

## Read Isaiah 5:18-24 - Pray

### Intro - Open to John 17:11-19

The world as we know it is full of hazards. If you think about your car, even with all the safety features, death by car crash is still possible. Even our own hearts attack many Americans each year. We need life insurance but that doesn't keep you alive, does it? It only helps if the worst comes. In a world that seems out of control, we need assurance not insurance.

Jesus' prayer continues in a petition to God for the care of the disciples. Last week in verse 6-10 we discussed the Name of God, the Name by which we are saved, the nature and fullness of God is the basis by which Jesus prays for the Father to act. What does Jesus ask the Father for the sake of his disciples? He asks for the Father to protect them. Protection from the world, based on his name. The key word for verses 1-5 was **Glory**, last week verses 6-10 was **Name**, and now this week's keyword is **Protection**.

#### **God protects the disciples from a cursed world so we can be blessed and a blessing in the world.**

Let's look at four blessings of the Father's spiritual protection. As we live in a world quickly spinning out of control, the Father (at the request of the Son), provides protection for the 11 disciples and by extension every disciple they made. Even you.

#### **One – Unified (In a fractured world)**

Read John 17:11-12

**<sup>11</sup> 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 me, that they may be one, even as we are one. <sup>12</sup> While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.**

Jesus speaks in the present tense here that he is "no longer in the world". To Jesus, this moment is connected to his crucifixion in just a few short hours. In his mind, he has already left. That is why we call this fuller section of John the "Farewell Discourse" because Jesus has been preparing and has already stated, he is as good as gone.

So where is he going? He is going to his Holy Father. Now this designation as a Holy Father is only used once here in all of scripture. God has demonstrated he is holy on many occasions, so the description fits, but Jesus uses it here because holiness is important for what the disciples need from God. They need to be protected from an unholy world, or as blessing number 4 will show us, a cursed world.

It's cursed from way back at the beginning, Genesis 3, when Adam and Eve fall into sin and with it all their descendants and all of creation are fallen into sin. So, God curses them. It is a curse to eat the rotten fruit of rebellion. To struggle against the ground, to struggle in relationships, to struggle against our own nature.

The Holy Father is asked by Jesus, his first request of the prayer, to **keep them in your name** (in the power and authority as he is God), **which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one**. Unity is his request. A unity modeled on God himself.

Now we must take a brief moment to clarify how Jesus and God are one. They are one in a way that no one else can be one. We worship a triune God, Father, Son and Spirit. Not three Gods, but one God who within one essence is three persons. It has no analogy which works because it is not something that our brains can't comprehend. We simply must see in God's revealing of himself as not multiple Gods or beings but one God (one being) in three persons. As a human being we are one being in one person. Simple enough, so we must break our categories to believe what God reveals about his triune nature.

So our unity, to be like God's unity within himself, is a spiritual unity in truth in contrast to the disunity or fractured world. When we have been born again and unified with Christ we believe this truth. The Holy Spirit then indwells us, and we find ourselves in unity with God and therefore in unity with God's people, the other ones bought and purchased by Christ's blood on the cross.

This spiritual unity, which Jesus shows in verse 12, is what he kept them in and therefore guarded them from the fractured world. What is so unholy, or un-god-like about our fractured world? Well for one thing, it plays fast and loose with the truth. Unity has to be built upon truth, and the church must be built upon Christ. The world is full of people who define truth according to their own subjective experience. It has created a fractured world where

everyone's subjective truth finds less and less agreement with others. The church can have nothing to do with this project of "my truth". A church that seeks to redefine truth according to their own demands will become like the world.

It is critical for the disciples and now us as their disciples, to be unified not based on a personality, or a program or a building but unified around truth IN THE PERSON OF JESUS. Truth is not up for debate, he has a name.

