

## Jesus' Prayer for Us

John 17:1-26 (New American Standard Bible)

Jesus spoke these things; and raising His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, so that the Son may glorify You, <sup>2</sup> just as You gave Him authority over all mankind, so that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. <sup>3</sup> And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. <sup>4</sup> I glorified You on the earth by accomplishing the work which You have given Me to do. <sup>5</sup> And now You, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world existed. <sup>6</sup> "I have revealed Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have followed Your word. <sup>7</sup> Now they have come to know that everything which You have given Me is from You; <sup>8</sup> for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me. <sup>9</sup> I ask **on their behalf**; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but **on the behalf of those whom You have given Me**, because they are Yours; <sup>10</sup> and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. <sup>11</sup> I am no longer going to be in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, so that they may be one just as We are. <sup>12</sup> 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 except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled. <sup>13</sup> But now I am coming to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> I am not asking You to take them out of the world, but to keep them away from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> Just as You sent Me into the world, I also sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, so that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. <sup>20</sup> "I am not asking **on behalf of these alone**, but also for those who believe in Me through their word, <sup>21</sup> that they may all be one; just as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. <sup>22</sup> The glory which You have given Me I also have given to them, so that they may be one, just as We are one; <sup>23</sup> I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and You loved them, just as You loved Me. <sup>24</sup> Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. <sup>25</sup> "Righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; <sup>26</sup> and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

## Introduction

The Scripture says that Jesus is seated at the right hand of God (Ephesians 1:20). What is He doing right now? He intercedes for us (Romans 8: 27, 34). Along with His Spirit!

With wordless groans (Romans 8:26)! On our behalf (John 17:9, 20)! All the time! So, if you ever feel that nobody cares, think again and know that Jesus cares! So does His Spirit! So does your Heavenly Father (1 Peter 5:7)!

Have you ever wondered, then, what kind of prayer Jesus offers on your behalf? I have. And, I have found an answer to my question. In today's text. The entire chapter of John 17 records the prayer of Jesus for His disciples. Since you and I also are His disciples, I can safely say that His prayer is still relevant to us as it was 2,000 years ago. We are included in His prayer (John 17:20). From His prayer, I would like to draw your attention to three things that Jesus prays for us today: *keep them in the name of God, protect them from the evil one, and sanctify them in God's truth.*

## **Content**

### **Keep them in the name of the Lord (v. 11).**

The meaning of the verb 'to keep': *Keep watch over us. Guard us. Keep us unharmed.* I am going to talk about this verb later. For now, please note here Jesus prays *in the name of the Lord*. Not just in anybody's name but in the name of the Lord Almighty! The same name to which all the creatures bow down and worship. The same name we invoke in our prayers. Did you know Jesus did everything *in His Father's name* (John 10:25)? He came to us *in His Father's name* (John 5:43). He performed miracles and wonders in the name of the Lord.

For His name's sake, God keeps His promise (John 14:14). In His name, God keeps us strong. In His name, God is faithful to us. Because of His name, we walk securely (Zechariah 10:12). In His name, we do everything, whatever we do and say (Colossians 3:17). Amen.

### **Keep them from the evil one (v. 15).**

Before we talk about the second point, it is worthwhile to talk about 'the world.' It appears 18 times in John 17. Almost once in every verse. So, what does the Bible say about 'the world?' First, the world is under Satan's control (John 12:31) for now (temporary occupation until Christ liberates it). The world doesn't know God (v. 25) nor Jesus whom God sent. This world hates Jesus because Jesus tells the truth about them (John 7:7).

The world hates Christians too (v. 14) because we are not of the world. Listen to Jesus: *If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you* (John 15:18-19). The same world hates us because of the name of Jesus that we carry on us (Matthew 10:22, 24:9). John the apostle exhorts us: *Do not be surprised, brothers and sisters, if the world hates you* (1 John 3:13).

Jesus tells us why the world hates us. Because of its ruler: Satan, the devil, the evil one, the prince of darkness who hates the children of light. Yet, to such a scary world, Jesus sends us back! (v. 18). Please note in verse 15 that Jesus is not asking God to take us out of the world. On the contrary, He is sending us back into the world! Yes, the same scary and troubled world!

