

# OpenTheo

## Jesus Prayer for the Church (Part 2)



### **The Life and Teachings of Christ** - Steve Gregg

In this piece, Steve Gregg explores Jesus' prayer for the church in John 17. Gregg emphasizes the importance of believing not just in the name of Jesus, but also in his character and teachings. Jesus prayed for his followers to be sanctified and unified, and to share in his glory. Gregg notes that having a seared conscience can lead to departing from faith, and that Christians should expect to experience both sorrow and joy. Jesus also prayed for believers to remain in the world, engaging with it as ambassadors for Christ. Finally, Gregg highlights the importance of unity among believers as a sign of the truth of Jesus' message.

### **Transcript**

...believe that's his name, yeah, I believe it. Who doesn't? Everybody in Palestine believed that his name, his name was Jesus. They believed his name, but that wasn't, that wasn't the issue.

To believe on his name is to believe in his person and who he is. To believe that he's all those things that, that the name implies. And so we need to make the name of Jesus known to the world.

As Jesus made the name of his Father known to the world, people should be able to look at us and see that's what Jesus is like. Richard Wurmbrandt, I don't know if I've told you the story before, but when he was in prison there was a particular obnoxious, brutal, cruel Romanian Communist guard that used to torture him. It was the guy's job, of course, but I mean, it's no excuse.

He used to torture this pastor in prison, this Romanian pastor. And the particular torture that he usually used was he beat the man's feet, the soles of the feet, beat him with a, I don't know, a stick or a lead pipe or something like that, which was very painful, made it impossible to stand up. Well, at some time later, during Richard Wurmbrandt's imprisonment, this guard, well, Richard Wurmbrandt had something like hepatitis or something, he was thrown into a cell with a bunch of people who were dying of the same disease.

And this guard apparently fell out of favor with the authorities and he also, I think, had the disease and was thrown in the same cell, as I remember the story. And Richard Wurmbandt nursed the man as much as he could, you know, he washed his feet, he, I believe, even gave up some of his portions of food for the man when the man was in dire straits and so forth. And the man began to warm up to the gospel, as you might imagine.

And just before the man died, actually, he asked Pastor Wurmbandt, he said, you've told me a great deal about this Jesus, but I still can't quite picture him, I still can't quite understand what he's like. Could you just let me know exactly what it is that Jesus is like so I could know, so I could, you know, know him or whatever. And Richard Wurmbandt said that he thought for a moment, he said, well, he's a lot like me.

Which many Christians I know would never say such a thing. But why shouldn't they? They should be able to. It seems like it should be the case that you could say to anyone who asks, you want to know what Jesus is like? Look at me.

I'm living like him. I'm seeking to be like him. And Jesus could say that about the father.

He manifested the father's character. The description of the father was manifested to us in Jesus. And, of course, we should hope that the name of Jesus would be manifested or his character and his likeness would be manifested in us.

Verse seven. Now they have known that all things which you have given me are from you. For I have given them, to them, the words which you have given me, and they have received them and have known surely that I came forth from you.

And they have believed that you sent me. This is fairly self-explanatory. He's describing his disciples.

They believe what is true about Jesus, that he was sent by God and that he came forth from God. Because Jesus has spoken to them his words and this has been a matter of conviction of theirs. Remember, Peter, when others were abandoning Christ and Jesus said at the end of John chapter six, Are you going to leave also? Peter said, Well, to whom shall we go? You alone have the words of eternal life.

It was the words of Jesus that brought conviction to his disciples that he was who he claimed to be. Even his enemies said, No man ever spake like this man. I've given them your word and they've believed and they understand where I came from.

Verse nine. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.

Now, to say he wouldn't pray for the world. Why wouldn't he pray for the world? Aren't we supposed to pray for the world? Are we only supposed to pray for Christians? Is this sort of a pattern for us? We're supposed to be like Jesus and do what he did? Did he

never pray for the world? Well, I don't know. We don't have very many of his prayers recorded, do we? But we do know this, that there's no reason to say that this statement means Jesus never prayed for the world or would not pray for the world.

He's just saying this prayer is not with reference to the world. The things I'm specifically asking now, I'm not really, I don't mean that you should fulfill this with reference to the world. These things are things that I'm concerned about for my disciples.

The world has its own problems, and it may be that in other contexts, other prayers, he would have addressed those needs. And I don't think there's anything wrong with us doing so. After all, the father said to the son in Psalm 2 8, Ask of me and I'll give you the heathen for your inheritance and the uttermost parts of the world for your possession.