But truth can be denied, and that is where Jesus goes next as he explains at the end of verse 12, about the one he lost, the son of destruction. Judas, the traitor. That explanation: He was fractured from the others so that Scripture might be fulfilled. At the beginning of the discourse in chapter 13 verse 18, Jesus says **I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'HE WHO EATS MY BREAD HAS LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME.'**

Quoting Psalm 41:9, it shows that one of the Messiah's closest friends, the one he would share a table of bread with, would betray him. Jesus, by choosing Judas, welcomes the world to his table, a fractured person, who will fracture himself away from the disciples again.

The greatest betrayal was according to plan. The greatest tacticians will give ground to take ground. They will pull back the left flank so that the enemy will advance and they will fire arrows into the enemy as it advances thinking they were winning. Satan will work in Judas to tempt him to greed, requesting to be the money holder for the ministry so he can skim money the whole time, feeding his greed and desire. Then when Jesus seems to be costing him money, when he allows a woman to waste a year's wages to anoint him for burial, Judas gives in and sets events into motion. Jesus then tells Judas at the last supper, **"What you are going to do, do quickly"**.

The betrayal of Judas was not a surprise, it was a planned bruise. It was a calculated retreat, but it was no retreat at all. Even the loss of God's son in death on the cross was for his glory and our gain.

Unity, even calculated removal of the one who was fractured from the fellowship, is God's intention for the disciples and Jesus' prayer for them. We are either unified in Christ, or fractured in the world. We see in the life of the disciples, despite disagreements, that they had unity in Christ as his prayer requested. That unity comes with the blessing of joy.

## Two – Joyful (In a hateful world)

Read John 17:13-14

**<sup>13</sup> But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. <sup>14</sup> 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.**

The focus here is on Jesus' joy in the disciples shared with them. He is applying in prayer what he spoke to them in chapter 15:11 **"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."** I hope you see this: our obedience to the word of God is for God's joy but we share in it! We do not suffer in obedience; we share in joy in obedience. This what every child fails to see when you disobey your parents. You are running away from joy with your parents. Yes, parents are flawed and they can be sinful rather than inviting into joy. But godly parents, submitted to the word of God, are intended to invite their children into their joy as Christ has done for the disciples.

Lexi and I share a love for soccer with much of our extended family. We get to share the joy of victories and beautiful goals. We will share the love of Jude and Grace's soccer games for however long they play. I won't be forcing them to play, but in introducing the game, in helping them practice, in joyfully playing together, I hope to share in the joy of a good game that will strengthen our relationship. When was the last time you saw God's commands like that? As joy to be had. As joy to be shared? But it is not without thorns.

Joy here in the disciple's obedience is shown to bring hatred from the world. It is in their enjoyment of God and his law, his ways, his words that brings out the hatred. Therefore, the disciples and Jesus, being not of this world, or in the case of the disciples, no longer of the world, they will be hated.

As your enjoyment of God grows, we should expect the world's opposition to grow. As we love God's design for marriage, the world will hate us. As we love God's plans for justice, the world will hate us. As we love God's ways for family and the raising of children, the world will hate us. The world loves its own and hates the revelation of God. God has revealed himself with authority that demands a response. This inspires the world to snarl and rage at his word and his disciples. That gives us a problem: Opposition. How will we endure? By loving good, in an evil world.

### Three – Good (In an evil world)

Read John 17:15-16

<sup>15</sup> I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

Jesus knows that the opposition will be stiff. Our temptation to shrink back, to withdraw from the world, to even long for God to remove us, will be strong. Jesus asks again for the Father to keep them, to keep the disciples this time not in his name, but from someone, the evil one; Satan himself.

Satan has been revealed as the ruler of this world. He is the prince of the power of the air. He is at work in the sons of disobedience as he was at work in the son of destruction. John writes in his first letter, 1 John 5:19 **We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.**

The evil one, with power allowed by God during this age, will lie, will accuse us, will bring up enemy after enemy. But God the Father, at the request of God the Son, will keep us from him.

