

**John 17: 18 and 19; “Christ’s Mission is my Mission”, A Communion
Sermon delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on June 4th, 2011,
in the Morning Worship Service.**

The Lord Jesus is in the midst of His High Priestly prayer to God, for the preservation and perseverance of all of God’s Elect. He is comparing His mission for God to the one that He intends for all of us; His Church. He is praying for our mission while we are here in this world. He says, As You (Father) sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.” He is not simply praying for the Apostles alone, because He says in verse 20, “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word.” So in verse 17 He prays that the Father would sanctify all of His people by His truth, because God’s Word is truth. For God the Father to sanctify us, as believers, is for Him to set us apart to all of His gracious purposes in our being saved from our sins through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is also that we might progressively become more like the Lord Jesus; that we would become more holy and righteous and loving people by means of His truth and grace. This is the question that we should ask ourselves as we come to the Lord’s table this morning. Am I, as a believer in the Lord Jesus becoming more like Him? Do I see my mission as a Christian? The way that we become more holy and righteous and loving in the sight of God, it says here, is to be sanctified by the truth. It is by means of abiding in the truth of the Word of God, and by living out that truth of the Word of God, that you and I who believe in Jesus Christ will become more like Him. This morning; first of all, we want to overview Christ’s mission to the world. (Verse 18a) Then 2ndly - we want to see that a great part of Christ’s mission was to sanctify Himself. (Verse 19) Then as we come to the table we want to see that Christ’s mission to the world is also our mission to the world. (Verse 18b)

1st of all - We want to see Christ’s mission to the world.

In verse 18a Jesus says, “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.” This was Christ’s mission; He was sent into the world by the Father. Turn with me over to John Chapter 3 and we will find this statement in a more developed form. John 3: 16 – “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” The mission of the Son came about because of the Father’s love for the world. The world that is being spoken of here is the dark and fallen world of lost mankind-sinners; people who will perish unless they have a Savior. The purpose of this divine rescue mission was that “the world through faith in Christ, “might be saved.” I want you to notice the words, “should not perish” in verse 16, and the words, “might be saved” in verse 17. These are the words of the general offer of the gospel, which God gives to all mankind so that they might not perish but have eternal life. God so loved fallen mankind in general that He gave His Son. Whoever believes in Him should not perish. The mission of Christ was, and is that people might be saved. This is the greatest of missions. Let me ask you this morning if it is your prayer to be a part of seeing Christ’s mission go forward; of people who are in darkness, coming to see the light and walk in that light?

Jesus is the Light of the world. The person who believes in Him will not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. But here in John 3, John wants to place the emphasis upon how important it is that every person hearing the gospel believe in it. The person believing in Jesus will not be condemned. But the person who has not, or does not, believe in Him is condemned

already. Why? Because they have not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. These are strong words indeed! It is only through faith in the name of Jesus that a person is saved. There is no good thing in them; in their heart, or their actions, or even the best of their good works which will commend them to God, to win or merit His approval, or lift the condemnation which God has placed upon every person outside of Christ, because of Adam's sin, and their own. Why are we condemned already, if we have not believed? It is because "light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Jesus has come into the world to save people from their sins, but people by nature do not love the Lord Jesus or see their need of Him. People need to hear and to know that they are sinners because they received a sinful nature from their first forefather Adam. All of Adam's descendants have a sinful nature. You have a sinful nature. And that sinful nature causes you to reject your need of Christ when He is preached to you. Christ Jesus has come into this fallen world of sinners, sitting in darkness; and His light has shined upon them; but the darkness that is in us by nature cannot comprehend that He is the only Pure One, the only perfectly sinless man; the only righteous and holy man who has ever lived. The nature of the Lord Jesus was never sinful because He was born of the virgin Mary. God the Father is His Father, and the Holy Spirit fashioned Him in Mary's womb as the Holy One of Israel. Oh let us remember this as we come to the Table this morning. The Father gave His Son to live a righteous life in your place. He so loved the world that He gave Him to us, to perfectly fulfill the law of God on our behalf. He did not spare Him, but delivered Him up to the cross for us all. How shall He not also, with Him, give us all things, as it says in Romans 8: 32. He is for us, now, because of the Lord Jesus. Who can be against us? There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For you and I who believe in Jesus have had our nature changed. We do not love the darkness any longer. Instead, as it says in John 3: 21 – "But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God." Have you come to the light? Do you have this light of life in your soul this morning? Then rejoice and give thanks to God that it is so.