In Acts, I mean Acts, did I say Acts? It's Psalm 2 8. In Psalm 2 8, the father actually invited Jesus to pray for the world, to ask him for the nations and for the heathen to be his possession. So certainly there's nothing unlike Jesus or nothing out of character or wrong for him to pray for the world. He's simply saying in this particular prayer, the things I'm praying, what did he pray? He prayed that they'd be sanctified.

He prayed they'd be unified. He prayed that they'd share his glory. He's not praying that the world would be sanctified and unified and share his glory.

He's praying these things specifically for his disciples. That's what he's saying. Verse 10, And all mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I'm glorified in them.

Now I'm no longer in the world, but these are in the world. Now, of course, there is the prophetic perfect against. He actually still was in the world at the moment he said that.

But what he's saying is, I'm leaving. I won't be in the world. He's speaking as if it's an accomplished fact already because it is so near.

But these are in the world. I mean, OK, I've been in the world. Father, you've been working through me.

You've been upholding me. You've given me your power and your blessing, and you've done your work through me. Now, I'm not going to be here to do that anymore, but do it through them.

They're going to still be here to take up the torch, and I'm coming to you. Holy Father, keep through your name those whom you have given me that they may be one as we are. Keep them one, or maybe it's two different prayers.

Keep them, and also may they be one. Keeping them would presumably mean not letting them get away, or perhaps less specifically, not allowing, not himself turning them away. Whether he lets them escape, if they wish or not, is not necessarily clear in this

particular passage.

Obviously, the fact that Jesus prayed that we would be kept is a suggestion that the Calvinists could use for eternal security, that God's going to keep us. However, according to Peter, the keeping of us by God is conditioned upon our keeping in the faith. It says in 1 Peter 1 and verse 5, it says that we are kept by the power of God.

Jesus asked that the Father would keep those who were Jesus's. Keep them. Well, we are.

We are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. That is, through our faith and God's power, we are kept. We are not kept by our own strength, fortunately, because we have but little.

It doesn't take strength to have faith. A child can have faith. It doesn't take maturity to have faith.

A new convert has faith. It just takes a decision. It takes a commitment.

It takes no turning back. It takes saying, no matter what happens, I'm going to trust God. Like Job said, though he slay me, I'm still going to trust him.

I'm just not going to give up on this faith. And as long as we have this faith, we are kept through faith by the power of God. Faith engages the power of God.

Faith engages all blessings from God. Now that faith is a gift from God, I do not deny. But I do not also deny that a person can refuse a gift.

If we have faith, we can't take credit for it. God has given us the opportunity of faith. He's given us, first of all, something to have faith in.

He's given us promises. He's given us His Son. He's revealed Himself.

If He hadn't done that, we couldn't have faith. In that respect, He has given us, the faith we have is a gift. But it doesn't mean that He's forced it upon us.

And this is what I understand the Calvinist view to be teaching, that God creates faith in a heart that had no inclination toward it originally. Because when we're dead in trespasses and sins and totally depraved, we cannot even have any desire, any emotions at all toward faith. Only God can create that in us, and it's all from Him, and there's nothing we do.

Now, they want to say that so that we can't take any credit. The problem is that the Calvinists have mixed up faith with works. They think, and Calvin actually made these statements in his writings, that if we, in fact, are producing the faith, if we are the ones who are exercising faith and not God putting faith in us, then we are saved by our own works.

Which obviously means that Calvin believed that faith was a work. But, of course, Paul held another view. Paul felt that faith was the antithesis of works.

Faith is not a work. It's not meritorious. It's not strenuous.

It's simply something you choose to do. And if you choose to do it, I guess that's a better decision than deciding not to, but it doesn't earn you any, you know, there's no brownie points for it. It just puts you into fellowship with God, and He's the mighty God who saves and keeps.

If you depart from the faith, you break that connection with God. And though you were kept by the power of God, when, you know, it's like this power system, this PA system here, is operating through the power of the electric company here in McMinnville. But it will not continue to do so if you break the connection.

If you unplug it from the wall, the power company will still be producing power. It will still be there and available. The device won't work.

Faith is the means by which we are connected to God in relationship, and that relationship is one that accesses His power and His grace to keep us. He prayed that we would be kept. But we know from later verses that we are kept through faith by the power of God.

By the way, I would point out that the very next verse in John 17, verse 12, he says, while I was with them in the world, speaking as if he wasn't anymore, but he soon would not be, I kept them in your name. Those whom you gave me, there they are again, the ones you gave me, I have kept so far, and none of them is lost except the son of perdition that the scripture might be fulfilled. Now notice this.

