

“CHRIST’S PRAYER FOR HIS PEOPLE”

John 17:6-19

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INTRODUCTION

Jesus’ prayer for Himself was really just a prelude for His prayer for His people. He was concerned for His restoration to His glory so that He could fulfill His assigned role of granting eternal life to those the Father had given Him.

But, what about those who had already believed? Those who had already become His followers? What would happen to them once Jesus returned to the Father and experienced His former glory? Jesus was not about to forget them; nor would He forget those who were still to believe.

Do you realize that Jesus was praying for you in this chapter—yes, especially in vv. 20-26; but also in verses 6-19 as He prays for those who were already His followers.

In this part of His prayer, JESUS PRAYS *For those who were His, Only for those who were His, and Specifically for those who were His*. Jesus prays that in His absence from this earth, the Father would supply what He could no longer provide in His flesh: **SECURITY and SANCTITY**.

THE LORD WANTS YOU Safe And Sacred; Secure And Sanctified. If He has prayed for you, will His prayer be answered?

I. THE LORD PRAYS FOR THOSE WHO ARE HIS (6-8)

A. The Father **gave everything** to His Son (v. 7).

Notice that the Father gave Jesus both His words (v. 8) and His people (v. 6). These men were taken **out of the world** (v. 6).

B. The Son **gave everything** to His people

He gave the Father’s name—revealing the Father’s **person** (v. 6)

He gave the Father’s **words**—explaining the Father’s requirements (v. 8)

C. The People **received everything** given to them by Father and Son

1. They received His words (v. 8)

2. They understood His words, learning through experience:

- That everything Jesus has is from God (7).
- That Jesus Himself has come forth from God and is deity (8).

3. They believed His words (8).

- They believed that Christ is “the Sent One”.
- They believed in His divine Mission from the Father.

4. They kept His word—His entire message to them (6)

5. They glorified Him (v. 10). **They manifested the true glory of His divine attributes by the changes in their lives worked by Christ.**

Remember the profound statement in John 1:12: “*But as many as received Him, to them He gave power [authority] to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on His name.*”

This is exactly what the Lord describes here in His prayer; upon this basis He makes His prayer to the Father.

But before we examine the specific requests He makes for His own, we must examine the limitation He places upon His requests.

II. THE LORD PRAYS ONLY FOR THOSE WHO ARE HIS (9-10)

A. He asks on their behalf—not on behalf of the world.

There are several factors we must understand:

- Elsewhere Jesus does pray for the world (e.g. on the cross; later in this prayer).
- Jesus commands us to pray for and to preach to the world.
- We must recognize what He means by the world—the organized system of opposition to His word and program under direct Satanic control.
- The requests He makes here can only apply to those who are already believers!

B. He asks for the Father’s benefit—for they were the Father’s and the Father gave them to Him. Thereby the Father would be glorified.

C. He asks for the Son’s benefit—what benefits the Father also benefits the Son.

Thereby the Son is glorified as well.

- Note that any human could say truthfully to God: “*All things that are mine are yours.*”
- However, only Christ Jesus could say truly, “*And Thine are mine.*”
- By saying this He declares absolute **community property rights** with all that belongs to the Father. *ONLY GOD HIMSELF COULD SAY SUCH A THING AND NOT BE GUILTY OF BLASPHEMY!*

Therefore, we see that the Lord prays for those who are His, and that He prays only for those who are His. Thirdly, we see that He prays specifically for those who are His.

III. THE LORD PRAYS SPECIFICALLY FOR THOSE WHO ARE HIS (11-19)

Father, keep them and Sanctify them.

A. Keep Them (11-15)

First, Jesus gives the reason for His request then He details the request itself.

1. The Reason (11, 12)

- I am not “in the world” [literally] anymore—He is soon gone!
- They **are** in the world—without Me!
- I come [the cross is certain, and all that follows it] to You (11, 13).
- I was keeping them while I was with them—continually.
- I guarded them—protecting them from danger.

- I prevented any of them from perishing—not one of them given to me perished.
- I can not in my human state do that any longer.
- The “son of perdition”, he who is characterized by damnation and the realm of damnation, did perish—but he is not one of those given to me.
- He was prophesied in Scripture—He did not thwart God’s program. His wickedness only succeeded in fulfilling Ps. 41:9.
- This verse does not teach Judas’ predestination to hell; it teaches that His character was “hellish” and “Satanic.” He acted the part of the wicked one and his place of final destiny.
- I have given them Thy word (14)

2. The Request

- a. “Keep them in Thy name, the name which thou hast given Me.”
 - Notice that Jesus addresses God as **HOLY FATHER**
In this name we see His tender fatherly care to keep children; we also see His holiness that will sanctify them.
 - “The name which you have given Me” is a reference to all the revealed truth about God which Jesus has received and made known—**It is the revealed word of God making God known**. Note that Jesus while on earth did keep them in God’s name—His revealed nature.
- b. “Keep them one”—as they already are, unified in divine love and in the character of divine truth—His name. **He is not talking about ecumenical church unity!** The unity already existed and He prays that all present and future believers will likewise share in it. (11)
- c. Don’t let them perish (12)
- d. Let them share my joy (13).
Jesus speaks these things in their hearing so that they may later remember how He had thought of and provided for them—and they will have great joy—yes **His Joy!** And not just plain joy, but **fulfilled joy**.
- e. Protect them from a world that hates them (14).
 - The world hates them because they are different—they are not “out of this world.”
 - The world especially hates them because they are followers of Jesus—who was not “out of this world.”
- f. Keep them out of Satan’s realm (15).
 - Satan is “the evil one”—a person who is wicked as often spoken of in John’s writings---Gospel and Epistles.
 - Jesus does not ask the Father to take them “out of this world.”
 - Jesus does ask the Father to “keep them “out of the wicked one”—out of the realm of his influence and control.

Jesus' first request to the Father is for the Father to keep His loved ones. That has to do with protection. But Jesus is also concerned for His followers' positive growth in Holiness—OUR SANCTIFICATION.

B. Sanctify Them (16-19)

1. Their Source (16)—repetition of v. 14b with one change: “Out of the world” both begins and ends the clause in v. 16—“Out of the world they are not, even as I am not out of the world.”

Why should the believer imitate the world when that is not his origin or source?

2. Their Separation—sacredness.

Basic idea of “Sanctify”—make holy, set apart from the world and to God. To use for sacred service. The two primary usages in the Greek OT translation is for the **setting apart of priests for sacred service**, and the **offering of sacrifices.**

a. In or by **truth**

b. **God's Word** is truth.

We cannot be set apart, made holy, apart from divine revelation—the Word of God.

c. Through Christ's Example (v. 19)

- Christ sets Himself apart; we are set apart by divine action.
- Christ's work or atonement is “for our sake”, “in our place.”
- Note the present tense verb—He “is setting Himself apart.”
- Believers “in truth” are sanctified (cf. v. 17), or are “truly” sanctified; it is not merely an external activity but is a genuine spiritual change. I favor “in truth” in consistency with v. 17.

3. Their Sending (18)

Sanctification is for a purpose. The believer carries the same word and message of revelation by which he is sanctified!

The Father sent Christ; Christ sends His people.

CONCLUSION

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