

Jesus Prays for His Disciples, Part 2

Scripture: John 17:11-19

Code: 1567

We come to this most marvelous chapter, chapter 17, which has so enriched our hearts already in the last few weeks, this chapter is known as "The High Priestly Prayer of Jesus Christ." It is His intercession for His own as the Son of God, Christ Himself, speaks to the Father on the behalf of those whom He loves. And as I've told you in past weeks, it is a pre-cross preview of a post-cross work. That is, when Jesus had finished His work on earth and ascended to the Father, He then began to intercede for those who are His, that is to constantly plead to the Father on our behalf. Though that didn't officially begin until His ascension, we have here in John 17, hours before His crucifixion, a preview of His intercessory work and some insights into how it is that Jesus prays for those who are His own.

Now, we have seen the chapter fall into three categories. In this prayer, verses 1 to 5, are concerned with Jesus praying for Himself. For He must accomplish His own work on the cross before He can ever expect the Father to do anything for the disciples who will follow. And so, first of all, He prays for Himself that His glory will be accomplished on the cross. Then in verses 20 to 26, He prays for all the believers who will live throughout the church age of years to come. But for our study, in verses 6 to 19, He prays for the disciples gathered around Him who were alive at the time that He prayed this, and particularly for the eleven Apostles. So, verses 6 to 19, which we're studying currently, are very specifically the prayer of Jesus Christ directed to the disciples who were alive at the time He prayed it, more particularly the eleven Apostles gathered about Him. And the pervading thing that I gain from this entire chapter, and I've studied it now for hours and hours for several weeks, the thing that I keep seeing over and over again is the tremendous love of Jesus Christ for His own. Here He is anticipating His own death and yet not anticipating it, aware of it and yet seemingly unaware of it, as He is not preoccupied with His own suffering but is totally preoccupied with making sure that those who love Him, that beloved little flock of disciples, are going to be well taken care of while He has to go to the cross and be a sacrifice for their sins. Not only does His care drive Him to the cross but His care drives Him to His knees before the Father that the Father would care for them while He goes to bear their sins.

And I'm reminded of chapter 13 verse 1 where it says, "Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come, that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." He loved them utterly, totally, completely. And here we see Him moving right toward the hour of His death and indeed His care is for them, His love is directed toward them.

In chapters 14, 15 and 16, He gave them all the promises of His love. Now in chapter 17, He prays out of a heart full of love that the Father will make these promises all come true in His perfect will. And so, we see Jesus Christ praying for His little lambs about to be let loose amidst the wolves of Satan in the world. And fully aware that for a time He is unable to cradle them in His own loving arms, He commits them to the tender care of the Father and asks that the Father take over the work of shepherding them until He can complete His work and rise to the right hand of the Father and intercede for them and send the Holy Spirit to dwell within them.

And so, if you really want to know the truth, people say that I Corinthians is the love chapter in the Bible, I say John 17 is the love chapter. Because, you see, I Corinthians 13 is more of a definition of love whereas John 17 is a total expression of love. And I can get along real well with definitions but I like expressions a lot better. And I hear about love in John ... in I Corinthians 13 but I begin to really experience it in John 17, because I see how much Christ loves me. And when I sing the song: "The King of love, my shepherd is," all I ever think about is John 17. In a framework of such passionate care and undying love then Jesus prays for His own. And you see His love here displayed in a beautiful, beautiful way, equaled only by the display of love on the cross. It's that kind of love, you know, that Paul talked about in Ephesians when he said that we might know the height and depth and the extremities both ways, the length and breadth, of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. And here we get as close an insight into the depth of His love as anywhere and you're going to learn some really, really exciting things this morning.

Because of His love for us He never ceases to pray for us. And that's why the writer of Hebrews says in chapter 7 verse 25, "He ever lives to make intercession for us." He never stops praying for us. That's how much He loves us. And He didn't begin that ministry officially as I said, you see, until He ascended, but here we have a little preview of it so that we might get an insight into His intercession and He does this in time and space and left it to be recorded for us so we might see how it is that He intercedes on our behalf.

Now, last week we considered the first two points of this one message and we said that point number one was the subjects of His prayer; you have an outline probably in your bulletin and if you'd like to look you'll be reminded that it's there. The subjects of His prayer in verses 6 to 8, now His prayer encompasses the whole chapter but this specific part is geared to a special group of individuals, as I mentioned, the disciples alive at that time particularly the eleven Apostles. Notice in verse 8, and I'll just read it, "I have manifested Thy name unto the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world."

Now, there they are, those are the ones that He's praying for, right there, those that the Father has given Him who are the disciples at that time particularly the eleven. And then He gives the two reasons why He had the right to pray for them. He is going to ask for the Father to care for them, He is going to put them on divine welfare for a little while. He's going to assign them to the care of the

Father and He now gives two credentials which really give them the right to claim that divine welfare. The first one is this, verse 6, "Thine they were and Thou gavest them to Me." Before He ever asks anything for them, He reminds the Father that they have a right to the Father's care because after all they were the Father's to begin with. They're Yours, You just gave them to Me. And so all He's really asking is that the Father care for His own which is consistent with the character of God, He always cares for His own.

And so, Jesus says then -- the first credential that permits them to receive divine welfare is that they were Yours to begin with. The Bible says He chose them before the foundation of the world.

