

# *Abide in Me*

## **Jesus' Farewell Discourse**

**A Commentary of John 13-17**

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## Introduction

The Farewell Discourse of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospel of John (chapters 13-17), represents one of the most profound and intimate moments between Jesus and His disciples. This extended section of dialogue offers a window into the heart of Jesus during the last hours before His arrest and crucifixion.

Set during the Last Supper, the Farewell Discourse encapsulates Jesus' final teachings, promises, and prayers, providing a treasure trove of theological insights and practical applications for believers. These chapters address themes of love, service, and unity, while also offering crucial instructions for living in a world that often stands in opposition to the Gospel.

The tone throughout this discourse is a blend of solemnity and tender reassurance. Jesus, fully aware of His impending suffering and death, focuses not on His own trials but on preparing His disciples for the hardships and mission that lay ahead. He emphasizes the perpetuity of His presence through the Holy Spirit, the importance of love and obedience, and the promise of eternal life.

As scholars and students of Scripture delve into this discourse, they encounter the deep relational aspects of Jesus' ministry. It is here that Jesus models servant leadership by washing His disciples' feet, commands them to love one another as He has loved them, and prays fervently for their unity and sanctification.

This small commentary aims to provide an examination of the Farewell Discourse, unpacking its rich theological themes and practical guidance. By exploring the historical context, literary structure, and deeper meanings behind Jesus' words, readers will gain a fuller appreciation for this pivotal section of the New Testament. Ultimately, the goal is to better understand how these teachings can shape the faith and practice of contemporary Christian life.

# **Laying and Leaving a Legacy of Lordship**

**TEXT:** John 13:1-20

**TONE:** Encouragement

**TARGET:** Believers

**TASK:** To encourage believers to live and leave a legacy that bears witness to the Lordship of Christ.

**TRUTH:** This passage depicts the immense love and humility Jesus displayed during His final moments with His disciples. As we delve into this text, we will focus on three key themes:

*The Light of Love*

*The Lessons of Humility*

*The Legacy of Service.*

John has now brought his audience to the climatic Passover, the night on which Jesus will be betrayed, and this scene take place before the meal that very night.

If you want to lay and leave a legacy of Lordship, then:

## **I. Walk in the Light of the Christ Love.**

A. Everything in John 13:1-3 is calculated to make verses 4-5 shocking. John first tallies up the reasons why Jesus should be served (vv.1-3) before showing Jesus instead humbling himself and serving those who should have served him.

B. The Depth of Jesus' Love: To our great surprise the highest makes Himself the lowest. John also contrasts the light of the love of Jesus with that of the darkness of a damned Judas. This allows John to juxtapose his description of the best man who has ever lived (v.1) with a description of the most evil instigator of the most treacherous act ever committed (v.2). This sets the beauty of Christ love against ugliness of evil.

**Illustration:** Throughout history, many Christians have embodied this message of love for enemies. One notable example is Stephen, who was stoned to death for his Christian faith. As he faced death, he prayed, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60), showing a steadfast love and forgiveness towards those who were persecuting him.

## II. Learn the Lessons of Christ Humility.

A. Jesus' Humble Act as an Example: The significance of foot washing: Jesus' act of washing His disciples' feet encompassed far more than mere physical cleansing. It symbolized the humility every disciple should embody in their relationships with others.

B. Countering Cultural Norms: The understanding of social status: In Jesus' time, foot washing was a task reserved for household servants. Jesus subverted societal expectations by voluntarily performing this duty Himself.

**Illustration:** In the Book of Exodus, Moses is chosen by God to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and guide them toward the Promised Land. Despite being raised as an Egyptian prince, Moses humbly accepted his calling and demonstrated humility throughout his journey.

### **III. Follow the Likeness of Christ Service:**

A. Overcoming Spiritual Invalidation: Jesus' response to Peter's resistance: Initially troubled by Jesus washing his feet, Peter grows to understand the importance of accepting Jesus' humble service. Peter was appalled that his Messiah, the king from David's line, the best person he has ever known, would stoop to such a task, Peter asserts that he will never permit it v.8. Peter does not understand because he is focused on the physical and not the spiritual -the symbolic significance.

B. Inviting Discipleship through Service: Following Christ's example: Jesus urged His disciples to follow His servant-hearted example, suggesting that true greatness lies not in power or position, but in serving others.

**Illustration:** In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus challenges his listeners to grasp the true meaning of loving one's neighbor, regardless of social, religious, or ethnic differences. The Samaritan exemplified selfless love and compassion by sacrificing his time, resources, and personal prejudices to help someone in need, showing mercy and hospitality.

As we conclude our exploration of John 13:1-20, let us remember the *illuminated path Jesus laid* before us through His actions and teachings.

Let us be *guided by the Light of Love* — the sacrificial love Jesus displayed, the *Lessons of Humility* — embracing servant-heartedness in our relationships, and the *Legacy of Service* — committing ourselves to impact the world for His glory. May our lives be transformed by this message, allowing us to shine as beacons of Christ's love in a darkened world. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**This is how you lay a legacy and leave a legacy of Lordship.**

## Commanded to Love

*TEXT:* John 13:21-36

*TONE:* Encouragement

*TARGET:* Believers

*TASK:* To encourage believers to abide in Christ to be empowered to love.

*TEACH:* The story of Julius Caesar and Brutus is a classic example of betrayal in history. Julius Caesar came a powerful Roman leader, had amassed great influence and authority in the Roman Republic. However, some members of the Senate group weary of his increasing power and sought to preserve the republic's democratic traditions.

Among these dissenters was Marcus Junius Brutus, a trusted ally and friend of Caesar. Despite their close relationship, Brutus conspired with other senators to assassinate Caesar, believing it was a necessary sacrifice to protect the Republic from tyranny and to maintain the ideals of democracy.

on the March 4/4BC, Julius Caesar was brutally assassinated by Brutus and his co-conspirators in a shocking act of betrayal. The betrayal by Brutus, particularly as someone whom Caesar had trusted and considered a friend, cut deep into Caesar's heart it shook the foundations of the Roman world.

**TRUTH:** By washing the disciples feet, Jesus removed from their hearts the mood and temper which would have made them unable to receive his word; one more act must be performed; he must remove from the circle the one unfaithful follower, the one unsympathetic hearer, before he could feel free to pour out before the disciples the full measure of his final message of mystery of love, and of cheer.<sup>1</sup> A very human Jesus is described as “troubled in spirit” (see on 11:33). Though John pictures Jesus as in control of the situation he does not let us think of him as unmoved by the events through which he was passing.<sup>2</sup>

## I. A command contrary to human nature.

A. *Judas: Betrayal* (Calculated): He (ἐκεῖνος [ekeinos]). Emphatic pronoun again. For whom I shall dip the sop (ῳ ἐγὼ βαψὼ το ψωμιον [hōi egō bapsō to psōmion]). Dative case of the relative (ῳ [hōi]) and future active of βαπτώ [baptō], to dip (Luke 16:24). Ψωμιον [Psōmion] is a diminutive of ψωμος [psōmos], a morsel, a common Koiné word (in the papyri often), in N. T. only in this passage. It was and is in the orient a token of intimacy to allow a guest to dip his bread in the common dish (cf. Ruth 2:14). So Mark 14:20. Even Judas had asked: “Is it I?” (Mark 14:19=Matt. 26:22). Giveth it to Judas (διδωσιν Ἰουδαῖ [didōsin Ioudāi]). Unobserved by the others in spite of Christ’s express language, because “it was so usual a courtesy” (Bernard), “the last appeal to Judas’ better feeling” (Dods). Judas now knew that Jesus knew his plot.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Charles R. Erdman, *The Gospel of John: An Exposition* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1917), 123.

<sup>2</sup>Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John, The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 554.

<sup>3</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Jn 13:26.

Here is demonstrated one of the most remarkable truths about our Lord's heart. On the eve of the cross, just a few hours before he was going to be crucified, our Lord's heart was troubled, nor for himself, but for another.

- a. **His Motivation:** Greed and disillusionment played a significant role in Judas' decision to betray Jesus.
- b. **The Consequences:** The consequences of Judas' betrayal were far-reaching and tragic. His actions led to Jesus' arrest in the Garden, setting in motion the events that would culminate in the crucifixion. Judas could not fix the damage he caused.
- c. **Lesson Learned:** Remind us of the dangers of succumbing to greed, selfishness, and deceit.

B. *Peter: Denial (Costly):* “Why can I not follow thee even now?” (δια τι οὐ δυναμαι σοι ἀκολουθειν ἄρτι; [dia ti ou dunamai soi akolouthein arti?]). The use of ἄρτι [arti] (right now, this minute) instead of *vuv* [nun] (at this time, verse 36) illustrates the impatience of Peter. I will lay down my life for thee (τεν ψυχην μου ὑπερ σου θησω [ten psuchēn mou huper sou thēsō]). Future active indicative of *tithēmi* [tithēmi]. Peter, like the rest, had not yet grasped the idea of the death of Christ, but, like Thomas (11:16), he is not afraid of danger. He had heard Christ's words about the good shepherd (10:11) and knew that such loyalty was the mark of a good disciple.

Wilt thou lay down? (θησεις; [thēseis?]). Jesus picks up Peter's very words and challenges his boasted loyalty. Shall not crow (φωνηση [phōnēsēi]). Aorist active subjunctive of φωνεω [phōneō], to use the voice, used of animals and men. Note strong double negative οὐ μη [ou mē]. Mark adds δις [dis] (twice). John's report is almost identical with that in Luke 22:34. The other disciples joined in Peter's boast (Mark 14:31=Matt. 26:35). Till thou hast denied (έως ού ἀρνηση [heōs hou arnēsēi]). Future middle indicative or aorist middle subjunctive second person singular (form identical) with compound conjunction έως ού [heōs hou] (until which time), "till thou deny or deniest" (futurum exactum needless). Peter is silenced for the present. They all "sat astounded and perplexed" (Dods). <sup>4</sup>

- a. The Denial: Despite his earlier declaration of unwavering loyalty to Jesus, Peter's denial in the courtyard of the high priest illustrated the depth of his fear and weakness.
- b. The Consequences: In the midst of his own suffering and impending crucifixion, Jesus witnessed Peter's denial, fulfilling the prophecy that Peter would disown him three times before the rooster crowed.
- c. Lessons Learned: It reminds us of our own capacity for weakness and failure in times of trial.

**Illustration:** In Mark 10:17-22, a wealthy young man approached Jesus and asked what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus told him to sell all his possessions, give the money to the poor, and follow Him. However, the young man went away sorrowful because he had great wealth and was not willing to give it up. Here human nature reveals its true character.

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<sup>4</sup>A.T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Jn 13:37-38.

## II. A command opposed by Satan's nature.

A. Satan: John 13:27 Then entered Satan into him (τότε εἰσηλθεν εἰς ἐκείνον ὁ Σατανᾶς [tote eisēlthen eis ekeinon ho Satanas]). The only time the word Satan occurs in the Gospel. As he had done before (13:2; Luke 22:3) until Christ considered him a devil (6:70). This is the natural outcome of one who plays with the devil. That thou doest, do quickly (ό ποιεῖς ποιησον ταχειον [Ho poieis poiēson tacheion]). Aorist active imperative of ποιεω [poieō]. “Do more quickly what thou art doing.”<sup>5</sup>

- a. Deception and Lies: He seeks to spread lies about others, create mistrust, and breed resentment, all of which erode the foundation of love.
- b. Selfishness and Pride: He preys on our human weaknesses, particularly or tendencies towards selfishness and pride. He tempts us to prioritize our own desire and interest above the need of others.
- c. Division and Conflict: Satan thrives on creating discord and conflict within relationships and communities. By sowing seeds of discord, he drives a wedge between individuals, causing rifts and barriers to communication.
- d. Fear and Hatred: These are powerful tools that Satan uses to counteract love. By stoking fear and fueling animosity towards others, he incites violence, discrimination, and oppression.

**Illustration:** Satan sought to oppose Christ's acts of love from the beginning through the wilderness temptations. When we yield to his tactics we surrender to his control, just like Judas.

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<sup>5</sup>A.T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Jn 13:27..

### III. A command empowered by Christ nature.

A. New Command: They had had it a long time, but the practice of it was new. Jesus does not hesitate, like the Father, to give commandments (15:10, 12). That ye love one another (ἴνα ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλληλούς [hina agapāte allēlous]). Non-final use of *ἴνα* [hina] with present active subjunctive of *ἀγαπάω* [agapāō], the object clause being in the accusative case in apposition with *ἐντολὴν* [entolēn]. Note the present tense (linear action), “keep on loving.”<sup>6</sup>

a. The Source of Love: This love originates from God Himself, who is the epitome of perfect love.

b. The Nature of Love: Exemplified in Christ, selfless, unconditional. It requires even to love our enemies. The nature of divine love. —Love is an expansion of soul, or the inflaming of the affections, whereby a Christian breathes after God as the supreme and sovereign good. Love is to the soul as the weights to the clock, it sets the soul a-going towards God, as the wings by which we fly to heaven; by love we cleave to God, as the needle to the loadstone.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>A.T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Jn 13:34.

<sup>7</sup>Thomas Watson, A Divine Cordial; The Saint’s Spiritual Delight; The Holy Eucharist; and Other Treatises, The Writings of the Doctrinal Puritans and Divines of the Seventeenth Century (The Religious Tract Society, 1846), 71.

- c. The Ground of love to God; that is, knowledge.—We cannot love that which we do not know. That our love may be drawn forth to God, we must know these three things in him.<sup>8</sup>
- d. The Challenge to Love: It demands humility, forgiveness, and a willingness to step out of our comfort zones.
- e. The Impact of Love: We reflect the character of God and near witness to the trans-formative power of love.

B. New command: The jews watered down the Mosiac teaching so they could love whom they wanted and hate whom they wanted. But Christ changed the object of neighbor to one another. This was radical in a world that was so divided by prejudicial divisions that make many of our differences pale by comparison -master and slave. Jews and Gentiles, and so on. The Greek regarded Jews as barbarians. The Jews had the reputation of being haters of the world. There was also a vast chasm between men and women.

No wonder the world was turned upside down, They were a band of brothers.

**TAKE-AWAY:** The need of the Hour.

- 1. Self-Reflection
- 2. Spiritual-Growth
- 3. Sowing Seeds

**TIE-UP:** Ultimately, the story of Julius Caesar and Brutus serves as a cautionary tale, reminding us of the destructive power of betrayal and the need for honesty, humility, and forgiveness in our relationships with others. We are commanded to love.

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<sup>8</sup> Thomas Watson, *A Divine Cordial; The Saint's Spiritual Delight; The Holy Eucharist; and Other Treatises, The Writings of the Doctrinal Puritans and Divines of the Seventeenth Century* (The Religious Tract Society, 1846), 71.

## **Comforting Troubled Hearts**

**TEXT:** John 14:1-14

**TONE:** Encouragement

**TARGET:** Believers

**TASK:** To encourage believers to cast all their cares upon the Lord.

**TEACH:** This passage is like a healing salve to an open wound. It is like a cold glass of water on a hot summer day. It is refreshing, encouraging, and comforting. It's one of reasons this passage is read so often at funerals. Yet, today, will see it fresh and anew. No longer will you see it as the funeral passage to give comfort to families in their deepest grief, but you will see it for you, right now, in your current situation. What has you troubled this morning? Please hear these words from Jesus and apply them to your situation.

**TRUTH:** On the night before His death, Jesus addressed His disciples in the upper room. Though His cross was near, Jesus was focused not on his ordeal, but was concerned for His disciples. Of course, Jesus's disciples would have been hurt and confused by His statements. Notice how Jesus comforts them.

