

Spiritual Protection & Sanctifying Purity

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[0 : 00] As we continue to work through this most holy prayer of the Lord Jesus in John chapter 17, I want to keep in focus that we have a scriptural timeline and the basis of that or the heart of that is the Lord is about to depart this life.

He's mere hours away from the cross and very soon He's going to be dead. In His closing hours on earth, the Lord prays to the Father for a number of things, such as the restoration of His rightful glory next to the Father of glory who is in heaven.

And originally this wasn't part of the lesson. I threw this in. Because, you know, we read about and we hear about glory or glorify throughout the Old and New Testament.

And I want to take a couple minutes just to discuss what we mean by that. God's goal is His glory, but we should never be guilty of thinking of that in terms of some divine ego trip.

He's very deserving of glory. All glory. God wants to be praised because of His praiseworthiness.

[1 : 53] And He desires to be exalted and deserves to be exalted for His greatness and His goodness. Think this evening of God's glory as a two-sided coin.

On one side we have God displaying His glory to men, mankind, men and women, and to angels. Having done so, He expects and deserves our response to be one of adoration in which we give Him glory based upon what we have seen and received from Him.

So, the other side of that coin is giving God glory. Seeing God's glory and giving God glory brings joy to God and to redeem mankind as well.

So, last night about 10 p.m., I turned off my security light. I just realized I haven't turned it back on.

[3 : 07] I need to do that. And I got on my little tractor and I drove out into the pasture. And once there, I looked up into the night sky.

Dan, you need to show me sometime. Dan's one of Dan's hobbies is astronomy. And I looked up into that night sky, fellas. And you're welcome anytime to do that.

I live 12 miles north, so there's not a lot of light. And I entered into a time of praise and adoration. And I must confess confession.

And I couldn't help but think when I was out there that the psalmist had it absolutely right.

In Psalm 19.1, the heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.

[4 : 04] I think this is exactly what Paul had in mind in the first chapter of Romans starting in verse 18. Man is without excuse. You may never have heard of God, but you can look up in the night sky and know there is someone more powerful than you.

I always remember the fellow who lived in darkest Africa and a Baptist missionary made his way and met him.

He said, I want to tell you about a person named Jesus Christ. And he told him. And he said, you know, I go out at night and I look up at the sky.

And I always knew he was there. I just didn't know his name. That's pretty poignant, isn't it? But he said, but I knew he was there.

The heavens declare the glory of God. My next point on the glory of God fits perfectly with our study last night of the five solas of the Reformation.

[5 : 17] And by the way, let me put a little advertisement in here on behalf of Evelyn. If you picked up a book and didn't pay for it, pay for it. We've got several books that haven't been paid for, but their books have been distributed.

All of humanity fell into sin and disobedience in the Garden of Eden. We were led there by our first parents. Sin absolutely permeates the human race.

We see it every day, don't we? Only in the sacrifice of Christ does man have the hope of being restored to God. And now here is my point.

God would never share with idols, with men or angels for having restored mankind to himself. We contributed nothing to his work of grace. We didn't contribute anything. And God will not share the praise due him for the salvation of humans.

[6 : 35] We contributed nothing to our salvation except our desperate need for it. I did bring to the Lord a big bucket of sins.

I guess that was my contribution. That was my contribution. And that's what I brought to the Lord. Part of the Reformation is the fact that the church at Rome said, oh, we do all these things. We deserve some of the glory too. Because we've done this and this and this and this. Had a very good friend of mine here, not at this church, but who told me that, you know, he met the Lord in salvation.

I said, well, how much did you contribute? Well, I hadn't thought about that. Well, I said, when you get to glory and you see Jesus, how much credit are you going to give him for your salvation and how much credit are you going to take for yourself?

And he got quiet and he said, I never thought of it in those terms. I said, well, you need to. You need to. Every stage in the process of salvation came from God.

[7 : 50] Our praise in bringing him glory must reflect that. And that is one of the reasons Reformation theology was so insistent on the principle of sole de gloria, the glory to God alone.

To God be all the glory. Now back to John chapter 17. He also offers a prayer, the Lord Jesus, in this inner Trinitarian prayer, where he prays for his disciples and they need it.