Then He gives the second reason that they are to be blessed with the Father's care in verse 6, "... and they have kept Thy word." You see, that's the balance. Thine they were -- is the divine choice; they have kept thy word -- is the human response. That's both sides of the mystery of salvation. They had credentials for divine welfare because they were the elect and because they were the believing faithful to the Word. And so, from both sides they were to be recipients of the Father's welfare.

And then He goes on to define their faith. "They have known that all things," verse 7, "whatever Thou hast given Me are of Thee." They believe that, that's saving faith. "For I have given unto them the words which You gave Me, they received them and they've known surely, number one, that I came out from God." They knew His origin was divine. Number two, "... and they have believed that Thou did send Me." They knew His mission was divine. And so they believed in Him, that He was God and that He was sent by God to accomplish a mission. Their faith validated their right to divine welfare. So, both the elective sovereignty of God and the faith of those disciples accredited them to receive the Father's care. And so, Jesus then introduces the Father to the subjects of His prayer and gives their credentials to receive His care.

All right, then we saw the second point last week, the reasons for His prayer in verses 9, 10 and just a little bit into verse 11. Why is He praying for them? First reason, verse 9, "I pray for them, I pray not for the world," remember that Christ does not intercede for unbelievers. He may pray -- Father, forgive them for they know not what they do, but He doesn't pray for their welfare, He doesn't intercede on their behalf. "I pray for them," that is these disciples, "I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given Me." Why? Here's the reason number one, 11 ... for they are Thine and all Mine are Thine and Thine are Mine." We'll stop there.

The first reason that Jesus prayed for His disciples was they were the personal property of both He and the Father. And since they were the personal property of both He and the Father, it was only normal that they would be cared for by He and the Father ... and thus does He pray.

Then the second reason that He prayed for them, as we saw last week and this is a quick review, was: "... and I am glorified in them." And He goes on to explain what He means. "And now I am no

more in the world, but these are in the world and I come to Thee." In other words, I'm leaving, Father, and the world seeing My glory will depend upon seeing it through them ... so, I'm leaving and, Father, I want You to guard them because they're going to be left to display My glory, I'm glorified in them.

And you know, it is true that when Christ gains glory, when men give Christ glory, it is because they have seen clearly His beauties through the life of one of His own. They have no other way to Him discern Him, do you see? And so, Jesus prays for them: number one, because they're personal property of the trinity and number two, because they are glorifiers of Christ because He's leaving and they are left to display His glory. All right, so that's the ground work.

Now, let's look at the requests, and oh, are these exciting. The third aspect of Christ's prayer -- the requests in His prayer. And this will be verse 11 to 19. What does He specifically ask for? I mean, they've got ... He's established the right to divine welfare, He's established the reason that He prays, it's important because they're the personal possession of the trinity and it's also important because they are the glorifiers of Christ. But what is it that He asks for? What does He expect from them?

Well let's see ... first of all ... what He doesn't ask, verse 15 ... and I want to set this off against the others. Verse 15 says, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world." Did you get that? He doesn't pray that they be taken out of the world. That's what He doesn't pray for. Now you've learned two things that Jesus doesn't pray for in this chapter. Number one, He doesn't intercede for unbelievers ... we saw that, didn't we? ... in verse 9, He doesn't pray for the world. Number two, He doesn't pray that Christians be taken out of the world. That would make an interesting study sometime to just chart the things that Jesus doesn't pray for. But He does not pray that believers be removed from the world. Jesus never prayed that His disciples would find an escape, He only prayed that they might find victory, you see. Jesus never prayed that they might find a cop-out, He only prayed that they might be conquerors. And the kind of Christianity so called which buries itself in a monastery or which buries itself in a convent is not the kind of Christianity that Jesus desires, if indeed it is Christianity at all. The life that is withdrawn from the world is a sad confusion of what Jesus intended for His own, He never intended that. He says -- I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world. Either remove them from being involved with the lost or to remove them by just taking them away all together in death, He doesn't pray for that.

Now, of course, there are times when prayer and meditation and withdrawing into the presence of God are needed but that's not the end, that's the means to the end. We withdraw into God's presence for meditation and prayer alone with God that we might be strengthened and empowered to go back into the world with an effective message ... and an effective life. And so, Jesus never offers His disciples an easy peace, He only offers them a triumphant warfare. He never tells His disciples to abandon the world but always tells them to win the world. Jesus Christ never attempted to establish a holy club, "Us four, no more, shut the door," isolated and stuck up in the boonies somewhere where nobody can touch them. Jesus Christ wanted a people who would move into the world and confront

them with His claims and His truth. All right, so that's what He doesn't pray for ... keep that in mind, we'll come back to it in a little while.

Now, what does He pray for? Four specifics, and may I add that this is for all of these disciples but particularly for the eleven that has special import. He prays for their oneness in the world, their joy in the world, their protection in the world and their sanctification by the Word... four tremendous things. And these are just exciting, there's ... we could do a whole study on each one of them but we won't.

