

Kept by Christ

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[0 : 00] John chapter 17 verses 6 through 10 is the text for our morning sermon, but I'm going to start reading from verse 1.

John chapter 17 beginning in verse 1 and going through verse 10.

When Jesus had spoken these words, He lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You, since You have given Him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom You have given Him.

And this is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I glorified You on earth, having accomplished the work that You gave me to do.

And now, Father, glorify me in Your presence with the glory that I had with You before the world existed. I have manifested Your name to the people whom You gave me out of the world.

[1 : 14] Yours they were, and You gave them to me, and they have kept Your word. Now I know that everything that You have given me is from You. For I have given them the words that You gave me, and they have received them, and have come to know in truth that I came from You.

And they have believed that You sent me. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those who You have given me. For they are Yours. All Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine.

And I am glorified in them. May God add a blessing to the reading of His word. Would you please be seated? And pray with me.

Heavenly Father, Your word is a light that expels darkness. A light that illumines our paths. Your word is a sword that severs us from sin and secures our foundation.

A foundation upon which to build our lives. And so, Lord, during this time, I pray that Your Spirit would use Your word to do just that for us. That Your Spirit, through Your word, would shed light.

[2 : 29] Sever us from sin. And secure us with the truth. That we would be conformed to Christ. And that Christ would be glorified in us.

We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Many of you have heard my testimony before. I was a prodigal in college.

I grew up in a good Christian home. I was raised going to church. I was saved at a young age.

Called to ministry when I was 16. But then I went to college.

And there in college, I decided that, you know what? For once, I'm going to do things my way. And I'll tell you that if anyone could lose their salvation, it would have been me.

And it would have been during that time in my life. In fact, it should have been me. But God never let me go. And so, I believe in the doctrine of eternal security of the believer.

[3 : 32] Not just because it's what the Bible says. Primarily, it's because of what the Bible says. But it's what I have experienced in my own life. I remember when I was a kid, I received some bad theological instruction from a good friend of mine.

And I don't remember why, but we decided that, you know, it would be fun one evening just to confess our sins to one another. And so, I was confessing to him a sin that I was always habitually struggling with.

And I don't remember what it was, but I do remember what he said. And he told me, well, do you expect that God is going to keep forgiving you of something that you keep doing?

Eventually, you're going to have to prove to God that you are worthy of his forgiveness. And thankfully, through his word, God was able to clarify that confusion for me.

It's not how it works. But I think that there are a lot of people who think that that is how salvation works. Who have that understanding of grace, or that misunderstanding, I should say, of grace.

[4 : 50] That God will only love me. God will only forgive me if I'm good enough. The story I'm about to share is one that I've shared before.

But I want to share it again because I think it's a great depiction of how God's love and grace works in the lives of those whom he saves.

And so, the story comes from a book called Proof. Proof was co-authored by a man named Timothy Paul Jones. And in the book, he writes about a story, an experience he had with his adopted daughter.

It's a little bit of a lengthy story, but it's a great story that communicates an amazing truth. He writes, For one reason or another, whenever our daughter's previous family vacationed in Disney World, they took their biological children with them, but they left their adopted daughter with a family friend. Usually, at least in the child's mind, this happened because she did something wrong that precluded her presence on the trip. And so, by the time we adopted our daughter, she had seen many pictures of Disney World, and she had heard about the rides and the characters and the parades.

[6 : 35] But when it came to passing through the gates of the Magic Kingdom, she had always been the one left on the outside. Once I found out about this history, I made plans to take her to Disney World the next time a speaking engagement took our family to the southeastern United States.

What I did not expect was that the prospect of visiting this dream world would produce a stream of downright devilish behavior in our newest daughter.

In the month leading up to the Magic Kingdom, she stole food when a simple request would have gained her a snack. She lied when it would have been easier to tell the truth.

She whispered insults that were carefully crafted to hurt her older sister as deeply as possible. And as the days on the calendar moved closer to the trip, her mutinies multiplied.

A couple days before our family headed to Florida, I pulled our daughter into my lap to talk her through her latest escapade. She said to him, I know what you're going to say.