Who is he talking about? He's talking about those that you've given me. He says, none of them, who are they? Those that have been given to him by the Father. None of them is lost except one.

You mean one of those that God gave him was lost? So it would seem. Those whom you've given me, I've kept them. None of them, the ones you've given me, none of them is lost except for one.

One of them is lost. Obviously a reference to Judas Iscariot. And he said this is that the scripture may be fulfilled.

So it's an exceptional case, very clearly. It is an exceptional case, but exceptions do prove that rules, if a rule is not a universal rule, an exception is all you need to prove it. Now if it is so that any who has been given to Jesus by God is incapable of falling away, if one who is truly in that category, one who has been given to Jesus by God, whom he will never cast out, who is being kept by the power of God, if that person, if that whole

category means one cannot fall away, then how is it that Judas, who is put into that category by this very statement of Jesus, did fall away? Well, the scripture might be fulfilled.

It's a once in history, just one case just to fulfill scripture. Well, you know, we can't say that for sure this is a unique case. It certainly is exceptional.

Jesus indicates that one is lost, but that's to fulfill scripture. Scripture predicted that something like this would happen. Jesus is of course the shepherd who has to give account to him who sent him to be a shepherd.

He has to give account of his sheep. One was lost, but God, that's not really my fault. See, I mean, that was scriptural.

That's supposed to happen. But if any one of his sheep is lost, it's not his fault. Whether the scripture predicted it or not, actually the scripture does predict, in the last days many shall depart from the faith and give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons.

So I suppose if people fall away now, we can say that too is so that the scripture might be fulfilled. The point is, if the scripture says it's going to happen, it is possible for it to happen. Therefore, if it is possible under any circumstances for one who has been given to Christ to fall away, as Judas did, and as Paul told Timothy, many shall, then I suggest that one cannot establish from scripture a doctrine that says that those who have been given to Christ, without exception, are going to persevere.

Now, I am of the opinion that those who are given to Christ who are truly regenerate, almost certainly will, certainly the majority will persevere. And you've heard me say it before many times. I personally believe that most people, the vast majority of people who fall away never really did know the Lord.

It's hard to know how a person has been given a new heart and a new spirit and has redirected his steps away from sin to God and has really had the revelation of Christ in his heart and has been given a new life, how that person can ever renounce what he knows to be true. I don't see how it can be done. But the Bible says that some do.

I don't know how Judas could do it, but he did it. And I mentioned a passage earlier, you might wonder the reference, about many shall depart from the faith. That's in 1 Timothy 4.1. 1 Timothy 4.1 says, Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.

Notice this in verse 2. Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron. Now this, to have your conscience seared, he's treating the conscience as if it's a fleshly organ. Of course, the conscience is a spiritual organ.

Conscience simply means your ability to know good and evil, your ability to detect moral value of a thing, whether good or bad. The fact that you have that ability is your conscience. Animals, it would appear, may not have such a device built into them, but people do.

And, as it were, speaking of the conscience as if it were a material organ of the body, which he's not trying to say, he says, They have their conscience seared. Now, seared flesh, seared means cauterized. Seared flesh has become insensitive because it's been exposed to something very damaging, caustic chemicals or actual, you know, something red-hot.

Paul gives the example of seared with a hot iron. It is actually a medical procedure sometimes followed for a bad wound to sear it or to cauterize it so that it causes instant scar tissue in reaction to the crisis of the, you know, the cells group into a new kind of tissue. And, you know, I don't know how exceptional the procedure is, but it's not unheard of as a medical procedure to sear flesh so as to close a wound, but the thing about cauterized flesh is once it has been cauterized, it's insensitive.

The nerves are dead. Now, to speak figuratively of someone having a cauterized or a seared conscience means that something has happened to these people so that they no longer are sensitive to what's right and wrong. Now, the fact that their conscience got seared and came to be in this condition means that it wasn't always this way.

They once knew what was right and wrong. This came to be in this condition by something that seared it, something that cauterized it. I don't know exactly what to say that would be.

I would suggest as a possibility that a person whose conscience is bothering them about some course of action and they refuse to repent, which is the normal thing for a Christian to do, but if for some reason they're tempted by pride or some other means not to repent, that they make themselves in time less sensitive to that sense of conviction. They harden their hearts. They nullify their conscience.