First, Jesus said, “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me” (v.1). Troubled indicates the stopping of the action in progress, “do not allow” or “do not permit.” The word believe is a present tense verb *pisteuo*, which refers to an ongoing trust.

*Comfort comes when we....*

## **I. Believe in Christ's Person (v.1)**

A. The last few days had been an emotional roller coaster for the disciples. Their fervent messianic hopes had reached an apex during the excitement of the triumphal entry – only to be dashed when announces His impending death...Other events in the upper room added to the emotional turmoil. They had felt shame by their prideful refusal to have Jesus was their feet. They were dumbfounded to hear Jesus predict one would betray him. And appalled at the thought of a leader like Peter denying Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

B. The point being, they were already Troubled. He is telling them to stop. Troubled translates from the root word (tarasso: to shake or stir up). Jesus then adds a second command. He stated, believe in God...believe also in me. Christ has repeatedly throughout John emphasized and affirmed His deity, making Himself equal to the Father. Heart denotes the seat of a person's will and emotions.

C. What does it mean to believe in the Person of Christ?

- a. Belief in the Person of Christ entails affirming the doctrine of the Incarnation.
- b. Belief in the Person of Christ involves acknowledging Jesus as fully divine.

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<sup>1</sup>John MacArthur, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: John 12-21 (Chicago, Moody Publishing, 2008), 97-98.

- c. Belief in the Person of Christ requires affirming Christ full humanity.
- d. Belief in the Person of Christ means confessing Christ as the long-awaited Messiah.
- e. Belief in the Person of Christ acknowledges Jesus as the only Savior and Mediator between God and humanity.
- f. Belief in the Person of Christ means submitting to Him as Lord and Master of your life.

**Application:** Place your full trust in Christ. He is the anchor of your soul.

**Illustration:** Abraham sacrifice of Isaac.

## II. Believe in Christ's Preparation (v.2-3)

- A. After assuring His disciples He was telling them the truth, He tells them He was going away to prepare a place for them. A place where they would be united in heavenly glory. The place to which Christ refers is none other than the new heaven and new earth.
- B. The Father's house is just another name for heaven. "The house Jesus goes to prepare is the new temple, the new Jerusalem, the new heaven and new earth. Jesus assures his disciples that there is room enough for them in the new temple, for there are many rooms in the Father's house."<sup>2</sup> It must be like a large country with a vast city, a kingdom. It is referred to as the Father's house because of its indescribable beauty and the peace of rest.

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<sup>2</sup>James M. Hamilton Jr., Expository Commentary: John-Acts (Wheaton: Crossway, 2019), 228.

C. Jesus conveys to His followers a vision of future heavenly living that surpasses even that enjoyed by the most exalted rulers of that day.<sup>3</sup> This issue here, however, is not what heaven will be like, but the fact Jesus will be there. This is what will make heaven a real home. On this point D.L. Moody used to tell of child whose mother was very sick. While the mother was sick one of the neighbors took the child to stay with her until the mother should get well again. But instead of getting well, the mother grew worse and died. The neighbors thought that they would not take the child home until after the funeral was over, and that they would not tell her about her mother being dead. So after a while they simply brought the little girl home. At once she went to find her mother. First she went into the sitting room to find her mother; then she went into the parlor to find her mother. She went from one of the houses to the other and could not find her. At last she asked "where is my momma?" When they told her that her mother was gone, the child wanted to go back to the neighbors. Home had lost its attraction for since her mother was no longer there. Moody said, "It is not the jasper walls and the pearly gates that are going to make heaven attractive. It is being with Jesus."<sup>4</sup>

**Application:** You must have the assurance He is preparing a place for you.

**Illustration:** Kids at Christmas time. The anticipation of that morning. The looking forward and longing for the what that day holds.

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<sup>3</sup> Andreas J. Kostenberger, Baker Exegetical Commentary On The New Testament: John (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 2004), 426.

<sup>4</sup> James Montgomery Boice, An Expositional Commentary: John (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 1999), 1070.

### **III. Believe in Christ's Promises (v.2-3)**

A. Jesus said, "...for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go, I will come again and receive you to Myself. This passage in no way alludes to a "secret rapture" of the church. What it does refer to is the Second Coming of Christ.

B. Similar terminology is found in Song 8:2, where the bride says that she will bring her lover to her mother's house. Here Jesus, the messianic bridegroom. This promise reflects the intimacy of the relationship between Christ and His disciples, emphasizing the persona and close bond that exist between believers and their Lord. It speaks of the future fulfillment of God's plan, where those who have faith in Jesus will be united with Him in everlasting communion and fellowship in His presence.

**Application:** You must know the promises of God and meditate upon them.

**Illustration:** When I'm away from my wife. Coming home to her embrace and the joy that will bring.

### **IV. Believe in Christ's Proclamation (v.4-11)**

A. Since Jesus had already told them He was going to the Father, He expected the disciples to know the way where He was going. But by this time their minds were rattled. Thomas vocalized his perplexity.

B. Jesus replied, "I am the way the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." He is the way to God because He alone is the truth about God and He alone possesses the life of God.

C. Thomas was silenced by Jesus' reply to his question, but Philip was still not satisfied. He said, "Lord, show us the Father." He was not content with the knowledge that Christ had given Him.

**Application:** You must participate in His mission.

**Illustration:** Racing horses

**TIE-UP:** Jesus has applied a healing salve to us all this morning. He loves.

# **Our Helper! The Holy Spirit!**

**TEXT:** John 14:15-31

**TONE:** Encouragement

**TARGET:** Believers

**TASK:** To encourage believers to live a life of love (i.e. 'obedience') through the power of the Holy Spirit.

**TEACH:** My wife is my helper. I'm always better when I'm with her. I witness better when I'm with her, I preach better when I'm with her. I pray better when I'm with her. I love being with her. Yet, I have a greater helper and that is the Person of the Holy Spirit. He is my Advocate and my Helper, my Comforter.

**TRUTH:** At the beginning of the Farewell Discourse Jesus provided His disciples with a real life illustration of love. Love is a choice, an action, empowered by the Holy Spirit. The hallmark of genuine love is obedience. Those who are genuinely saved will respond in submission and service unto Christ. Yet, this life of loving obedience is impossible apart from the Spirit's presence in our lives. He is our Helper!

There are several things we need to know about our Helper.

We need to remember....

## **I. The Identity of our Helper is Perfect (v.15-17)**

A. Jesus said, "...he will give you another Helper...the Spirit of Truth." Paraclatos (Advocate, Helper, one who comes alongside).

B. Spirit of Truth  
(reveals truth, empowers to obey)

c. He is a real person who is divine. He is equal in essence to both the Father and the Son, yet distinct in His person. Jesus referred to Him as “another Counselor. There are two different Greek words for “another.” One is *allos* (meaning ‘another just like the first’) and *heteros* (meaning ‘totally different’). The term *allos* is used here. Thus, the Spirit is ‘another just like the first’ fully divine, which is the identity given to Him in (Acts 5:3-4).

d. “Here Christ promises the Paraclete to the ones who love and therefore obey Christ. This promise introduces the Paraclete as the indwelling Spirit of truth. The Paraclete is “another” Paraclete. Another of the same kind, therefore, the Holy Spirit is another Person, just like Christ, we will mediate the presence of Christ.”<sup>1</sup>

**Illustration:** Imagine a house with different rooms representing different aspects of our lives -our thoughts, emotions, actions, relationships, and more. Before accepting Jesus into our hearts, this house is empty and lacks true life and purpose.

However, when we invite Jesus into our lives and accept Him as our Savior, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us. The Holy Spirit moves into this house and begins to transform it from the inside out.

As the Holy Spirit takes up residence in our hearts, He begins to renovate each room of our house. He cleanses the room of our thoughts, filling them with truth and wisdom. He brings peace and joy to the room of our emotions, replacing fear and anxiety

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<sup>1</sup> Scott Kellum, *Preaching The Farewell Discourse* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2014), 117.

with hope and love. He guides our actions, aligning them with God's will and purpose. He strengthens our relationships, fostering loves, forgiveness, and unity. (Kelly's rumba bouncing around the house)

**Application:** Let Him in every room.

## II. The Indwelling of our Helper is Powerful (v.18-20)

A. Jesus said, *“In that day you will know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you.”* Often this is referred to as the “baptism” of the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist stated, *“I baptize with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire”* (Matt. 3:11).

B. Jesus Himself stated, *“For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 1:5). Paul wrote, *“For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body...”* (1Cor. 12:13). Therefore, the indwelling of the Spirit is true of every believer.

c. The indwelling come with “every spiritual blessing in Christ.” Peter wrote, *“His divine power has granted to us all that pertains to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence”* (2Peter 1:3). With the indwelling comes partakers, promises, and power,

d. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a distinctive blessing of the new covenant. However, it is important to note that even though we are “not” commanded to be indwelt/baptized, we are commanded to be filled. Paul stated this in (Eph. 5:18).

**Illustration:** Homeless couple, addicted to drugs changed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Application:** Let Him clean every room.

### **III. The Illumination of our Helper is Progressive (v.21-25)**

A. Here we see the result of the indwelling Holy Spirit. He mediates the presence of God and Christ to the ones who are in covenant with him. The manifestation referred to by Christ is in reference to His inner indwelling.

B. Jesus said, "*These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things....*" The Holy Spirit teaches us about Jesus according to the application of Scripture. He also illuminates us to human need.

C. He illuminates by opening blind eyes (to see), unfog the mind (to understand), He gently woos the will (to believe). He provides interpretation, explanation, and application of Scripture. He reveals truth progressively over time.

**Illustration:** As a young boy we would hunt raccoons at night wearing headlamps to illuminate the darkness. He helps us see sin, righteousness, and judgment.

**Application:** Keep everything picked-up.

#### IV. The Instruction of our Helper is Precious (V.15, 21, 22-26)

A. Jesus said, “*If you love me you will obey me...*” (v.15). He also said, “*He who keeps my commandments, love me and will be loved by my Father and I will reveal myself to him*” (v.21). Again, “*If anyone loves me, he will keep my word and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Fathers who sent me*” (v.22-26)

B. The instruction is one of loving obedience. Both are manifestations of the divine nature. Love is a fruit of the Spirit and obedience is the fruit of love. Without obedience there is no proof of Spirit empowered love, and without love there is no Christ.

C. “The implication is that even under the old covenant obedience that comes from fear, duty, or guilt rather than love is not the heart of obedience. Covenant faithfulness and love are inseparable.” <sup>2</sup>

**Illustration:** Marriage vows are precious. Even more so are the numerous commands to obey Christ as an act of love.

Application: Show it off.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 118.

## V. The Impartation of our Helper is Peace (v.27-31)

A. Jesus said, “*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you.....*”

The peace that comes from Christ through the Spirit is a salvific peace (peace with God), it is also a sanctifying peace (peace of God).

B. It’s a peace that transcends worldly understanding. It frees us from fears and anxiety. It provides us with divine assurance. We assurance of His presence, His promises, and His Parousia.

C. The peace that Jesus offers differ from the peace of the world in several important ways:

a. Source: The peace of the world often depends on external facts such as wealth, success, or relationships. It is fleeting and can be easily disrupted. In contrast, the peace that Jesus gives is rooted in our relationship with Him. It is a deep-seated inner peace that transcends externals.

b. Nature: The peace of the world is based on temporary solutions or distractions that provide temporary relief from troubles and anxieties. On the other hand, the peace that Jesus offers is a lasting and transformative peace that goes beyond surface-level calmness. It brings true healing and restoration to the soul.

c. Foundation: The peace of the world can be shaken by unexpected events, conflicts, or losses. It is based on shifting sands of human efforts and circumstances. In contrast, the peace that Jesus gives is grounded in the unchanging character of God.

d. Effect: The peace of the world may provide temporary comfort or relief, but it does not address the deeper spiritual needs of the human heart. The peace of Jesus brings true transformation, inner healing, and reconciliation with God. Leads to a life of purpose and hope.

**Illustration:** When Jim Elliott chose the spear over the tribal leader's damnation.

**Application:** Rest in Him.

**TIE-UP:** Just like when my wife is with me, I am better when keeping in step with the Spirit.

# Living and Flourishing in Christ

*TEXT:* John 15:1-17

*TONE:* Encouragement

*TARGET:* Believers

*TASK:* To encourage believers to abide in Christ for life, nourishment, and strength.

*TRUTH:* A skillet with burnt eggs will be hard to clean in the morning. An alternative to scrubbing is soaking the dish in hot water and dishwashing liquid. Letting a dish abide in the solution will allow a hard cleaning job to become a lot easier. This is what abiding does for a Christian.

*TEACH:* In the time of Jesus a great golden vine hung over the entrance to the Jerusalem temple. Josephus describes it: ‘The gate opening into the building was, as I said, completely overlaid with gold, as was the whole wall around it. It had, moreover, above it those golden vines, from which depended grape-clusters as tall as a man’ (Jewish War v.210–212). If the second part of Jesus’ farewell discourse was given en route from the Last Supper venue to the Garden where he was betrayed, his teaching on the true vine may have been given in the temple courtyard with the great golden vine glinting in the light of the Passover moon.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Colin G. Kruse, John: An Introduction and Commentary, vol. 4, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 310.

## I. Jesus is the Source of Life.

A. In the famous “Song of the Vineyard” in Isa. 5, the prophet makes the point that God carefully cultivated his vineyard (Israel) and in due time expected to collect fruit from it, but Israel yielded only bad fruit; hence, God would replace Israel with a more fruitful nation. Yet it is not the church that serves as Israel’s replacement; rather, the true vine is Jesus, who is the new Israel...It is He who embodies God’s true intentions for Israel; Jesus is the channel through whom all God’s blessings flow<sup>2</sup>

B. Jesus as the true vine signifies that He is the source of spiritual life and sustenance for His followers. Just as a vine nourishes its branches and enables them to bear fruit, believers must remain in fellowship with Jesus.

C. Jesus presents two kinds of branches as “in” him; a fruitless branch that Father removes and a fruitful branch he prunes to be more fruitful. The fruitless branch represents/stands for the unsaved person (i.e. Judas). Throughout Scripture to be fruitless indicates the absence of divine life. Additionally, the context teaches that fruit bearing is the test of true discipleship. The life that Christ gives is to flow out of us to others. Jesus said to woman at the well, *“The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”*

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<sup>2</sup> Andreas J. Kostenberger, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: John (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 448.

D. Fruit bearing is the result of faith and fellowship. John also stated in 1John 1:2-3 “*the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us- that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.*”

E. Abide in me means to continue in a daily personal relationship with Jesus characterized by trust, prayer, love, obedience, and joy. This is the life Jesus produces in us, the fruit we are to bear. Bearing fruit is the true test of the Christian life, the true revelation of the inner state.

**Quote:** If we would bear fruit, it can only come as the life and the power that work in the Vine work in us. This alone is the secret of effective service.<sup>3</sup> -Andrew Murray

**Illustration:** Psalm 1 ...*Jesus is the tree planted firmly by the streams of water which bears fruit in every season.* Our spiritual roots run deep when we are united in Him.

**Application:** Cultivate a deep, ongoing relationship with Jesus to experience His power and guidance in all areas of life.

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<sup>3</sup> Andrew Murray, The Fruit of the Vine (New York; Boston: Thomas Y. Crowell & Company, 1898), 7.

## II. **Jesus is the Nourishment of our Souls.**

A. As we abide in Christ, the vinedresser who represents God the Father, cares for the vineyard (believers) with love and attention. It is the vinedresser's role to prune, cultivate, and tend to the vine to ensure its health, productivity and fruitfulness. God works in the lives of believers to shape and refine them, forming in them a life that bears abundant fruit for His glory.