[7 : 43] She said flatly, you're not going to take me to Disney World, are you? The thought hadn't actually crossed my mind, but her downward spiral suddenly started to make sense.

She knew she couldn't earn her way into the Magic Kingdom. She had tried and failed that test several times before. So she was living in a way that placed her as far as possible from the most magical place on earth.

In retrospect, I'm embarrassed to admit it. In that moment, I was tempted to turn her fear to my advantage. The easiest response would have been, if you don't start behaving better, you're right, we won't take you.

But, by God's grace, I didn't. Instead, I asked her, is this trip something we're going to do as a family? She nodded, brown eyes wide and tear-rimmed.

Are you a part of this family? She nodded again. Then you're going with us. Sure, there are going to be some consequences to help you remember what's right and what's wrong, but you're a part of our family, and we will never leave you behind.

[8 : 50] I'd like to say that her behavior grew better after that moment. They didn't. Her choices pretty much spiraled out of control at every hotel and rest stop on the way to Lake Buena Vista.

Still, we headed to Disney World. On the day we had promised, and it was a typical Disney day, overpriced tickets, overpriced meals, lots of lines, mingled with just enough manufactured magic to consider maybe going again someday.

In our hotel that evening, a very different child emerged. She was exhausted, exhausted, pensive, weepy at times, but her month-long facade of rebellion had faded.

When bedtime rolled around, I prayed with her, and I held her, and I asked, so how was your first day at Disney World? She closed her eyes and snuggled down into her stuffed unicorn.

After a few minutes, she opened her eyes ever so slightly. Daddy, she said, I finally got to go to Disney World. But it wasn't because I was good.

[10 : 06] It was because I'm yours. I'm yours. And the author concludes, that's the message of outrageous grace. Outrageous grace isn't a favor you can achieve by being good.

It's the gift you receive by being God's. This morning, our text brings us face to face with outrageous grace.

grace. An irresistible grace. It reveals that the one who saves us is the one who keeps us saved.

And so having prayed for himself in verses 1 through 5, Jesus now here turns his attention to his 11 disciples, and he begins to pray for them.

And in this part of his prayer for them, in these five verses, we are reminded that God plays for keeps. The main idea for this morning's sermon is this.

[11:11] Those whom the Father graciously gives to the Son are kept securely by Him forever. Those whom the Father graciously gives to the Son are kept by Him securely forever.

So as we turn our focus to the portion of Jesus' prayer where He is praying for His disciples, I want you to see how our Lord describes them. He describes them in two ways by stating two truths about them in regard to their relationship to both Him, the Son, and God, the Father.

And in these descriptions, we observe the amazing grace of God towards us. The things that we will look at this morning have theological weight.

And so what we need to do as we go through these verses is that we need to be like Mary, who when the angel announced to her that she would be the mother of the Son of God, she heard those things and treasured up all of them, pondering over them in her heart.

And so the truths of our text today are things that we must treasure. They are things that we must ponder over. They are truths that we should delight in because good doctrine produces great joy.

[12:39] And so first of all, Jesus describes His disciples as His Father's possession. In verses 6 and 9, Jesus describes His disciples as His Father's possession.

I'm going to read verse 6 and verse 9 again. I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. And then in verse 9, I am praying for them, I am not praying for the world, but for those who you have given me, for they are yours.

So how does Jesus here say that His disciples became His disciples? Well, these two verses tell us that God gave them to Jesus and that before He gave them to Jesus, they were already His, or else how could He have given them if they weren't already His?

The idea that disciples of Jesus belong to the Father and are a gift to His Son is not a new idea. It's not an isolated teaching of Scripture.

In John 10, verses 27 through 29, for example, Jesus, if you remember, was confronted by unbelieving Jews who were goading Him to admit that He was the Messiah. And this is how He answered them.

[14:01] I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand.

Earlier in John 8, again, Jesus is met by unbelief, and listen to what He says in response to that. John 8, verses 45 through 47. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me.

Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.

Now jump forward to John chapter 18. Here Jesus is before Pilate, and listen to what Jesus says in response to Pilate's unbelief.

[15:10] Then Pilate said to Him, So you are a king. Jesus answered, You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born, and for this purpose I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth.

Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice. And so three key phrases pop up from each of those three passages.

Of my sheep, of God, and of truth. All descriptions of people before the Father gives them to the Son.

The Bible teaches that you, if you are a disciple of Christ, if you have been saved by Him, were known, loved, and chosen by God before you knew, loved, and chose Him.

And we find example after example of that in the Bible. Back in the Old Testament, God chose Israel.

[16:12] Why did He choose Israel? Was it because Israel was a more noble people than any other nation? Was it because Israel was mightier or stronger than any other nation?

Did they show greater promise and greater potential than any other people group in the world? God gives His answer in Deuteronomy 7, 6 through 7. For you are a people holy to the Lord your God.

The Lord your God has chosen you, has chosen you to be a people for His treasured possession. Out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth, it was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set His love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples.

Remember, God chose Abraham. God came to Abraham and God called out to Abraham and through Abraham He established the nation of Israel.

He chose to set His love upon them and called them to then communicate His love to the rest of the world that they too might know and share in His love and mercy.

[17:28] Another example we see of this comes from Jeremiah. Jeremiah chapter 1 verses 4 through 5. There Jeremiah, inspired by the Spirit, says, Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.

And before you were born, I consecrated you. I set you apart. I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations. So God is saying to Jeremiah, Before I formed you, I knew you.

I set you apart before you'd done anything. I had appointed you for this task. God chose Jeremiah and then Jeremiah chose God, chose to love and serve God faithfully.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, one of the greatest insights that you can ever gain is to recognize this truth that God has chosen to set His love upon you, that He has bridged the divide you created by your sin through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ.

He has chosen you. He has called you out. He has adopted you as His child. Now, well, you might think, well, that might have been true in the Old Testament.

[18:48] That might have been true in the case of Jeremiah. But aren't things different now? Doesn't the New Testament teach something different? Look at Ephesians chapter 1 verses 3 through 6.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. Now, listen.

Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, and here's for the purpose, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.

In love, He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace with which He has blessed us in the Beloved. And so, you know, it's unfortunate that words like election and predestination have become taboo phrases in many of our churches. But these words are not words that we should avoid.

[19:54] These are words that we should discuss. They should not create divisions amongst us. These are God's words. And God has inspired these words by His Spirit, and they are meant to be read by you and understood by you for your joy.

For your joy. These words, this truth that God has chosen us before the foundation of the world that we have always been His, possession is an important aspect that separates Christianity from all other religions of the world.

Every other religion of the world teaches that humanity is responsible to make themselves acceptable to God. if you want God to love you, if you want God to save you, then it's up to you to do it.

You must earn His favor by whatever that might be. Going on some kind of a pilgrimage, saying a certain amount of prayers, a certain amount of times during the day or whatnot.

But listen, Christianity is about grace. Christianity is separated by the fact that we are saved by grace, unmerited grace.

[21:09] And grace, by definition, is something that is never earned. You cannot earn grace or else it's not grace anymore. And so God, as He did with Adam and Eve, when they sinned in the garden, comes still looking for us.

He comes still calling out to us and restoring us to a right relationship with Him. Look at how the Bible defines grace in Ephesians 2, verses 8-10.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

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

And so while the Bible teaches God's choosing us, it also teaches the importance of our choosing Him.

[22 : 14] No one wrote more extensively or as passionately about God's sovereignty and salvation than the Apostle Paul. But listen, and yet, no one was more committed to traveling across land and sea to share the gospel than the Apostle Paul, because he understood that God is sovereign in salvation, but man has a responsibility.

And so we see that Paul, for example, in Corinth, when he faced Jewish opposition, many were hearing the gospel, many were believing. That night, he received a vision from God.

Listen to God's words to Paul in Acts chapter 18, verses 9-10. And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.

What's God saying here? God says that there were people still in Corinth who were his. Not all of them, but there were people there who were his. Paul didn't know who they were.

Paul knew that he was to preach the gospel and God would do the rest by calling them to his amazing grace and salvation. In Acts chapter 13, verse 48, Paul is preaching the gospel in Antioch.

