

AND WE BEHELD HIS GLORY - Studies in John's Gospel
Part sixty-four - Sunday, December 1st, 2024, 10 a.m.
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**CHRISTIANS ARE NOT OF THIS WORLD - THE ONE ORIENTATION
THE WORLD WON'T TOLERATE**

John 17:10-19 - "All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. [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."

Up to **verse 20** of this chapter Jesus is praying for the most important community of people ever established on planet earth. He speaks these words - these **prayerful** words- to the most **seminal** and **foundational** group of people ever to be called together. This small band is the **only** saving community on the planet and their mission must reach the **entire** planet. The destiny of the **whole world** lies in these individuals for whom Jesus prays.

Here we are this morning. We are the church. We're not just **at** church - though that too is a very important New Testament obedience - we **are** the church. We are by extension the group Jesus prays for in John 17. He makes that clear when He shifts His attention from the first called disciples to those who would be reached through their recorded writings - **John 17:20 - "I do not ask for *these only*, but also for those who will believe in me through their word...."** - IPAD TEXT

"For those who will believe their words." That's us. We have been reached by the recorded words of those first apostles. So how important are **we** to Jesus' plan today? I don't just mean **are we saved** and **going to heaven**. I mean what kind of interest does Jesus have in our actions and our life's calling?

Is it enough that we try to be good people? Are we noble as long as we are **"people of faith,"** as the media loves to describe us, and hold our beliefs rather **sincerely**? Is it enough that we're non-judgmental and accepting of others? Or is the longing of Jesus for us today more specific, more focused, and more challenging?

In short, the important issue of this prayer of Jesus for His church is **are we fulfilling the heartfelt desire of our Lord today?** Are we being the answer to His prayer to the Father? Are we **being** and are we **doing** what we're supposed to **be** and supposed to **do** as our professed loyalty to Him gets expressed in our moment-by-moment lives?

1) WAS JESUS' PRAYER THAT THESE DISCIPLES BE "KEPT IN THE FATHER'S NAME" ANSWERED?

IPAD TEXT - John 17:10-12 - "All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. [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."*

What kind of "**keeping**" did Jesus have in mind? That's an important question to ask because it also reflects on how Jesus prays **we** will be kept in this present world. And the reason I ask that question of our text is it doesn't **look like** these disciples were very well kept by Father God at all - or anyone else. The Apostle John is the **only** one to die of old age. The others - **all** of them, so say most historians - were violently hacked to death as martyrs.

So what kind of **“keeping”** is being requested by Jesus? There are some clues in these opening few verses of our text. Jesus expressed His joy at being **“glorified”** in these disciples (10). After Jesus’ ascension they did nothing to **discredit** His finished work. Their lives made their Lord look like great treasure. In short, they were kept faithful to their Lord.

Then Jesus asks they be kept **“in your [the Father’s] name”**(11). They made it clear Jesus was unique in His relationship to His Father in heaven. They made it clear no one else was God the Son. So they are **kept** in the sense of never proclaiming a Lord who was anything like any other religious leader. Apparently that was very important to Jesus. There was a huge gap between the way **He** had come from the Father to do the Father’s work and the way anyone **else** was sent by the Father. These disciples faithfully made that their message.

Then Jesus mourns the fact that one of His first **“chosen”** ones - one of those the selection of whom He had prayed about all night - had freely chosen to defect (12). It is wonderful beyond telling that an **all-knowing** God who never **creates or promotes wickedness** could and did through His perfect foreknowledge prepare the events of the cross around Judas’ defection and bring redemptive grace through it. In our text we watch as Jesus prays for better loyalty as the Father **“keeps”** the other eleven in this world.

When taken together these expressions point more to the disciples being kept **true** than being kept **safe**. Much depended on their faithfulness. You and I are here because they remained faithful against all odds. There would be no reliable gospel record to **respond** to had Father God not answered the heart cry of God the Son.

The billions of Christians around the world today didn't just fall down from the sky. We're not the result of good luck. Eleven faithful witnesses sliced a path through the jungle of religious confusion and moral relativism. We have a "**faith once delivered**" because Jesus' prayer for the "**keeping**" of His disciples was miraculously answered. Be glad. Be eternally glad. Be glad no matter what.

2) **THE SURPRISING RESULT OF STEADFAST FAITHFULNESS TO JESUS IN A WORLD INTOLERANT TO HIS WORD**

IPAD TEXT - John 17:13-16 - "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."

It's important to understand Jesus' prayer words in **verse 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."**

I think we can see something similar to Jesus' words in our text back in **John 11:42 - "I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." - IPAD TEXT**

My point is Jesus, on several occasions, said things **out loud**, not for His own sake, but specifically **to be overheard** for the benefit of others. And in our John 17 text Jesus wants these disciples to hear Him pray for their **faithfulness** - for their **loyalty being "kept" by Father God** - **John 17:15 - "I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one."**

So Jesus ties two things tightly together. Right along side His prayer for their **faithfulness** He **tells them** He prayed for their faithfulness **out loud** so they would see a strange connection they might otherwise miss. We'll see it in just a minute.

Let me explain. What might come to your mind if you heard the call to being ***kept faithful and loyal?*** And even more, what might come into your mind when this prayer was coupled with warnings about the coming persecution and alienation of this present world? You might be moved by a sense of ***courage***. You might be challenged by the high road of ***duty***. You might even have some unconfessed ***fear*** you might not be up to what Jesus required of you.

