
Last week we started our study in John 17 and what is often referred to as Jesus' High Priestly prayer. If you remember, in the beginning of the prayer Jesus spoke of His relationship with the Father and now He is specifically addressing the 11 disciples (as Judas has already abandoned them); but, as we will see, when we get to verse 20 that He has also been incorporating us—all true believers—into this prayer for the disciples. We are going to pick up right where we left off beginning in verse 11.

John 17:11-12

"I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are." While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.

As we noted last week, Jesus' prayer transcends time as in the Spirit He has come before the throne of the Father (which, by the way, is exactly what we do when we pray) and therefore He can prospectively say that He is no longer in this world but we are. And Jesus is not just getting sentimental and all choked up here; He is legitimately concerned for us as He knows how difficult it is to live as aliens and strangers in this place where we not only do not belong but where we are considered to be enemies.

While He walked on this earth Jesus guarded and protected all that were His. No harm came to anyone and not one of them fell away from the faith (I say that because Judas did not fall from his faith for he never had saving faith in the first place). But now Jesus is about to leave the world; therefore, He entrusts what belongs to Him to His Father. Jesus pleads with His Father to keep the disciples (and us) in His own name; but notice that Jesus prefaces His request by calling on the intrinsic nature of His Father's holiness ("Holy Father"). In the Greek this adjective ("*hagios*") is very special and seems to encompass more than just something sacred (which would be the word "*heiros*"), more than something worthy and honorable (which would be the word "*semnos*", and more than something that is pure and free from defilement (or "*hagnos*"). Rather, this adjective gathers together and comprehensively expresses all that is godlike.

So what do you think Jesus meant when He said: "keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me?" From the beginning, the Jews always knew God as "Jehovah" (***Genesis 4:26***) or the great "I Am," which is the name He spoke to Moses (***Exodus 3:11-14***). Then lo and behold, Jesus took upon Himself this same name when He said: "unless you believe I Am you will die in your sins" (***John 8:24***) and "before Abraham was I Am" (***John 8:58***). He also used this name in making various references to who He is for us:

I Am the bread of life (***John 6:35***)

I Am the light of the world (***John 8:12***)

I Am the door (***John 10:7***)

I Am the good shepherd (***John 10:11***)

I am the Son of God (***John 10:36***)

I Am the resurrection (**John 11:25**)

I Am the way, the truth, and the life (**John 14:6**)

I Am the true vine (**John 15:1**)

Therefore, we could probably rephrase verse 11 to say: “Father, with everything You are be to them everything they could ever need in the same way that while I was with them I was everything they could ever need.”

This is powerful! This prayer should bring you great comfort you as you can have absolute and undiluted confidence that your heavenly Father is, Himself, everything you need and He is the one who watches over you with all that He is. This is why we can and must trust ourselves to Him. Besides, Jesus prayed only according to the will of the Father; therefore, we know that this prayer was not only heard but answered and has therefore become our reality.

So what happened with Judas? Why wasn't he “protected”? Jesus refers to Judas as the “son of perdition,” which literally means that destruction was not just His destiny but it was also innate in his character (the word “son” is often used in the Bible to describe someone's character). It is the same phrasing that Paul used when he talked about the Antichrist and called him the son of destruction (**2 Thessalonians 2:3**). Judas' duplicity, treachery, and avarice were rooted deep in his soul. Motivated by his love for money, he was bent on destroying the Son of Man; and, because he was also a tool for Satan, at the same time his acts were a foolish attempt by the enemy to destroy all of mankind.

But you might ask yourself, didn't the Father give Judas to Jesus and didn't Jesus choose Judas? Just because Judas followed Jesus and was asked to be part of the 12 does not mean that He had been chosen by Jesus to receive eternal life.

“Many are called, but few are chosen” (**Matthew 22:14**). In **John 10:27** Jesus clearly said that His sheep hear His voice and follow Him and He gives them eternal life. Judas did not truly follow (at least not in the spiritual sense of walking in Jesus’ steps) and was therefore proven to not be one of the chosen sheep.

Judas was not washed in the Word.

John 13:10-11

Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean."

Judas was not chosen

John 13:18

"I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'HE WHO EATS MY BREAD HAS LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME.