[23 : 38] And many were believing and listen to what the text says and explains why they were believing. And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord and as many were appointed, appointed to eternal life, believed.

Before you were saved, the Bible says you belong to God and he, in eternity past, ordained the time when you would hear the gospel and receive it.

Well, how did you receive it? You received it through the new birth. You were born again. How did that happen? John 1, 13 says, of those who are of Christ, who are his disciples.

You were born, not of the blood, meaning this doesn't pass down through the bloodstream because your mom and your dad were Christians. Nor of the will of the flesh. You were running away from God.

It wasn't your will, nor of the will of man. No one else forced you to do it. It was God who saved you. It is God who has saved you. It is his spirit that has illumined you and transformed you and opened your eyes to see and behold his beauty and his greatness and your need for Christ.

[24 : 55] Perhaps you think this is unfair. Listen. Our sinful nature has corrupted our understanding of what fairness is.

And we live in a culture that really wants to try to make everything fair. And as kids, we are all given a participation trophy.

But then we get into the real world and we realize, you know what? That's not how it works. Listen.

We have a corrupted understanding of what is fair. Because you know what is fair?

It's for God who is holy. Holy, holy, holy and righteous. Who cannot look upon sin. What is fair for him to say, you've rebelled against me, you've sinned against me, then go your way.

Have it your way. Romans 3.23 says, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. If God let us go our own way, none of us would ever come to him.

[26 : 00] We were saved not because we were better, not because we were smarter and figured it all out or we uncracked the code or that we were more worthy because of our goodness, goodness, but by God's grace and by God's mercy.

And so in understanding what God has done to save you, it removes from us any reason to boast. I don't deserve what I have received and that understanding of what I've received that I do not deserve leads me to not think better of myself but leads me to my knees to worship God.

Who am I that you would save me? Who am I to be the recipient of such grace? And it causes me to worship him more fervently and want to surrender my life more completely to him.

I didn't work for this salvation. God has worked this salvation into me. William Cooper was born in England in 1731.

His father was a pastor. His mother came from a prominent family in England. William was smart. He was well educated. He was on his way to becoming a lawyer. He appeared to have it all together.

[27 : 18] A promising life. A promising future. But inwardly, he was always struggling and in turmoil. In great distress.

William lost his mother when he was six. Later, he became overcome with depression as a result of having his heart broken and rejected by someone who he loved, which led him to attempt and fail to succeed in committing suicide.

To make matters worse, he was keenly aware of his failures. He was keenly aware of his faults. Have you ever known someone, all they can think about, all they can dwell upon is just how they're not good enough.

How they're always failing. That's all they can ever focus upon. And it drove him crazy. And you know, when he read the Bible, when he would read it, all he would see is just how unworthy, unworthy, unworthy I am.

I fall short of the glory of God. And so he was admitted into an insane asylum as a result. He felt unloved and unlovable.

[28 : 41] One day there, though, he picked up a Bible and he began to read in Romans. I read you Romans 3.23, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. He read that and he read the verses that follow it.

Verses 24, 25, and 26. Yes, they all fall short of God, but are justified by his grace as a gift. You don't work for it, it's a gift. Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

It was to show his righteousness at the present time so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. And so through God's word, God's spirit opened William Cooper's eyes to see that having peace with God did not result from his being good enough.

He wasn't saved because God saw something good in him, but because of something God was working into him. He beheld God's amazing, unmerited, and unearned grace and later he wrote of that experience.

[29 : 56] This is what he said. Immediately I received the strength to believe it and the full beams of the sun of righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement he had made, my pardon sealed in his blood and all the fullness and completeness of his justification.

In a moment I believed and received the gospel. Unless the almighty arm had been under me, I think I should have died with gratitude and joy. My eyes filled with tears and my voice choked with transport.

I could only look up in heaven in silent fear, overwhelmed with love and wonder. William Cooper became a poet and he wrote many hymns.

One of those hymns which he wrote was, There is a fountain filled with blood. We sing that song sometimes. There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins. And sinners plunge beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain on his day and there may I, though vile as he, wash all my sins away. For since by faith I saw this dream by flowing wound supply, redeeming love has been my theme and shall be till I die.