First of all, He prays for their oneness in the world, verse 11: "And now I am no more in the world but these are in the world and I come to Thee." Now, that's ... that's kind of introducing the problem. Jesus is saying -- I am about to leave and they're going to be left here without My physical presence. Jesus was going to the cross and then He was going to ascend to the Father and they would be left alone in terms of the physical presence of Christ. But may I hasten to add, they would not be left without a supernatural care because Christ had already promised them that when He went away He would send the Comforter who would dwell within them. But even before the Comforter came, when Jesus went to the cross, there would be a period of time in there wouldn't there? At least a period of time of several days when they would be without Him. And so, in view of that and in view of the continuing time that they would be without Him physically, He prays for the Father to take care of them. The Father ... the Savior then reminds the Father that His beloved little flock that were given Him by the Father will be deprived of His personal care and be exposed to the world and it was now up to the Father to activate all the promises of 14, 15 and 16 and secure these ... these believers. Now notice what it says in the middle of the verse, verse 11, beginning with Holy Father, those two words very, very important. They set the pace for the rest of the passage.

"... Holy Father," emphasis on holy, Holy Father, "keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me that they may be one as We are."

Now, here the wicked world is contrasted to the Holy Father and I'll show you what I mean. Jesus is expressing the Holy Father for a very important reason. You know, in the New Testament, that expression, I don't think, appears anywhere else. The holiness of God is a great emphasis in the Old Testament but it's not so emphasized in the New Testament ... more of the love of God, the Fatherhood of God and so forth. But here the combination of holy and Father are put together for a very express reason. The power of the Holy Father is being set as sufficient to off-set the influence of the world's system. He says -- Holy Father -- emphasizing His holiness. Now the word holiness, hagis, holy, simply means to be set apart, or to be separated. And He is saying -- separate Father. What does He mean? Separate from what? What is it that God is separate from? From sin, Holy Father, separate from sin, guard them. Guard them from what? Guard them from sin. Separate Father, keep them separate. That's all He's saying. And the holy is the whole emphasis of this passage. God is holy and separated from all evil. He is of purer eyes than behold iniquity and canst not look upon sin. And here His holiness is emphasized because Christ wants Him to keep His disciples holy and

separated from all evil. Separated Father, keep them from the same thing that You're separated from. Guard them against the unholiness of the world. The word to keep is trson, it means to watch over, it's kind of a divine surveillance, you know. For three years Jesus had kept them and now He commits them to the care of the Father with the prayer that the Father will fulfill His will and guard them from the unholiness of a polluted, godless, Christ-hating, persecuting world.

Now it's kind of a beautiful little exchange. I was looking back at verse 6 and at the end of the verse it says ... and they have kept Thy word." Jesus tells the Father -- They have kept Thy word. And in verse 11 He says -- You keep them ... fair exchange. And so, He says -- Holy Father, keep them from the unholiness of the world.

Now, notice ... continuing in verse 11 ... He says, "Keep them through Thine own name." Now, don't you remember last week, we talked about what it means when it says in the Bible -- the name of God? It's not just talking about Yahweh, or what His name is as a title, it's talking about His entire character and His entire nature, right? I have kept them through Thy name -- He means, I have kept them according to Your character and nature. In other words, by Your power, by Your holiness, by Your love, by Your grace, by Your mercy, by all that You are, I have kept them, guarded them, according to the holy character of God. He has done it and He says -- Father, now You do it.

Verse 12 -- While I was in the world, I kept them through Your name -- now, back in verse 11 -- You do it, through all Your attributes, through all Your essence of holiness, keep them in Your holiness, keep them in Your love, keep them in Your grace, keep them in Your mercy, etc., right? Wisdom, right on down the line. By all Your character, by all Your nature, keep them ... keep them. And so, Jesus prays that they be guarded from unholiness.

Now watch this. I began to look at this and I began to say to myself -- You know, it's a strange thing that Jesus is so concerned about us. I mean, let's face it, when you come right down to it, we're valueless, right? I mean, we're vile sinners. Why does He get so concerned about hanging on to us? Why is He so intense about praying to the Father to care for us? I mean, where do we get all this value all of a sudden? What makes us such a hot commodity to Jesus Christ?

And then I read a little further in the verse and my heart jumped because I saw what it was. Listen to this. "Keep through Thine own name those ... here it comes ... whom Thou hast ... what? ... given Me." Do you know why we're so valuable to Jesus? You know why? Because we are love gifts to Him from the Father. That's why. In ourselves we're not that valuable, but because we have been given to Christ as an expression of the Father's love, we are priceless. Now you don't receive ... for Christmas, you received a lot of stuff, right? And a lot of it was very nice stuff. But, you know, it's interesting, when you look back of all the things that you received from dear friends and family, you know the things that mean the most, aren't the specific objects, but what is valued is valued on the basis of the love that you have for the individual that gave it to you. Parents, you realize that. Every year your kids

bring weird things for you for Christmas from school, strange little things, can't ... so you realize some teacher probably stayed up a week figuring it out and you've got to stay up another week figuring out what to do with it ... strange little strange things that you say -- Oh, it's beautiful, kid. You don't know what to do with it. But you know something? You look back, and I look back at Christmas, and I see all the little things that kids brought. Now in themselves they're not worth anything ... nothing ... sawed ... off Joy soap bottle with some sprinkle on it, you know, what are you going to do with it? And you've got all of these kind of little things that they bring home and they're not worth anything ... but you know something? Of all the things you look back on, they're the most priceless treasures you have because they're expressions of the love. And so you see, the gift is valued in the sense that you love the giver, right?