And if one persists in sin without repentance, despite the fact that the Holy Spirit is convicting, I believe that this may be the process by which a conscience becomes seared so that these who depart from the faith... I don't know how anyone who knows what a Christian knows, who knows what I know, and I don't see how anyone could be a Christian if they don't know what I know, because I'm just talking about knowing the Lord. That's what eternal life is, is knowing God, knowing Jesus. If anyone knows that, I don't know how they can fall away, but they can, and apparently it's the result of a process of numbing their sense of right and wrong by possibly... I'm injecting this part, but I think it's true... by possibly not responding to conviction, resisting conviction, hardening the heart, and eventually, because you don't respond quickly when God's convicting you about something, you become less sensitive about it.

God's voice becomes fainter and fainter. You hear Him convicting you loudly at first, and as you reject and reject it, His voice gets fainter and fainter, and you think, oh, well, He's quietening down about this. No, He's not quietening down.

You're growing deaf. Your heart's becoming hard. You can't hear the knock any longer.

There's a callous forming there. And so, I mean, it is, according to Paul, the case that some, many, will come into this strange and certainly unenviable condition of having a seared conscience and departing from the faith as a result of it. Judas did.

Others will. Paul said, if Judas did it, that the Scripture may be fulfilled. I guess on the strength of that, we could say that others will, that the Scripture may be fulfilled.

In fact, there's clearer scriptural reference to Christians falling away, departing from faith, than there is to Judas falling away, because there's not actually a real clear reference in the Old Testament to a prediction of Judas doing this. I know that everyone understands the falling away of Judas to be a fulfillment of prophecy, and it is. Jesus says so here.

But it's kind of hard to find which prophecy. It's in the Psalms somewhere. And there is a place where it says, He that ate bread with me has lifted up his heel against me.

And Jesus quoted that as being a reference to Judas. If you read it in the Psalm itself, however, it would appear, as is the case in many Messianic prophecies, it would appear only that David was talking about some friend who had betrayed him. However, Jesus applied it to himself and to Judas.

And therefore, there was a scriptural, at least by type and antitype, there was a prediction of fulfillment required. But there are very plain statements in the Scripture that many will depart from the faith. So I mean to say, if a vague, almost hidden prediction about Judas had to be fulfilled in the way it was, then I should say that plain statements to the same effect would have to be fulfilled.

And we'd have to allow that some may fall away because of that. Some will, in fact. I hope that we shall not be among them.

That's up to us. Because we're kept by the power of God through faith. And it's up to you to decide whether you keep the faith or discard it or depart from it.

Verse 13. I didn't comment on the last part of verse 11, but we'll have occasion to bring this concept up. It says that they may be one as we are.

That comes up again in verse 21 and so forth. So we are going to not comment on verse 11, the last line, until we get to those later verses. Verse 13.

And now I come to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy



fulfilled in themselves. Now, Jesus had talked about his joy previously. We usually think of Jesus with scriptural warrant as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

He was that. He was acquainted with grief. He was acquainted with people's grief.

And he also bore some grief of his own, especially on the cross. And he was sympathetic toward the grief of the world. He didn't experience the kind of grief and depression that we sometimes selfishly feel because we're feeling sorry for ourselves.

I don't know that Jesus ever exhibited anything like feeling sorry for himself. Unless it was when he said, how long must I bear with you people? I mean, I guess there's a little bit of him being on the edge of being tempted to be impatient, but he still stayed with them. He still worked with them and he didn't yield to that temptation.

But for the most part, Jesus, I think, his heart was moved with compassion for those who are afflicted. That's a sharing in their grief. Compassion literally means sharing, suffering together.

And he wept at the tomb of Lazarus, no doubt because of the grief of the sisters and others there that he was compassionate and sympathetic with. So he is a man of sorrows, but that doesn't mean that there wasn't something cheerful and attractive about his personality as well. After all, I don't know that sinners are largely attracted to morose individuals, gloomy individuals, especially at feasts and parties where Jesus frequently went and large numbers of sinners flocked to be around him at those times.

I'm not saying that he ran around with a lampshade on his head. I'm sure he didn't. But I would say that he probably wasn't a wet blanket either at the party.

He probably did not rain on their parade. He probably didn't sit there and judge and say, look at all these people. They're all sinners.

Oh, man, how awful. Boy, am I grieved. I mean, sure, he was grieved by sin, but he was probably relieved that they were coming.

After all, that's what the parable of the prodigal son was all about. There was celebration, there was dancing, there was music because the prodigal had come home and the parable itself was about these very people that Jesus was feasting with, the sinners coming back to God. That was a happy thing.