The disciples could stand for good in an evil generation. They could stand for the gospel before the Sanhedrin, before the Romans, before the mobs that sought to stone them but not be moved. Isaiah warns in 5:20 **“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil”**

The world, that the disciples are not of, reverses good and evil. They free a murderer and crucify Jesus. The world will disguise evil to make it more palatable. Sexual perversion is claimed as good when it exchanges natural use of the body for unnatural use. Gambling and the lottery is claimed as good when it funds education but it simply taxes the poorest among us. Abortion is claimed as good when it is the evil killing of innocent life. Euthanasia is claimed as good when it is the devaluing of the wisdom and dignity of the aging. Drunkenness and drug use are claimed as good because they provide an escape from reality, failing to offer true healing.

If you think the reversal of good and evil will stop itself without God’s intervention, you have deeply misunderstood the human condition. There is a fundamental sinfulness in each person and in all we create, that it takes an act of God, an act of sacrificial death to make a way for any in this world to be saved and transferred from darkness to light.

Brothers and sisters, we are not of this world. We must see the folly and the evil sin and take no part in it. Yet we enter into the world and do not shrink back because the longer we are in the world we will long to be with Jesus. Jesus did not request us to be taken out of the world, the next request is for us to be blessed, to be sanctified for the task.

### Four – Blessed (In a cursed world)

Read John 17:17-19

<sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

To be sanctified is to be set a part for holy use. What Jesus introduced in verse 11 with a call to his Holy Father, he concludes here asking for God’s holiness to be poured out through truth, while in the world, through the holy sacrifice of Christ himself.

In the temple of the Old Testament, every part of the temple down to the lampstands had to be consecrated, splattered with blood to set them apart for the holy use in the dwelling place of God. Hebrews 9 outlines this practice and gives us the sure foundation that Christ’s blood was shed once, and through this blood there is forgiveness for sins.

The disciples are to be sanctified with Christ’s blood and by the truth of his word. This truth unifies us, brings us joy, and makes us love goodness. This holy preparation is only possible when we think God’s thoughts after him. That by the truth of his word, we learn to live in the opposite ways of the world we once loved. The truth prepares them to face the world and to be sent into the world as Christ was.

Jesus, existing with the Father for all eternity, was planned to make his entrance into the world through the virgin birth. The Father sent the son into the world. Jesus, as one with the Father, consecrated or sanctified himself. He was put to holy use. He is God’s means of blessing us in self-revelation. He is God’s priest and sacrifice. He brings us blessing in a cursed world. Christ succeeds where Adam failed. Adam, through sin brought the curse, Christ through his righteousness brings us blessings.

## Conclusion

The world as we know it is fractured, hateful, evil and cursed by God for its rebellion. That is why Christ came, to display the righteousness of God and shed his blood for a people who would be the opposite. We do not despair, we stand up in the world for truth and the word of God with confidence!

If you are trusting in God's true word, in Christ's true work, in the Spirit's true witness, you are set apart for holy use. His blood has made you holy. You have no place for fracture, hate, evil and cursed living. You are God's instrument to show his holiness in the world. Jesus prays for your spiritual protection which is assured since your salvation was planned before the world began.

Turn to Hebrews Chapter 7 verse 25 and 26. I keep going back to Hebrews because it explains Jesus' work so well. Connecting the old covenant to the new.

<sup>25</sup> Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

<sup>26</sup> For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.

Jesus' prayer for the disciples is a part of his work he does to this day, being the perfect high priest, interceding for those who draw near to God through him.

Believer you are called to be in the world and not of it. You are protected by God the Father, at the request of God the Son. How much more confidence do you need to kill the sin you are living in? God is protecting you as you may stand convicted this morning of your sin that is just like the world and you are called to be holy and set apart. The sin of the fractured, hateful, evil and cursed world has no part with us. You are set apart for holy use. **We are sent into the world and can go with confidence that God will protect us for his holy use.**

I pray that you will live in all the blessings of God's spiritual protection. Unity, Joy, Goodness, and Blessing.

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1 John 5:19, Isaiah 5:20

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