

Jesus Prays For His Disciples – Jesus Prays For Us

John 17:6-19: This reading is often called the high-priestly prayer of Jesus. It commends the disciples into the Father's keeping in view of Jesus' coming death upon the completion of his earthly mission and ascension. He prays firstly for their preservation and also for their sanctification. In the gospels the use of the word sanctification is rare. In John's gospel, and in this reading, sanctification concerns our relationship with the triune God on the one hand and mission on the other. Jesus is the one sanctified by the Father and sent into the world. The disciples have learnt the truth from Jesus concerning the true nature of the Father and his own full authority to reveal the Father, they truly belong to God. Jesus is glorified thereby, and they are separated from the evil world. They will need continued protection, however. This will come about if the unity existing among the Persons of the triune Godhead is established also among them. The joy Jesus has experienced in his own mission will similarly strengthen them as it is given. They will need further to be kept from the attacks of Satan and the evil world because Christ's work will be continued by their presence in the world. Therefore the Father will consecrate them (sanctify them) for the task as Jesus himself was.

In this reading Jesus prays to God the Father giving thanks and glory to God for giving the disciples to him. Jesus thanks God for having given them especially to Him in Verse 6, '*You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.*' Jesus goes on to thank His Father for keeping them faithful and that they believed everything that Jesus had taught them and that he was sent by God. In this prayer Jesus is praying for the body of believers, the royal priesthood that will spread the 'good news' of salvation and redemption through Jesus Christ.

Jesus goes on to say in Verse 10 "I am glorified in them" What does this mean? Jesus in his prayer in the first part of this verse describes a unity. 'Yours are mine and mine are yours'. God's glory is the revelation of his character and presence. The lives of Jesus disciples reveal his character, and he is a present to the world through them. This prayer is for his disciples at the time but is shared for us today as the body of believers. By grace and faith we too have received the present of Jesus Christ in our lives. What are we doing with this amazing gift? Does your life reveal Jesus character and presence to the world and the people you come in contact with??

Let me come at this text in a slightly different way. Francis of Assisi, the 13th century saint whose spiritual awakening took him from '*a boozing in silks as a rich party boy to preaching the Gospel in rags.*' In today's language a rich party boy who liked to drink a lot of alcohol. Francis upon his conversion quoted, "I have been all things unholy. If God can work through me, He can work through anyone." Francis actually gave up his earthly inheritance from his family to serve the Lord a poor and humble man.

St Francis of Assisi. Is the man who came up with the phrase of '**Wearing the world like a loose garment**' which touches us in a few places and only then, lightly. This

saying is used in the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. In Francis mind it is the transformation to becoming more Christlike and spiritual person, seeking first the Kingdom of God. It allows us to create a peaceful space for ourselves, separated from the incessant incoming arrows that the devil fires at us of uncertainty, fear, anger, unmet needs and other painful perceptions. To **wear the world as a loose garment** is to perceive things as something the world and life will always press at us and around us, but do not touch us but 'lightly' Most things are either outside our control or ultimately unimportant. We do not need to grasp, manage, dwell on or react to everything that happens to us, but can choose to keep the "world" at an emotional distance. We talk to God and can place all of our issues and concerns at the foot of the Cross and hopefully leave them there. It is an attitude that can relax the body and relieve the mind of poisonous emotions when confronted with people, places or things that upset us.

To be in the world but not of it, to live and move through life without being emotionally attached to everything that happens, is to wear the world lightly and be at peace. This spiritual plane gives us an opportunity to rise above the world and rest with the Spirit. Of course we are going to experience all the emotions of life. It is not saying we must completely detach from the world, having no emotions and feelings. It is more a place of retreat and solitude. St Francis is talking about a transformation of the heart to focus on what is important in our lives and that is to be Jesus disciples.

The expression "Out of this world" is a way to say that something is so extraordinary that it does not seem that it could be from our planet. Usually, a person says it when they have experienced something beyond comparison: "This chocolate is out of this world!", and then Dianne quickly adds but it's not good for you Ian so I had better eat it as it will make me happy.

The world longs for the 'out of this world experience', doesn't it? The world looks to hit new heights and ascend to utopia. Longing for the 'the perfect relationship, the supermodel look, the fashion, the accessories, the stuff, the job, the car, the biggest plasma screen, the popularity, the reputation, the house...out of this world! And it is never enough. The world longs for more. More opulence, more money, more travel and extravagance; more living for the self.