B. Pruning in a spiritual sense represents the various ways in which God works in the lives of believers to remove sin and hindrances, to correct attitudes and to refine character traits that may be inhibiting our spiritual growth or fruit-bearing capacity. Just as a gardener prunes a vine to enhance its overall productivity and health, God prunes believers by allowing them to undergo challenges, trials, or discipline meant to shape our character, increase our dependence on Him, and deepen our faith. The Father works by the Spirit through Christ to nourish our souls in Christ. The Lord's aim is first to reveal the true inner state of man. Second, to progress the believer from bearing fruit, to more fruit, too much fruit, and ultimately abiding fruit.

C. God's pruning knife is His WORD, "sharper than any two-edged sword, a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Christ says: "Ye are clean through the word I have spoken to you."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid, 29.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, 20.

**Quote:** *In the whole parable Christ does not speak of anything that the Husbandman seeks or does, but this one thing—He seeks more fruit, and directs His pruning or cleansing to this one end.<sup>5</sup>* -Andrew Murray

**Illustration:** Imagine a tall, majestic oak tree standing in a peaceful forest. Over the years, this tree had grown thick branches that stretch out in all directions, creating a dense canopy of leaves. However, some of these branches have become weak and burdened with dead weight, hindering the tree's ability to thrive.

One day, a skilled arborist comes to the forest and carefully inspects the oak tree, with a sharp pruning saw, the arborist begins to remove the dead branches, cutting away the unnecessary weight and allowing the tree to redirect its energy towards healthy growth. As the dead branches fall away, the oak tree appears lighter and more radiant, its true beauty shining through.

**Application:** Embrace seasons of pruning as opportunities for spiritual growth and transformation.

### **III. Jesus is the Strength of our Walk.**

A. By saying, apart from me you can do nothing, Jesus places emphasis on the truth that without Him, believers are unable to bear fruit or accomplish anything of lasting value in their own strength. He is the source of spiritual life, growth, and strength for believers, and apart from Him, our efforts are futile.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 20.

B. What is it specifically that we cannot do apart from Him? Bearing fruit. When Jesus spoke about believers bearing fruit, He was referring to the spiritual results, the outward manifestations of a person's faith. In the context of the metaphor of the vine and the branches in John 15, bearing fruit symbolizes living a life that reflects the character of Christ. The fruit includes traits such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. It also encompasses acts of service, sharing the gospel, and making disciples.

C. Throughout, Jesus commands His followers to abide and to obey His commandments. He said, *if you keep my commandments you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love....This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.*

D. Bearing fruit is not about performance or trying to earn salvation, but rather about allowing the life of Christ to flow through believers and impact the world around them. Ultimately, fruit bearing is the natural outcome of abiding in Christ, as believers draw their strength, wisdom, and guidance from Him. When we are connected to the source of life and power, we are empowered to bear fruit that glorifies God and enriches the lives of others. As our life is the manifestation of the hidden life of the Vine.

**Quote:** *And this spirit we cannot have by any imitation or effort, but only by receiving it fresh from Himself every morning and all the day. An intense devotion to God and an entire yielding up of ourselves to His service for men, and giving up of our life to live, and love, and die for men, as Jesus did<sup>6</sup>* -Andrew Murray

**Illustration:** We would never go without our phones; this is why we are always charging them. We must stay plugged into Christ if we are going to be fully charged.

**Application:** Prioritize prayer as a means of finding strength and growing closer to Him.

#### **IV. Jesus is the Friend of Sinners.**

A. My command is this: love each other as I have loved you. This is the fruit that Jesus empowers His disciples to bear, a deep sacrificial and selfless love toward one another. This reflects the essence of Christian living.

B. Jesus illustrates by stating *Greater love has no one this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.* Demonstrating the depth of love Jesus has for His followers. Jesus also elevates His disciples by calling them friends. He shares His teachings and insights with them, inviting them into a closer, more intimate connection. In the OT, only Abraham and Moses are called friends of God (Ex. 33:11; Isa. 41:8). Jesus extends this privilege to all obedient believers.

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<sup>6</sup> Andrew Murray, *The Fruit of the Vine* (New York; Boston: Thomas Y. Crowell & Company, 1898), 8.

C. Jesus also reminds His disciples that He chose them for a purpose, You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit. All disciples of Jesus throughout the ages are both chosen and appointed to bear fruit.

D. “The knowledge that we have been “appointed” to bear fruit is a mighty power; but there is something deeper. Christ points to the Divine origin of our calling to bear fruit. It might have been that we had chosen Him as Lord, and offered ourselves for His service. The appointment would then have had its rise in our will. But no—“Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you.” As little as a branch chooses the vine on which it grows, did we first seek or choose Christ. As each vine brings forth and sets the branch in the place it chooses, so each branch in Christ has become such in virtue of His election. To believe this with our whole heart, to allow the Holy Spirit to work this faith into our inmost being, is of more practical consequence for the Christian life than we think.”<sup>7</sup>

**Quote:** *Whether in God, or in Christ, or in us, the Divine life is love to men. This is the life-sap of the True Vine, the spirit that was in Christ Jesus.*<sup>8</sup> -John Murray

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid, 38–39.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, 7.

**Application:** Show your love for Jesus by walking in obedience to His Word and displaying His love to others.

**TAKE-AWAY:**

1. Bear Fruit that Abides.
2. Pray Prayers that Prevail.

The abiding was to bring the double blessing—power to bear much fruit, power to prevail in prayer.<sup>9</sup>

**TIE-UP:** The planet Mercury is hot. Pluto is cold. Why is Pluto cold and Mercury hot? Mercury is really close to the sun and Pluto is a long way off. The farther you get away, the colder things become, but the closer you get, the hotter the things are. You may say that you are not a Pluto Christian or a Mercury Christian. Maybe you are an Earth Christian where things get hot and cold. You may be a seasonal Christian who has changes depending on whether it is wintertime, summer time, spring-time or fall. God is looking for some Mercury Christians. He is looking for some folks who want to get close and stay hot all the time because they stay close to the SON.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid, 44.

<sup>10</sup><https://www.moodypublishers.com/mpimages/Marketing/WEB%20Resources/PDFs/Excerpts/TonyEvansBkIllustrations01.pdf>

# **Standing, Abiding, and Prevailing in Christ.**

*TEXT:* John 15:12-17

*TONE:* Encouragement

*TARGET:* Believers

*TASK:* To encourage believers to continually abide in Christ.

*TEACH:* Ruth was a Moabite woman who married one of Naomi's sons, but tragedy struck when both her husbands and brother-in-law passed away, leaving Naomi a widow in a foreign land. Despite the difficult circumstances, Ruth chose to stay by Naomi's side and accompany her mother-in-law. In Bethlehem, Ruth gleaned in the fields to provide for Naomi and herself, catching the eye of Boaz, a wealthy landowner and relative of Naomi. Boaz showed kindness to Ruth, eventually leading to their marriage and the redemption of Naomi's family line. Through her unwavering faith, sacrificial love, and humility, Ruth became a shining example of standing firm in her new identity, living a life of obedience to God's revealed will, and prevailing upon Naomi to go. Ruth's example will serve as our illustration through each point of this message.

*TRUTH:* In the first part of this chapter. We learned about the need for and importance of abiding in Christ.

We must abide in Christ because....

1. Jesus is the Source of Life.
2. Jesus is the Nourishment of our Souls.
3. Jesus is the Strength of our Walk.
4. Jesus is the Friend of Sinners.

Here we see why we need to abide! Now let's look at how to abide. We have an inclusion with v.12 and v.17, built around loving one another.

## I. Love stands firm on one's Identity in Christ.

A. *"If you abide in me and my word abide in you...."*

a. **United:** Union with Christ is central and essential to the Christian faith. Unless sinners are united to Jesus, they remain unable to receive and spiritual blessing from God, since *"every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" is bound up "in Christ"* (Eph. 1:3). By union with Christ, God confers on the believer all the saving benefits Christ merited by His life, death and resurrection. Union with Christ occurs in the application of redemption.

God's Word teaches us that we are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world and that we are untied to Christ by God's justifying grace alone through our faith alone because of the atoning death of Christ alone (Jn. 15:4-7; 1Cor.15:22; 2Cor.12:2; Gal. 3:28; 2:10; Phil.3:9; 1Thess.4:16; 1Jn. 4:13). The nature of this union is not only that we are in Christ but that He is in us (Jn.6:56; Rom. 8:10; 2Cor. 13:5; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17; Col. 1:17).<sup>1</sup>

B. *"No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends..."*

a. **Friends:** The gospel call us to trust Jesus as our Savior, submit to Him as our King, and value Him as our Treasure. It also calls us to enjoy Him as our Friend. But do you view Him this way? What does it mean for Him to be our truest friend?

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.ligonier.org/guides/union-with-Christ>

How is Jesus our friend? He draws near to us in our suffering. He remains committed to us even in our stumbling. He lets us all the way in and loves to the end. He knows us better than we know ourselves. He loves us more deeply than anyone else ever could. He guides us, and shares intimate knowledge with us. He encourages us. Rebukes us. Our relationship with Him is cultivated through communion with Him. And our friendship is proven through obedience.<sup>2</sup>

C.     *“You did not choose me, but I chose you...”*

a.     **Chosen:** It is the free grace, unmerited favor of God. Though the disciples are Christ's friends, this does not mean that they are on equal footing with Him. On earth friends generally choose each other, but the friendship of which Jesus speaks is different. It is one-sided in its origin. It was not brought about by gradual approach from both sides, as is often the case among men, but by Jesus alone. His words emphasize the free, independent, and spontaneous character of Christ's love. The ground of His love never lies in us, always in Himself, for even apart from His love for us God is love.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup><https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-a-friend-we-have-in-jesus>

<sup>3</sup> William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, vol. 2, *New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953–2001), 307.

D.     “*...but chose you and appointed you...*”

a.     Appointed: Yet, it comes with great responsibility. We have been chosen unto salvation and appointed as ambassadors of the gospel. Christ chose these men out of a world of darkness in order that they might be his followers and as such bear fruit. Unto this purpose He has appointed them; that is, he had set them apart from the world. The fruit consist of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal. 5:22).

**Illustration:** Ruth stood firm in her new identity.

**II.    Love lives obediently to the commands of Christ.**

A.     “*...I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit...*” We must remember that bearing fruit means death. Abiding in Christ’s love stands in the center between God and mankind. Love runs from the Father through Jesus to the disciples (Father-Son-Disciples). The disciples are to abide in the love of Christ. Abiding in His love is accomplished by obeying His commandments, and we keep His commandments through loving Him. So, because abiding is accomplished in obedience and obedience is accomplished through love, then abiding is loving Christ.

B. The Father loves Jesus; Jesus loves the disciples; they must love one another.

a. **Repentance** toward God the Father.

Repentance toward God involves a genuine recognition and acknowledgment of one's sin, leading to a deep sense of remorse and desire to turn away from those wrongdoings. It is characterized by sincere sorrow for past actions, a humble confession of sins, a willingness to seek forgiveness, and a commitment to change and live according to God's principles.

b. **Faith** in Christ the Son. True faith involves a deep, personal trust and reliance on Jesus for salvation and guidance. It entails a commitment to follow His teachings, to live a life that reflects His love and grace and to cultivate a close relationship with Him through prayer, worship, and obedience. True faith shapes one's worldview, values, and actions leading to a transformed life.

c. **Dependence** upon the Holy Spirit.

Depending on the Holy Spirit involves acknowledging our need for His support in our daily lives, seeking His wisdom and direction in decision-making and allowing Him to work in and through us to accomplish God's purposes.

d. **Love** toward one another. Loving one another involves showing grace, forgiveness and empathy towards others, treating them with dignity and respect regardless of differences. It also includes being patient, kind, and gentle in our interactions, seeking the good of others above our own interests. Offering support, meeting needs, listening attentively, offering encouragement, and being willing to help and serve in times of need.

- C.     “...and that your fruit should abide.”
  - a.     The above characteristics ought to be the overwhelming pattern of our lives.

**Illustration:** Ruth clung to Naomi and bore the fruit of her changed identity.

### **III. Love prays prayers that prevail through Christ.**

- A.     “...so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.”
- B.     Earlier in the same passage, Jesus said, “*If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*”
- C.     Conditions: Triple A experience.
  - a.     **Abide** in Christ and His Word Abides in you.
    - i.     Repentance toward God.
    - ii.     Faith in Christ.
    - iii.     Dependence upon Holy Spirit.
    - iv.     Love toward one another.
  - b.     **Ask** in the Father’s name
    - i.     This mean you are praying according to God’s revealed character and will in Scripture.
    - ii.     Every day we offer ourselves to God for men.
    - iii.     Every day we pray in the power of the Holy Spirit for ourselves.

c. **Assurance:** “Ask whatever you wish...” *Thou has been faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things* -this is the law of the Kingdom. It is the man who is faithful over a few things, in his own personal abiding in Christ and His fruit-bearing for those around him, who will be set over many things, and have the power given for real prevailing intercession in wider circles.<sup>4</sup>

**Illustration:** Ruth’s persistence prevailed over Naomi.

**TAKE-AWAY:**

1. Stand firm on your identity in Christ.
2. Live obediently to the commands of Christ.
3. Pray prayers that prevail through Christ.

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<sup>4</sup> Andrew Murray, *The Fruit of the Vine* (New York; Boston: Thomas Y. Crowell & Company, 1898), 47.

# **Christians and their Relationship to the World**

*TEXT:* John 15:18-16:1-4

*TONE:* Encouragement

*TARGET:* Believers

*TASK:* To encourage believers to expect opposition from the world, as they seek to live separate from the world.

*TEACH:* Addressing a national seminar of Southern Baptist leaders, George Gallup said, “we find there is very little difference in ethical behavior between churchgoers and those who are not active religiously...The levels of lying, cheating, and stealing are remarkable similar in both groups. Eight out of ten Americans consider themselves Christians, Gallup said, “yet only about half of them could identify the person who gave the Sermon on the Mount, and fewer still could recall five of the ten commandments. Only two in ten said they would be willing to suffer for their faith.<sup>1</sup>

Yet, in this section we see the Christians relationship to the world.

*TRUTH:* This section is highlighted by two important themes: The opposition of the world against the church and the ministry of the Spirit to and through the church.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/w/worldliness.htm>

Jesus talks to His disciples about the hatred they should expect from the world. It seems incredible that anyone would hate Jesus Christ and His people, but that is exactly what the situation is today, and some of the hatred comes from religious people. In a few hours, the religious leaders of Israel would be condemning their messiah and crying out for His blood. Our Lord openly taught his disciples that one day persecution would come. Until the Lord returns or until we die, we must live in this hostile world and face continued opposition toward Him.

*Thus, our relationship with the world is.....*

## **I. Our Relationship to the World is one of Separation.**

A. In every age of the church separation from the world has always been one of the grand evidences of a work of grace in the heart. The world is a source of great danger to avoid. When the Bible speaks of the world, its means those people, programs, and ideologies who think chiefly of worldly things and neglect the world to come. People who always think more of earth than they do of heaven. They care more about their body than they do their soul. They are more concerned about pleasing man than they are honoring and serving God. The world is an enemy to the soul.

B. See Rom. 12:2; 1Cor.2:12; Gal.1:4; Eph. 2:2; 2Tim.4:10; Ja. 4:4; 1John 5:4; 5:19; Matt. 13:22. What is it specifically we must separate from?