He said there's joy in heaven among the angels about that. And so there was clearly joy in Jesus' heart about that. In fact, we're told in Matthew 11, I believe it is, that Jesus rejoiced in his spirit.

I think it's in Matthew 11 and also the parallel in Luke 10. Let's see if I can find it in Matthew 11 quickly here. Well, he's rejoicing in his spirit.

It's not mentioned in the Matthew passage, but in Luke 10. That's where it'll be. Luke 10, 21 is the parallel.

And this is when the disciples came back and said, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name. It says in Luke 10, 21, in that hour Jesus rejoiced in the spirit and said, I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. He was so excited to see his disciples operating in the spiritual realm, seeing things that others couldn't see.

They were just babes. They weren't the wise and prudent. They weren't the educated classes.

They were just the peasants, the normal people. But he loved to see what God was doing in their lives. And he rejoiced in it.

So, though we don't read of Jesus laughing in the Bible, and we do read of him weeping, that doesn't mean that his demeanor was altogether morose and depressed and all that. There were moments, no doubt, where that was the emotion of the hour. But he was happy to see the kingdom of God come.

He compared it with a wedding feast. And it wasn't the time to be fasting, but to be feasting and so forth. So, when Jesus says, My joy, I want my joy to be in them.

This joy comes from, in my opinion, having a clean conscience. When you're doing the will of God and there's no barriers between you and your fellowship with God, that's a joyous thing. David said in Psalm 32, How happy is the man whose sins are forgiven.

How blessed or happy is the man against whom the Lord will not impute sin. Psalm 32, verse 1. To have a right relationship with God is a thing that's full of abundant joy and happiness. It is said of Jesus in the book of Hebrews that he was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.

He was happy a lot of the time. And how could one not be happy knowing that God and you have unbroken fellowship. There's not a thing interfering with God's favor in your life.

Not one thing. He holds nothing against you. Your conscience is clear.

Every true Christian has known this joy. It's a fruit of the Spirit. The joy in heaven over that restoration of such relationships.

So, we can see then that Jesus had every reason to be joyous in terms of the kind of joy not that the world gives, but the joy that a relationship with God gives. And he prays that they might know this joy as well. Certainly people who are having in the world's way of thinking a happy time, but whose conscience are nagging them continually cannot ever

be said to have the kind of joy that is a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

They may have a joy almost a joy unbearable and full of guilt. But we have a joy unspeakable and full of glory, according to Peter. So, Jesus said, I speak these in the world that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

Earlier, Jesus had said, if you know these things, after he told them some things, if you know these things, happier you if you do them. And I almost had not brought this up because I don't remember the exact reference. I believe it's in the 13th chapter he had said that, but I could be wrong.

In any case, he indicated that happiness was a result of doing what they knew he wanted them to do. So, if someone finds that, please report it and we'll give you that reference too. He said, if you know these things, happier ye if you do them.

I'm fairly sure it was part of the Upper Room Discourse which you just finished studying. So, somewhere in there. Let me know if you find it.

Okay? 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 the world. Now, he had commented like this in chapter 15 where he said, if you were of the world, the world would love its own because I've called you out of the world and the world doesn't love you.

They're going to hate you. Anyone find that verse? Could be. Let me take a look.

15, 17? 15, 13? I'm sorry, 13, 17. Okay, there we go. Not hearing very well these days.

Those old rock and roll years in my youth. There it is. I was right.

It's chapter 13, but it's verse 17. If you know these things, happier you if you do them. So, there's a happiness that comes from being obedient.

Doing what you know Jesus wants you to do. Having a clear conscience before God. There's a happiness that the world never knows until they repent and get right with God.

Also, a peace that they don't know until they do that as well. Okay, now, the hatred of the world directed to the disciples. It's hard to know to what degree they'd already incurred this.

Of course, by their association with Jesus, they were probably despised by those that were out to get Jesus, but Jesus, even at this point, wasn't widely hated. He was opposed by some, but the general populace had not turned against him in mass. Some of them ceased to walk with him, but we don't know that they were hating him at that point.

But there were some who truly hated him. There were those who didn't want the light at all, and they hate the light, and they wanted to extinguish the light. Now, those people

may have hated the disciples, but probably not directly in the sense that... I mean, the disciples probably seemed rather insignificant.

They were a small band. They weren't out preaching and teaching most of the time like Jesus was. They were just kind of watchers.