Judas did not come to Jesus and did not “believe” Him

John 6:37-40

"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out." For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. "This is the will of Him who sent Me,

that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

Judas had bound his soul to the devil

John 6:70-71

Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?" Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.

If you think about it, this whole Judas thing is pretty scary. Jesus had only 12 disciples that He kept closest to Him. Yet, from within this special group of disciples came raw evil. From within those who "followed" came one who moved with the spirit of the antichrist—one who denied that Jesus is the Christ. And it is clear that no one but Jesus knew that Judas was not a true believer but a great liar, for He had everyone fooled.

I think this is one of Satan's favorite places to operate—from within a body of believers. It's how he can potentially do the greatest damage. In ***Matthew 13:24-30*** Jesus tells a story of a man who planted good seed in his field. But at night an enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat. This treachery was not immediately apparent for at a certain stage of growth the wheat and the weeds look alike. Thus, the farmer did not want his servants to go pull out the weeds for

fear that they might accidentally pull out the wheat. Instead, he said wait until they mature and fruit for then it will be easy to discern between the two. This parable provides quite a lesson to us and to all believers.

Satan is always scheming and one of his moves is to plant “look a-likes” in the body, and it is often so hard to tell who’s who until you see the fruit. I am not just talking about the fruit of the Spirit verses the fruit of the flesh, since all of us have spent way too much time in the flesh; although, if you never see God’s Agape love produced in a person’s life, then you might want to be very wary since that is the primary fruit of the Spirit. But we must be aware that this is how Satan operates.

Matthew 7:15-20

"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves." You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit." Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits.

Paul warned the church of Ephesus to be wary of these ravenous wolves. He knew that Satan would sow his seeds and raise up men from within the fellowship who would not live to glorify the Son, but would want to take the glory for themselves. These would be men who would want to be important, influential,

and recognized as “spiritual” leaders when they really have nothing but darkness to offer.

Acts 20:29-31

I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert.

In John’s later years he was actually the pastor of the church at Ephesus and he wrote addressing this very issue.

1 John 2:18-19; 22-23

Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us...and who is a liar? Anyone who says that Jesus is not the Christ. Anyone who denies the Father and the Son is an antichrist. Anyone who denies the Son doesn't have the Father, either. But anyone who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

It's pretty clear that we must be wary of Satan's attempts to damage our fellowship but we have to be careful that we don't take our eyes off of Jesus and focus too much on the enemy. Yes, we can learn a lot by seeing the fruit that is produced by a person's life; but with that said, we need to be very careful about ever making a judgment about who is wheat and who is a weed (hence, we are not to go and pull out any of the crop until the fruit is ultimately born).

Therefore, I think we just need to keep teaching those who come to our church why they can trust Jesus and if they get sick of it and leave, we have done our part without doing any accidental damage to the crop of wheat. If, however, they stay and start teaching in any way shape or form that Jesus is not our "I Am" and that there is another way or some diluted way that incorporates a little of Jesus and a lot of self, then we have an obligation to step in and ensure that everyone knows that such teaching is of the spirit of antichrist and has no place on our body.

In addition, if someone ever starts trying to draw those in the body unto themselves instead of teaching people how to be dependent upon Jesus, then we know we must step in and put the kibosh on such activity. And that includes me. My job is to help you learn how to abide in Christ and depend upon Him for your very lives. Yes, there will be times where you might be very dependent upon me, or another leader, to help you walk and learn how to trust Jesus; and that is ok, especially when you are young in your faith. But that is not ever to be the steady state of affairs.

If I do my job right, I am to teach you how to be in relationship with God and derive your strength from Him; I am to encourage you to detach from me (or any leader) and attach exclusively to Jesus. Leaders are merely trail guides to show

you the pathway of faith, but we are not the way. Thus, if I, or another leader, ever flip out and start trying to make you beholden or hyper-dependent upon me, then it is incumbent upon you, as a body, to deal with it and put me back in my place. The glory must always be to Jesus and only Him for He is the way!

Now back to Judas, even though Jesus knew he was a rat, he never “ratted” him out. Jesus just let him ultimately do it to himself and all the while continued to teach Judas the truth. And because Judas had up front and personal experience with God in the flesh and was taught the same truth that Peter and John were taught; he is without excuse. He chose purposefully and deliberately to live in unbelief and to deny that Jesus is the Christ; and, in so doing, he unwittingly became the one to fulfill the ancient prophecies.