Do you know why Jesus now loves you so much? Not because of your own intrinsic value but because you were given to Him by the Father and He loves the Father infinitely. You want to know something exciting? Consequently, He loves you to the same degree that He loves the Father. That's why you're so valuable. You see, that's why when Jesus goes to the cross, He stops to pray for you because He loves you so much, not for your own sake, but for the sake of the Father who gave you to Him. I mean, that's exciting, isn't it? That will show you the depth of the love of Christ for you... it's not limited. His love for you is as unlimited as His love for the Father. For you represent to Him, the love of the Father, for indeed you were the Father's love gift to Him. Now that's why Jesus is so concerned about praying for US. That's why the ministry of intercession is what it is. That's why He really cares ... He really cares.

So, our high priest looks on us with a love and a delight that we really don't deserve but that becomes ours because the Father conditions that love. And so, He says -- Father, guard them. Guard them from what? Guard them from unholiness. Holy Father, guard them that they might not be defiled, being fouled up with the world, falling into worldly patterns, behaving in a worldly manner, guard them, don't let it happen, Father.

You say -- Why? I mean, a little worldliness couldn't really be that bad. Watch this, at the end of verse 11, this is really a heavy thought, here's the reason, hina, purpose, the reason: ... in order that they may be ... what's the next word? ... one." Now, I want you to catch this, now I'm going to tell you something that's very important. Jesus says - Father, keep them, keep them from unholiness. Why? That they may be one. Now think about it. If there is one prayer that Jesus prays again and again, and that we read in the New Testament over and over again, it is a prayer for oneness, isn't it? Paul said to the Philippians, "My ... I want you to be of one mind, of one love, of one accord." Peter said, "unfeigned love of the brethren."

Unity is the cry of the New Testament, the body, the unity of the body, every member caring for the other member ... all of the unities that are prescribed in Ephesians 4, 1 Corinthians chapter 12, constantly through out the New Testament, love for each other and oneness. And Jesus says Oh,

Father, You've got to keep them from unholiness in order that they may be one. Now watch this, friends, that means that there's only one thing that ever violates oneness. What is it? Unholiness, sin ... sin. When anyone believer gets sucked off into the world, oneness is destroyed because we automatically, at that point, lose the unity of our testimony.

Now, there are all kinds of people in the ecumenical movement, and all kinds of liberals, who use this verse to teach denominational union. That's ridiculous. Jesus is not saying -- I pray that all denominations sometime become one mammoth world denomination. That will happen but it's not going to be an answer to the prayer of Jesus. When He prayed there weren't even any denominations. Denominations, evidently, were the human idea. They thought I was great at the time and now they're thinking it wasn't so good. Jesus is not praying that. He is praying that His disciples may be one in love, in will, in deed, in holiness. One in a composite, collective unity standing against the world in defense of the faith in a pure kind of love bond. And the only thing that destroys unity is sin, unholiness. And so Jesus says -- If they're going to be one, You're going to have to keep them pure. Every time a believer falls into worldliness, the unity is broken, the oneness is broken and you get friction, you get problems, you get a discontent Christian, you get wrangling and it all comes from unholiness, all of it.

One writer said, quote: "It is the divine unity of love that is referred to here, all wills bowing in the same direction, all affections burning with the same flame, all aims directed to the same end, one blessed harmony of love." That's what Jesus prayed.

And you know, the beautiful part of it is that His prayer was answered. You remember what it said in Acts 4:32, it says those early Christians got together and they were all of one mind and one soul. He prayed that they would be one in a holy separation in the world. None of them hindering the united testimony by fooling with the evils of the world. They were separated. Did you know that God wants separated believers, did you know that? He doesn't want believers who are defiled by the world, they are a disastrous testimony and they destroy the united testimony of a holy oneness. And that's our problem. I mean, Paul wasn't just batting the breeze when he said -- Come out from among them and be ye separate and touch not the unclean thing. He knew exactly what he was saying. A unity of love in holiness that separates us from the world is Jesus prayer. Jesus prayed for separated disciples.

And so many disciples today are worldly, let's face it. I mean, we're so trapped into this thing by our own desires, the desire for fame, the desire for money, for prestige, for social acceptance ... acceptance for fashion, for fulfillment of lust, whatever it is, you know, we get sucked into this world deal and we ... we ... we look, act, dress and smell like the rest of the world ... and it's very difficult to tell us apart. Now, they shouldn't be able to tell you apart because of how you smell, we want to clear that up. But anyway, there should be some distinctions. We were chosen out of the world and it's a little bit ridiculous to go back into the world and confuse the issue. But, my friends, the one great damaging thing that continually is thrown up in my face and in your face when we attempt to give a

testimony for Christ is always the messed up lives of other so-called Christians and the demise of a unified holiness has cost us an effective testimony in the world.

Someone says -- Wow, man, I mean, you can't just, you know, be weird, I mean, you've got to fit in, you've got to just be like them and just kind of slide in and sneak up on them. Oh, garbage! And we have this idea you've got to fit in. I don't read that in the Bible anywhere, where does the Bible say -Fit into the world? The Bible says -- Don't fit into the world, be not conformed to this world. Don't be ... you say -- Well, I mean, you can't be different. Yeah, you should be different. You say -- Well, you don't want to be odd. Yes you do. God called out a peculiar people, some of us are more peculiar than others but we're all peculiar, called out and we are to be separated from the world. We're not to be sucked into the system. And this idea that you've got to become what they are so you can reach them is not true at all. You've got to be the opposite of what they are, then you'll reach them.