They were like students. And while, you know, it's the teacher who's the threat. The world hated Jesus because he was an influence in a direction they didn't feel comfortable about.

The disciples at that early stage were just paying attention, just learning. That was their schooling. And they probably had not become the brunt of a great deal of persecution yet.

But again, speaking in the prophetic perfect, the world has hated them, no doubt is referring to the immediate future because after Jesus ascended and the day of Pentecost came, we find it's not very long in the book of Acts until the world begins to treat the disciples whom they now see as a threat because they're now preaching and doing the same things Jesus did, begin to treat the disciples the way they treated him. Verse 15, I do not pray that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one. Now, this is a strange request in some respects because he has just said in verse 14 that the world hates them.

So what a mean thing to leave them in the world where they're hated. Why not just take them out? Jesus, after all, is going. But he didn't go out the easy way.

He left the world through the cross, through death, same as they all eventually did. But prior to death, Jesus never left the world. He didn't just bail out when things got hard, nor were they going to be allowed to do so.

Now, but why? Since they're hated in the world, why would Jesus pray that they stay there? Why wouldn't he just say, God, would you please rapture them now? I realize it's not a comfortable situation in the world for them. I think it would be awfully nice just to get them out of this situation. Why did he pray that God would not take us out of the world? I believe there's two reasons.

One is because we need it. When God has found us initially, He doesn't find us as He wants us. He accepts us as He finds us, but He doesn't want us to stay that way.

It's like a rock from a quarry that's going to be carved into a gem or into a stone for the temple. It's got to be chiseled. It's got to be shaved.

It's just not the right It's not the way it should be. It's okay. I mean, it's usable.

It's acceptable, but it's got to be shaped. It's got to be changed so it can become more

useful. It's like a lump of clay that has to be molded and changed by pressures that will make it into a vessel and honor or whatever.

Now, or gold that has to be melted so that it can be made into a vessel of honor. The world is our cauldron. And if the world didn't hate us, in a sense, it wouldn't do its work on us.

Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us and exceeding an eternal weight of glory. 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 18, I think it is, or 17 says that the afflictions that we have in this world are working something for us that's got to be worked. When God finds us, we're not very much like Jesus, but he intends to make us that way.

And the world and the pressures and the sufferings and the hatred of the world are those things that God uses to chisel and chip and burn and melt and reshape and fix. And so, don't take them out of the world quite yet. They've got a lot of growing to do.

They need what they're going to have here for a while. They're going to need this persecution. They're going to need this trouble.

That's why Peter said that God, if need be, will allow you to endure temporarily trials. That's what he said in 1 Peter 1, 6. We read it a moment ago. That if need be, we are enduring grief through trials.

It is necessary. So, that's one reason Jesus said don't take them out of the world. The other is, of course, there's a whole world out there to win yet.

Jesus had preached to thousands. Most of them weren't faithful. But the disciples were going to carry on this particular work.

There's a world to reach. Don't take them out of the world. That's why monasticism, cloistering yourself away in a religious community somewhere and not touching the unclean thing is simply not the Christian way.

It, of course, was a response of a certain group of people in the Dark Ages and even before that, a response to corruption in the world. And certain religiously minded people did not wish to be corrupted by contact with the world. The Essene community in the days of Jesus had done that.

They felt like the Jewish society was totally corrupt, so they went out into the desert and lived in isolation. Wonderful. Wonderful for them, not too good for the world if, in fact, they had something to offer the world.

If they were really better off than the world, and that may be open to question about the Essenes or the monastics, for that matter, in some cases, but if they really were better

off, then they have something to offer the world, but the world's not going to get any of it from them if they're in isolation. Don't take them out of the world. Keep them in the world.

But I don't want them to be subject to the ruler of this world. This is the thing. We will live in the world around people who are subject to the ruler of the world, but we're not subject to him.

We have another king, one Jesus. We are in opposition. We're a part of a resistance movement.

We're here representing another country. Our citizenship is in heaven. We're ambassadors here.

We have a function as spiritual saboteurs to undermine the influence of the prince of this world. We've got to stay in his territory to do that. But Jesus prays for our exemption from his influence.

Now, this doesn't mean to keep us from temptation, because temptation is part of the trial. Temptation is something that is a test of us, and we need that. But it means don't let us succumb.

He's praying that his disciples will not succumb to temptation of the enemy. It certainly isn't praying that the enemy won't be able to kill them, because the enemy did eventually kill them. They eventually died, and people do die eventually one way or another.

So he's not saying keep them from physical harm. He's not saying don't ever let the enemy have at them in any way. Don't let him ever tempt them.

