

**Find Life in the Son:  
In the World  
John 17:11-19**

**Introduction**

As Josh pointed out last Sunday, Jesus' intercessory prayer for His people starts with praying for God the Father and God the Son to be glorified. In that context of God's glory He prays for the people the Father had given Him out of the world. They are the ones who have come to know in truth that God the Father sent Jesus, God the Son into the world. The Son's mission is to rescue a people in whom both Father and Son would be glorified through their faith in the grace and truth of God made visible in Jesus.

It's important for us to recognize that *the glory of God and the good of His people are inseparably connected. Human beings dishonor God when they don't treat Him as God. And they do harm to themselves, as those made in His image.* They dishonor the Father when they dishonor the Son by rejecting His truthful words and miraculous works. When they do believe, when they do trust Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life from God the Father, their own lives begin a transformation that bears resemblance to Christ—full of grace (goodness and favor unearned) and of truth (honest and reliable).

The mission of God's people to glorify Father and Son requires the power of deity. So it makes complete sense that Jesus would pray the way He does in our passage this morning, John 17:11-19. If you're using a Bible from the book rack in front of you, our text is on page 903.

Jesus is leaving this world, but His disciples are not—at least, not yet. They had followed Him closely for three and a half years. He spoke as no one else ever spoke. He did miracles no one else had done. To have Him crucified and gone was alarming and bewildering. How will they survive? How will they thrive?

Jesus has already given them some idea. In the last verse of chapter 16, just before He prays this prayer, Jesus declares—  
John 16:33

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.

Earlier in the evening He has promised Peter—

Luke 22:31-32

<sup>31</sup> Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat,  
<sup>32</sup> but I have prayed for you that your faith

may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.

Peter is not the only one for whom Jesus prayed. In this high priestly prayer recorded in John 17, He prays for His remaining eleven disciples, as well as for those who will believe in Jesus because of their testimony.

**11** 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. **12** 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. **13** But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. **14** 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. **15** I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. **16** They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **17** Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. **18** As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. **19** And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

Over and over again Jesus underscores that His disciples will be in the world—and that they are there for a reason. Jesus prays for God to be at work in them and through them during their time in the world.

1. Preserve Them for Joy (11-13).
2. Guard Them from Evil (14-16).
3. Sanctify Them for Mission (17-19).

These requests summarize what Jesus wants to happen in your life as a believer while you live in this world.

### **1. Preserve Them for Joy (11-13).**

<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. <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.

Those last words are arresting! They are not what we might expect. “These things I speak in the world, [so] that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.”

Joy? His joy? Fulfilled in themselves?

Where's the joy coming from? They are in a world that hates Jesus enough to crucify Him.

How are we supposed to find joy in such a world? A vale of tears, the land of the dying, dominated by Satan, the prince of the power of the air, who energizes the children of disobedience. The longer we live, the more battles we face and the more sorrows and disappointments we rack up.

What needs to happen for us to have His joy fulfilled in us? What is Jesus saying would do that for us?

Keep them in your name—I have kept them in your name—your revealed character.

"[So] that they may be one, even as we are one."

Over and over again Jesus has declared that His words were from the Father, that His works were from the Father—that He and the Father were one. One in heart, one in mission, one in word, one in action. Jesus is praying that His followers will enter into the same oneness of relationship and mission. *There is a divine community of love, goodness, and truth that starts with the Triune God and flows into those who have God's life in them. And when we enter into that holy communion, that loving relationship,*

that beneficial mission together with one another and with God, *we discover a joy like no other.*

We are created for this kind of joy—and the gospel of Jesus recovers it for us. The gospel is the news that brings joy, the good news.

Because human beings are image-bearers of God, they reflect this hunger for loving relationship even before they are born again. Even unbelievers want the joy of peaceful relations and loving unity. They just are unclear how to get there. We have to understand that sin is inherently disruptive and destructive. We need a Savior from sin—not just from doing and saying back things, but from being a sinner by birth and by choice ourselves.

We find happiness, we find joy, when we recover the communion with God the human race lost in the Garden of Eden. *We lost joy when we lost God. Paradise eludes us until we are reconciled with God through Jesus.* But once reconciled, everything starts to move toward the loving unity God created humans to enjoy.

Judas was looking for joy in wealth, power, and influence. His heart was never given to Jesus. He never really wanted God. His betrayal was no surprise for Jesus. He knew

from the beginning who was His and who was not. Jesus did not lose Judas; He never had him.

God's plans were not thwarted by a false disciple and never will be. The Scripture had already predicted it would happen. It also warns us that there will be those among us who depart from the faith. Don't let it shake you.

The reason there is conflict and disunity in our world is our sin. Until you fix that, every effort to produce a peaceful, loving world will fail. Jesus engaged in conflict. Jesus saw defections. All results of the evil He was confronting. Jesus prays for us that we will enjoy the loving unity of the Father and Son even in the middle of a war-torn world. That God will prove to be our safe place no matter how unsafe a world in love with its sin and hostile to God and His people may be.