I'll never forget, one night, in a big rally, a youth rally deal, there were a bunch of rock bands playing and I was suppose to be the speaker. It's always hard for me, you know, to do that cause that stuff makes me nervous anyway. And it was just ... oh wild, ripping and tearing, snorting going on up there and I was sitting in the back saying -- Lord, why do You get me into these things? And a couple of kind of, you know, hippie-type kids came in the back and they just really looked like they'd been through it, dope and the whole thing, and they really looked serious minded and they sat down ... I'll never forget what happened ... they sat down and about five minutes later one of them said -- Well, let's get out of here. They got up and walked out and one of the guys at the door stopped them and said - Where are you going? He said -- Ahh, -- he says, -- We thought this Christianity deal was something different, I mean, we can hear this anywhere. They were gone.

You see, the very dynamite of Christianity is its uniqueness, you see. And that's why it's so insidious today when ... when all of the attempts of Satan are to blend in Jesus Christ and Christianity with the rest of the system, see ... so that you can't see the difference anymore. Because our testimony, my friends, is separation. And this is what Jesus wants, that we be one in a holiness, none of us slopping around being defiled in the system.

Now, let me teach you something at this point, that I think is important ... by illustration. In the Old Testament, God called out a special people, Israel. And He wanted Israel to be His witness in the world, right? So He didn't say to them -- Israel, you're My witness, so sneak around and just kind of look like everybody else, do what they do and then grab them in a corner and, you know, let them have it. No. He said -- You're going to be My witness so here's how it goes, you will dress different, eat different, work different, plant different, marry different, worship different, have holidays that are different, cook different, sacrifice different, everything you do from the time you're born till the time you die will be different than every other nation in the world, right? He didn't say -- Blend in and sneak up on them ... He said -- You will be different. And I mean, they were different. They looked like opposites to the human race. They didn't fit in anywhere.

You want to know something? Every time they tried to fit in, they went right down the drain and their testimony was wiped out. And every time they stood in difference and every time they obeyed God and were unique, God honored their testimony and blessed them. And every time they tried to blend in, inter-married, fooled with false idols, they went right down the tubes and that's what brought about finally their dispersion. When God chooses a people to be a testimony to Him, He wants them different, separated and distinct, not blending in. And, dear ones, the church is called out of the world just like Israel was called to be a unique testimony. Your patterns, your behaviors, your life style should be different than the system.

Listen, only people that ever come to Jesus Christ are the people who are desperate for a change anyway. They don't offer them the same thing they've got. Most Christians just go along and the testimony of a holy unity is non-existence ... non-existent because we've all fallen into the patterns of the world, see. We're all concerned with money, prestige, fame, fashion, ta-dit-ta-da and all the way down the line. And so Jesus prays that there would be a holy oneness.

You say -- Well, I mean, I've got to stay in the world, right? How you going to figure this out? I've got to be in the world because Jesus didn't pray that I'd be taken out, but I don't want to get into the system itself? That's right. It's like a boat, it's okay when the boat's in the water, it's great, but when the water's in the boat, you've got problems. The same thing with a Christian. Nothing wrong with a Christian in the world, just something wrong with the world in a Christian. So, Jesus prays for our united, holy separation from the world.

And I love this next verse. "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name." He says - Father, I've been looking after them, now You're going to have to help Me a little bit. And He says: "Those that Thou gavest Me," and that's seven times in this chapter, He refers to Christians as gifts from the Father ... seven times. Because, you see, that's the basis of His care for us.

Okay, He says -- "Those that Thou gavest Me, I have kept them, none of them is lost." We'll stop there. Jesus says -- I haven't lost any of them. You can go back to John6:39, "All that the Father gives to Me, who come to Me, I'll lose none of them but raise them at the last day." He never loses one love gift that the Father gives Him, never. There's no such thing as a Christian ever losing His salvation, that's a non-existent, can't happen ... no way. He says -I have kept them all and none of them is lost. And somebody would immediately blurt out Ah, ah, ah ... Judas. Right? You can hear the objection already, can't you? So could the Holy Spirit, look at the next line. "But the son of perdition," which is a name for Judas, "that the Scripture might be fulfilled." Hmm, what about Judas?

Judas here is called the son of perdition. Jesus ... is Jesus saying, as some have said, Jesus is saying that He tried His best but He couldn't hang on to Judas? He tried His best but He miserably failed in the case of Judas? I'll tell you, I don't want a Christ who can fail 'cause if He failed in the case

of Judas, He just might fail in my case. Judas is no exception, my friends. And you must understand the construction of this verse or you can get a little bit confused. He is not saying this ... He is not saying -- None of them is lost except the son of perdition ... ei does not mean except, it means but, and it's a straight transition. None of them is lost ... period. But the son of perdition is that the Scripture might be fulfilled. Did you get it? Judas was never given to Christ as a love gift. The phrase -- son of perdition -- indicates that from birth, he was going on a straight line to perdition. Do you see it? Jesus said it would have been better for that man if he'd ... what? ... never been born because once he was born, perdition was the only possible end to it all. He was a son of perdition. He was designated for that, by his own will. And so He is saying -- None of them is lost ... period. But the son of perdition is that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