Why back into the world? Because we are the children of the light. Because we have a mission to do. Because the people in the world need us--the messenger of truth and light. God sends us back to the world to bring people to Christ out of the darkness into the light! Out of the devil's bondage and oppression into the freedom and liberty in Christ! Remember: Jesus never wants us to stay comfortable in the spiritual greenhouse, the Church, the Sanctuary, where everything is cozy and comfortable. Our place is out there. Into the world Christ sends us. Don't be afraid. The Lord is with you. He will go with you. He will protect you from the evil one. Amen.

By the way, speaking of the evil one, it is the same one as the one in the Lord's Prayer: *Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from 'evil'* (Matthew 6:13). But I prefer a translation that says, 'from the evil one'--referring to the devil. It makes more sense to me if we say, 'the evil one' instead of 'evil.'

Why do we need the Lord's protection and deliverance from the evil one? Because the devil has every intention to steal our happiness and joy. He is the murderer and the liar from the beginning (John 8:44). His intention is always to destroy and kill us (John 10:10). For instance, to deprive us from salvation, he takes away God's Word the truth from our hearts (Matthew 13:19, Luke 8:12). He keeps us in misery and oppression in all forms (Acts 10:18). Here's one example of physical oppression.

One day Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. There was a woman who was bent over double and could not straighten up at all. For eighteen years! *When Jesus saw her, He called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your sickness."*<sup>13</sup> *And He laid His hands on her; and immediately she stood up straight again, and began glorifying God.*<sup>14</sup> *But the synagogue leader, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, began saying to the crowd in response, "There are six days during which work should be done; so come during them and get healed, and not on the Sabbath day."*<sup>15</sup> *But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites, does each of you on the Sabbath not untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it away to water it?"*<sup>16</sup> *And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, **whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years**, should she not have been released from this restraint on the Sabbath day?"* (Luke 13:12-16).

The evil one throws fiery darts at you (that is, always accusing to keep you miserable in shame and guilt) (Ephesians 6:16). He also tempts you all the time (Matthew 4:3).

So, Jesus prays that the Father in Heaven protect us from the evil one. Here's the promise of God. *But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and **protect** you from the evil*

one (2 Thessalonians 3:3). *He who was born of God **keeps** him, and the evil one does not touch him* (1 John 5:18).

Verse 12 in today's text, Jesus said that He guarded His disciples. He protected them. So will He. We are under His protection. The evil one or his minions will never touch us. Amen.

### **Sanctify them in His Truth, the Word** (v. 17, 19).

Definition of sanctification: the divine plan and process to make us heaven fit. To get us ready in His presence for eternity, God works on us throughout our lives to transform us into Christ's image and likeness (2 Corinthians 3:18). In every aspect of our lives, He trains us and disciplines us to live like Jesus did, to walk in the same way as Jesus did. Of course, we all know that it is a tall order. However, that's the plan God has for each child of His. No more. No less. To be just like Jesus. To make us all 'little Christs' (C. S. Lewis).

Now, one thing we can count on is this: God is faithful (Psalm 33:4, Lamentations 3:23). He never does a sloppy job. He will finish His good work in you by the day of the Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6). Perhaps, you may wonder why your life has not been easier after you became a believer in Christ. Rather, in some cases, you seem to suffer more than others. Consider the persecuted Christians. Before their conversion, they led an easy life. Everybody accepted them. Then, after they profess their faith in Jesus, everyone turns their back against them. Persecution and hardship start. Their family renounce them. They lose their jobs. They are even cast out by the community. Why all these troubles? How would you explain it? It is part of sanctification. Be like Jesus. Walk like Jesus.

Once again, the end of the sanctification is that you become much closer to Jesus. God will not settle for less. So prays Jesus for us. So, it is answered. Therefore, we'd better believe and accept God's plan for us.

Briefly, Jesus uses His Word to sanctify us. You all know how much I emphasize the Bible in our walk with God. How crucial the Word of God is to our spiritual growth! Those who take God's Word seriously will harvest the fruit of growth such as peace, love, joy, assurance, stability, and so forth. Those who neglect God's Word will remain a baby and struggle with life's hardships.

### **Conclusion**

Jesus offered the prayer in today's text 2,000 years ago. Today, the same Jesus offers the same prayer on our behalf (John 17:20). It is still relevant, still effective, still answered affirmatively, and at work among God's children. It will be so until Christ comes again too. This prayer is for you! God will keep you in His name, keep you safe and secure from the evil one, and will sanctify you through and through until you are transformed into Christ's image. Amen.