- a. The cares of the world.
- b. The fears of the world.
- c. The business of the world.
- d. The money of the world.
- e. The pleasure of the world.
- f. The desire of the world.

C. These are the great rocks that many a lives and souls have shipwrecked their faith upon. Typically, these people do not deliberately choose evil and openly rebel against God. They hope somehow to get to heaven at last and they think it proper to have some form of religious beliefs. Yet, they cannot give up their idol, they won't give it up. They must have part of the world. On the last day the world will show just how man souls in has slain.

D. But what constitutes separation? Sometimes you will see sincere and well-meaning Christians doing things which God never intended them to do in a manner of being separate from the world. It is possible to be sincere and wrong at the same time.

a. Paul did not mean Christian's ought to give up all worldly callings, trades, professions, or businesses. He did and does not forbid soldiers, lawyers, doctors, merchants, and tradesmen. The right plan is to carry out one's mission in our business.

b. Paul did not mean that Christian's ought to decline all interaction with the unconverted. There is no warrant for such conduct anywhere in Scripture.

c. Paul did not mean that Christian's ought to take no interest in anything on earth except religion. To neglect science, art, literature, and politics -to read nothing which is not directly spiritual -to look at a newspaper -and care nothing about the government of one's country -this is a neglect of duty.

d. Paul did not mean that Christian's ought to retire from the company of mankind and shut themselves up in solitude. Holiness is not obtained by such practices, Jesus prayed, "I pray not that you should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one." We cannot keep the devil out by hiding in holes.

E. So what is Separation?

a. Refuse to be guided by the world's standard of right and wrong. For most of mankind people just go with the flow. True Christians will not follow, but instead will ask what does the Bible say?

b. Be careful how you spend your leisure. Honorable occupations and lawful businesses are a great safeguard to the soul, many find the least danger here. The devil finds it hard to get the hearing of a busy man. But when the day's work is over and the time for leisure arrives then comes the hour of temptation.

c. Determine not to be swallowed up and absorbed in the business of the world. A true Christian will strive to his duty in whatever station or position he finds himself and do it well. He will not allow anything or anyone to get in between him and Christ. If he finds his spiritual duties being eat up by work and leisure, he will say "Stand Back."

d. Be careful how you allow in friendships, intimacies, and close relationships with worldly people. Yes, we need to treat the lost with the utmost respect, courtesy, kindness, and charity whenever we meet them. But acquaintances in one thing, while friendship is another. The cultivate such intimacies is dangerous to the soul. Human nature is so constituted that we cannot be much with other without effect upon or character.

Prov. 13:20 *“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.”* If you are a true Christian you will soon see their thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are their ways or ways.

## **II. Our Relationship to the World is one of Opposition.**

A. Even though the United States is arguably the freest nation on the planet and offers 1st amendment protection, Christians still face increasing persecution here. We need to recognize it and prepare for it to worsen.

B. Some believe the term ought to be reserved for the most horrific acts: burning at stakes, beheadings etc... But this understanding has a major problem. First, that not what the word persecution means. The definition includes hostility and ill-treatment. Jesus clearly taught that persecution can and will take on many forms that don't result in death.

- C. What form will persecution take in America?
  - a. **Suppression Via Technology:**  
People will see it as a threat to national security.
  - b. **Violent National Ideologies:**  
This will produce violence against Christians.
  - c. **Growth of Islamic Extremism:**  
More groups will emerge hell bent on destroying the west.
  - d. **Heightened Propaganda and Disinformation:**
  - e. **Weaponizing Religion:**
  - d. **Spread of Organized Crime:**

D. We are specifically commanded not to love this world or to be conformed to this world (1Jn. 2:15; Rom. 12:2). Jesus said that the world hates him and would hate us. Satan, in fact, rules over the fallen world (Jn. 14:30, 16:11). James goes so far as to say that when we are friends with the world, we are committing spiritual adultery, making over selves an enemy of God (Ja. 4:4). As A.W. Tozer said, “A Whole new generation of Christians has come up believing it is possible to accept Christ without forsaking the world.”

**Illustration:** Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego give us a good example of how today Christians should relate with the world. The four friends lived in Babylon, worked diligently with all honesty, excelled, and were evaluated but never lost track of who they were -they were in the Babylon system, but not of the system. Christians are simply in the world -they are simply in the world -physically present -but not of it, no part of its values.

### **III. Our Relationship to the World is one of Commission.**

A. The secret of witnessing the world are as follows:

- a. **Right Heart:** Regenerated; Renewed; Sanctified; Fully in love with Jesus.
- b. **Lively Faith:** The victory that overcomes the world our faith (1John 5:4). We must put the invisible before our eyes as visible. To set before our eyes the grand realities:
  - i. Our Souls
  - ii. God
  - iii. Christ
  - iv. Heaven
  - v. Hell
  - vi. Judgment
  - vii. Eternity

We must cherish the conviction that what is unseen is just as real as the seen, yet ten thousand time more important.

- c. **Habit of Boldly Confessing Christ:** Come out from the world and show your true colors, act and speak like men who are not ashamed to be identified with Christ. Habits produce settled character.

**TAKE-AWAY:** In conclusion let me ask you a question, provide you with some counsel, and encouragement.

1. **Question:** Are you overcoming the world, or are you overcome by it. Awake from this peril.

2. **Counsel:** If you want to come out of the world begin by telling your story to Jesus, keep nothing back. Tell Him you are sinner wanting to be saved from the world.

3. **Encouragement:** If you have come out of the world then take comfort and persevere you are on the right road. You have no cause to be afraid. The everlasting hills are in sight.

**Tie-Up:**

1. We are Different - New Identity
2. We are to be different - New Purpose
3. We are to fully embrace our difference - New Power

## **Redemptions Drama and the Spirit**

**TEXT:** John 16:5-15

**TONE:** Encouragement

**TARGET:** Believers

**TASK:** To encourage believers to rely fully upon the Holy Spirit as God's plan of redemption unfolds perfectly.

**TEACH:** An Outreach team goes into the community to engage in street and door to door evangelism. Many times we get to rejoice in salvations, and other life changing decisions. We recognize that apart from His guidance, provision, and transformative power, our efforts would have been in vain. We stand in awe of His faithfulness and grace, which enabled us to step out in faith, follow the plan laid before us, and witness the life-changing impact of sharing the love of Christ with others. But no matter how well plans are made they are always prone to frustration, and even disruption. Our plans can be thwarted by weather, Satan, the flesh, and just mere ignorance. But God's redemptive plan never changes. It continues to progress as decreed before the foundation of the world. It cannot be thwarted, disrupted, nor frustrated. God is **LARGE AND IN CHARGE**.

**TRUTH:** (UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT) The ramifications of Jesus' departure can be understood only from a salvation-historical vantage point. In other words, In the grand drama of biblical redemptive history what is Jesus doing here? What is He teaching here? Contrary to what the announcement of Jesus' departure may signal for His followers, His work on earth has not come to an end; it will be continued by the Spirit. So, rather than hold up God's purposes, the crucifixion expedited it.<sup>1</sup> For, by eschatology necessity the Spirit cannot come unless Jesus has first been exalted.

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<sup>1</sup> Andreas J. Kostenberger, Baker Exegetical Commentary: John (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 470

What is undeniable here is that the disciples are filled with deep grief (type) recurs in vv.20, 21, 22. What they need to hold onto is this: It is for your good. Unless He departs the Counselor will not come.

The major events of redemptive history are as follows:

- 1. Creation:** God created the heavens, the earth, and all living creatures, including mankind in His image. Adam and Eve are placed in the Garden of Eden and given dominion over creation.
- 2. Fall:** Adam and Eve disobey God's command and sin enters the world, leading to separation from God and the brokenness of creation.
- 3. Covenant with Abraham:** God chooses Abraham to be the father of a great nation through whom all nations will be blessed. God promises to give Abraham and His descendant the land of Canaan, and to make His descendant as numerous as the stars.
- 4. Exodus and the Covenant at Sinai:** God delivers the Israelites from slavery in Egypt through Moses. God enters into a covenant with Israelites at Mount Sinai, giving them the Ten Commandments and establishing guidelines.
- 5. Monarchy and Prophets:** The Israelites establish a monarchy with kings such as Saul, David, and Solomon. The prophets arise to call the people back to faithfulness to God and warn of the consequences of sin.
- 6. Exile and Return:** The Israelites are exiled to Babylon due to their disobedience. Some Israelites return to Jerusalem under Persian rule and rebuild the temple.

What is next... (from Jesus' words to His disciples)

**7. The Finished Work of Christ:** Jesus said, “*But now I am going to Him who sent me...*” Jesus’ statement carries emotional weight as it alludes to the culmination of His earthly ministry, leading up to His sacrificial death on the cross and subsequent resurrection, then ultimately, His ascension. It is a moment of acceptance, surrender and completion of His earthly mission, paving the way for the fulfillment of God’s plan of redemption.

Rather, than hold up God’s purposes, the crucifixion actually will expedite it.<sup>2</sup> Out of necessity the Spirit cannot come unless Jesus has first been exalted. Jesus said, “*...it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you.*” Only through the internal presence of the Spirit will the disciples truly understand Jesus. Thus, John paints successive events on the salvation-historical canvass.

**8. The Coming of the Holy Spirit:** “*And when He/Helper comes He will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment....*” The coming of the Spirit is equivalent to the indwelling of Jesus. OT prophetic literature is full of anticipation regarding the inauguration of the age of the kingdom of God by the pouring out of the Spirit.<sup>3</sup>

John simply introduces in summary fashion what is spelled out in greater detail in 16:9-11. John 16:8-11 deals with the Spirit’s judgment of the world, and 16:12-15 with His revelatory ministry to believers. It’s ultimately the world that is on trial.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 470.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 471.

Therefore, redemptions drama is right on pace with God's eternal decrees. Everything is on pace and fulfillment is almost here. God has sent the Spirit as our Helper as the drama unfolds according to God's sovereign oversight. How does the Spirit help?

## **I. He Convicts the World of Depravity (v.8-11)**

A. The Holy Spirit's mission extends not only to believers, guiding and empowering them in their faith journey, but also to the lost, drawing them into relationship with God. No one can be saved apart from the Spirit's work in regeneration.

B. Despite the recent comment made by the Pope, the Bible teaches that all people by nature are in rebellion toward God. They are hostile enemies, dead in sin (Eph. 2:1); by nature children of wrath (v.3); darkened in understanding and excluded from the life of God because of ignorance. In John 3, Jesus states one must be born of the Spirit. Again, in John 6:44 Jesus declared, "*No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him.*"

c. Jesus said, "*when He comes He will convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment.*" The beginning of the Holy Spirit's saving ministry to the lost is revealed in this word convict. In this context it refers to the judicial sense, like a criminal convicted of a crime. Ultimately, those who die without Christ suffer eternal punishment in hell.

d. The Holy Spirit convicts concerning sin (hamartias) more than likely because the word is singular, Jesus has the sin of unbelief in mind. How people respond to the Spirit's convicting on this issue determines their eternal destiny. Second, Jesus told His disciples He convicts concerning righteousness. Not only does the Spirit convict people of sin, but also the

necessity of having perfect righteousness. Finally, the Holy Spirit convicts the world concerning judgment. Not that they will be condemned, but that they are condemned already. Not that they will experience (even though that is true) but they are under wrath even now.

## II. **He Reveals the Truth (16:12-13a)**

A. Jesus said, *“I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth...”* In addition to convicting the world the Spirit also guides. Some may say like Pilate, “what is truth.” Jesus tells us in John 17 when He, speaking of His disciples says, “*Sanctify them in truth Thy word is truth.*”

B. Only the Holy Spirit, since He is God, knows all that God knows and thus is qualified to reveal divine truth to man. I believe this is primary a reference to the writers of the New Testament. But it also extends in a secondary sense to the Holy Spirit work in illumination. (see 1John 2:20,27). As we pray, study, and accurately handle the word the Spirit provides illumination.

C. The Holy Spirit's leading will always be consistent with the Word of God. He will never lead anyone to violate the truths contained in this book.

### **III. He Glorifies the Son (v.13b-15)**

A. Here Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit, also known as the Helper, to believers after His departure. The primary role of the Holy Spirit, according to Jesus is to testify about Him (15:26) and to glorify Him (16:14). This points to the Holy Spirit's mission to exalt and magnify the person, work, and teachings of Jesus.

B. The relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit within the Trinity is characterized by perfect harmony, mutual glorification, and unity of purpose. The Holy Spirit's ministry of glorifying the Son reflects the unity of the Godhead and demonstrates the divine love and cooperation among the three persons of the Trinity. Ultimately, the Holy Spirit's role in glorifying the Son is part of the intricate and mysterious work of God.

C. The Holy Spirit glorifies the Son by revealing Christ's love to us. Throughout the New Testament, we see the Holy Spirit at work in illuminating the Scriptures and helping followers of Christ understand the significance of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. By drawing attention to Christ's redemptive work and pointing people to Him as the Savior and Lord, the Holy Spirit ultimately glorifies the Son.

D. The Holy Spirit also empowers believers to witness. When the Holy Spirit fills and indwells believers, He equips them with spiritual gifts, wisdom, boldness and power to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8). As believers share the message of salvation and demonstrate Christ-like character through the Spirit's enablement, they bring glory to the Son by reflecting His love, grace, and truth to the world.

E. Still, the Holy Spirit transforms hearts and lives. The Holy Spirit works in the hearts and lives of individuals to bring about spiritual transformation and conformity to the image of Christ. Through the process of sanctification, the Spirit convicts, comforts, guides, and empowers believers to live lives that honor and glorify Jesus. And as the character of Christ is increasingly manifested in the lives of believers the Son is magnified.

**TIE-UP:** The Holy Spirit empowers each of us to serve God as He progresses the mission of redemption. What is our role?

1. **To abide in Christ.**
  - a. Abiding keeps us from grieving the Spirit.
2. **To love one another.**
  - a. Loving keeps us from grieving the Spirit.
3. **To win the lost.**
  - a. Evangelism keeps us from grieving the Spirit.

**TIE-UP:** Through out the world very day contacts are made, conversation are had and decisions are made to follow Christ. The drama of redemption continues to unfold and as it does our job is to keep in step with the Spirit.

## Take Heart!

*TEXT:* John 16:16-33

*TONE:* Encouragement

*TARGET:* Believers

*TASK:* To focus on the disciple's journey from sorrow to joy through the resurrection of Christ and the peace He offers in overcoming the world.

*TEACH:* Illustration: The burden of going through a renovation. It takes time, money, and endless promotion. The process can be trying, inconvenient, and stressful. Yet, the result will be beautiful.

*TRUTH:* John 16:16-33 focuses on the disciples and their journey from sorrow to joy. The disciples faced confusion and fear as Jesus spoke of His impending death, but He promised them a joy that no one could take. The disciples still have no category to allow them to make sense of a Messiah who would die, rise from the dead, and abandon his people in favor of "Another Counselor."<sup>1</sup> The disciples were perplexed and confused.

Think back on a time when you were confused about something. Confusion caused by not understanding a situation can lead to a sense of panic and anxiety. In the case of Jesus' disciples after his crucifixion, they experienced a whirlwind of emotions such as fear, uncertainty, and doubt. Their previous hopes and expectations seemed shattered, and they were left grappling with shocking turn of events.

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<sup>1</sup> D.A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According of John (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Co, 1991), 543.

I'm sure the disciples felt like they were in a dense fog with no clear direction, unsure of what steps to take next or how to make sense of the situation. This kind of uncertainty can create a sense of panic, as the mind races to find answers and make sense of the chaos. In situations like these we must be on guard against hasty actions, panic manifested in frantic discussions, and fearful retreats.