At the end of the age Jesus will welcome His faithful servants with the words, "Enter the joy of your Lord." There is a sense in which we get a foretaste of that joy even on earth now.

### **Applications**

- Since fullness of joy comes through closeness to God not from what we find in the world, how can you increase your joy this week?

- In what ways has loving unity from God been disrupted in your relationships, and what can you do to restore it?
- In what ways are you looking for joy in the wrong places, and how can you get back on track?

## **2. Guard Them from Evil (14-16).**

<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. <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.

The very word of Christ that gives us fullness of joy puts us out of step with the world. Our identity is no longer our connection to this world but our union with God's family and Christ's kingdom. The world's devotion to idols intended to replace God makes it hostile to true worshipers of God just as it was hostile to Christ. The world is a place of real danger, but Jesus does not pray for us to be taken out of the world. Rather, He prays for our protection in the world. Protection from the evil one. "Keep" or guard them from the evil one.

His words reflect the reality that there is a personal source to the wickedness around us. Satan is the adversary of God and His people.



The devil is the slanderer of God and the accuser of the brethren. He prowls about like a lion seeking someone to devour. He has the bloodthirsty nature of a bloated dragon, drunk with the blood of countless murders. He is a murderer from the beginning, a liar and the Father of lies. He loves to deceive and to destroy.

Jesus prays that His Father will guard them from the evil one—not just from being destroyed by him, but from being deceived by him, from being drawn away by him, from being used by him in his devious strategies to dishonor God and harm people.

As an angel created by God but fallen away in rebellion against God, Satan is far more powerful than any mere human. The god of the world, the prince of darkness. Yet he cannot overcome Christ, nor stand before His power.

Ephesians 6:10-13

**10** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. **11** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. **12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. **13** Therefore take up the

whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

That's why James writes

James 4:7

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

*It is only in our connection to God that we find our protection from the devil and his whole kingdom.* Jesus underscores this truth in repeating the reality that His disciples are no longer of this world, just as He is not of this world. They are born again. They have His life in them, His character growing in them, His truth dispelling the lies, His purity cleansing the corruption, His love expelling the hatred.

Note that Christ connects His giving us His word with the hatred of the world toward us. The world does not want God telling people what to do. The world wants to define its own reality, however false it may be. The world wants to throw off the reign of God and rule on its own. Ultimately, all idolatry is deification of self and its desires and appetites. But those who receive God's Word in faith are transformed. They are born again. Their minds are renewed. They are in the world, but they are not of the world. And that is why they are safe in the world.

## Applications

- Given what Jesus prays, why is fear and escapism just as inappropriate a response to the world as yielding to its lies and temptations?
- Why would laziness and accommodation also be a wrong response to the work of Satan in the world?
- What is it about the believer that gives him or her protection from the evil one?

### 3. Sanctify Them for Mission (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 sanctify is to make holy, and holy means you belong to God and are taking on the character of God. Jesus prays that God the Father will sanctify them in the truth. It is the word of God that accomplishes that. But that sanctification has a mission to it—a direction.

Jesus declares that He has sent His disciples into the world, just as the Father sent Him into the world. Why? For their sake. He consecrated Himself—and that is the same word translated sanctified—He set Himself apart to God in order to accomplish His mission to save those who believe in Him. He

has sent them into the world on the same saving mission—an extension of the His reason for coming to earth.

It is their holiness, their clearly belonging to God, their godliness—as evidenced by their resemblance to Jesus through the transforming work of the Spirit that makes them effective in gospel ministry.

*The holiness the Word of God produces in people does not make them aloof, holier-than-thou elitists. It makes them loving displays of the truth and love of Jesus. It draws future believers toward the Savior.*

*Those who try to reach the world by denying or twisting the Word of God will never reach the world. They are only joining the world.* The Word of God transforms people by the power of the Spirit. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Even those who at first refuse it are given ears to hear when exposed to the Word of God.

No believer can become more and more like Jesus apart from the truth of the Word. It is the God-appointed means of regenerating people and transforming them. It makes them effective witnesses. It set them on gospel mission. Whenever you see greater attention to the Word of God you see an increase in the health of the church, the people of God.

Whenever you see neglect of the Word, you see decline in their health. And unhealthy Christians do not effectively reach the world with the gospel.

### **Applications**

- What evidence can others see that you clearly belong to God—that you are sanctified?
- What strategies are you using to devote yourself to God’s Word so that it has its transforming effect on you?
- In what ways are you using the insights and lifechange the Word has worked in you to reach others for Christ in keeping with the mission on which He has sent you?

### **Conclusion**

In all three areas Jesus prays for, His Word makes the difference.

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Communion

### **Applications Summary**

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- In what ways are you looking for joy in the wrong places, and how can you get back on track?
- Given what Jesus prays, why is fear and escapism just as inappropriate a response to the world as yielding to its lies and temptations?
- Why would laziness and accommodation also be a wrong response to the work of Satan in the world?
- What is it about the believer that gives him or her protection from the evil one?
- What evidence can others see that you clearly belong to God—that you are sanctified?
- What strategies are you using to devote yourself to God’s Word so that it has its transforming effect on you?
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