After all, Paul was given a messenger of Satan to buffet him, and he asked to have it removed, and God said, no, no, no, you keep that. I'll give you grace for it. It's going to keep you humble.

You need that. So temptation, afflictions even from the enemy, even physical death, those are not the things Jesus prayed we'd be delivered from, but from apostasy, from defection, from corruption of the prince of this world, from the evil one. So to take us out of the world is not what he has in mind.

And by the way, even when we die and our spirits go, Lord, I believe when he returns and we'll get new bodies and we'll live in a new earth. The world is the environment that he made for us to live in. Once he fixes it, we'll live in it forever, in the new one.

Verse 16, they are not of the world just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth.

Now, sanctification is... you already know this, so to be sanctified is to be holy. The word holy and sanctified come from the same root, not necessarily in English, but in the Greek. The Greek word for sanctify and the Greek word for holy and the Greek word for saint.

They all are very, very closely connected. The word holy is the root word, *hagios*, and it means to be set apart. Sanctify means to make holy.

A saint is, in the Greek, is a holy person. It means one who is set apart, one who is holy. Holy means set apart.

Sanctify means set them apart. Sanctify them by your truth. Yeah, well, Christians certainly are set apart from the world by the truth because the world doesn't love the truth.

They don't love the light. And the more you stand for the truth, the more you'll find out you're set apart. You're on a different path.

You're in the same company. You may work at the same place. You may live in the same neighborhood, but you're set apart.

You're separate from sinners, even as Jesus is said to have been, though he was a friend of sinners. It says in Hebrews that he was holy and harmless and separate from sinners. So, we are set apart from the world, not geographically, not removed from all contact with the world in any sense.

We need to be right in there. Leaven and salt can only do their work if they are in the environment that they're to work on. And we are the salt of the earth.

We're leavened. And we're supposed to be right in the midst of things doing our leavening and salting work. And light also is not to be put under a bushel, Jesus said, but it's to be put in the middle of the place where everyone can see the light.

So, we're not to be removed from the world, but we are, while in the world, to be set apart from it in another sense. Set apart by our acceptance of the truth. The truth makes us free and that makes us different.

The truth sets us on a different path than the world's on because we embrace truth and the world hates the truth. And, therefore, our lifestyle will be different. But sanctify them by your truth.

You know, sanctification is an interesting concept. I don't know that Jesus means it here in the same way that it later comes up in the epistles or the way that theologians usually talk about it because it can mean more than one thing. To be made holy can be something that's more or less positional.

That is, God has positionally set us apart in His own reckoning, in His own dealings. We're in a different category than the world, as far as God is concerned. Like the Israelites in Egypt where God made a distinction between Israel and Egypt in His dealings with them.

We're told. And the plagues didn't come on the Israelites, but only on the Egyptians for this very reason because God makes a difference. He's set them apart.

So it can be sort of a positional thing with reference to God's attitude towards us. He thinks differently about us. He's got a different idea, another plan for us than He has for the world.

We're set apart in a special category to be His. But sanctification also can refer to behavior because in 1 Peter 1 it says, As He who has called you is holy, so you also be holy in all manner of conduct. So being holy is a matter of being set apart, first and foremost.

It's a positional thing. But there is a conduct that is called for by those who are set apart like this. And you need to be holy or sanctified in all manner of conduct.

That is 1 Peter 1, I think it's verse 15. And Paul indicates in 1 Thessalonians 4, right at the beginning there, he says that God has called us to holiness, not to uncleanness. Okay, well, so whether Jesus means sanctify them, meaning make them live a holy life, or whether He means just set them apart from the world, in either case, sanctification is through the truth.

It's not just the work of the Holy Spirit, although of course the Holy Spirit is a key agent, the key agent, I suppose, in sanctification. But the truth is also a part. God wants people to worship Him in spirit and in truth, to be set apart from other worshipers by these two characteristics, the spirit and the truth.

And we are set apart in that respect from those who worship idols or who worship God wrongly. And your word is truth. So, reading the Bible, and not just reading it, of course, embracing it, meditating upon it, studying it, applying it, obeying it, this is how the word is to be related to.

And it is through the word and through this proper use of the word that sanctification is furthered in our lives. In verse 18, as you sent me into the world, I have also sent them into the world. Well, He hadn't even said that to them yet, quite, although in chapter 20, He says, He says in chapter 20, verse 21, after His resurrection, He says, Peace to you, as the Father has sent me, I also send you.

