

We are continuing in the Gospel of John, and the passage this morning is part of a prayer that is commonly known as Jesus' high priestly prayer because in the prayer he acts as a mediating priest who petitions the Father on behalf of his followers. This powerful prayer comes just before his crucifixion, so it is a sort of 'farewell' type of prayer, which serves as a summary of the entire Gospel of John. Many of the themes of John are spoken by Jesus in this prayer, themes such as his obedience and glorification, his claim to be one with God, the calling out of disciples and their mission in the world, their unity through the Son and the Father, and their final destiny. He begins the prayer by praying for himself, which we saw in last week's sermon. Then he prays for his disciples, which we will look at this morning, and finally he prays for the church, or more specifically, all believers, which will be the next sermon.

Now, we'll see that Jesus does not pray for the world, but he sends his disciples into the world— so we will look at how John uses the term world, and the differences between his use of the term "world" in [John 3:16](#) and this passage. As well, we will look at exactly what Jesus petitioned in his prayer for his disciples. I will highlight his confidence in his disciples faith, which I think is very assuring for us as we struggle in our own faith. Finally, Jesus said that he is saying "these things" so that his disciples may have the full measure of joy within them. Now, how many here would like to have the full measure of joy within you? I think too often people think that if they become a devoted Christian then they have to become a solemn, serious, and ultimately joyless person who has to shun everything in the world that gives joy. That's not what Jesus wants for us, it is not what he prayed in his farewell prayer. So, we're going to look at "these things," according to Jesus, that will become our full measure of joy as we live in this world.

So turn with me in your Bibles to [John 17:6-19](#) - this is the word of the Lord for you and myself this morning.

— (Scripture)

Jesus prays for his disciples in this prayer, and right from the start we can see the aim of Jesus' ministry and the characteristics of his disciples. In verse 6, Jesus said, "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world." The ministry of Jesus is one of revelation. The reason why Jesus came was to reveal the Father to those who God chooses for salvation— Jesus' ministry to us is to reveal the Father to us— so what Jesus is all about is bringing us back into a personal relationship with the One who created us as he saves us. Jesus is the only one who can reveal our Creator to us and bring us back into fellowship with him. That is important because in order for Jesus to reveal our Creator to us, he has to pluck us from the world. But notice this, Jesus said his disciples were those "you gave me out of the world," and he speaks of their characteristics, saying they accepted and obeyed the word of Jesus, and they believed in Jesus. So in that way, not only were they saved, but they became distinct and different from the world. Before Jesus can reveal the Father to you he needs to pry you from the clutches of the world--- but Jesus never intends for you to not be in the world.

My friends, Jesus calls us out from the world but he doesn't call us out of the world. As Christians, we are in the world but not of the world. The way that we can stay in the world but not be of the world is by believing Jesus, by obeying the Word, by listening to Jesus' words and accepting them— these things set us apart from the world, and they teach us the right way to live in the world.

Here is the great part about this, we don't have to search this world for God, we don't have to search this world for our identity, we don't have to search for a place to belong — all we need is Jesus because he is the one who reveals the Father and

all of these things to us. Jesus takes us out of the world to show us how we are not of this world, to show us who created us, to show us where we belong, to show us who we are, and how we should live. He keeps us in the world so that we can represent him and enjoy God's great creation- to enjoy the world that God created!

We are in the world but not of the world. Let's talk about the world for a few minutes. Jesus said in v. 9, I am not praying for the world but for those you have given me. Now, this seems to contradict [John 3:16](#)! You might be saying, well I thought Jesus was sent into the world because God loved the world, and now here Jesus is saying I'm not praying for the world. What is that? Did Jesus come down expecting to love the world and save it, but once he experienced the world did he say "well, the world is so far gone I'm not even going to pray for it?"

Well, no actually, John's use of the word "world" is multi-faceted, it has several meanings. So the world In [John 3:16](#) is talking about people in general, and probably God's creation that has been declared "good." So, theologically speaking, [John 3:16](#) is where we understand that God's offer of salvation through Jesus is extended to the whole world, to whomever will accept it. [2 Peter 3:9](#) says that the Lord is patient, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. So the "everyone" in 2 Peter is the world in [John 3:16](#).