They are soon going to be a flock of sheep without the presence of the chief shepherd. The chief shepherd's going away.

And you're going to have this flock. And if you've ever been around sheep, they're not the sharpest knife in the drawer. They're pretty dumb. And they need a shepherd.

Well, the chief shepherd's leaving. And additionally, this is before the disciples grasp the fact that they're not going to be left as orphans, but have with them the Spirit of God.

[9 : 05] They did not understand that in fullness, that the Spirit of God would come to fail, guide, protect, convict, and restrain them. And by the way, he's been carrying on that ministry for over 2,000 years now, or right at 2,000 years.

Now listen to these words in John chapter 17. Again, Jesus speaking, verses 11 to 19. I am no longer in the world, and yet they themselves are in the world.

That's the 11 disciples. 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. 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.

[10 : 30] I have given them your word, and the world has hated them. Strong language.

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 thy truth. Your word is truth. And you sent me into the world.

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.

Because of the finished work of the Lord Jesus, every believer in every age has direct access to the throne room of God.

[11 : 40] I want you to think about that. Whenever I think of that concept, I often will turn over to Leviticus 16 and read about the complex, difficult, involved process by which the high priest of Israel would enter into the Holy of Holies one day a year on the Day of Atonement.

It was a 24-hour ceremony. Something like seven ceremonial washings, the changing of clothes seven times.

They tied a rope on him because if he did something wrong and God struck him dead, they had to reel him out like a fish. They couldn't go in after him.

They'd be struck dead. And he wore a bell and they got worried if they stopped hearing the bell ring. It's an amazing chapter of how complex and difficult it was in the Old Covenant to approach God.

And now, we have direct access to the throne room. I said last week, we walk around with the Holy of Holies inside us.

[13:04] The physical Holy of Holies in Israel was an expression of the Holy Spirit who would eventually come. And he's come and he dwells with members of the church, the true believers.

And as a believer, when you wake up at 3 a.m. and your world seems to be crashing around you, remember, you can enter into the very throne room of God and have an audience with the King. And I've told you before, the Lord has VBE, very big ears. You can hear that slightest whispered prayer. Just think, just think, you can have an audience with the King tonight.

And many of you will. I'm reminded of a little boy about these lads' age in Scotland. And he was praying for the Billy Graham of Scotland to come to his area of western Scotland out there by Skye and not that Skye but the town of Skye.

Dian and I have been there. And he was praying for him to come. And all of a sudden, this guy was in a revival 500 miles away and he sat up and he said, I'm supposed to go out west.

[14:29] God just told me. And he got up and the moderator said, where are you going? He said, well, God told me to go. He said, well, you've got to preach first. He was supposed to preach that night so he preached and then he went.

When he landed, the guy at the dock said, oh, I can't think of his name, but Duncan, I believe. Dr. Duncan, Billy told us you were coming.

He said, well, who's Billy? He's a little 12-year-old boy that lives here in the village. I think he was 12, not nine. And he said, well, where does he live? He said, well, he's on the outskirts of town, a little farm.

Dad's dead. He lives with his mom. So he started walking that way and he passed somebody. He said, I'm looking for Billy. And he said, aren't you Dr. Duncan?

Yeah. I said, yeah, Billy said you were going to come. He said, I've got to meet Billy. He finds the house. He knocks on the door. The mother answers. He says, oh, doctor, my son, Billy said you were going to come.

[15:33] He'd been praying for you to come. He said, well, where's he at? He said, he's out back in the barn. He was in the hayloft praying. This Billy Graham of Scotland went out there and he opens the door and he says, Billy?

And the little boy looked down. He said, Dr. Duncan, give me a few more moments. Right now, I'm having an audience with the king. Told Billy Graham that. Billy Graham's going, wait outside. I'm having an audience right now with the king. Can you imagine? We can have an audience with the king. The fact that we can have an audience with the king separates us from every world religion.

There's not a one that can do that. None. In worldly religions, which are a figment of man's imagination, God is distant, inaccessible, and angry.

He's angry. This is not the case with the true God of the universe. Through Christ, we all have access to God the Father. We can enter into the Holy of Holies and have the audience I'm talking about.