[31 : 09] Is that the theme of your life? Redeeming love. Amazing grace. Jesus. You didn't work for it. It's been worked in you. You don't receive the glory and you don't want it.

It all goes to Christ because you knew that you were God's possession given to his son. How do you know that, though? How can you know that that is you and that you've been given to the son? Well, the next thing we see here is that Jesus describes his disciples as those whom he receives. Jesus describes his disciples as those whom he receives. Why are you among those who belong to the father and whom the son received?

How can you know that you are part of the father's possession who has been received by the son? Well, Jesus answers that question in verses 7 and 8. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you for I have given them the words you gave me and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you and they believe that you sent me.

And so I believe that the words Jesus mentions there is shorthand for the gospel. He was saying that the disciples not that they obeyed every single jot until of the law or that they kept the commandments perfectly throughout all that time that he was with them but they did embrace the essential truths that Jesus taught.

[32 : 38] They knew that he was the Messiah that he had been sent from God. They put their faith in him. The crucifixion and the resurrection and the ascension had not yet happened but the disciples whom the father had given to Jesus knew that this Jesus was the son of God and they trusted in him.

Because the father chose them they then chose Jesus. Jesus continues and says I am praying for them I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me for they are yours all mine are yours and yours are mine and I am glorified in them.

These truths are no different for us today than for Jesus' disciples back then. If you are in Christ it is because God took you out of this world and gave you to his son who manifested his word his truth the gospel to you with the result that in your salvation the gospel is in your heart.

You trust completely in him for salvation and you know that in that you are kept eternally by him.

The son does not reject those whom the father gives to him.

He keeps them and he keeps them forever. A friend of mine adopted a little boy with his wife. The boy was about five years old when they adopted him and he knew that he was adopted.

[34 : 15] He knew a little bit, he had a little bit of a memory of his biological parents but he knew he was adopted. Years later my friend picked up his son from school and the boy was in the back seat and kind of hopped in the car and just looked out the window.

Just not his typical self. He's usually talkative, usually vibrant, usually bouncing off the walls and my friend realized my son's not acting like himself. Maybe he just had a rough day and he needs a little bit of time to cool off after a tough day.

So they drove into the driveway of their house and the boy was still despondent. So finally my friend looked in the back seat and he said what's wrong?

Tell me what's the matter? And the boy turned to his father and just immediately burst into tears.

One of my friends, he said, told me today that since I'm adopted I'm not really you and mom's kid and you don't really love me.

So my friend said he reached back, you know, as far as he could and grabbed his boy nicely by his chin and lifted him up, looked him in the eyes and he said you listen to me.

[35 : 34] We chose you. I have chosen to give you my name and I love you and you are my son and nothing will ever change that.

We can hear a story like that and understand how it works in this life, how much more greater is it for us when we open up the Bible and God lifts our chin and through his word speaks to us and says, listen, you are mine.

I have given you my name. I love you. I've been gracious to you. I will continue to be gracious to you. I have forgiven you.

I will continue to forgive you because when you become a part of God's family, he doesn't kick you out. If you're that lost sheep, the good shepherd is the one who goes out and finds you and brings you back home.

And so on the night of Jesus' crucifixion, the disciples were in distress, much like my friend's son.

[36 : 51] And in that crisis that they were experiencing, that's what Jesus does for them through this prayer. He reminds them that those who the Father possesses and gives to him are those he keeps and he keeps them forever.

The shepherd would be stricken and the sheep would scatter. But what did he do when he came back? He went and found his sheep. That's the kind of Savior that we have.

Despite ourselves, he does not lose us. The disciples would come to understand this. After Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came, the proof of their faith would be demonstrated in dramatic ways as they boldly proclaimed the gospel and as they suffered for it as a result.

The disciples did not abandon the truth that they had come to know in Christ because they knew that he would never leave them. They knew that he would never forsake them. They knew that they were eternally his.

Romans 8, 38-39 says, for I am sure, speaking of Christians, speaking of those who follow Christ, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor power, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

[38 : 22] God. Imagine a father walking beside a railroad track with his three-year-old daughter. He's got his daughter's hand in his and it's potentially a dangerous situation.