In moments like these, Jesus encouraged His disciples to “take heart.” However, the important question we must answer is what did Jesus do to encourage His disciples?

He encouraged them with several important truths. These bring us clarity amid confusion.

## **I. Reality of Resurrection (v. 16-22)**

- A. The initial sorrow and perplexity of the disciples at Jesus' words about His death (v.16-18).
- B. Jesus's promise of joy through His resurrection (v.20-22).
- C. There is a contrast between the sorrow of Jesus' death and the joy of His resurrection.
- D. After the resurrection joy became a defining characteristic in the lives of the disciples. Their joy was evident through (1) Through their bold witness (Acts 4:31). (2) Through the unity they enjoyed (Acts 2:46). (3) Through their devotion to prayer and fellowship (Acts 2:42). (4) Through their courage in the face of persecution (Acts 5:41).

**Illustration:** Imagine a caterpillar going through the stages of metamorphosis inside its cocoon. At first, the caterpillar may feel confined, isolated, and may be even a bit fearful of the unknown changes happening within. It might be a time of uncertainty and discomfort as it undergoes transformation.

Gradually, as the process unfolds, the caterpillar begins to see signs of new life emerging. The cocoon starts to crack open, and a beautiful butterfly emerges, spreading its wings in freedom and flight.

In a similar way, the disciples experienced a sense of sorrow and confusion during Jesus' crucifixion and burial, much like the caterpillar's time in the cocoon. However, just as the butterfly brings joy and beauty after its transformation, Jesus' resurrection brought a profound joy and new life to the disciples.

**Application:** Preach the Gospel to yourself daily.

## **II. Outpouring of Joy (v. 23-27)**

- A. The disciples' direct access to the Father through prayer in Jesus' name (23-24).
- B. Jesus's assurance of answered prayer and the Father's love for them (25-27).
- C. Prayer is encouraged so that the disciples' joy would be full. Thus, the statement further elaborates on the joy that has risen from the ashes of grief. Therefore, not only will the disciples have joy at seeing Jesus again; they will have an abiding joy beyond the resurrection appearance in a newfound relationship with Jesus through prayer.

**Illustration:** As a child approaches a parent with trust and confidence, knowing that their loving parent will hear and respond to their needs, the disciples can come before the Father in prayer through the name of Jesus with the same assurance. Jesus promises that when we pray in his name, our request will be granted.

Praying to the Father through the Son aligns our prayers with His will, desires, and character. When believers approach God in this manner, they are seeking His purpose and plans, rather than their own. They are submitting themselves to God's divine wisdom and authority, knowing that His ways are higher and better than their own. Submitting to God's divine wisdom and authority produces joy in the heart of His disciples.

**Application:** Pray, seeking God's purposes rather than your own.

### **III.        Peace that Overcomes (v. 28-33).**

- A.    Jesus's departure and return to the Father as a source of peace for the disciples (v.28).
- B.    The disciples' confession of understanding and belief in Jesus as the Son of God (v. 29-30).
- C.    Jesus's forewarning of tribulation in the world but His ultimate victory and the disciples' peace in Him (v. 31-33).

**Illustration:** Corrie ten Boom was a Dutch Christian who, along with her family helped many Jews escape the Holocaust during World War II. Corrie and her family were eventually arrested by the Nazis and sent to concentration camps for their role in the underground network.

Despite facing unimaginable tribulation and hardships in the concentration camps, Corrie held on to her faith in Jesus and found peace that transcended her circumstances.

She often share how she experienced God's presence and strength amid the suffering, providing her with supernatural peace that transcended her circumstances which allowed her to minister to others.

One powerful moment of peace occurred when Corrie and her sister Betsie were transferred to the notorious Ravensbruck concentration camp. Amid the squalor and cruelty of the camp, Betsie encouraged Corrie to trust in God's sovereignty and remain focused on loving and serving others, even their captors.

What a powerful story of how the peace Christ gives overcomes the darkness of this world. His joy and His peace are ours because HE has overcome the world.

**Application:** Preserve in peace knowing He has overcome the world.

**TAKE-AWAY:** What we can be sure of is that in this world we will have trouble. Therefore, we should not be surprised or caught off guard when it comes. Expect both cosmic hostility and personal hostility.

**TIE-UP:** Just like in a renovation the old is made new so we are being renewed. Every circumstance of life God wants to us to shape us and to give us a hope beyond this temporary world.  
**TAKE HEART HE HAS OVERCOME THE WORLD.**

## **Seeing the Father through the Son**

*TEXT:* John 17:1-5

*TONE:* Encouragement

*TARGET:* Believers

*TASK:* To encourage believers to trust God and live their lives for His glory.

*TEACH:* Isaiah's vision of God deeply impacted him, leading to his acknowledgment of his own sinfulness and the sinfulness of his people. It compels him to faithfully accept the prophetic mission to call the Israelites to repentance and renew their covenant with God. Isaiah sees God as sovereign over all nations and history, controlling the destinies of peoples and empires. This belief drives Isaiah to proclaim messages not only to Israel but also to other nations, offering both judgments and promises. Isaiah views God as faithful to His promises and committed to redeeming His people. Isaiah prophesies about a coming Messiah who would bring salvation and establish God's righteous kingdom. His high view of God enabled him to face hard circumstances, hard people, and hard heart.

Isaiah's view of God determined his actions.

**What we believe about God will determine our actions.**

**Quote:** “Your beliefs become your thoughts, Your thoughts become your words, Your words become your actions, Your actions become your habits, Your habits become your values, Your values become your destiny.” - Gandhi

Remember, all truth is God's truth. The world just borrows from it.

We will see what Jesus believed about God the Father. The question we need to ask ourselves is:

Does my theology match that of Jesus?

*TRUTH:* The disciples had left all to follow Jesus. They must have felt very dejected to be left by Him. Yet, Jesus, was wise and merciful to give them comfort. He spent no less than four chapters, all intending to confirm and fortify their hearts against the bitter trials and afflictions, which they were sure to face after His departure. Jesus once again provides consolation for His disciples via supplication.

In this chapter we have the Lord's prayer. Not the prayer He taught us to pray, but the very prayer He prayed for us. One author suggests, since this prayer was prayed right before His arrest this was His swansong. He states, "Jesus appears to be swan-like, singing out His dying song in the ears of His disciples." He further writes, "Truly such a prayer, made by such a one as out Great Hight Priest, at such a time, on such an occasion, under such circumstances will deserve our best attention, both in handling and hearing."

Jesus provides no less than six theological principles to build our lives upon, which in turn bring glory to God.

## **I.     Jesus bows in Humble Dependence before the Father (v.1)**

A.     *"Jesus spoke these words, he lifted (raised from lower to higher position) up His eyes to heaven."* Even though Jesus is co-equal with the Father, both being fully divine, equally God, yet Jesus showed His dependence upon His Father in His humanity to carry out His Father's plan of redemption, which is evidence here.

His praying demonstrated that He ultimately submitted to His Father's will, which was to go to the cross and pay the penalty (death) for our breaking of God's law. This has been the pattern of Christ life throughout John.

For example:

- a. In John 5:19-20, Jesus openly states He does not act independently but only in accordance with what He sees the Father doing, underlying His humble reliance on the Father's guidance.
- b. In John 6:38, Jesus clearly articulates that His very purpose in coming to earth is to execute the Father's will rather than His own, showcasing His submission and obedience.
- c. In John 8:28-29, Jesus emphasizes His total reliance on the Father in both speech and action, asserting that His words and deeds are instructed by the Father. Of course, more examples could be provided.

**Illustration:** George Muller was a Christian evangelist who founded orphanages in England. He is renowned for his remarkable faith and dependence on God. Muller often prayed for the need of his orphanages without soliciting funds directly. Several times when resources were depleted, he would pray, and provisions would arrive unexpectedly. Muller's life demonstrated a profound trust in God.

B. Our dependence toward God will be evident in our daily posture. Do you bow on your knees, with our eyes lifter toward the heavens in prayer? Daily, do you open your Bible to receive wisdom, instruction, and guidance from the Lord. Do you pray without ceasing? Do you daily confess your sins to prevent hindrance between you and God? Do you cling to Christ as drawing man does to a life raft? Do you put on the full armor of God to stand against the schemes of the devil?

**Application:** Pray and look toward Heaven, expressing both your confidence and dependence on God.

## **II. Jesus acknowledges the Divine Providence of the Father (v.1b)**

A. When Jesus says, “*the hour has come*,” He is referring to the predetermined time for a significant phase of His earthly ministry, particularly His suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension. This phrase is laden with eschatological and salvific meaning. Here are some key aspects of its significance:

a. **Fulfillment of God’s Redemptive Plan:** Culmination of God’s plan for the redemption of humankind.

b. **Glorification through Suffering:** This indicates that His impending death, despite being an act of immense suffering, is also the means through which He will accomplish the work of salvation and glorify the Father.

c. **Completion of His Earthly Mission:** Jesus acknowledges that His mission will culminate in His death.

d. **Judgment and Victory over Evil:**

“The hour” also conveys the impending judgment upon the world and the defeat of Satan through Jesus’ atoning death and resurrection.

B. The world was created as the result of divine providence. The earth rotates on its axis by way of divine providence. The seas know their boundaries as result of divine providence. Seasons change, clouds build, rain falls, grass grows, flowers bloom, animals give birth, trees shed their leaves, snow falls, the wind blows all by way of divine providence. Nations rise and fall, kings are exalted and brought low all by providence. Wars rage, the earth quakes, and people live or die according to divine providence. The lost are saved and the dead are raised all as the direct result of divine providence.

**Application:** Trust in God’s timing in your own life, recognizing His plans are perfect and purposeful.

### **III. Jesus revealing the Sovereign Election of the Father (v. 2b)**

a. When Jesus says, “*to give eternal life to all whom you have given me*”, He is speaking within the context of His Priestly Prayer. This statement encapsulates several profound theological themes:

a. **Gift of Eternal Life:**

Jesus is acknowledging that His mission includes bestowing eternal life upon certain individuals.

b. **Diving Agency:**

The phrase “all whom you have given me” indicates that those who receive eternal life are given to Jesus by the Father. This indicates a prior divine action and purpose. It reflects the biblical concept of election, wherein God, in His sovereign will, chooses individuals as recipients of His grace.

**Illustration:** In “Knowledge of the Holy”, A.W. Tozer attempts to reconcile the seemingly contradictory beliefs of God’s sovereignty and man’s free will:

*An ocean liner leaves New York bound for Liverpool. Its destination has been determined by proper authorities. Nothing can change it. This is at least a faint picture of sovereignty. On board the liner are scores of passengers. They are not in chains, neither are their activities determined for them by decree. They are completely free to move about as they will. They eat, sleep, play, lounge about the deck, read, talk, altogether as they please; but all the while the great liner is carrying them steadily onward toward a predetermined port. Both freedom and sovereignty are present here, they do not contradict. Yet, the reason the people are on the ocean liner is strictly due to God’s sovereign election, His preordained plan.*

B. Where would man be apart from God’s sovereign grace? We would be eternally lost and perpetually damned, separated from God in outer darkness. The place of hopelessness and torment. Our nation would be further along in its depravity then it already is. Without God’s grace in election, we would never know there is a God. We would never know that we have broken His law. We would never be made aware of our need for Him.

**Application:** Examine yourself, test yourself, be sure you’re in the faith.

## IV. Jesus proclaims the Glorious Gospel of the Father (v. 3)

A. When Jesus says, “*And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent,*” He is offering a profound explanation of what eternal life entails. This statement is central to understanding the essence of Christian faith and salvation. Let’s break down the key elements:

a. **Eternal Life is Knowing God:**

Jesus defines eternal life not merely as living forever, but as entering a deep, personal relationship with God. In other words, eternal life begins here and now for those who know God.

b. **Intimate, Relational Knowledge:**

The term “know” in this context is not just about intellectual understanding or awareness. It denotes a personal and intimate intellectual understanding. To know someone implies a close, experiential, and affectionate relationship.

c. **The Only True God:**

Jesus distinguishes the God of Israel from the false gods and idols that were prevalent in the ancient world. He is asserting the monotheistic belief that there is one true God.

d. **Jesus Christ as Essential to Eternal life:**

Jesus includes Himself in the equation: Knowing Jesus Christ is inseparable from knowing God. This reveals the foundational Christian belief in the Trinity, where Jesus is fully divine and integral to having a relationship with God. It further underscores His role as the Messiah (“Christ” means “Anointed One”) and the Savior sent by God. “Sent” points to His incarnation.

**Illustration:** Imagine a neighborhood community hall where children gather after school to play and learn. One day, due to a series of unforeseen events, the building catches fire. The flames spread quickly, trapping several children inside. The situation becomes dire, and the community gathers outside, desperate and anxious for help. Just when hope seems lost, a young firefighter named Alex arrives at the scene. Despite the raging flames, intense heat, and the crumbling structure, Alex bravely rushes into the building, determined to save the children. Navigating through the smoke and debris, Alex finds the group of frightened children huddled together and leans them towards safety. With unwavering courage, he makes multiple trips into the burning building, each time emerging with children in his arms. On Alex's final trip, weakened and overcome by the smoke, he still manages to rescue the last child. Unfortunately, as he exits the building, a part of the structure collapses, and Alex is mortally wounded.

This story parallels the Gospel in several ways:

1. **Desperate Situation:** Just like the children trapped in the burning building, humanity is in a desperate situation due to sin.
2. **The Rescuer:** Alex represents Jesus Christ, who sees the dire state of humanity and decides to intervene. Jesus willingly steps into the world.
3. **Rescue Mission:** Just as Alex bravely rescues the children, Jesus comes to “*seek and save the lost.*” Through His life, death, and resurrection, He provides the way out of sin and death, offering salvation and eternal life.

B. What a Gospel we have. A Gospel decreed by a triune God before the foundation of the world. A Gospel that transcends space and time yet happened at a specific place at a particular time. A Gospel full of divine wisdom, yet, simply enough for a child to believe. Powerful enough to change nations, yet, gentle enough to heal the broken.

**Application:** Grow deeper in your understanding of the Gospel to know God.

## **V. Jesus' example of Faithful Obedience to the Father (v. 4)**

A. When Jesus said, "*I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do*" He was communicating several significant theological truths and practical truths. Here are a few aspects:

### **a. Divine Mission:**

Jesus refers to the specific tasks and roles given to Him by the Father. His mission included teaching, healing, making God known to humanity, living a sinless life, and ultimately preparing to offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin.

### **b. Accomplished Word:**

By saying He has accomplished the work, Jesus indicates that He has faithfully carried out all the Father's commands and fulfilled the prophecies regarding the Messiah up to that point.

### **c. Example for Followers:**

Jesus life, focused on completing His divine mission and therefore glorifying the Father, serves as an example for believers to follow - living their lives with a purpose to honor and glorify God.

**Illustration:** The time was the 19th of May, 1780. The place was Hartford, Connecticut. The day has down in New England history as a terrible foretaste of Judgment Day. For at noon the skies turned from blue to gray and by mid-afternoon had blackened over so densely that, in that religious age, men fell on their knees and begged a final blessing before the end came. The Connecticut House of Representatives was in session. And as some men fell down and others clamored for immediate adjournment, the Speaker of the House, one Colonel Davenport, came to his feet. He silences them and said these words: "The Day of Judgment is either approaching or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for adjournment. If it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. I wish, therefore, that candles may be brought.