Now, John uses the term world in another way here in this passage, even though it is the same Greek word, "Kosmos." The meaning of the "world" in this passage is that which stands in complete, unrepentant opposition to God. The world that Jesus is not praying for is the world that has set itself up as its own god, it is those who have totally rejected Jesus and have chosen the life of rebellion against God. It is the world that is set against Jesus and his followers— that is the world that Jesus has called us out from.

Further, there is a distinction that Jesus makes between those who belong to God and those who belong to the world. The benefit that those who belong to the world receive from God is the gift of being born and having life in a physical body on God's earth for a certain amount of time. Also, all are given the free offer of salvation through Christ, and a choice of whether to believe for salvation or not believe. That is the extent of the benefits that a non-believer can expect to have from God. Breath, physical life for a time, and a free offer of salvation through Christ.

But the benefits extended to those who belong to God are extensive and greater than anything this world has to offer. The apostle Paul's prayer in [Eph. 3:16-18](#) gives us a glimpse of that — listen to this:

“16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”

Look at all those words— riches, power, faith, love, the fullness of God!

We have something that the world is desperately trying to create on its own but can never come close to attaining— that is the fullness of God's love within us. The fullness of God- the power and the riches of his Spirit within us! Think about that! Jesus cannot pray that the world would receive what those who belong to Jesus receive! What he gives belongs exclusively to those who are his. The world will

never attain the kind of love, peace, and joy that God gives. This is why Jesus said, I am not praying for the world. My friends, the benefits we receive from God are exclusive to his people. We should respond to God's gift to us by shining his light in the world.

We are in the world, but not of the world, and Jesus knows that the world is hostile toward those who belong to God, and that brings us to the actual petition that Jesus prayed for his disciples, so let's look at v. 11 of [John 17](#).

“I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.”

And Jesus repeats this same petition in v. 15, saying, “my prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.”

We must remain in the world. My friends, the Lord has commissioned us to be in the world where the evil one has his way, and that means that we will come under attack for our belief in Jesus. Satan and his cohorts will do whatever they can to destroy us, to confuse us, to harm us, to deceive us, ultimately to kill us. But the good news is that Jesus does not send us into the world unprotected, alone, and without power. The power that Jesus has given us is the power of God's holy name, the name of Jesus.

I believe there are two ways to understand this— one is in the mighty authority that God's name carries, much like the authority that the President's signature carries, turning a bill into a law. The OT speaks of God's authoritative name in this way: [Prov. 18:10](#) “the name of the Lord is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.” We see in the NT how the name of Jesus was used to cast out demons,

heal the sick, and perform miracles. Peter in the book of Acts said to the lame man, “silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give to you, in the name of Jesus, rise up and walk!” and the man was healed.

There is spiritual authority in the name of Jesus but the effectual use of his authority is reserved only for those who know Jesus and are known by him. In [Acts 19:11-20](#), the seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva attempted to cast out demons by the Jesus who Paul proclaims, and the evil spirit said, “Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?” and then the evil spirit pantsed them, and they ran out naked! Our permission to use the authority of the name of Jesus is tied to our unifying relationship with Jesus and with other Christians.

There is spiritual power in the name of Jesus and the Lord has given us power by his name- so if you are being attacked by the devil, and you have a relationship with Jesus, then you can invoke or appeal to the name of Jesus because there is power in His name. This is what I do when I sense I have come under attack- I say, “In the name of Jesus, I command you satan to leave now, you have no authority here, and I have authority over you by the power of the name of Jesus.” I have to tell you, it is very rare that the attacks continue after I say this, but sometimes spiritual attacks happen because of our own pride or disobedience to God, which takes us out of his protection. It is in those times that we need to repent, come back to the Lord, and seek the support of other Christians around us. So you do not need to suffer under the attacks of the devil by yourself, speak the name of Jesus and ask for the church to pray for you. This is one way that the church is unified: by the power of the name of Jesus and through love and support for one another.

The second way to understand this — and I believe both ways come hand-in-hand — is that Jesus’ word, “protect them by the power of your name,” means, “keep them in loyalty to you,” or “keep them in complete devotion to your character.” So

Jesus prays for his disciples to be protected in the world by their loyalty and devotion to God. Basically, Jesus was praying that the Father would keep his followers in complete devotion to his Word while they remained in the world, and because of their devotion, the evil of this world would not harm them, would not own them.