Here's what Jesus wanted them to think of as He prayed for their being kept in faithfulness. ***Joy***. That's right. He wanted them to link their faithfulness - even faithfulness against all odds - with divine, unspeakable ***joy*** - **John 17:13 - "But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, *that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.*"**

There's the strange connection I mentioned a minute ago. Jesus prayed out loud so they would see the link between two apparent opposites - ***persecution from the world - joy from Jesus***.

Now, make the bridge across the years to whatever summons the Spirit of Jesus would make to ***your*** heart today. Where is He pressing for dedication - loyalty - faithfulness in the face of what seems to be great obstacle or high cost? If you don't hear Jesus trying to pull your whole being into ***deeper joy*** than you will ever find on your own terms you'll miss the heartbeat of deep discipleship. Follow Jesus at any cost for this reason: ***He wants to deepen your heart's joy.***

3) **THE WHOLE CHRISTIAN LIFE MUST BE LIVED BETWEEN THE LORD'S JOY AND THE WORLD'S HATRED**

IPAD TEXT - John 17:13-16 - "But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, *that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.* 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."

These verses describe **Jesus' joy** and the **world's hatred**. No disciple can have just **one** of these. These are the two permanently established truth points affecting everything about how we relate to Jesus Christ in this world. They are **starting points** in how we live out the faith we profess. And one is as certain as the other. We live between the **Lord's joy** and the **world's hatred**. Check for yourself. There is no other environment offered by our Lord in this text.

"I have given them your word...."(14). This is Jesus' way of making obvious the **root** - the **source** - of the antagonism from the world. It certainly isn't from our **deeds**. There is no hatred for feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and caring for the poor. There is no hatred for hospitals, schools, orphanages, or feeding centers.

No. That's not the cause of the worldly hatred promised by Jesus. It's those pesky **"words"** from divine revelation. It's saying what God says. It's truth **bound up by revelation** and **proclaimed beyond human opinion**. The world won't hate anyone for **"believing in Jesus"** - whatever that has come to mean. But it will, as soon as it thinks things through, hate those who **believe everything Jesus said**.

Take a look around. Many churches have figured this out. We've learned to fudge on some of those hard absolute divine words and just focus on those **"red letter"** deeds of Jesus as He walked this earth. We've become **half-faithful**. We have found we can be friends with virtually everyone with loving deeds without participating in that stark reality Paul described in **2 Corinthians 2:15-16 - "For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, [16] to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?" - IPAD TEXT**

I was poked in the eye with this truth years ago in the writing of **Andrew Walker** in the paper, **"First Things" - "The full, biblical Gospel (one that speaks both a sentence of death, and a hope of reconciliation) is a public truth (Acts 4:12). We hate our neighbor when we hide truth under a bushel (Matthew 5:15). Speaking in uncertain, reticent tones gives the deadly impression that it is pastoral to not speak with biblical conviction. This is wrong. If preaching "salvation" excludes sexual ethics, John the Baptist's corpse would have a head attached to it, and 1 Corinthians would probably never have been written."**

Remember both sides of this third teaching point. Jesus lays out the simple reality that we disciples live ***between the two realities*** of ***divine joy*** and the ***world's hatred***. The point needs restating here. Treasuring the joy of our Lord is the ***root*** for faithfulness in the face of the world's hatred.

Again, if we fear losing face with our culture ***more*** than we treasure our Lord's joy - or, perhaps more commonly - if we think we will somehow be pleasing Jesus ***more*** by ***not*** declaring those truths that we think separate us from the world and keep us from reaching it - we will ***miss both*** pleasing our Lord ***and*** reaching the world. ***In Jesus' name do all the deeds. And in Jesus' name proclaim clearly all the words.*** And it's those ***words*** that will garner the world's hatred.

4) THE SAME WORD THAT SAVES IS THE WORD THAT SENDS

IPAD TEXT - John 17:17-19 - "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."

Starting with **verse 19** and working back to **verse 17**, here's what we see in these verses. **First, Jesus "consecrated" Himself.** We need to establish exactly what that means. **Second,** Jesus says these disciples are **"sent"** into the world just as surely as Jesus Himself was **"sent"** into the world by the Father. And **finally,** Jesus' disciples need to be **"sanctified"** to their mission just as Jesus was **"consecrated"** to His.

How sent are Jesus' disciples into the world? They are just as sent as Jesus was sent into this world. In other words, they are no more **mission-less** in this world than Jesus was **mission-less** in this world. Their lives are driven by **one consuming passion** just as was His. They have a **reason** for everything they do just as He had a reason for everything He did on this earth.

Jesus' whole life was **"set apart"** for one specific thing. And that's the exact **meaning** of that word John records Jesus using - **"consecrate"** - **John 17:19 - "And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth."** - IPAD TEXT

We know Jesus didn't mean **consecrate** in the sense of being cleansed from sin. He had no sin needing purification. He meant consecrated in the sense of **setting everything else aside for the accomplishment of one great task.**

Now let's put **verses 17-18** together - **"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."** - IPAD TEXT

Here's what I see here. Those who profess to be disciples of Jesus are as **set apart** to take His word into this hostile world as Jesus was **set apart** to come and die for our sins. There is no other way to read those words - **"As you sent me.....So I have sent them...."**(18).

This is not just Bible stuff for missionaries or pastors. You have been **set apart**. If you profess Christ your life has been **removed** from living for ordinary things. In **everything** you do, you are called - **set apart - consecrated** - just as surely as Jesus was set apart - for one thing.

You are set apart on the assumption that the part of the world you engage will **never know the truth - will never know Christ's words** - apart from you fulfilling your divine calling. **Your life isn't to be spent on your own ambitions any more than Christ had the option of eating the bread Satan offered Him in the wilderness.** Keep your life on mission. Keep your life in Christ's fullest joy.