, gratitude for an event smoothly organised or appreciation of their contribution to the spiritual life of the church, other members of the body need your affirmation as they also are aiming to have a sober and balanced assessment of their function in the church. (See **Hebrews 10:24-25**)

e) Understand that spiritual development is not a competition. If my brother or sister grows ahead of me, it will probably be an encouragement for me to grow as well, but I do not have to compete against them. On the contrary, I can benefit from their growth and thank God for it. (See **1 Corinthians 12:26**)

f) Widen our vision. All believers are our brothers and sisters. In God's sight our denominational and doctrinal differences are irrelevant and an abomination. THERE IS ONLY ONE CHURCH - are we prepared to begin to function on this level? (See **Colossians 3:11-15**)

g) Perhaps the single most important thing we can do between ourselves is to learn to trust each other. Yes, we will let each other down from time to time and will be a disappointment in various ways, but we need to be trusted in order to develop our abilities in the Lord. The failures will give us fresh opportunities to confess our weakness to each other; the successes will be a vital part of the affirmation process (see d) above and also **1 Peter 1:22-23 & 2:4-5**)

We are being built into a temple,  
Fit for God's own dwelling place;  
Into the house of God which is the Church,  
The pillar and the ground of truth,  
As precious stones that Jesus owns,  
Fashioned by His wondrous grace.  
And as we love and trust each other  
So the building grows and grows.

Ian Traynar. Copyright 1977 Thankyou Music.