B. Faithful is what the Gospel demands of each of us. Faithfulness unto Christ because of His faithfulness unto death. Faithfulness further demands that we die to ourselves daily. O how, the flesh loves to exalt itself above and before God. Further, the worries of this world are screaming for our attention. We are like young puppies, constantly having our drawn away by distractions, driven by contaminated instincts that seek to rule us. Yet we, by the power of the Spirit must not carry out the desires of the flesh.

**Application:** Submit fully to God's plan in your life, obeying Him faithfully to the end.

## **VI. Jesus prays for Restored Glory by the Father (v.5)**

A. Jesus is requesting that God the Father restore to Him the splendor and honor He enjoyed before taking human form and entering that world. This reflects several key theological points:

a. **Preexistence:**

Jesus exited before the creation of the world, highlighting His eternal nature.

b. **Divine Relationship:**

It emphasizes the intimate and unique relationship between Jesus and God the Father.

c. **Restoration of Glory:**

Jesus is asking to be reinstated to His original position, which He temporarily set aside to fulfill His mission on earth.

Overall, it underscores Jesus' full divinity, His eternal nature, and His role in the divine plan of salvation.

**Application:** Pray with your eyes lifted toward heaven in complete dependence upon God.

**TIE-UP:** Both Isaiah the Prophet and Jesus the Messiah had high views of God. Isaiah's view of God caused him to say, "*Here am I send me.*" Jesus' view of God caused Him to say, "*My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work*" (Jn.4:34) and to say, "*not my will, but yours be done*" (Lk. 22:42).

What is your view of God leading you to do? What do your habits say about your view of God?

## Glory Restored

*TEXT:* John 17:1-5

*TONE:* Encouragement

*TARGET:* Believers

*TASK:* To define the glory of God and to encourage believers to live their lives for the glory of God.

*TEACH:* The glory of God transcends the boundaries of human understanding, existing in a realm far beyond the capacity of any finite mind to fully grasp. While we may attempt to describe and contemplate His majesty through words, arts, and theology, the true essence of His glory remains an enigma, evoking awe and reverence. His divine magnificence surpasses all human language and intellect, inviting us to embrace the mystery and wonder that come with recognizing the limitations of our comprehension. Therefore, it is profound humility and reverence that I attempt to address this subject.

*TRUTH:* We have the Lord's prayer. Not the prayer He taught us to pray, but the very prayer He prayed for us. From this account we can learn several important truths as we study the focus of Christ's prayer, which was for a restored glory.

The Holy Spirit seems to put a mark of respect upon this prayer above others' prayers which Christ conceived in the days of His flesh. This was, as it were, His dying blaze. Here we see the eruption of love Christ has for all His disciples.

Thomas Manton has written, "This prayer is standing monument of Christ's affection to the church." In this prayer, He mentions all the blessings and privileges necessary for the church. He prays for Himself, the apostles, and for all His disciples.

He begins the prayer with a request for glory to be restored. What does Jesus mean by glory?

## I. The Vocabulary of Glory

A. The Hebrew word is [Kabod], this is by far the most important Hebrew word that indicates glory. In its basic literal sense, it means ‘heavy.’ The judge Eli, for instance is described as ‘old and heavy’ [kabed]. Also, Absalom’s long, luxurious hair is so heavy. Same word [kabed].

B. However, the figurative use of [kabod] for outnumbers its literal use. Especially, notable are those contexts in which [kabod] describes a persons wealth. Abraham, for example, is said to be “very rich” [kobed me’ od] in livestock, in silver, and in gold” (Gen. 13:2).

C. Abraham was heavy in possessions. The term and its derivative may also be used with someone’s prestige. One example is that of Benaiah, one of David’s thirty most distinguished warriors. He is referred to as “renowned” [kabed].

D. Psalm 96 is a prime example of all that is wrapped up in [kabod]. His [kabod] is the outward manifestations, the weight of His beauty, splendor, majesty, and excellence.

E. Sometime after the history of this early word [kabod] the noun [doxa] began a development of its own that soon took it from its original meaning. Early on the word meant to ‘have an opinion’ but as time went on it came to mean, “to have a good opinion” and then “that which merits a good opinion.” During these stages the word could correctly have been translated as ‘praise’, ‘honor’, ‘good standing.’ It means, one who is so heavy in majesty that He deserves ultimate praise.

F. *The glory of God encompasses the profound magnificence, immeasurable worth, divine beauty, and boundless grandeur of His infinite perfections, both in His very essence and in their manifestations to creation.*

-Blake Gideon

Now that we have somewhat of an understanding of the meaning, let's take a look at how the glory of God has manifested itself. I call this....

## II. The Visions of Glory

A. **External displays of Glory:** Of course, the Bible is full of visible manifestations of the glory of God. But for the sake of time, I will share only a few examples.

a. God's glory was displayed by shattering the false glory of Egypt and its Pharaoh by the dramatic means of separating the sea to allow the Israelites to go through to safety and to close it in judgment on the Egyptians.

b. Moses encounter with God's glory in Exodus 33; the context of the passage is the sin with the golden calf. God response is not immediately clear. God announces that Moses will not see His face. Why? Because people cannot see God's face and live. In other words, full exposure to the divine presence would overwhelm and destroy a human observer. Of course, this is anthropomorphic language, as God is Spirit, this does not mean Moses saw nothing, but we need to acknowledge this is a metaphor. So impressive was the mere glimpse that when Moses descended from the mountain that his face was glowing with reflective glory.

c. The glory cloud in the wilderness. We are first introduced to the cloud that represents God's presence in Ex. 13 through the flame burning in the bush. God's weighty presence is often accompanied by fire and smoke or a cloud that illuminates at night. On the one hand, the smoke and cloud obscure, reminding people that direct exposure to the presence of God is overwhelming. Fire on the other hand, is both beneficial and destructive. Fire warms, but also burns. Fire attracts our attention, but accompanied by smoke, does not allow one's gaze to penetrate behind it.

D. In 2Chronicles 7:1-3, during Solomon's dedication of the Temple, he finishes praying, fire comes down from heaven to consume the burnt offering and sacrifices. At the same time, the glory of the Lord fills the temple. The priest are unable to enter the temple because it is filled with the glory of the Lord. The Israelites see the fire and glory and worship, praising God with their faces to the ground, exclaiming, "*He is good; his love endures forever.*"

E. The entire creation eloquently proclaims the glory of God, serving as a grand symphony of divine artistry and wisdom. The Bible tells us in Psalm, 19:1, "*The heaven declare the glory of God: the skies proclaim the work of his hands.*"

This means that every element of the natural world, from the vastness of the cosmos to the intricate design of a single cell, points to the grandeur and brilliance of the Creator. The stars, planets, and galaxies in their ordered and yet unfathomably complex motions reveal God's power and majesty, echoing the attributes of His infinite nature. The beauty of a sunrise, the complexity of an organism, and the interdependence of ecosystems testify to His impeccable creativity and glory.

The only reason God is able to manifest His glory outwardly is because He is glorious intrinsically.

**B. God's Internal Glory:** God displays His glory outwardly, only because He is intrinsically glorious.

**Quote:** Albert Mohler, said, "God's glory is best understood as the intrinsic beauty and external manifestations of God's being and character." God Himself is Light. Glory is His nature, the sum total of His excellence.

**C. The Transfiguration of Jesus:** The brightness of the transfiguration therefore affirms both God's nature of intra (in himself) and ad extra (in creation). The brightness of Jesus's face and his shining clothes are not merely ornamental; they unlock the very essence and meaning of the transfiguration.

a. His face shines because he has received glory as man, and His face shines because He is glory. The Light does not come from without but from within Christ. He displays the glory He shared with the Father before the world was spoken into existence.

b. The transfiguration also displays the glory of a future kingdom and the transition to a new covenant.

c. Jesus is also displayed as greater than Moses and Elijah. Their faces only glitter from a borrowed glow, whereas Jesus possessed the full measure of divine glory. Jesus was there to fulfill and accomplish a greater work. Notice, we have one from Heaven (Elijah), those on the earth (Peter, James, and John) one from the below the earth (Moses)...Phil.2:11. It also, true from the Bible that both Moses and Elijah wanted to see the glory of God (Ex.33) and (1Ki.19).

Elijah finds himself in a cave hiding from Jezebel.

i. A mighty wind tears through the mountains.

ii. An earthquake shakes the mountain.

iii. In a soft voice, the Lord appears. When Elijah hears the whisper, he wraps his face in a mantle. He is not able to stand unveiled in the presence of the Almighty. He can't bear the sight of the Lord. The Lord's voice comes to him tells him to go back and finish his ministry. "Passed by" same phrase.

Jesus is the greater prophet who will far surpass Moses in His work of redemption.

- d. Further, the cloud demonstrates the unity and the individual glory of each Person of the Godhead.
  - i. We see the Son's glory both intrinsically and externally.
  - ii. We have the Father's voice from heaven. We can't help but hear the glory in the Father speaking.
  - iii. The cloud. The cloud descends just like the Spirit at Jesus baptism. We have a theophany, the Spirit's manifestation through the glory cloud. For He presides in the glory cloud.

### **III. The View of Glory**

- A. One of the best ways to understand the glory of God, not that we ever will, yet we can study how people have reacted to catching glimpses of such divine glory.
  - a. Abraham falls facedown before God (Gen. 17:3,17)
  - b. When fire comes from the Lord and consumes the burnt offering, the people of Israel fall on their faces (Lev. 9:24)
  - c. Moses and Aaron fall on their faces before the glory of the Lord (Num. 20:6)
  - d. Joshua falls facedown before the ark of the Lord (Josh. 7:6)
- 5. On Mount Carmel, when the fire of the Lord falls from heaven, all the people fall facedown and claim that the Lord is God (1Kings 18:39)

6. When David sees the angel of the Lord, he falls facedown (1Chron.21:16)
7. Ezra falls facedown before the house of God (Ezra 10:1)
8. Ezekiel falls on his face before the Lord's glory (Ezek. 1:28; 3:23)
9. Daniel falls facedown before the messenger of God (Dan. 8:17)
10. John falls down before one who face shines like the sun (Rev. 1:16-17).

#### **IV. The Victory of Glory**

- A. We too will have shining faces.
- B. We too will have glorified/transfigured bodies.
  - a. Yet, this glory is not inherit, but reflective.
- C. We too will come with Him in glory.
- D. We too will be a part of His glorious kingdom. A New Heaven and a New Earth.
- E. One day we will behold His glory in its fullness, and this is what He prays for.

## V. The Value of Glory

A. Phil. 2:5-11, Jesus valued the glory of God so much that He gave His life. The same can be said about the Apostles and many martyrs throughout history. They were sawed in-two, imprisoned, and left for dead all for the glory of God. Lottie Moon valued the glory of God so much that she died of starvation choosing instead to give it away. William Carey valued the glory of God so much he left the comforts of England for a foreign land.

B. How much do you value the glory of God? Do you value it enough to work on your marriage, knowing God hates divorce? Do you value it enough to quit porn or at least start the process of getting help? Do you value the glory of God enough that you will forgive or seek forgiveness from those whom you have hurt. Do you value the glory of God enough to give of your time, talents, and tithe? Do you value the glory of God enough to go wherever He sends you? To do whatever He tells you? To say whatever, He puts on your lips? Do you value the glory of God enough to go after the lost, to help the hurting, to comfort the dying, to care for the sick and lonely? Do you care enough to die to yourself and put others first? Youth, do you value the glory of God enough to stay pure until marriage? Do you value the glory of God enough to honor your parents? Do you value the glory of God enough to say no to sinful pleasures of this world to pursue Christ?

**Quote:** “The heart of true religion is to glorify God by patient endurance and to praise him for his gracious deliverances. It is to live one’s life through smooth and rough places alike in sustained obedience and thanksgiving for mercy received. It is to seek and find one’s deepest joy, not in spiritual lotus-eating, but in discovering through each successive storm and conflict the mighty adequacy of Christ to save. It is the sure knowledge that God’s way is best, both for our own welfare and for his glory. No problems of providence will shake the faith of the one who has truly learned this.” J.I. Packer.

**TAKE-AWAY:** In whatever you do in word or in deed do it all for the glory of God. For of Him and through Him are all things to be the glory forever, Amen.

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#### Research Resources

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## **Your Identity and Your Mission**

*TEXT:* John 17:6-19

*TONE:* Encouragement

*TARGET:* Believers

*TASK:* For believers to discover or remember their identity and embrace the mission given to them by Christ.

*TEACH:* As I was waiting for my flight in the bustling terminal, I couldn't help but notice a young man sitting across from me. He looked anxious, checking his watch every few minutes and staring out the window at the planes taking off and landing. Eventually, he turned to me and asked if I knew when the flight to Chicago was boarding. We started talking, and it turned out he was on his way to start a new job -a big step in his career. But beneath his excitement was a layer of uncertainty. He told me about his fears: Am I making the right decision? What if I fail? What if I don't belong? In that moment, it struck me. Here he was, on the threshold of a significant change questioning his identity and his purpose, just like many of us do at various points in our lives.

I shared with him some words of encouragement and faith reminding him that while new opportunities can be daunting, they are also a change for incredible growth. Most importantly, I told him that his worth and identity are not solely defined by his job, his success, or his fears, but by something much greater. We all have moments where we question who we are and whether we're on the right path. But it's in those moments that we need to remember who we are in Christ and lean into His mission for us.

**TRUTH:** Jesus prays for His disciples with the primary purpose of seeking divine protection, unity, and sanctification for them as they face the impending challenges of continuing His mission in the world. Understanding the significant trials and oppositions His disciples would encounter, Jesus intercedes on their behalf, asking the Father to keep them united, safeguard them from the evil one, and sanctify them in truth. By doing so, He aims to ensure that they remain steadfast and effective witnesses of the Gospel. Essential to the success of such a task is dependent on understanding at least two important truths: Your identity and Your mission.

## **Our Shared Identity**

### **I. We are given by the Father to the Son.**

A. *“I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world.”* The term “manifested” (ἐφανέρωσα in Greek) underscores the revelatory role of Jesus Christ. He has made known the name- representing the essence, character, and nature -of God to the disciples. In Jewish thought, the “name” of God encapsulates His being and attributes. By revealing God’s name, Jesus is making known God’s character, His love, holiness, mercy and truth. The revelation is a key function of the Incarnation (Jn. 1:18), where the invisible God is made known visibly in Jesus.

**Quote:** “Jesus did not instantly reveal the Father in a blaze of glory, because His disciples could not have endured the kind of experience. Gradually, by His words and His deeds, He revealed to them the nature of God, as they were able to bear it.”

- Warren Wiersbe

B. The phrase “*whom you have me out of the world*” points to the doctrine of election. The disciples, and by extension all true believers, are portrayed as a gift from the Father to the Son. This act of giving illustrates the sovereign grace of God in the act of salvation (Jn. 6:37,39). The Father’s choice is not based on any foreseen merit in the believer but is a manifestation of His divine will and love.

The concept of being taken “*out of the world*” indicates a calling out from the realm of sin, rebellion, and unbelief into a distinct, holy community. This draws on the idea of sanctification, where believers are set apart for God’s purposes. It signifies a new identity and mission for the disciples, who are no longer of the world’s order but belong to the Kingdom of God (Jn.15:19).

**Illustration:** A staff member recently bought me a pen and gave it as a gift. He purchased it and gave it to me. Now that the pen is in my possession, I have the liberty to use it in any manner I choose. However, because I am aware of the love and intention behind the gift, you naturally feel a sense of stewardship and honor towards the pen. I choose to use it thoughtfully and with respect, honoring the one who thoughtfully gave it to me. Instead of misuse and neglect, I find way to utilize the pen in ways that reflect its purpose and beauty.