And you'll remember Psalm 41:9, Psalm 109, verses 4 to 13, both of those prophesy in detail the betrayal of Judas Iscariot. That's all in the plan of God. Jesus knew that before the foundation of the world, the Father never gave Judas as a love gift to Christ. That wouldn't have been a very nice love gift, frankly. And you know the Father knew what Judas would do, you know that. And you know the Father would never give Jesus a love gift, a Judas for a love gift. And so, He's making a clear transition -- None of them is lost. And then to answer the skeptic -- But the son of perdition is lost, not because I couldn't keep him, but because the Scripture had to be ... what? ... fulfilled. And there's a big difference.

Now, the term -- son of perdition -- means the utterly lost one. It means the one with no hope of being saved.

So, you see what He's saying? He's saying -- The Father's will was accomplished in the case of the eleven, and it was also accomplished in the case of the one. Judas never was saved.

This ... this comes as a strong comfort to me and to the disciples. I mean, aren't you glad to know that Jesus wasn't surprised by what Judas did? That Jesus was not a victim, aren't you glad to know that? Aren't you glad to know what it says in John 10, that Jesus said No man takes My life from Me, I lay it down ... what? ... of Myself? And so, He says -- I'm praying for their oneness. Father, I've kept them one, I've kept them together from being tainted with the world, and, Father, you do it. And you know, that first of a group of disciples, their will agreed with the Father's will and they were one in a holiness of uni ... in a unity of holiness. And the testimony was unbelievable. People were being saved every day. But today, the Father still desires it, the Son still desires it, but unfortunately, our wills don't always desire that kind of holiness that makes for unity. My friend, if you want to live in a worldly fashion, it doesn't just affect you, it fractures the testimony of the body of Christ.

All right, a second thing He prays for, and these are very quick things 'cause they're very simple, we'll just go over them briefly. Second thing He prays for is their joy in the world. You know, it could have been miserable in the world, you know that? I mean, being a Christian in this world, if you really just

thought about all the things you've got to go through, and the persecution and all of this kind of thing, if you really looked at it from when we ... like some Christians do, you could get miserable. And there are a lot of Christians, you know, who are miserable. But Jesus here isn't concerned with that, He's concerned with their joy. Now watch this and this is indirect, it's indirect, it's not a special request directed at God but it's an indirect purpose in His prayer, verse 13: "And now come I to Thee," I'm coming to You, I'm going to die then I'm going to ascend to You, "and these things I speak in the world." In other words, I'm going to come to You and talk to You and I'm going to intercede for them and I'm going to have a lot to say, but I'm saying this right here in John 17 before I leave. Why? "That they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves."

Now, there's the key to the whole seventeenth chapter. This is why Jesus prayed this prayer ... for our joy. He says -- I'm coming to You and then I'm going to talk to You a lot about them, Father, I'm going to pray a lot about them, but I'm saying some things here that My joy might be fulfilled in them. Now watch this. Do you have any idea what Christ's joy was? What was His joy? Let me give you an insight. This is really rich. Christ's joy was in the care of the Father for Him. Did you get that? Christ's joy was in knowing that the Father cared for Him. And Christ wanted us to share His joy and so He prays this prayer to show us that the Father also cares for us. Do you see? Christ's great joy was that He knew the Father cared for Him. He knew it. And He says Father; I'm praying out loud so they'll know not only how much I love them but that You're going to care for them. For them to understand the love and care of the Father, for them to understand the intercessory work of Jesus was a constant source of joy.

And I'll tell you something, frankly, if you're a Christian that doesn't have any joy, you're ... something's wrong, you're a self-contradiction. If you're a joyless, miserable Christian, it just simply means that you don't really comprehend the love and the care of God for you. There's no reason to be anything but joyous. Oh, you have trials and Paul says he had heaviness of heart continually over Israel, there are things that break your heart and grieve your spirit, but at the same time you never lose that constant abiding joy when you really understand how much God loves you. How much He loves you ... and how much Jesus loves you. And Jesus is saying Father, as the greatest joy that I have is our love shared, so I pray this out loud in space and time, right here in front of My disciples, and to be written for all disciples, that they might also understand how much we love them. Do you see? Joy comes from knowing His love.

I don't care what I understood doctrinally, if I didn't really know God loved me and cared for me, I'd never have any joy at all. You know that? Joy always, sooner or later, gets back to the Father's care and the love of the Son ... always. If I had every other doctrine and every other truth in the Word of God all down pat and I didn't believe that the Father cared for me and that Jesus loved me, I would be miserable 'cause that's the basis of joy. And so, He simply says -- Father, I ... I want them to know so that they might have joy.

Jesus had the joy of knowing the Father's care, the Father's love and He wanted us to have it and so He prays to the Father showing us the pattern of His care and the Father's care in return. Well, I'll tell you, it's exciting to have joy based on the love of the Father. God loves us. God loves us. And Jesus loves us, as I showed you earlier because we were love gifts from Him ... from His Father.