[16:52] The Word of God promises that we can enter into God's presence in those special times when we have need of mercy and grace. Now, if your life is anything like mine, that's pretty much all the time.

Pretty much all the time. When we pray for others, or when others pray for us, we call that intercession, don't we?

Or interceding for others. We are commanded to pray for others, or in biblical language, to intercede for others. Interceding for others is an essential element of church life.

All true Christians offer prayers of intercession for others. John chapter 17 is the Lord's intercession for His disciples, and as we are going to see later, and for all of those who would believe down through the centuries as a result of their ministry.

And that's us. That's us. We're building on the apostles' work and mostly the 27 books of the New Testament.

[18:11] We also learn that the Holy Spirit intercedes for followers of Christ. He does so in ways that are beyond our understanding.

There are times when believers do not know what to pray for. And there are times when we are confused. And it is in those times that the Holy Spirit steps in, prays on our behalf to the Father.

In a language we would never understand. Scriptures tell us that such prayers are always answered because the Spirit of God always prays or intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. According to God's will. And we also know that the Lord Jesus prays for us. John chapter 17 is a preview of such prayers.

It's an amazing ministry. Hebrews 7.25 He ever lives to make intercession for us. So we see in this chapter a transition of the Lord from earth to heaven.

[19 : 19] Now He's not going to die in this chapter but He's going to transition. He's going to transition. He has just a few more hours of life left on this planet but He has entered into His heavenly intercessory work on behalf of His followers.

At this very moment He is at the right hand of the Father wherever lives to make intercession for us. Now we are at a point in the prayer where Jesus is lifting up His earthly disciples who now number 11 this follows the desertion of Judas.

Judas is still alive. He's only got a couple hours left in His life before He commits suicide. When one reviews the behavior of the 11 remaining disciples it becomes apparent as to why the Lord needed to intercede for them.

Peter long considered the strongest among the early followers of Christ would desert and deny Him at the critical hour. Thomas would be branded a doubter.

All of them realized within themselves they had the capacity to be the betrayer. When Jesus said in the upper room one of you will betray me they said is it I Lord?

[20 : 45] Is it I Lord? Is it I Lord? They all saw that. I'm going to tell something guys. If Jesus walked in at night and said one of you is a betrayer we'd all have a knot in our stomach.

We just would. Every one of us. We must keep in mind that these men were not called by the Lord because of their intelligence.

They were not called because of the depth of their theological knowledge. They were not called because of their theological training or education. These were ordinary men with ordinary weaknesses.

They were impetuous skeptical hot headed prideful and when it came between push and shove cowards in their own right.

And then on top of that they were fishermen. Crude. Liars. Yeah. Yeah. I mean you can't imagine the biggest fish I ever caught.

[21 : 49] It was like the bottom line is this. If we were going to write a fictional account of all of this these types of men would never be selected as followers of God during his visit to planet earth.

We wouldn't even dream of having these guys anywhere near. There was nothing about them that was impressive or extraordinary. Yet these are the very men God had called to carry on after Jesus was gone and to build his church for all generations until he returned.

And let me just say to you these eleven turned the world upside down. They did. They turned it upside down.

In effect what they did is they threw a stone in a lake a calm lake and they got it to the middle and the ripples started forming and traveling and they're still traveling to this day.

They haven't stopped. They're spreading around the world to this day. And there are people being saved to this day as a result of their work. As a result of their work.

[23 : 11] So Jesus was not relying on the deep spiritual traits of the disciples but on the faithfulness of the Father to guide them and reveal truth to them and when the Holy Spirit came to empower them his prayer was not intended to change the Father who's unchangeable but to change those who heard it.

he's changing the disciples. That is why this prayer unlike so many others of the Lord is done out loud because we're beneficiaries of it as well.

Aren't you glad? Jesus wanted the disciples to hear it and learn from it. He also wanted the following generations to hear and benefit from this prayer as well.

And here we are in the 21st century half a world away from where it was prayed still benefiting from it. Talking about it 2,000 years later.

Soon Jesus would no longer be in the world. His earthly mission was drawing to a close but His followers would be in the world and it was a world that would become increasingly hostile to Christ's followers.

