

# John 17:13-19 – The High Priestly Prayer (Part 2)

## Intro

- It has been said that eavesdroppers seldom hear anything good about themselves.
  - o i.e. if you listen in on someone else's conversation, you might not like what you hear.
  - o In John 17, Jesus allows us to listen in on his conversation with his Father, and what we hear about ourselves is both encouraging and challenging.
  - o Remember, in this prayer Jesus is talking only about those who are in a right relationship with God through faith in him
  
- Last week we looked at the first part of Jesus' prayer (vv. 1-12) and were reminded of who he is and how he views us. We saw:
  - o Though Jesus is the glorious God of the universe, his glory is most fully revealed in his self-sacrificing love, and he ties his glory to his relationship with his followers.
  - o His will is that we have a perfect, eternal relationship with God (Father & Son) and we are brought into & kept in that relationship by the power, love, & grace of God.
  - o With that kind of confidence, we can say, "If God is for us, who can be against us?"
  
- Through the rest of the prayer, Jesus talks to his Father about his plan for us.
  - o This too brings us encouragement because we know that God will accomplish his will.
  - o It also challenges us because the Christian life is a lot more rewarding if we cooperate with God's will rather than being dragged along resisting the whole way.
  - o There is also the challenge where if your life looks nothing like what Jesus is describing, you may need to consider whether you truly are his follower or if you just said a prayer once-upon-a-time as if they were magic fire insurance words.
  
- The part of the prayer we are going to look at this morning centers on sanctification.
  - o The main idea of *sanctification* is *being made holy* or *being set apart*.
  - o Usually we think of it in terms of being set apart *from* sin (not yielding to temptation), and that is certainly a big part of it.
  - o It also includes being set apart *to* God for his use according to his purpose.

## (13) Joy

- In the leadup to praying about our sanctification, Jesus prays that the teachings he has given will fill us with joy.
  
- Many people think of holiness and joy as being opposites.
  - o When they think of someone trying to be holy, they may think of someone who is always a bit grim and dislikes anything fun (how Puritans are often portrayed).

- Or they say, “God doesn’t want you to be happy; he wants you to be holy.”
  - As if holiness will always make you miserable.
  - As if God does not want you to experience gladness and enjoyment.
  - This is a slander against our loving God.
- As Jesus prays, we see that God wants both our joy *and* our holiness....and *joy* is not a completely different thing from *happiness* and *gladness* (e.g. Matthew 5:11-12).
- Being set apart for God’s purpose does not mean miserably missing out on life; it means living life as it was meant to be.
  - John 10:10 – Jesus came to deliver us from the destructive ways of this world and give us true “life to the full.”
    - That does mean giving up certain ways of pursuing momentary happiness (“the fleeting pleasures of sin” – Hebrews 11:25)...
    - ...but as we grow in our relationship with our great God, we increasingly desire and delight in things that are truly good, beautiful, and eternally valuable (Psalm 37:4-6).
  - Being set apart by God brings joy, but it can make life difficult in the short-term, which is what Jesus turns to next in his prayer.

## (14-16) Protection

- One reason that holy living can produce difficulty is that we are no longer part of the broken, sinful world system and our values and behavior should reflect that fact.
- In chapters 15-16 Jesus has already described to his disciples how they can expect opposition from the world.
  - The world mistreated Jesus because he pointed out its need for salvation from sin (and who likes to be told that they’re not good enough?).
  - Early Christians rejoiced and felt honored when they suffered for their faith because it meant they were so much like Jesus that they were treated like him.
- It is God’s purpose to leave his followers in this world for now.
  - We are not supposed to withdraw into little closed communities where we avoid all contact with unbelievers who act like unbelievers (1 Corinthians 5:9-13).
    - We can’t be shocked when those who do not have a relationship with God do not value the things of God.
    - It is not our responsibility to punish them for their sins.
    - It is through our living among them (interacting with them, showing God’s love, speaking God’s truth) that God is glorified and draws them to himself.
  - Jesus prays for our protection from Satan as we live in hostile territory over which Satan has a high degree of control.

- We live here on planet earth in the middle of ungodly society, but we are not part of it (the well-known phrase “in the world but not of it” is a paraphrase of these verses)
  - o This does not mean that we just have a knee-jerk reaction where we reject & condemn anything new or popular so that we’re 20-50 years behind the times.
    - E.g. bad-mouthing fidget spinners or blue hair dye
    - “It’s too hard to be holy [to actually evaluate what is right and wrong] so let’s be weird.” – Dr. Ingalls
  - o This does mean that we should not adopt the beliefs, values, or behaviors of the world that contradict God’s truth.

## (17-19) Sanctification

- (17) Believing and living the truth of God’s Word is what sanctifies us – what sets us apart from sin and to God.
  - o The indwelling Holy Spirit produces godly character traits and motivations which enable us to gladly obey God’s principles & commands as revealed in Scripture.
  - o We have an objective standard of right and wrong that is the first and foremost consideration in evaluating claims of truth and courses of action.
  - o Faithfully following this standard will inevitably set us apart from our society; making us “outsiders” in the ways that matter to God.
    - This is a good thing – it is what Jesus prayed for! Don’t shrink back from it.
    - Don’t tie your identity to merely earthly faction or philosophy that is destined to perish along with this fallen world.
  