Third thing, we'll hurry. He prays not only for their oneness in the world and their joy in the world, and it won't be easy always to have joy in the world cause the world's hostile, thirdly, He prays for their protection in the world. Verse 14, "I have given them Thy Word," and, of course, when He did that that set them apart, right? I mean, when they received the Word, the Word of God, the Word made them alive, they were automatically set apart from the rest of the world. And who runs the world? Satan. So, naturally, immediately they're enemies of the world, right? Now, that's what it says. I've given them Thy Word. Zap -- that sets them apart. Consequently, the world hates them because they are not of the world even as I am not of the world. The world hates anybody that isn't part of the system. If Satan hates God, and that's the basis of the whole conflict of the universe, if Satan hates God as the foundation, then Satan's domain will militate against God's domain, then Satan's demons and Satan's men, the dupes of Satan, will hate and persecute those who belong to God. It just funnels down to that kind of antagonism. And so, in the world, if you're a true believer, declaring your faith, the world will be hostile. Satan will be actively operating against you. And it may break out in open persecution or it may break out in temptation that begins little by little to peel away your effectiveness.

But the point is there is a very obvious opposition to the believer within the system because Satan runs the system. And don't think that you can do the thing that's worldly and think it's fun and it won't hurt you a bit. My friends, you're falling right into Satan's trap, you're falling right into his lie, you're believing His hypocrisy and you're going to find yourself set in opposition against God whom you claim to love ... when you do the thing that Satan wants you to do.

And so, He says -- they've received the Word and immediately have been set against the world and the world hates anybody that's not a part of its system. When you've been washed and separated and set apart from the world, the world will not tolerate you. And don't you see, then, that a Christian who then goes and plays around in the world, a worldly Christian, is a degrader of Jesus Christ because at the end of the verse it says this: "... they are not of the world even as I am not of the world." Our separation from the world should be equal to that of Jesus', totally undefiled, separate from sinners.

A Christian that fits into the world is a degrader of Jesus Christ and the holiness of the body. He drags the image of Christ down.

Well, you say -- Boy, that's awful hard, you know, to always maintain that thing, you know. It's awful hard to stay away from the world. Once in a while I get tempted to take pot or to run around with

unbelievers and do the things that they do and to amuse myself with the amusements of the world. I get trapped in the money deal and I'm lust after money and all these things, it's awful hard, you know, it would have been a lot easier if the Lord had just zapped me out of this world, saved me and taken me home, and then the Lord could have, you know, won the rest of the world with skywriting, or something, you know. Just preach the message in the clouds everyday. Or, big voices out of heaven - booming down, or something, you know, I mean, He could have gotten rid of us. Wouldn't it have been a lot easier?

Well, I'll tell you, friends, let's face it. The biggest hang up that Christianity has to face as Christians, you know, sooner or later it all boils down to an inadequate testimony because we're all so inadequate ... and it seems like God could have done it another way. He could have but He didn't design to do that, He did it this way. And so, in verse 15 He says this: "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world." Father, I'm not saying that, right? I mean, the world's going to hate them but I'm not telling You to take them out, I've got to have them. They've got to be here. I only pray, verse 15, "That Thou shouldst keep them from the evil one." From the evil one. Father, don't take them out, I need them here. They must go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. They must be witnesses unto Me. Don't take them out, Father, leave them. But, O Father, keep them from the evil one.

Jesus prays for our protection from the wicked one behind the system ... Satan. He knows that Jesus' disciples will be steadily attacked and He prays that God will guard them. Oh, and it's so true, that God does guard us. Satan can never take us out of the hand of God ... can he? And yet, isn't it sad and isn't it strange that so often, even though we're secure and God guards us, we willfully decide to play around in the world? So, Jesus prays that the Father would guard them from the evil one. You know, the Bible says in I John 5:18 that the whole world lies in the arms of the wicked one, doesn't it? The whole world. And we need to be protected from the wicked one. Don't take them out just protect them.

You know, it's really ... it's really ridiculous for a Christian to pray to die. Have you ever heard of a Christian who wanted to go home to be with the Lord so bad, he just prayed -- Lord, take me home? Shouldn't pray that. I mean, you know, unless you're praying for someone else, you feel the pain or something is severe and death is imminent, you can pray that prayer, but for a Christian to say O Lord, I'm all tired, I want to go home, see ... just take me home, **and give me my mansion, huh-huh,** see. I've had it.

That's ridiculous. Jesus says -- I don't want You to take them but, Father, I want You to just hyper activate them, to keep them from Satan, power them to do the job. So, Jesus prays for oneness in the world, joy in the world, protection in the world.

Lastly, for sanctification by the Word. Now remember what He wanted ... and we come first ... full circle here because the first thing He prayed for was holiness and here He gets down to how we can be made holy. Verse 16, "They are not of the world," same as verse 14, "even as I am not of the world." Just a reminder, we're different, we've got to sever all connections with the godless system. We need to be different. We need to stick out and be oddballs, separated from the world.

Now you say -- How can I ... how can I be that? I mean, I'd like to be separated; I'd like to be holy, how? How do I ... how do I really become this? And the answer is beautiful, verse 17, listen to this. "Sanctify," that's hagiason, to make holy, listen to it this way: "Make them holy through Thy truth." Stop right there.