[24 : 37] Same ripples. And the ripples were becoming kind of a tsunami in our day. The world that He was leaving them in is the same one that murdered Him.

It was a world controlled by Satan and by His followers. It was a world that would like to see Christianity stamped out of existence. Not a lot has changed in the intervening 2,000 years. This is a world of darkness filled with sin and temptation. It is a world where the doctrines of demons abound.

Leaving them in such a world the Lord intercedes for His disciples. In fact, Jesus makes two specific requests for His followers.

He asks the Father that they be protected spiritually and He asks the Father that they be sanctified with purity. first thing I want to mention is spiritual protection.

[25 : 47] I want to mention protection. 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.

I know we've read this, but think in terms of spiritual purity, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, but now I come to You and these things I speak in the world, so they may have my joy made full in themselves.

I've given them Your word, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I'm not of the world. I do not ask you to take them out of the world, but keep them from the evil one.

They are not of the world, even as I'm not of the world. There's spiritual protection right there. This is the only place in Scripture where God has addressed His Holy Father. That's what the Pope's called now.

I can't bring myself to do that. I mean, if you walked in, I couldn't do that. The Lord here is emphasizing the holiness of God as supreme over all things in the universe, including the spiritual world.

[26 : 58] these were unholy men, as we all are, but through Christ, they were now linked to the Father who is holy, and thus they were experiencing His sanctifying work of making them holy.

It can often be frustrating to realize just how unholy we are, and yet at the same time God wants us holy. I heard a great minister say this, our holiness is not unto perfection in this life.

Our holiness, though, should be the direction of this life, ever striving. The Lord first asked for their spiritual security, asking the Father to keep them.

It is a request from the Lord that the Father guard the disciples with all of His holy character. Father brings to bear His attributes for the sake of His children.

The fact that God protects His children leads to His ultimate promise of glorification at some point in the future. He preserves us until that time.

[28 : 17] A time when we're going to see Jesus and be like Him because we're going to see Him as He is. that's why I have a real problem with the extreme charismatic guys who go up to heaven and visit with Jesus and tell them, hey buddy, how you doing?

And, you know, it didn't happen. It didn't happen. The Father's protection is also a factor that unites believers with one another.

That is, again, something the world's religions lack. The Lord never lost one person given him by the Father. And we, of course, all realize that Judas was not truly one of the followers of the Lord. He had gone out from them, thus proving he was not one of them. Had he been one of them, he would have remained. The departing was proof that he was never one of them.

Now, interestingly, the Lord does not ask the Father to remove his followers from this evil world and place them in heaven with him. But, you know, if you think about that, would it be a lot simpler?

[29 : 31] I mean, you get saved and God takes you immediately to be with him. You know, why doesn't God do that? Well, there's a really quite simple, though profound answer.

God is still in the business of calling out a people for his namesake in this world. He's redeeming people, the unsaved, so that they will be eternal worshipers of his Son.

He's doing that for the Son. Let me tell you, church membership and being saved, that's a byproduct. We're going to worship the Son for eternity. That's the focus of the Father.

I'm giving my Son saved people to worship him for eternity. And he's still calling out people to be redeemed, and he uses saved people in the church to accomplish that.

We do that. We share with people. We send missionaries. We invite people to come in. That's why we're still here.

[30 : 41] God's still redeeming. When the last person whose name is recorded in the Lamb Book of Life has been saved, it will be time to leave. And boy, what a glorious day that's going to be.

True believers remain in this world to this day, although we are not to take part in the evil world system that dominates so much of life. In our day, this domination is at an all-time high.

We have seen the stage set in this country for the criminalization of Christianity. And I'm telling you, I don't know about us, but these boys, if the Lord tarries, we'll see believers going to prison.

They will see that. But we have the assurance from the mouth of Jesus that the Father will keep us from the evil one. The other thing I want to bring up tonight just briefly is the sanctifying purity.

sanctify them in thy truth. Your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, I have also sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify myself that they themselves may also be sanctified in truth.