The father holds her hand. The girl's safety does not depend on her strength in holding her father's hand. Her safety comes from her father's hand holding hers, keeping her from getting loose, keeping her from wandering onto the tracks where potentially horrible things could happen.

And this is what Jesus is asking his heavenly father to do for his disciples and for us. Remind them not of their strength, but of yours.

They've got important work to do. Remind them, Lord God, Heavenly Father, that you are the one who has them. You are the one who's given them to me.

You are the one who keeps them. Whenever I'm walking with my kids in a public area where there is a lot of people around, you know, it can be scary when you're a kid and you're short and everybody is tall and you can't see where you're going.

[39 : 55] And so immediately what I do is I reach for their hand because I don't want them to get lost. And I can see what they can't see, right? And sometimes I can see, okay, we're about to go into this really small opening maybe somewhere, a door or something like that, or there's going to be a lot of people and they're moving really fast.

trust and I know that my kid, though they can't see that, they can sense it. And I'm going to guide them through it. And one thing that I do is I have their hand and what I'll do is I'll just give it a little bit of a tighter squeeze.

Just briefly, a little bit of a tighter squeeze. Why do I do that? Because I want them to know that I'm here. I want them to be reminded of my strength, right?

And I want them to know that they can trust me. And so what I hope is that God through this text today has done that for you.

With your hand in his, that you've heard these things and you've felt his squeeze. Say, hey, I've got you. I've had you. I've given you to my son.

[41 : 02] He has prepared a place for you with me forever. I've got you. Don't be afraid. Don't fear. You are mine. And you are loved.

And I have a place for you. And so how should we live in light of such truth? Well, I think like the disciples back then, it's the same truth for us today.

We should feel so secure in God having us and belonging to Christ that it should affect every way that we live.

And I love the parable of the talents. We need to have a kind of radical faith. A faith that looks a little reckless to the rest of the world. Not because we are acting recklessly, but because we know how securely we belong to the Father.

That we're going to be obedient. We're going to go. We're going to speak. We're going to do whatever he commands us to do. We're going to be gracious with what he has supplied. And we're going to trust that as we do so, we have nothing to fear because the one who has us keeps us forever.

[42 : 13] To him be the glory. May we live our lives in ways that reveal to the world. And they look at us.

You know what? Those Christians, they're not afraid. They see what's going on in this world and it confuses them and it concerns them, but they're not afraid.

Why are they not afraid? Because they know, hopefully they would come to see, because we know that it's not about us. It's not about who we are.

But it's because we know the hand that holds us and the hand that keeps us secure always, forever. Three questions of application for our groups to discuss tonight.

Question number one, in these verses, Jesus' prayer reveals that his disciples are given to him by God and that he will keep them. How should those truths provide us with confidence in the present and hope for the future?

[43 : 19] How should these truths provide us with confidence in the present and hope for the future? Question number two, in verse six, Jesus explains that those who are genuinely his keep his word.

The Bible also teaches that good works do not save anyone. How can we reconcile those truths? And then read James chapter two to answer that question.

It will help you. And then finally, the Bible teaches God's sovereignty and man's responsibility in salvation. Read Romans 8, 28 through 29, 10, 9 through 11, and 11, 33 through 36.

What do these verses teach about these things? Let's pray. Lord God, we are thankful for you.

Lord, I pray that each one of us this morning has felt your comforting hand, your comforting grip as we've gone through this text. Lord, salvation is truly your idea.

[44 : 23] It's accomplished by you. you're the one who saves us, and you're the one who keeps us. Lord, we have nothing to boast about. As we've sung already, we come to the cross with nothing in our hands.

Nothing. Lord, we thank you for the grace that we have received. And Lord, we know that we are called and commanded by you to go and make disciples. Lord, we know that you encourage us through your word to live boldly and fearlessly.

So God, I pray again that this word today has been something that your spirit has used and will use in the days and the months and the years to come to encourage us to live our lives passionately and courageously for you, knowing that we belong to you, knowing that there's nothing that can separate us from you, and that God, as we go, and as we live boldly for you, that people would hear the good news of Jesus Christ in our hopes, Lord, that they would be saved.

We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.