Looking in the Old Testament it is really hard to figure out what scriptures foretold Judas’ betrayal with the exception of **Psalm 41:9** which Jesus referenced in **John 13:18** (“Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me”). Thankfully the Holy Spirit spoke to Peter to show us what scriptures spoke of Judas; but even so it’s still very confusing.

Acts 1:16-20

Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. "For he was counted among us and received his share in this ministry." (Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out. And it became known to all who were living in Jerusalem; so that in their own

language that field was called Hakeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) "For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'LET HIS HOMESTEAD BE MADE DESOLATE, AND LET NO ONE DWELL IN IT'; and, 'LET ANOTHER MAN TAKE HIS OFFICE.'"

These were quotes from *Psalm 69:25*; and *Psalm 109:8* and if it were not for the Spirit revealing this to Peter I would have never even come close to figuring out that these were prophetically speaking about Judas. Anyway, enough about Judas, let's move on.

John 17:13-19

"But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves." I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one." They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth." As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth."

I am going to hold off on covering the end of verse **11** "that they may be one even as we are" and verse **13** "that they may have My joy made full in themselves" until we deal with verse **22-23** "that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity." So for now

let's move on to verse **14-15** where Jesus says: "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one." This is the part of the prayer that always bums me out; sometimes I wish He would have prayed for us to either be taken out of the world for good or to be absolutely protected from the enemy. Wouldn't that be cool if as soon as a person accepted Christ they were swooped up in to heaven—kind of like an instant rapture? But I guess that would be problematic, for who would be around to teach anyone about Jesus. I guess He wanted us here so we could manifest His Word to all who have been chosen for salvation and to demonstrate to those in the world that even the ruler of this world has no power over a believer.

Jesus says that He gave them the *Word* and **John 17:6** says that they kept His *Word*. It is the willingness of a person to receive the *Word* of God that separates a true believer from all others in the world. The religious leaders, and quite frankly almost the entire nation of Israel, were so beholden to the world's system and their Father the devil (**John 8:44**) that they were deaf to the *Word* that was spoken to them. They were also blind to the *Word* that was lived for them. But the disciples, on the other hand, received the *Word*. When so many others refused to follow Jesus, Peter, speaking for the disciples, said: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God" (**John 6:68-69**).

Jesus prayed "keep them from evil." It is translated "evil one" because the adjective is masculine and singular. But, with that said, the adjective also allows for a broader understanding and could speak of the whole realm of evil. But I

want us to focus on the word “keep” as it does not mean what you might think. Jesus was not praying that the Father literally keep us away from evil. In addition, Jesus is not encouraging us in any way shape or form to isolate ourselves in some Christian monastery or community where we try and avoid the trappings of evil. Rather, He is praying that the Father watch over us with the *Word* such that evil does not influence our lives. The Greek word Jesus used was “*tereo*” which means to watch. He did not use “*phulasso*” which would mean to place in isolation or the word “*koustodia*” which implies a fortress or full military guard.

A perfect example of this prayer in action is found in the book of Luke where Jesus talks to Peter about His ensuing denial.

Luke 22:31-32

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

The best way for us to understand the prayer, “keep us from evil” is to realize that Jesus wants us to be people who can live in the midst of evil yet be set apart by the *Word* such that our ***faith*** never wanes—even if we happen to fail and totally blow it. This is awesome. Remember, the issue of sin is no longer an issue of sin. Jesus sacrifice was sufficient. This is the reason why Jesus does not seem to be moved at all by the fact that Peter is going to deny Him. Satan asked for permission to mess with Peter and he got it. This is so comforting and discomfoting alike.

First of all, it is clear that even Satan cannot come against those that belong to Jesus without the *Gatekeeper* first giving permission—that is super comforting. But the fact that Jesus just gives Him permission is a little unnerving unless we remember that Satan is just a tool which God uses to accomplish His purposes.

Notice that Jesus does not even try and get Peter to not sin; rather, He just prays that the Father will watch over Him or “keep” him during this time so his faith will not fail. Jesus entrusted Peter to the Father’s watchful care knowing that when Peter repents the Spirit will use even this sin to strengthen and encourage the larger body of Christ who, like Peter, will blow it over and over again.