I think both understandings are correct- one, there is spiritual power in the mighty, authoritative name of Jesus that we are permitted to use, and two, our singular devotion to Christ will keep us from stumbling into the evil ways of the world as we live in this world. And the purpose behind God's protection over our lives is that we would be united with God and each other, loving and supporting one another in the name of Jesus as we go out into the world — when people don't feel protected they scatter, right? But what Jesus is saying and what the church needs to say to you is that you are not alone, and you are not left to your own power to try to live in this world. Jesus, with his truth and power, is with you, and his people are with you. The Lord's protection keeps us together.

Now, the truth is, this world is hard to live in, and we have a tendency to fall deep into the world's ways. Because of that reality, many of us might want to take ourselves completely out of the world. Or we might feel totally discouraged because we can't get the world out of our hearts. Well, Jesus gave us a great, hidden encouragement in this prayer about his faith in his disciples— in us, even though we are weak and tend to go astray. In verse 8, Jesus said of his disciples, “they knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.” Do you see how much confidence Jesus has in the faith of his disciples? He said, “they knew with certainty...” now remember, this was just before Jesus was arrested and crucified. Jesus, referencing his crucifixion, said to his disciples in [John 16:31-32](#), just a few breaths ago, that you will all be scattered, and you will leave me all alone. What happened after Jesus was arrested? Peter denied Christ in

public three times. When Jesus was on the cross, the disciples scattered. After the resurrection, Thomas doubted that Jesus was really alive. That doesn't look like certainty to me! Looks like doubt and unbelief! But you know, Jesus looked beyond all of the coming weaknesses, denials, and doubts, and he looked at his disciples for who they were to become in him.

My friends, Jesus looks at you not as one who is struggling with barely an ounce of faith, but as one who is perfect in him because he has made you perfect— and you will be perfect. Jesus looks at you not as one who has been defeated by temptation but as one who stands strong in the name of Jesus- he sees your future you! Your future you is filled with undying certainty and belief in everything that Jesus is— your future is healing and wholeness in Christ, so don't give up when you stumble in the ways of the world- stick to your relationship with Jesus, stay in his protection by remaining in him and by staying connected to the church, to your Christian brothers and sisters.

The last thing I want to highlight briefly is vs. 13, “I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. What are “these things” that Jesus is talking about here that gives the full measure of joy?

“These things” are Jesus' revealing the Father to us, his word revealed to our hearts, the truth that we belong to him, and he belongs to us— these things give us joy!

“These things” are the fullness of God within us, the glory of God shown through our lives, and unity we have with Christ and his people by his amazing love-- these things give us joy!

“These things” are the promise of power in his name, and the protection from evil that we receive in his name, these things give us joy!



“These things” are the truth that Jesus has redeemed us, he has conquered sin and death, and he is preparing a place for us to be with him for eternity, where we are made whole, and sin, sickness, and death are no more, these things give us joy!!

This world is not our home, Amen!

God has called us to be in the world but not of the world. What does that look like practically for you? We live in this world to be an example of who Christ is— to be vessels of his grace and love. So you might think of how you act when you are outside of the church and in the world... do you use filthy language around your co-workers or non-Christian friends? What is your speech like? Are you one who shares in spreading gossip and rumors about people or do you refrain from that kind of speech? Do you choose to encourage and build up instead? Do you go out with your non-Christian friends and do all of the same ungodly things that they do? Or do you take a pass while remaining a friend, so that you can show what it looks like to live a life free of the dark ways of this world? When someone cuts you off or angers you, do you fly the bird at them or blurt out a bunch of cuss words? Or will you check yourself and offer grace? Think about how you speak and act when you are in the world. We are called to be in the world, to be with our non-Christian friends and co-workers, but we are called to be of Jesus while we are with them, not to condemn them but to love them, to show them a better, healthier way to live. So think about how you can bring the light and life of Jesus into your relationships, places of work, and play, so that people will notice that you are not like them. Show them that you have something different, something much greater, something that they are looking for. Share the fullness of the love, peace, and joy of God with them. Be a real, warm person.

Let's pray