But He's talking to His Father about it in advance of that, and says, I'm sending them into the world. Or He says, I have sent them. Again, prophetic perfect.



He hasn't quite yet done it. And for their sakes, I sanctify myself that they also may be sanctified by the truth. I need to be holy so that they can be holy.

If Jesus was not holy, we would have no hope of being holy. He is our model, and He is our Redeemer. If He were not holy and perfect, He couldn't redeem us, and we could never be saved or sanctified.

The model of His life also had to be perfect so that if we follow Him in every detail, it will result in us being holy rather than being something else, something short of that, because He was nothing short of that. I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word. That's us, folks.

You have come to believe in Christ through their word. So initially, before this, He was talking about, principally with His disciples in view, His current disciples that were with Him at that time. But He says, in addition to these, I really want these things to be true also of those that will be believers along the road through their testimony.

That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me, and the glory which You gave Me, I have given to them, that they may be one just as We are one, I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in One, and that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them as You have loved Me. Now, I would suggest in verse 22, He says, the glory which You gave Me, I have given them, is in the past tense and may be a reference to some mystical sense in which He's given them glory, although it could be a prophetic perfect, as so many of His statements are, indicating I'm going to give them My glory. The glory I have from You, they're going to share in this with Me.

Their bodies may be transformed into the same as My glorious body, and so forth. So whether He's saying this is something really accomplished or something He's saying predictably, but using the past tense as He's consistently done throughout the prayer, I cannot say for sure. However, verses 21 and 22 in particular are an appeal for unity, as also the last line in verse 11 was.

He says that they may be one as We are. Now, one as God and Jesus are, some have felt that this disproves the Trinity. When Jesus said, I and My Father are one, we often say, well, that's a proof of the Trinity, or at least two-thirds of it, because Jesus and the Father are one God.

However, they would say, well, if we're one with each other the same way as Jesus is with the Father, then are we a Trinity? I mean, when there's three of us together, are we three in one? Well, in one sense, we are. We share in one life. There is one faith, one hope, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, one spirit, one body.

Paul said all those things in Ephesians 4. There is a mystical sharing of oneness that we

do possess. We, being many members, are one body, Paul said. I look at myself, and I look like an individual, but really when God looks at us, I'm a member.

I'm a limb or an organ of a body, and you're the other parts, and many millions of other people are too. So, in a sense, we are all, if three of us are together, we are three and also one. Or if there's three million of us, it's three million in one.

So, there is a mystical union there. Some have felt that Jesus might be praying for agreement, unity of an agreement sort, and that is possible because he speaks in both cases, verse 21 and 23, that the result of it will be that the world may believe, in verse 21, the last line, the world may believe that you sent me, and in verse 23, the last line, that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them as you have loved me. The unity of the believer is apparently supposed to manifest itself in visible ways so that the world will be impressed.

I will tell you one thing, the world is not particularly impressed at the moment with this particular feature of the body of Christ. In fact, I've often been embarrassed when challenged by unbelievers. You know, if Jesus is the only way, well, which Christianity is real Christianity? There's hundreds or thousands of denominations.

But it is a reproach. It is a reproach. I'm not saying there's no answer that can be given, but you've got to pretty much talk fast because it is not the norm.

Division among Christians is not the norm. Where there's division, there's pride, and there's a failure to love properly. And when Christians do love one another and are humble and do stay together in unity, of course, that's a testimony to the world about who Jesus is.

Verse 24, Father, I desire that they also whom you gave me may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which you have given me, probably later when we go to heaven or when we stand before him. For you loved me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you, and these have known that you sent me.

I have declared to them your name. We comment on this. And I will declare it that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in them.

So I revealed you to them so that you could be in them. And as he said in chapter 14, verse 23, that the Father and Jesus would come and make their home with us. And so that his love would be in us in particular.

So God's presence in us, the purpose of his declaring God to us and letting us know God is so that there would be this manifestation of this fruit, love. Jesus said elsewhere in chapter 15, In this my Father is glorified that you bear much fruit. And the fruit certainly is that of God's love in our hearts.

If we don't have this love, we won't have the unity for which he prayed. If we don't have the unity, the world will not know. They will not have the proof that Jesus himself indicated would be the convincing proof.

So the love of believers for one another and the unity among themselves is clearly the testimony that Jesus expects to be the main sign to the unbeliever that the gospel is true and that Jesus is sent from God. Well, we're out of time and so we'll stop there. We made a pretty hasty treatment of the last few verses, but I think we covered most of the concepts.