**Application:** Embrace your Identity by keeping His Word.

## II. We are set-apart by the Father for the Son.

A. “*All your mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.*” Later, Jesus prayed, “*Sanctify them in truth; your word is truth...*”

This statement illustrated the perfect unity and mutual indwelling between the Father and the Son. It reveals a relationship of shared possession and reciprocity within the Trinity, underscoring the divine nature of Jesus. It points to a seamless connection where there is no sense of rivalry or division. By claiming everything of the Father is His, Jesus is asserting His divinity. This shows Jesus as having equal authority with the Father, reflecting the equality and distinctiveness within the Godhead.

To sanctify something is to set it apart for holy purposes. Jesus is asking the Father to set the disciples apart through the truth. This underscored the importance of spiritual formation rooted in God’s Word. The word (logos) represents the ultimate truth revealed through Scripture and embodied in Jesus Himself. This sanctification implies a continual growth in holiness, guided and grounded by divine truth.

Jesus is glorified in them, when His followers exhibit His character, carry out His mission, and unify in love and truth. The disciples’ obedience and faithfulness to Jesus bring honor and recognition to His name.

Our security rests in another fact: we are here to glorify Him. With all their failures and faults, the disciples still receive the word of commendation. God has provided the divine resources needed to glorify Him through His Word.

**Illustration:** Imagine a gardener who has planted a beautiful garden. This garden is full of different types of plants, each with its unique beauty. The gardener works tirelessly, knowing every flower, leaf, and stem, providing them with everything they need to thrive. The garden is a reflection of the gardener's skill, vision, and care. Everything the gardener has poured into the garden represents his skill and dedication. When people come to see the garden, they marvel at its beauty and want to know who crafted such a wondrous work. The healthy, vibrant plants glorify the gardener without speaking a word, simply by existing as they were intended. So too, the disciples, embodying Christ's values and mission, become living testimonies to Jesus transformative power.

**Application:** Embrace your Destiny by looking to Glory.

### **III. We are kept by the Father through the Son**

A. *“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...”* Here, Jesus expresses the transitional phase of His ministry. He emphasizes the dichotomy between His imminent physical departure and the continued earthly presence of His disciples. The disciples will remain in the world, an environment riddled with spiritual and moral challenges. Therefore, their need for divine protection and preservation is paramount. We are given as a gift that cannot be lost.

The phrase “...and I am coming to you” illustrates Jesus' anticipation of reunification with the Father. It reflects His longing for divine fellowship that He momentarily set aside to fulfill His redemptive mission on Earth. Jesus invokes the term “Holy Father,” denoting both reverence and intimacy. “Holy” underscored God's transcendent purity, while “Father” denotes a deep, familial intimacy. Praying for the Father to “keep them in your name” identifies the divine name

as a symbol of God's character and power. Jesus is asking the Father to safeguard His disciples by enveloping them within the fullness of His divine nature.

Further, Jesus adds, *“...which you have given me, that may be one, even as we are one.”* Jesus' request for unity among His followers is profound. The “oneness” He describes is not mere agreement or harmony but a deep, relational unity that mirrors the oneness shared between then Father and the Son. It is a call for spiritual unity grounded in love, purpose and mission, reflective of the divine relationship in the Trinity.

**Illustration:** Imagine a celebrated artist who has crafted a masterpiece in a vibrant, bustling city. The artist, knowing that they must soon depart for an extended journey abroad, call upon a trust guardian to protect and preserve the masterpiece. This guardian is someone who shares the artist's deep appreciation and understanding of the work, someone who can ensure its integrity and showcase its beauty to the world. Before leaving, the artist says to the guardian, “I will be away, but the masterpiece will remain here, surrounded by elements that may either admire or endanger it. Protect it in my name, for it carries my essence. Let those who see it recognizes the unity and harmony in every brushstroke, just as they would if I were here to explain and protect it myself.”

In spiritual terms, the artist stands for Jesus, who has accomplished the masterpiece of salvation and imparted His teachings. The bustling city symbolizes the world with all its distractions, challenges, and influences. The guardian represents God the Father, who is tasked with preserving and protecting the work and essence of Jesus in the lives of His disciples. The masterpiece itself symbolizes the unity and testimony of the disciples, who are meant to reflect the beauty and purpose of Jesus' mission while navigating the complexities of worldly life.

**Quote:** “Every individual believer is precious in the sight of the Lord; a shepherds would not lose one sheep, nor a jeweler one diamond, nor a mother one child, nor a man one limb of his body, nor will the Lord lose one of His redeemed people.”

- Spurgeon

**Application:** Embrace your Security by modeling Unity.

#### **IV. We are hated by the world because of the Son**

A. *“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.”* Jesus indicates a distinct difference between His followers and the world. The “world” here refers to human systems and values opposed to God’s will and truth. The disciples, having received and internalized God’s Word, stand in stark contrast to mainstream societal norms, ideologies, and practices that reject divine principles.

The world’s hatred stems from this fundamental difference. Just as Jesus faced opposition and rejection because His teachings and life challenged the status quo, His followers encounter similar animosity due to their adherence to divine truth. “Not of the world” emphasizes the disciples’ transformed identity. Being “not of the word” signifies they belong to a different reality -the Kingdom of God.

Jesus uses the word, “world” 15 times to emphasize the distinct and often adversarial relationship between His followers and the prevailing systems and values of the earthly realm. By frequently referring to the ‘world,’ Jesus highlights the disciples’ separation from worldly influences, the spiritual dangers they face, and the mission to reach and transform the world despite its hostility.

**Illustration:** Imagine a lighthouse situated on a rugged coastline. This lighthouse emits a powerful, steady light, guiding ships safely through stormy, dark water. Within this darkness, the light is conspicuous -distinctly separate and illuminating. The lighthouse represents the disciples who gave received God's Word. Just as the lighthouse is designed to reflect light, the disciples, have internalized divine truth, reflect this truth in their lives. The Word of God within them is the source of their distinctiveness and guidance.

Now picture several smaller boats near the lighthouse that fight against its light, preferring to navigate in their self-assumed understanding, rejecting the guidance its offers. These boats represent the world and its system, opposed to being guided by the light. Instead, of letting the light be a guide, they are provoked by it. In love, we are called to provoke the world.

**Application:** Embrace your Mission by engaging the World.

We are gospel people with a gospel message.

**TIE-UP:** Remember the young man that was about to take a big step in his career, but beneath his excitement was a layer of uncertainty. Remember, the fears he told me: Am I making the right decision? What if I fail? What if I don't belong? Maybe, you have the same feelings, if so, remember your identity and your mission by embracing them both.

## **Sanctified in Truth**

*TEXT:* John 17:17

*TONE:* Encouragement

*TARGET:* Believers

*TASK:* To encourage believers to cooperate with the Spirit in their sanctification.

*TEACH:* Imagine a sculptor who starts with a large block of marble. The marble is raw, rough, and unrefined. The sculptor has a vision of a beautiful statue hidden within this block of stone. Sanctification can be likened to this process where God, the master sculptor, lovingly, and patiently works on the believer, who is the block of marble. The sculptor first selects the right block of marble. In a similar way, God chooses us and sets us apart for His purpose. He then begins by removing large chunks of marble that don't belong, shaping a rough outline of the envisioned statue. This represents the initial stages of sanctification, where obvious sins and harmful habits are addressed and removed from our lives. As the basic form begins to take shape, the sculptor then shifts to more detailed work, chipping away smaller pieces and refining the shape of the statue. This represents the continuous process of sanctification, where finer and more subtle aspects of our character and behavior are being molded, honed, and refined. The final stages involve sanding and polishing the marble to get a smooth, finished surface that shines. Similarly, as God continues to work with us, the polishing reflects the deep inner transformation that results in a more Christ-like character, shining with His love, grace, and truth.

**TRUTH:** Again, we turn our hearts and minds to the profound prayer of our Lord Jesus. This prayer, often referred to as the High Priestly Prayer, offers a rich tapestry of divine intercession, revealing the heart of Christ for His disciples and by extension, for all who would come to believe in Him. Our focus is on verse 17, where Jesus prays, “*Sanctify them in Truth your word is truth.*”

## **I. The Definition of Sanctification**

A. The Old Testament term for “sanctification” is qadash, a verb. Some believe that the word is related to “chadash” which means “to shine.” However, with greater degree of probability it is derived from the root “qad” meaning “to cut.” Thus, it carries the idea of separation. Literally, to make holy.

The NT verb is “hagiazo” it is derived from “hagios” which like the Hebrew qadash expressed primarily the idea of separation. The noun denoting sanctification is the word “hagiasmos.” It occurs ten times, namely, in Rom. 6:19, 22), it denotes ethical purification, it includes the idea of separation, namely, “the separation of the spirit from all that is impure and polluting, and a renunciation of the sins towards the desires of the flesh and of the mind.” <sup>1</sup>

First, and foremost, holiness is used in Scripture to describe the character of God. He is regularly identified as the “Holy One.” This refers to the distinctiveness or otherness in reference to God’s character and works. God cannot be associated with anything that is ‘unholy.’ We see this throughout the Old Testament, where God demanded separation with respect the places, times, persons, and acts. God spoke in Leviticus 11:44 these words, “*For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy.*”

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<sup>1</sup> Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1958), 548.

We see this clearly as God sets the Nation of Israel apart from the rest of the Nations of the world. God chose them for separation. Israel is called to be a ‘kingdom of priest and a holy nation’ (Ex. 19:6), set apart from the nations to serve as a witness to God’s holiness. This separation required faithfulness to the covenant, including adherence to laws and commandments that distinguish Israel culturally, morally, and religiously. Furthermore, God gave the Israel purity laws (Lev. 20:26). The dietary, ceremonial, and ethical laws function to keep Israel distinct in holiness. God said to Israel, “*You shall be holy to me, for I the Lord am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.*”

Another great example is that of the Tabernacle and Temple. They were scared places, holy ground. The physical structure and their compartments (Holy Place and Holy of Holies) are consecrated spaces where God’s presence dwells, accessible only through prescribed rites. The Ark of the Covenant resided in the Holy of Holies, symbolizing the utmost separation of the most sacred items related to God’s covenant and presence. We also have the example of the Priestly Duties. Priests and Levites were designated for sacred service, symbolically bridging the gap between the profane and the divine through sacrificial rites and purification processes, Ex. 28:41 states, “*And you shall put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him, and shall anoint them and ordain them and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests.*”

The New testament word for sanctification is “hagiasmos.” It occurs ten times, namely in (Rom. 6:19, 22; 1Cor.1:30; 1Thess. 4:3). While it denotes ethical purification, it includes the idea of separation, namely, the separation of the spirit of man from all that is impure and polluting, and a renunciation of the sins toward which the desires of the flesh and the mind lead us.

**Illustration:** Scripture often uses the metaphor of refining silver or gold to illustrate sanctification (Mal. 3:3; 1Peter 1:7). This process involves intense heat to purify metals, symbolizing trials and perseverance shaping believers into Christ's image.

Jeremiah 18:1-6 depicts God as the potter shaping clay. Believers are mold-able in God's sovereign hands, undergoing continual remolding until they mirror Christ.

**Application:** Actively pursue holiness in your life personally and your community.

## II. The Characteristics of Sanctification

A. Justification and sanctification, though intimately connected, serve distinct roles in the Christian's journey of faith.

Justification is the instantaneous legal act of God where He declared sinners righteous on the basis of Christ's perfect righteousness, which is imputed to them through faith, a concept rooted in passages like Romans 3:24 and 4:5. It is an irreversible, once-for-all declaration that changes the believers standing before God.

Sanctification, on the other hand, is the gradual transformative process wherein the Holy Spirit works within believers to conform them increasingly to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29). Unlike the forensic nature of justification, sanctification is a progressive, lifelong journey of moral and spiritual renewal, involving both divine initiative and human cooperation, as depicted in passages such as 1Thess. 4:3 and Phil. 2:12-13. Along with the final salvific event -glorification, these doctrines highlight the completeness of God's redemptive work from the moment of conversion to the ongoing growth in holiness.

Sanctification produces change in the life of the person saved. In the opening verses of 1 Corinthians 6, the apostle criticizes those members of the church who were taking one another before the public courts for the settlement of private disputes (6:1–8). Condemning the one who did the cheating in the first place, Paul proceeds to warn the congregation as a whole that those who do such things are in danger of forfeiting the kingdom of God (6:9–10).

In the process, he makes it clear that at least some of them had been ‘*fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers*’. He implies that professing Christians who persist in such behavior show themselves to be amongst those who will not inherit God’s kingdom! But Paul cannot leave the matter there, especially since his argument might suggest that his readers were still among ‘*the wicked*’. *This is what some of you used to be*’, he affirms. ‘*But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God*’ (6:11).<sup>2</sup>

### **III. The Source of Sanctification**

A. It is a supernatural work of God: 2Peter 1:3-4, powerfully encapsulates the supernatural aspect of sanctification, stating, “*His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.*”

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<sup>2</sup> David Peterson, Possessed by God: A New Testament Theology of Sanctification and Holiness, ed. D. A. Carson, vol. 1, New Studies in Biblical Theology (England; Downers Grove, IL: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 1995), 44.

This passage highlights that sanctification is not primarily a human endeavor but a participation in the divine life facilitated/granted by God's power. Sanctification begins and is sustained by God's initiative, not human effort.

The Holy Spirit, given to believer at conversion (Eph. 1:13-14), is the principal agent of sanctification. Biblical anthropology, understood within the context of total depravity, upholds that human beings cannot achieve holiness apart from divine intervention. The Holy Spirit works supernaturally within the believer, transforming their thoughts, attitudes and actions. In John 3:5-6, Jesus teaches Nicodemus that one must be "*born of water and the Spirit*" to enter the Kingdom of God, indicating a radical, Spirit-wrought change.

However, this does not negate the cooperation of believers. Sanctification, though fundamentally a divine work of the Holy Spirit, necessitates active human participation. Theologically, this process is synergistic, meaning that while God initiates and empowers sanctification believers are called to respond and cooperate. This is reflected in Philippians 2:12-13, where believers are urged to "*work out your salvation with fear and trembling*," underscoring human responsibility, even as it affirms "*for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good pleasure.*" Though discipline like prayer, scripture study, and obedience, believers collaborate with the Spirit, fostering a transformative journey that impacts every dimension of their being.

**Illustration:** Imagine sanctification as a sailboat journey. The believer and the Holy Spirit are partners in this spiritual voyage. The sailboat represents the believer. The boat by itself cannot propel forward without external help despite being fully equipped and crafted for the journey. The wind symbolizes the Holy Spirit. The wind is the empowering force that propels the sailboat forward, much like the Holy Spirit works within believers to enable their growth in holiness. Hoisting the sails depicts the human cooperation. The sailor (believer) hoisting the sails represents engaging in spiritual disciplines -prayer, reading Scripture, participating in community, and seeking to obey God's commands. Without hoisting the sails, the winds (Holy Spirit) power cannot effectively move the boat.

**Application:** Learn to yield to the Spirit's leadership daily?

#### **IV. The Nature of Sanctification**

A. Sanctification primarily consists in two parts: The mortification of the old man, the body of sin. This scriptural term denotes that act of God whereby the pollution and corruption of human nature that results from sin is gradually removed.

The other is the quickening of the new man, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. It is the act of God whereby the holy disposition of the soul is strengthened, holy exercises are increased, and thus a new course of life is promoted. The old structure of sin is gradually torn down, and a new structure of God is reared in its place.

Sanctification affects the whole of man: Body, Soul, Intellect, Affections and Will.

a. **Physical Purity of the Body:**

Scripture emphasizes the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 6:19-20).