There's only one way to be holy, only one way to be separate from the world, that's through the truth. The world's full of lies, the truth separates us. You say -- Where do I find the truth? What's the next part of the verse say? "... Thy Word ... what? ... is truth." You know how you become holy? Only one way, through the Bible, through the Word of God. That's it. Holiness comes from the Word of God; the tool that God uses to make us separated is the Word of God. That's why it is so important that you as a Christian be in the study of the Word of God on a daily basis so that the Word of God can constantly be purifying you, do you see? When you stay away from the Word of God, it is a disaster.

No one is holy. No one is set apart unless he is in the Word and the Word is in him. The only way you'll ever be holy is in the Word. Not by going to church and sitting there, not by getting emotional religious feelings, not by belonging to some kind of a denomination, the only way you'll ever know holiness in your own life -- first, to receive Jesus Christ, which is the basic precedent, then to be in the Word of God so that it constantly, daily purifies you. David said -- "Thy Word have I hidden in my heart that I might not sin."

Now, notice the statement -- Thy Word is truth. That's a classic statement. There are people who would argue with that statement and say the Bible isn't really true only parts of it are true. But that statement is a classic statement concerning the accuracy, the inerrancy and the perfection of the Bible. Does that statement say -- the ... Thy Word contains truth? Is that what it says? It says -- Thy Word ... what? ... is truth. This is truth. It doesn't just contain it, you don't have to look for it in there, just open it anywhere, it's truth ... absolute, inerrant, accurate, total revelation of God.

So, holiness, then, comes from knowing and acting on the Word. And if you want to be holy as Christ prayed that we might be holy in a oneness of holiness, we must be in the Word as individuals. That's why we believe there's no other purpose for the church to exist than to teach the Word. That's the point. If we teach the Word, we get a holy oneness and then our witness is effective. And if all we do is try to generate people to do their witnessing without ever teaching them the Word so they can know holiness, their witness is ineffective. There must be holiness. And Jesus says they've got to pick up where I left off, verse 18.

"As Thou has sent Me into the world," and how did He send Him? So Holy ... set apart ... even so, I also sent them into the world." How does He send us? To be holy and set apart. Father, You sent Me here, set apart from men, undefiled, not touched by sin, to confront the world, Father, that's the way I want to send them, holy, undefiled, without blemish. As Peter said, "Without blemish and without spot." Unholy, worldly Christians accomplish nothing. They are negative.

And so, we have a divine call to holiness. We, in answer to the prayer of Jesus Christ, must radiate holiness. As an individual, I gain it through the Word. And then as we all grow in the Word, there becomes a oneness of holiness that stands as a testimony in the world. I pray, God, that will be our testimony.

Verse 19 gives a tremendous climax, and we're skipping some thoughts, but ..."And for their sakes I sanctify Myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

Now, what does Jesus mean? For their sake I sanctify Myself? Sanctify, holy, means to set apart. Did Jesus set Himself apart? Sure He did. He set Himself apart to do ... what? ... whose will? ... the Father's. He set Himself apart to do the Father's will. And He's saying this -- Father, for their sakes I set Myself apart to do Your will that they may be set apart to do Your will.

Do you know that we could never do the will of the Father if Jesus hadn't accomplished the Father's will on the cross? Could we? Could we be holy? Set apart unto God without the cross? No. Could we be set apart at all without Christ being set apart? No. That's why Hebrews says, in Hebrews 10:10, "For by one offering has He sanctified," or set apart, "all believers." Once for all He died and set us apart. And if He hadn't been willing to set Himself apart, obediently to the Father's will, we would be unable to do it. And so, Jesus is saying -- Father, I've got to get to the cross and I'm willing to do it, I've got to set Myself apart that they may be set apart.

Listen to this. Hebrews 13:12: "Wherefore Jesus also," listen ... here's His purpose in dying, listen: "that He might set apart the people with His own blood suffered." You know why He died? To set us apart, holy unto God.

Same thing in Titus, I think, isn't it Titus 2:14? It says this: yes, fourteen: "Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a people of His own." You see, He had to die to set us apart. He had to be set apart to do God's will that we might be. There it is.

And so, Jesus prays. Prays for four things. He prays for a holy loving oneness in the world. He prays for them that they might know full joy in the knowledge of the care of a loving Savior and a loving Father. He prays for complete protection from Satan. And lastly, He prays that they may be set apart by knowing and acting on the Word. And then says: "All of this is going to be possible because I'm

going to be set apart at the cross, accomplishing Your will, making possible their setting apart."

I trust and pray that in your own life the prayer of Jesus Christ for these things is being answered.
Let's pray.

Father, we thank You for insight into Christ's prayer. So many rich truths we've learned this morning. We thank You for the fact that Jesus Christ was willing to sanctify Himself, set Himself apart at the cross, to die for us that we might be able to be set apart unto God. Father, I'm aware that there are some in our midst this morning who maybe have never received Jesus Christ in a personal way. Maybe they've been religious, been in church, but they've never received Christ, and they're not set apart unto You yet because they've never put their faith in Him. Father, may this be the day that they do that. Lord, there are those of us who are Christians and we look at our own lives and we're not seeing the kind of oneness and holiness that should be there. We're not having that joy we should have. We're not seeing ourselves apart from the wicked one but rather falling into the world and it's all because we're not really in the Word projecting holiness. Father, speak to us by Your Spirit in regard to what we need to learn because of this time together and because of the Spirit's teaching, may we never be the same. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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