We can long to be out of this world for other reasons, can't we? When our life goes wrong; when our suffering, pain, and burdens that pile up lead us to long to be out of this world and at home with the Lord. How often have we prayed, 'Lord please take me home to be with you. I've had enough of this life', or something similar.

But Jesus says in verse 15: "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one." He uses the storms of affliction to bring us closer to Him. Without wanting to sound insensitive, just ponder for a moment: if we didn't have suffering...would we know God? Those who are persecuted and destitute, those who have nothing left to hope in but God, don't look to the world, but to Him. How sweet it is to learn the Saviour's love when nobody else loves us! There is one thing worse than going through life with immense burden and pain and that is to go through it without God.

In Verse 11 Jesus clearly does not pray for us to be taken out of the world. Jesus prays, “ I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world and I come to You, Holy Father, keep through your name those whom You have given Me that they may be one as We are.” Jesus is praying about the unity of the Truine God and asking that his followers too would be united in harmony and love as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are united in purpose. What is our purpose here at Christ Church Murray Bridge? To further the Kingdom of God in our community. To show the love of Jesus Christ so that all people will know Jesus Christ and have an intimate relationship with him. We can all do this wherever God has placed us in this community. It is wonderful we come together as the body of believers and worship God on Sunday’s. However, the real work of Christ, the mission field is outside these walls. I would like each of you to reflect on what you are doing out there to further God’s kingdom to share this amazing gift we have through Jesus Christ?

We can all come up with a lot of reasons, excuses why we are not doing this but through God we can do immeasurably more. The Lord will give you the strength and courage to serve Him if you only sincerely pray for this and trust in his provision.

In verse 13, Jesus prays *‘that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves’*. The key to immeasurable joy is living in an intimate contact with Christ, the source of all joy. When we live in the joy of Christ we will experience God’s special care and protection and see the victory God brings even when defeat seems certain. As I read this passage I reflected on the believers in Myanmar who are really experiencing many things during this time of political unrest. Yet there is a joyfulness in our conversations which blows Dianne and I away. Personally, the last time I was very unwell in early 2016 and ended up in hospital with my mind being very broken I was able to hold on to the joy that Jesus gave me through faith and his Word. Immersing myself in the Word, journaling and praying brought me out of the time of darkness with the help of doctors and nurses. God healed my mind.

There is no doubt Christians are up against it. Jesus states, Verse 14 *‘I have given them your word and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of this world.’* The world hates Christians because we have different values from the world. As Christ’s followers we do not cooperate with the world by joining in their sin. Yes we do sin but as redeemed children of God we are sanctified. We are living examples against the world’s immorality. The world follows satan’s agenda and Satan is the avowed enemy of Jesus and his people.

The Word of God is powerful and is our defence against the attacks of the Devil. Jesus quoted Scripture to the enemy when he went through the time of temptation soon after his baptism. We are told that the Word of God is a double edged sword which cuts through everything including bones and marrow. It gets in to the very core of who we are and speaks in to our heart. In Ephesians 6: 10 – 20 St Paul talks about the armour of God as we are not just wrestling against flesh and blood but against spiritual powers of darkness. We have the shield of faith, the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit. Prayer is mentioned as a powerful means of protecting ourselves and the other saints. Paul ends this with *‘that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the*

gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.'

If the disciples are to continue the mission they too must be sanctified, being brought into an intimate fellowship enjoyed by Father and Son. Jesus prays that the Father would sanctify the disciples in the truth, verse 17 So that they may be filled with God's being and power. Jesus sanctifies himself through his death and then sends his disciples into the world just as the Father had sent him imparting to them the Holy Spirit. The presence of the Holy Spirit is the key to Paul's view of sanctification. Paul holds to the view that we become holy, sanctified based on the historical reality of the atoning death of Christ and resurrection which is brought into reality by the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the bridge to God the Father. We stand before our God and maker, holy and righteous. Jesus prays this prayer today as he is with us and at the same time at the right hand of God the Father, interceding for us constantly, asking to keep us strong in the faith and to protect us from attack. The Holy Spirit in us and for us speaks in to our hearts and allows us to talk with God, to have understanding and the Spirit pleads for us and with us.

In closing I would like to encourage all of us here to live your lives knowing God's transforming love and friendship. That he is our loving Father and has our backs. Go in peace. May God bless you and keep you growing in your faith. To be fruitful followers of Christ.

Amen