Sanctification therefore includes honoring God through bodily sanctity, avoiding sexual immorality (1Thess.4:3-4), substance abuse, and other practices that defile the body. Roman 12:1 urges believers to present their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God.

b. **Inner Renewal:** The concept of ‘soul’ (often overlapping with “heart” in biblical usage) pertains to the seat of one’s emotions, consciousness, and spiritual life. Titus 3:5 speaks of the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit, indicating supernatural renovation of the souls faculties. Furthermore, a sanctified soul is increasingly aligned with God’s will.

c. **Renewal of the Mind:** Romans 12:2 commands believers not to conform to the world but to be transformed by the renewal of their minds. This cognitive sanctification involves replacing worldly wisdom with divine truth. Sanctified intellect engages deeply with God’s Word, growing in understanding and obedience. Furthermore, the process of sanctification sharpens discernment, enabling believers to distinguish good from evil and to make godly decisions (Heb. 5:14). This spiritual wisdom is foundational for growth and ensures alignment with God’s purposes.

d. **Holy Desires:** Sanctification transforms emotional responses and desires, reorienting them towards what pleases God. The affections, which include love, joy, and grief, become purified and aligned with godly virtues.

e. **Submissive Will:** Sanctification includes the redirection of one's will toward godly desires. The sanctified will grows in its ability and desire to conform to God's commandments. Jesus' submission in Gethsemane ("not my will, but yours be done," Luke 22:42) acts as the paradigmatic model for sanctified wills. True sanctification liberates the will from bondage to sin, resulting in joyful submission to God's will.

## V. The Means of Sanctification

A. When Jesus prays, "*Sanctify them in Truth*," He is revealing the divine mechanism by which believers are set apart for God's purposes. Truth is more than a concept, it is an embodiment of God's character and revelation. In a world filled with relativism and half-truths, the Word of God stands as the infallible, unshakable truth.

The Word of God is the absolute truth, when Jesus says, "*Your word is truth*" it is a profound declaration that carries multi-layered theological significance. This statement invites us to explore the essence, authority, and transformative power of God's Word.

**The Bible is true ontologically:** This means that the very essence and being is true. As God's self-revelation, Scripture reflects His unchanging nature. Heb. 6:18 states that it is "impossible for God to lie," underscoring that His word is pure, without deceit, and perfectly reliable. Just as God is immutable and eternal, so is His Word, firmly grounding it in God's very nature.

**The Bible is true Christologically:** Jesus Himself is referred to as ‘*the Word*’ in John 1:1, which declares, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*” This identifies Jesus as the ultimate expression of God’s truth. Thus, the written word (Scripture) and the living Word (Jesus) are inseparably connected, both emanating truth.

**The Bible is Authoritative:** The doctrine of in-errancy asserts that because God is the ultimate author of the Bible, the scriptures are without error in all they affirm (2Tim. 3:16). Scriptures, trust worthiness is grounded in the perfection of God.

**The Bible is Sufficient:** This means that the Bible contains all the knowledge necessary for salvation and holy living. No additional revelation is required outside of what is already provided in the Bible.

**The Bible Transforms:** The Word plays an active role in renewing the mind of believers. It purifies, instructs, and molds us to resemble the character of Christ. Ephesians 5:26 speaks of Christ cleansing the church “*by washing with water through the word.*” This continuous cleansing gradually conforms us to Christ’s holiness.

**Illustration:** Imagine you are tasked with building a magnificent skyscraper. The core instruction for this monumental task is to follow and intricate and detailed blueprint created by the master architect, who had centuries of experience in building structures that stand the test of time. The master architect hails from a reputable lineage of builders who have constructed the most resilient and beautiful structures known to humanity. He designs methods are tried and true, trusted by many to guide their construction projects to successful completion. You, alongside a team of dedicated workers, are the construction crew. Though enthusiastic and skilled in various aspects, you are aware that without the blueprint and ongoing guidance from the master architect, your efforts could lead to catastrophic failure -a building that is unsound, unstable, and unusable.

**Application:** Immerse yourself in God's Word daily.

**TIE-UP:** The story is told of a young girl who accepted Christ as her Savior and applied for membership in a local church. "Were you a sinner before you received Jesus into your life?" inquired an old deacon. "Yes sir," she replied. "Well, are you still a sinner?" "To tell you truth, I feel I'm a greater sinner than ever." "Then what real change have you experienced?" "I don't quite know how to explain it," she said, "except I used to be a sinner running after sin, but now that I am saved. I'm a sinner running from sin!" she was received into the fellowship of the church, and she proved by her consistent life that she was truly converted.

## Together As One

*TEXT:* John 17:20-26

*TONE:* Encouragement

*TARGET:* Believers

*TASK:* To exhort believers to unite as one for the cause of Christ.

*TEACH:* The majestic redwood forest, these trees are some of the tallest living things on the planet, stretching up 350 feet high. Their great height and enormous strength are awe-inspiring. But have you ever wondered why these towering trees, which live for over 2,000 years, rarely fall despite their shallow root systems?

The secret lies in their roots. Instead of going deep, redwood roots spread out wide and intertwine with roots of other redwoods. By entwining like this, they create a network of roots that hold each tree up. They grow in close proximity, and their interlocked roots make them incredibly stable, helping them withstand strong winds and floods. Their unity in the underground network is the very reason they stand strong and tall together.

The redwood forest powerfully illustrates the unity that Jesus prayed for in John 17:20-26. Just like the redwoods, we as believers are meant to spread our roots out wide, connecting and intertwining with one another. When we stand together, supporting each other through the trials and storms of life, we exhibit the unity that Jesus desired for us. Our collective strength comes from our unity. United, we display the power and glory of God. When we are “Together as One,” our intertwined lives provide stability and support that no one of us could achieve alone.

**TRUTH:** As immerse ourselves in the final moments of Jesus' Farewell Discourse, it is essential to recognize the profound weight and depth of this pivotal concluding message. These last words, delivered in the intimate setting of the Upper Room, provide an enduring portrait of both divine love and eternal truth. Jesus, fully aware of the imminent trials He would face, took this moment not to dwell on His own suffering, but to impart lasting wisdom and assurance to His disciples. Here, within these sacred verses, we find encapsulated the essence of His teachings, the goal of His mission, and necessity of abiding in Him. Jesus' farewell is not merely a parting note but a cornerstone of Christian faith -our oneness.

## **I. Our Unity has Trinitarian Implications**

A. In Jesus' prayer, the statement, *“Just as you Father, are in me and I in you, that they too might be in us,”* captures the profound mystery and intimacy of the believer's union with the triune God. Theologically, this reveals the inner life of the Trinity, an eternal communion of love, will and purpose between the Father and the Son. When Jesus prays for believers to be in “us,” He is inviting them into this divine fellowship, underscoring the unity and indwelling presence that arises from the work of the Holy Spirit.

The unity between Father and Son speaks to the essential unity of the Godhead, a perichoretic relationship where each Person of the Trinity indwells to be “in us” indicates a participation in this Trinitarian life through mystical union with Christ, achieved through faith and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 2:20; 1Cor.6:17).

This union is not a mere metaphysical abstraction but a transformative reality grounding the ecclesiastical and ethical dimensions of the Church. As believers are drawn into the life of God, they reflect the unity and sacrificial love manifest in the Trinity (Jn. 13:34-35). Thus, Jesus' prayer is both an affirmation of divine ontology and an apostolic mandate pointing towards the eschatological fulfillment where believers, united with Christ, partake in the divine nature (2Peter 1:4), inhabiting the fullness of God's eternal purpose and glory.

Through our unity, we offer compelling evidence of God's reconciling work in Christ, showcasing the transformative power of the Gospel. When we embody the love, forgiveness and harmony that characterize God's own triune community, we not only glorify Him by reflecting His nature but also become living testimony to a fragmented world that longs for genuine connection and peace.

**Illustration:** Imagine a beautifully orchestrated symphony, where each musician is diligently playing their unique instrument, guided by a common score and unified under the direction of a skillful conductor. The harmonious blend of diverse melodies and rhythms creates a singular, magnificent piece of music that transcends the individual contributions of any single performer. In this analogy, the church is like the symphony where each believer, with their distinct gifts and abilities, comes together to serve a greater purpose under the divine direction of God.

**Application:** Read books on the Trinity, study the Trinity, and model the unity of the Trinity in all your relationships.

## II. Our Unity has Missional Implications

A. When Jesus prays in John 17:21, “*...so that the world may believe that you sent me,*” He connects the unity of believers to His mission of revealing the Father. This statement underscores the theological interplay between ecclesiology, soteriology, and missiology.

a. **Ecclesiology:** This prayer reveals Jesus’ desire for the church to model the unity that exists within the Trinity. The oneness of the Church is meant to reflect the oneness of the Father and the Son. Such a unity, characterized by love, mutual indwelling, and shared purpose.

The unity among believers reflects the unity within the Trinity. Just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one, the Church is called to mirror divine relational harmony.

b. **Soteriology:** Jesus prays with the recognition that the fruit of unity among His followers has salvific implications. When believers embody the Trinitarian love and unity, it manifests the truth of the Gospel. This authentic witness serves as a tangible evidence to the world of the divine origin of Jesus’ mission. It is to be a foretaste of Heaven.

A unified Church demonstrates the power of the Gospel to reconcile diverse groups into one body. This tangible unity provides a strong witness to the world, validating the message of reconciliation and peace in Christ. Conversely, division and disunity can harm the Church’s witness, making the Gospel appear ineffective or insincere.

c. **Missiology:** This prayer links the Church's unity with His mission to the world. It suggests that the very credibility of Christ's mission hinges on the unity and love displayed by His followers. Therefore, unity is a missional imperative.

Unity fosters a spirit of mutual support and shared purpose, enhancing the overall impact of the Church's mission activities.

**Illustration:** The church is like a lighthouse perched on a rocky shore, its beacon piercing through the dense fog and treacherous waters. This lighthouse stands as a guiding light for ships navigating the dark and stormy seas. Now, think about the lighthouse keepers - each with a distinct and critical role to ensure the light doesn't go out. Some keepers maintain the structure, others clean the lens, while some fuel the lamp, ensuring the light shines at its brightest. Their collective efforts are essential; if any part is neglected, the light could dim or go out, leading to potential disaster for those depending on it. The church is akin to this lighthouse, a beacon of hope and truth in a world often shrouded in confusion, despair, and moral ambiguity. The members of the church are the Keepers.

**Application:** Pray every day to keep everything in the right perspective to be a faithful witness.

### **III. Our Unity has Communal Implications**

A. Disunity within a congregation can stem from a variety of sources, often leading to significant detrimental effects on the congregation's health and individual spiritual lives. Often the issues are not doctrinal orthodoxy, at least not in Baptist life, but interpersonal conflicts. People have unresolved grievances, jealousy, and unforgiveness can breed bitterness and disrupt the bond of love and trust among congregants.

On an even more personal level, disunity significantly affects one's communion with God and others. Isolation and disconnectedness pull back rather than engage, leading to diminished participation in communal spiritual activities. This detachment not only weaken personal faith but also undermined the supportive role of fellowship, leaving individuals spiritually vulnerable. Spiritual pride and self-righteous attitudes can drive wedges between believers, fostering an environment of judgment rather than grace. In turn, these attitudes impede one's relational growth with God, as humility and mutual respect are essential for genuine spiritual communion. Moreover, gossip and slander are particularly corrosive, as they tarnish reputations and sow seeds of distrust, further disqualifying the unity that reflects God's nature to the outside world.

Addressing these determinants of disunity requites a conscious effort towards forgiveness, open communication, and prioritizing the collective mission over individual preferences. By confronting these issues head-on with a commitment to reconciliation and understanding, a congregation can begin to heal and restore the unity that is pivotal for both communal health and personal spiritual development.

**Illustration:** Consider the intricate dance of honeybees within a hive. Each bee has a specific role to fulfill -some gather nectar, others protect the hive, and some nurture the young. The hive thrives on the synchronized efforts of thousands of individual bees working in harmony, directed by the single purpose of sustaining and growing their colony. Should disharmony disrupt this delicate system, the hive's productivity falters, and its very survival is threatened. The hive represents the church, where each member's unique talents and contributions are vital to the body's overall health and mission. Unity in the church, much like the harmony of thriving hive, relies on each member understanding and performing their God-given roles, while working together for a common purpose.

**Application:** Reconcile quickly with those whom you have disunity.

#### **IV. Our Unity has Eschatological Implications**

A. Jesus has one more request, He wants his followers to see the preexistent glory that the Father has given to Him. This echoes His earlier words to the disciples that He is going to prepare a place for them (14:1-4).<sup>1</sup>

When Jesus prays, “*Father, I desire...*” indicates Jesus’ intimate relationship with the Father and highlights His pastoral intercession for His followers. His desire for believer is that they live in eternal communion with God. Jesus continued, “*that they may be where I am...*” can be understood on multiple levels. Eschatologically, Jesus is speaking of the believer’s ultimate destiny to be with Him in heaven. He desires that we share in communion with Him.

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<sup>1</sup> Andreas J. Kostenberger, Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament: John (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 499.

This prayer looks forward to the consummation of God's redemptive plan. Believer's destiny is to dwell eternally in the presence of God, experiencing the fullness of His glory and love. "Where I am..." indicates Heaven, the place of God's supreme presence. This reflects the future reality where believers will dwell in the direct, unmediated presence of Jesus -a fulfillment seen in Revelation 21:3, where God's dwelling is with humanity.

"To see my glory..." looks forward to the eschatological revelation of Christ's majesty. At the Second Coming, Christ will be universally recognized as Lord and His glory will be revealed to all (Phil.2:10-11). Believers will see Him as He is (1Jn. 3:2), an encounter that will transform and glorify them. The glory revealed includes the expansive and inclusive nature of Christ's kingdom, redeeming people from every nation, tribe, and language -a vision highlighted in Revelation 7:9-10, showcasing the full extent of His salvific work and divine glory.

**Application:** Embrace the beautiful reality that one day we will all be together in glory.

## Conclusion

The Farewell Discourse of Jesus, encapsulated in the Gospel of John, stands as a profound linchpin of New Testament theology and practice. Throughout chapters 13 to 17, we witness the culmination of Jesus' earthly ministry as He imparts His final words of wisdom, comfort, and command to His disciples.

This intimate dialogue poignantly reveals Jesus' unwavering commitment to His mission and His enduring love for humanity. Through acts of humble service, such as washing the disciples' feet, and earnest prayer, He sets forth a pattern for us to follow. His teachings on the Holy Spirit, the true vine, and the new commandment to love one another are as relevant today as they were in that upper room.

As we reflect on this compassion-laden discourse, several timeless truths emerge: the significance of servant leadership, the necessity of abiding in Christ, the unifying power of love, and the assurance of God's everlasting presence through the Holy Spirit. These themes are more than theological concepts; they are practical imperatives that shape the essence of Christian life and community.

In studying the Farewell Discourse, believers are called to a deeper faith and a more dynamic expression of their discipleship. The words of Jesus resonate through the ages, calling each generation of His followers to embody the love, faith, and unity that He so passionately endorsed.

Through this commentary, it is our hope that readers will be both challenged and inspired — challenged to examine their own spiritual journeys and inspired to live out Jesus' teachings with renewed fervor and dedication. The Farewell Discourse serves not only as a reflection of Jesus' ultimate sacrifice but also as a blueprint for a transformative and enduring faith that can thrive even in the face of adversity.

May the insights gained from this exploration of Jesus' final words to His disciples empower us to carry forward His legacy of love, service, and divine connection, drawing us ever closer to the heart of God.