So “keep them from evil” can be understood as a request for the Father to preserve our faith regardless of what comes against us—and because we live in the world there will be plenty that comes against us. I think the Old Testament parallel to this is found in Isaiah 43.

Isaiah 43:1-3

But now, thus says the Lord, your Creator, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine! "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior

In returning to the discussion of the *Word*, in **verses 16-19** Jesus asked the Father to sanctify us in truth. This word “sanctify” has two primary meanings: 1) to be set apart from the world or set aside for God, and 2) to be holy or pure. The *Word* (which is the truth) accomplishes both in our lives.

If we receive the *Word*, it will have the effect of causing us to discard the world and present ourselves exclusively to God as a living and holy sacrifice. It will transform our minds so that we may know the good and perfect will of God such that we can live to fulfill that will (**Romans 12:1-2**).

I want to caution you, however, being sanctified by the *Word* is not about knowledge of the *Word* or even about our preaching the *Word*; it is about living the *Word*. This is made clear to us when Jesus said that He sanctifies Himself for our sake. Jesus set Himself apart exclusively for the purpose of fulfilling the work that His Father had appointed for Him; including offering His own life as a sacrifice for our sins. In everything, Jesus always trusted Himself completely to God and in perfect obedience lived by faith according to the *Word* of the Father. As such, He became the perfect example of what it means for us to live the by faith and similarly be completely set apart for the Father to only do what the Father tells us to do, to only go where the Father tells us to go, and to only say what the Father tells us to say—nothing more and nothing less!

You see, in the same way that the Jesus was the Father’s disciple and was sent into the world to fulfill the Father’s appointments for His life, Jesus sent us into the world as His apostles to similarly fulfill the Father’s appointments for our lives.

Ephesians 2:10

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

But our minds must be transformed by the *Word* in order for us to even know how to hear His voice in our lives and understand the specific assignments which God has prepared for us. As we take our knowledge of the *Word* and chose to let it become authoritative over our lives—when we actively choose to believe it and bet our life on it—then our minds will be transformed by the *Word* as we believe the truth. Don't be deceived, the power of the *Word* in our lives is in our choice to live it.

Further, the *Word* will also make us pure and holy. A note of caution, however, as this is not to be understood in terms of your ability to comply with certain behavioral rules for the road like: do not drink or chew or go with girls who do. Nothing like that! Rather, the *Word* causes us to be intrinsically holy and pure just like Jesus is Holy and pure. Therefore, this notion of our sanctification can only be understood in the context of our New Creation. You see it was through the living *Word* that we first became washed clean (***John 15:3; Ephesians 5:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:11***) and given a new nature. And it is through the *Word* that our minds are transformed so that we can learn to choose to live from this new nature and no longer live according to the dictates of our old sinful nature.

Ephesians 4:22-24

“in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

So the living Word of God will set us apart exclusively for the Father’s purposes and allow us to live in this world as Jesus lived—in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Jesus also said in verse **17**: “Your word is truth.” We know that in the gospel of John Jesus is described as both the word (***John 1:14***) and the truth (***John 14:6***). This is why we must never fall into the trap of treating the Bible as a static piece of information to be memorized or analyzed, but as a miraculous expression of the person of Jesus Christ. Understand that when Jesus said that He gave the disciples the *Word*, He was literally saying that He had entered into a personal relationship with the disciples and gave to them Himself! This is so beautiful. In fact, the entire *Word* of God is about God making Himself manifest to men for the purpose of allowing men to be in a relationship with God in order that we might experience and know His love.

This takes us back to the idea of sanctification and the *New Creation*. Being sanctified in the *Word* means that Jesus, the truth, comes to make His home within our bodies allowing us to trust ourselves to Him and yield in complete submission to His will and purposes for our life. But never forget that it is up to us to receive this *Word*. I pray that none of us will be like those religious leaders who

were deaf to the *Word* or like all those that heard the *Word* and saw the *Word* and still rejected it. Jesus wants you to let the *Word* have its intended effect in your life and truly sanctify you in truth by teaching you why you can trust yourself to Jesus and why your Father will always be everything that you will ever need.

Lord willing, we will continue with this prayer next week.

Let's Pray