- A sampling of areas where we are to be set apart from the ways of the world (a lot of the verses in this section are from Ephesians 4-5 – off with the old and on with the new):
  
- Marriage & Sexuality
  - o I’m starting with this one not because it’s somehow “the most important” but because it is an area where our society & God’s Word are very clearly out of sync.
  - o Our society is at a place where it’s pretty much “anything goes as long as all participants are consenting adults.”
  - o Scripture teaches that marriage and sexuality are good gifts from God to be used according to his design.
    - Mark 10:6-9 – Jesus defines marriage as a man and woman united for life.
    - Scripture consistently praises sexuality within marriage, contrasting it with all other sexual activity as *sexual immorality* (Hebrews 13:4, 1 Corinthians 7:2).
  
- Wealth & Possessions
  - o The goal of society (the “American dream” even) is to accumulate enough stuff to lead a comfortable life with plenty of leisure and entertainment.

- Scripture exhorts Christians to be content in all circumstances, and tells us that the love and pursuit of money leads to sin, suffering, and apostasy (1 Timothy 6:9-10).
  - We are encouraged to be generous from the heart (1 Corinthians 9:6-8), knowing that how we use our money shows what we truly value (Matthew 6:19-21).
- Speech & Communication
- In our society, speech has become more and more untethered from anything that resembles how a follower of Jesus should communicate.
    - Profanity (including using God’s names interchangeably with obscenities) is seen as just a way to express strong emotion.
    - Insults, mockery, slander, and rage are a regular part of communication (especially in online disagreements).
  - God’s Word tells us that a person who give free-reign to their tongue and says whatever they please shows their profession of faith to be untrue & worthless (James 1:26).
    - Our words should help people, build them up, and express praise to God for his goodness, not be used as angry weapons, filthy exclamations, or crude jokes (Ephesians 4:29-32, 5:4).
    - This is true even when correcting those who need to hear God’s truth (2 Timothy 2:23-26)
- One more, and I saved this one for last because I see it as an area of failure that is absolutely destroying the testimony of the church here in the US – Double Standards
- Society often has double standards when it comes to how people are treated (there’s “those people” and “my people”).
    - “Those people” are undeserving of compassion, respect, legal protection, maybe even of life itself...
      - They’re unborn so they’re not really a person.
      - They’re Hispanic or an immigrant, so they must be a criminal.
      - They’re a protestor, so they must be a rioter or domestic terrorist.
      - They’re a Muslim, so they must support violence & terrorism.
      - They’re poor, so they must be lazy.
    - “Those people” are so bad that it justifies anything said or done by “my people” (I excuse or even applaud things that I would otherwise condemn).
  - God’s sanctifying Word does not permit us to play these games. We must have godly impartiality and integrity.
    - James 2:8-9 – Applying “Love your neighbor as yourself” to only some people is a serious violation of God’s commands.
    - Ephesians 5:7-11 – Joining a person in their sin (whether direct participation or excusing and condoning it) is the exact opposite of sanctification.
  - Be sanctified by the truth of God’s Word, not pulled into the ways of the world.

- (18-19) We are set apart to carry on Jesus' work in the world.
  - o A description used elsewhere: we are the body of Christ.
    - We are his visible, physical presence in the world.
    - We are empowered by the Holy Spirit and set apart to do God's will just as Jesus was.
  - o Jesus' sanctification is perfect, but ours is ongoing and will not be complete until we see him face to face. (I John 3:1-3)
  - o Imagine having nothing within you that finds sin at all appealing.
  - o Imagine no more having to stop and think "is this something I should do?" because none of your desires will be sinful...all will be according to the will of God.
    - If you are saved, that will be you someday.
    - If you are saved, you will have a desire to be moving in that direction already.

## Application Questions

- Am I acting like the visible, physical presence of Jesus in the world?
  - o Next time we'll talk about doing this in unity which is what Jesus emphasizes next as he makes it clear that his prayer is about all of his followers, but for now think in terms of you individually
  - o When people observe or interact with you would they be able to come away saying, "yeah, that seems like how Jesus would act."?
  - o That is what we are set apart to do
  
- Am I pursuing sanctification?
  - o Is the Word of God a daily part of my life? (17 – "Sanctify them by/in the truth, your Word is truth")
  - o Is there any ongoing worldly behavior in my life that I need take off and separate myself from?
  - o Any godly behavior, some aspect of loving and serving God, that I am neglecting and have to put on?
  - o If there is, ask for God's help, maybe ask for a brother or sister's help in bringing your daily life more in line with Scripture...continuing in the journey of sanctification with the help of the Holy Spirit, just as Jesus prayed for you to do.