[31 : 55] Don't get hung up on that. Jesus didn't need sanctification, but he says I sanctified myself as an expression. He didn't need baptism, but he said we must fulfill! All righteousness.

righteousness. Jesus asked for the spiritual protection of his children and he asked for their purity through the sanctifying work of the Trinity.

The disciples have before them a very difficult assignment. They're going to take the gospel to the world and it is a hostile world that they're going to take it to.

Most of them are going to be martyred. Most of them are going to die for their faith. And mark this thought down. There are believers that died for their faith this very day.

Somewhere in the world believers died for their faith. And you're always saying what is he doing?

This Sunday the pastor is going to allow me to get up. This is going to be in your insert.

[33 : 00] And the pastor is going to allow me to get up for one minute or maybe a minute and a half. the voice of the martyrs on October 21st from 2 to 4 at the community center will be celebrating our 50th anniversary since our founding.

We are bringing in some people from all over the world. Good friends of mine. Bob Fu been in jail in China. Peter Yossick who has been in this church.

And I think Dr. McBride had him speak to us for 15 or 20 minutes one Sunday. And I think we had him in here on a Monday night. Peter did 445 days in the Sudan in prison with three Sudanese pastors.

They were helping a little boy with medical needs and sharing the gospel with him when they arrested him. Peter confided in us. I think he's gone public with it, but he was tortured. He was tortured.

Hormuz will be there. He is the Billy Graham of Iran. He has a live TV broadcast in America and people from Iran call him and he witnesses to him.

[34 : 08] They beam it into Iran. The Iranians hate him. And there are going to be some other folks here. That's a once in a lifetime. That will never be repeated.

And we're going to be handing this out this Sunday. It's for the following Saturday. So we're a week from this Saturday if you will. Once in a lifetime.

So the Lord asked the Father to sanctify the disciples in his truth. Part of this is to set them apart from sin. And that's always been difficult for believers, but never more so than our day.

Sin surrounds us. It enters our life through unimaginable mediums. It comes into our homes and television, movies, the internet, and so forth.

When my boys were younger, Justin was married, Rob was dating, little Mary, remember Mary? And they rented a film. I'm down there with Diane and we're just having a and all of a sudden I heard the worst profanity.

[35 : 17] I said, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. I went up and what are you guys doing? We're watching this film. you're not going to watch that and you've got your wife and your girlfriend listening. I said, oh, dad, all the movies have that.

No, they don't. No, they don't. I'm going to put it in Oklahoma. You know? I started to sing it. I can't remember some of those songs. Rogers and Hammerstein, Oklahoma.

Oklahoma. The greatest way to be sanctified is through the written word of the living God. The next failure is listening to the pastor's sermons.

But the greatest is the written word of God. The Lord speaks to his children in every age through the written word. Again, Reformation. We broke with the Catholic church.

They chained the Bible to the altar. They made it illegal to read. They printed it in Latin and other languages that the masses couldn't read.

[36 : 19] They executed John Huss because he printed it in English and was declared a heretic. It's quite a history. We need to set apart time daily for the intake of his word.

I was doing that at 4 o'clock this morning. I don't recommend that for everybody. I didn't feel well and I couldn't sleep so I got up. The truth of Jesus is not just the red letter words.

All of scripture is the truth of God and we need to be diligent students of it. I think it was Peter who said we need to long or to crave for the word much like the newborn baby craves milk.

And I've got a little granddaughter who's age zero over in Branson that's doing that. Letting them know when she's hungry. The Lord sends his children into a hostile world.

And I've been in a good part of that world and let me tell you something. Wherever I go you find believers. You find believers. The gospel is so powerful it will penetrate the darkest area.

[37 : 29] the best results are gained when the believers that go have been sanctified by the word. Disciples are to go and make other disciples.

That's what we're to do. So the Lord prays for his disciples consistent with the Father's will.

The Father answered every prayer the Lord ever prayed. There was never a prayer that he didn't answer. And he did pray you know Lord if it be your will take this cup from me.

But nevertheless not my will your will be done. He answered every one of Jesus prayers. And that includes the prayer prayers. He now prays the Lord Jesus for every believer in every age including 2017 in Barterville, Oklahoma at Highland Park Baptist Church.

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[38 : 50]