

Lesson 1 in Unite, Renew, Revive Series
Theme of Lesson: Unite

“I’m not praying only for them but also for those who believe in me because of their word. I pray they will be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. I pray that they also will be in us, so that the world will believe that you sent me. I’ve given the glory that you gave me so that they can be one just as we are one. I’m in them and you are in me so that they will be made perfectly one. Then the world will know that you sent me and that you have loved them just as you loved me. Father, I want those you gave me to be with me where I am. Then they can see my glory, which you gave me because you loved me before the creation of the world. Righteous Father, even the world didn’t know you, but I’ve known you, and these believers know that you sent me. I’ve made your name known to them and will continue to make it known so that your love for me will be in them, and I myself will be in them.” John 17:20-26 (CEB)

Jesus prayed for his disciples shortly before his death, but not just his disciples “but also for those who believe in me”, in other words, us. In this prayer, we can see the mutual indwelling of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—simultaneously united as one and distinguished as three.

Question: What is Jesus asking His Father to do for us?

Question: What is Christian unity?

Jesus twice states in these verses why he is asking His Father for our unity, so that we can share in His redemptive work in the world.

Question: What is our response to Jesus’ prayer?

Question: How is our unity expressed?

We have the great commission to share the gospel, but we do not do it alone. God has indwelled us with the Holy Spirit and continues to work through us.

Question: What does our Scripture say about love?

Question: How do we respond to that love?

The unity of the church is not a human endeavor, but a sign of God’s love in us. As Cynthia Rigby from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary puts it: “It looks like fewer boundaries, and more connections, fewer “I can’t imagines,” and more “I’m going to really try to imagines.” It looks like a less polarized world, characterized not only by everyone feeling like they belong and where everyone who comes is included, but where those who are not there are missed.”

Question: How is love expressed at Parkway Presbyterian Church?

Question: How does our facility help us express love?

Remember that you are the only “Bible” some people will read. If the world sees Christians fighting among themselves, they will turn away, but if it sees people who accept one another, bear one another’s burdens, and genuinely love one another then “they will know we are Christians by our love” as the song says.

Question: What can we do as a church to show God’s love?

Question: How can our facility be used for mission and ministry?