Now 2ndly - We want to see that a great part of Christ's mission was to sanctify Himself. (Verse 19)

"And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth." This also we thank God for as we come to the table this morning; that Jesus sanctified Himself. He set Himself apart; not only to do the will of God perfectly in accordance with the truth of the Scriptures, but He also set Himself apart to do that will all the way to the cross; all the way to the place where He would die for you and I who believe in Him. Turn with me to the book of Hebrews Chapter 10 and you will see this. Verse 1 says, "For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect." "For then would they not have ceased to be offered?" "For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins." "But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year." "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins." "Therefore, when Christ came into the world, He said, 'Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me.' "In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had not pleasure." "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come—In the volume of the book it is written of Me—to do Your will, O God.' He takes away the first, that He may establish the second." "By that will we have been sanctified through the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Christ sanctified Himself by His being willing to do God the Father's will in a representative Mediatorial way. He represents all of God's Elect people in regard to their lack of obedience or the breaking of God's law. In the case of their lack of obedience, He makes up for what they lack in perfect obedience. And in the case of their breaking God's holy law, He accepts in His person the punishment which they deserve.

In all of this, the Lord Jesus had right motives for what He did. He obeyed God's commandments to glorify Him. He lived to the glory of God and not His own glory. In John 5: 30 He says, "I can of Myself do nothing." "As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who send Me." You see, it is by that will we have been sanctified; set apart to all of God's purposes in our salvation. It is because of Christ's will being steadfast, in every aspect of His obedience and His sufferings, that we are saved from our sins, and that we now have a new heart to do and to keep the commandments of God, and to live to His glory.

The end of the purpose for which Christ willed to do God's will, and willed to go to the cross this was so that we would be "sanctified by God's truth." It was so that after He has saved us and reconciled us unto God; when we read the Bible and hear it preached that we would be able to receive it and go about to try to do and keep it. You can see this if you will turn with me to John 18, verse 33. "Then Pilate entered into the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, 'Are You the King of the Jews?'" "Jesus answered him, 'Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell this concerning Me?'" "Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew?'" "You own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me." "What have You done?" "Jesus answered him, 'My kingdom is not of this world.'" "If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." "Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?'" "Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king.'" "For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." "Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." "Pilate said to Him, 'What is truth?'" Pilate did not know it, but the Man who stood before Him was the personification of the truth. The reason that Christ came into the world was to bear witness to the truth of God Himself and to fulfill the truth of the Old Testament Scriptures; thereby making the way for His Apostles to write the New Testament Scriptures and to give them to all of us who would believe through their word. Once we grasp this; we begin to see what our mission is as well. It is to be sanctified by the truth of the Scriptures, and to bear witness to that truth, before others, even as Jesus did. The truth of the Scriptures accompanied by the power of Christ's Holy Spirit, being lived out in the life of the believer, leads them on to greater holiness, and to greater opportunities to bear witness to the truth, even as Jesus did before Pilate. Pilate was not born of water or the Spirit. He was not wrought upon by the washing of water with the word. The Spirit was not striving effectually for His salvation. Pilate was very content with his present position of power and authority, and even though he was hearing Jesus' words, he was not hearing Him with spiritual ears. Jesus sanctified Himself so that we also might be sanctified by the truth. Are you set apart to the truth of the Scriptures? Are you making progress in holiness, righteousness, love, and truth? That is what this Supper is meant to do for you today. It is meant to strengthen your faith and your desires for greater holiness and a closer walk with Christ, when you remember what He has done for you. O may it be so, even as we come to the Table now.

Then, 3rdly, as we come to the Table we want to see that Christ's mission to the world is also our mission to the world. (Verse 18b)

Now, let's think of verse 18 once again. "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world." This verse indicates that just as the Father sent the Lord Jesus into the world, He has also sent, not only the Apostles, but you into the world; you who have believed in Him. Jesus represented the Father when He came into this world. And you represent Jesus when you interact with the people of this world every day, as well. Christ perfectly represented the Father's love, the Father's wisdom, the Father's righteousness, and the Father's compassion. You represent the Lord Jesus in these same ways; not perfectly; but that is where this Supper fits in. In order to represent the Lord Jesus better, you need to feed upon the faithfulness of

Your Savior and what He has done for you. You need to look to Him for the strength which He alone can give you which will lead to your living out the truth of God's word even as Jesus did. Jesus went about doing good. You will seek to do the same. Jesus saw people as sheep without a shepherd and he taught them the truth of how they could have eternal life. He cared for, and ministered to their many needs. Jesus took upon Himself the cares of others; even those of lost people. You and I can do the same, to some measure or degree, if we will look to Jesus for the spiritual strength and the wisdom to do these good works. We often think of missionaries as those who go to foreign lands to minister to the lost and needy people there. But Tama, Iowa is also a mission field where people around us need the truth of the gospel and the Scriptures, and to be helped in the most basic ways to understand how to live to God in the way that will bring glory to Him. Let us partake of this Supper with those thoughts in mind. You don't have to leave this city to become a missionary, but you will have to begin praying to look outside of yourself to see the needs of others, and then pray about what you can do to meet them.