

## **Stories That Matter Week 6: “So That They May Be One”**

*Isaiah 45:1-7, Psalm 21:1-7, 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11, John 17:1-11*

**Opening Prayer:** Gracious God, Thank you for bringing us together today. In a world that often feels divided and disconnected, remind us that we belong to you and to one another. Open our hearts to hear your voice through Scripture, conversation, and community. Help us to listen well, speak with grace, and grow together in love. May our time together reflect the unity Jesus prayed for. In Christ’s name, Amen.

**Theme: The Story Abides:** In John 17, Jesus prays not for power, success, or comfort for his followers—but for unity. Jesus understands that the way believers love and care for one another becomes part of the church’s witness to the world. Christian unity does not erase differences; instead, it reflects the love, connection, and shared purpose found within the Trinity itself.

**Secular Quote:** “*We rise by lifting others.*”

*-Robert Ingersoll*

—**Starter Question:** Think about a time when you felt truly connected to a group, team, church, or community. What made that sense of unity meaningful?

### **Digging Deeper Questions**

- What stands out to you most in Jesus’ prayer in John 17?
- Why do you think unity was so important to Jesus before going to the cross?
- What is the difference between unity and uniformity?
- Jesus says, “I have been glorified in them.”

What do you think it means for Christ to be “on display” through believers?

- Where do you see division hurting the witness of the church today?
- How can Christians remain united even when they disagree?
- Jesus says believers are “in the world” but not “of the world.”

What does that look like practically in everyday life?

- How does knowing that Jesus prayed for us affect the way you think about your faith?

**Actionable Faith Steps** Choose one of these practices this week:

#### **1. Reach Across Distance**

Contact someone you have drifted away from, had tension with, or simply have not encouraged lately.

#### **2. Practice Intentional Unity**

Spend time listening to someone whose experiences or perspectives differ from your own without trying to argue or “win.”

Perform one visible act of kindness, generosity, or encouragement this week as a witness to Christ’s love.

#### **4. Pray for the Church**

Spend time praying not only for your congregation, but for the broader church around the world.

#### **Closing Reflection**

Jesus’ prayer reminds us that Christianity was never meant to be lived alone. The church is called to embody Christ together. Every act of love, forgiveness, patience, and grace becomes part of the story we tell the world about Jesus.

Unity is not weakness. Unity is witness.

**Closing Prayer:** Holy Father, Thank you for the gift of community and for the people gathered here today. Forgive us for the times we allow pride, anger, or division to separate us from one another. Teach us to love as Christ loves. Help us become people who reflect your grace, peace, and unity in a divided world. May our lives point others toward Jesus. Strengthen your church and make us one in you. Amen.

### **Daily Scripture Guide:**

#### **Monday Psalm 133:1-3**

“How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!”

**Focus:** The beauty and blessing of unity among God’s people.

#### **Tuesday Ephesians 4:1-6**

“Make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

**Focus:** Christian unity requires humility, patience, and love.

#### **Wednesday 1 Corinthians 12:12-27**

“Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”

**Focus:** Different gifts and people working together as one body.

#### **Thursday Philippians 2:1-11**

“Be of the same mind, having the same love...”

**Focus:** Unity through humility and Christlike service.

#### **Friday Colossians 3:12-17**

“Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”

**Focus:** Living together in compassion, forgiveness, and peace.

#### **Saturday Romans 12:9-18**

“Live in harmony with one another...”

**Focus:** Practical ways Christians reflect Christ in community and daily life.