

The Upper Room (John 17.13-26)

Prayer Concerning His Companions (17.6-19) Christ is glorified in the saints, v.10

This section divides into two parts. **vv.6-11a** concern two provisions the Lord made for His disciples. He had manifested the Father's *name* (v.6) and given them the Father's *words* (v.8). **vv.11b-19** concern two petitions the Lord made concerning His disciples. He prayed that the Father might *keep* them (v.11b, 15) and *sanctify* them (v.17).

vv.13-14: These verses bring a contrast between 'joy' and 'hate'. If the disciples were **obedient** to the revelation they had received from Christ concerning the Father, they would enter into the conscious enjoyment and experience of 'my joy'. This peculiar joy of the Lord Jesus was the inner joy of full communion and fellowship with heaven and the Father (see 15.11). This is something the disciples could know even after He had departed. **v.14:** Yet, in contrast, they had experienced the 'hatred' of the world in association with Christ and would continue to do so. He had experienced this to the full, and had largely preserved them from it (7.7; 15.18, 20, 24). Christ was hated because He did not belong to this world. He came from heaven and revealed the Father, testifying that its deeds were evil (7.7). So the world will also hate those who are *associated* with or *resemble* Him. The hatred of the world was further intensified as these men appeared to others like aliens – they were also not 'of the world'. Every Christian has been born from above, chosen out of the world, does not live like the world (character) and does not share the world's destiny. **John Butler:** *Though we live in the world, the world does not live in us.*

vv.15-16: In the light of this hatred, surely it would be better for Christians to be removed from the world? Oh no! In divine purpose, the Lord Jesus prays 'not' that these disciples should be removed from the world. There were many who were going to believe on Christ through their word (v.20)! We are here to continue to witness to the revelation of the Father in Christ that others might be saved. Thus, the Lord prays that they might be 'kept' (protected, not exempted) from the evil in the world. The Father keeps us from the moral evil of this world when we live in communion with Him.

Leckie: *The Father keeps us from the evil; we cannot keep ourselves from the evil. We must recognise our own weakness; left to ourselves we will succumb. We must put our trust in the keeping power of our Father (1 Peter 1.5; Psalm 16.1).* Note. A number of translations and commentators suggest it is not just evil generally but 'the evil one', i.e. the devil.

Gooding: *Satan would try and entice them into worldliness, compromise and sin to discredit the gospel. Those who actively spread God's word must expect to be special targets.* **v.16** is not repetition for the sake of emphasis. In v.14 the Lord was stating the chief reason why the world hated them; here, it is the chief reason why they should be kept from the world's evil. They don't belong to it!

v.17: This verse explains how the Father keeps us from the world's evil. We are 'sanctified' through the word of truth. Sanctification means to 'set apart' from the common and unclean and devote wholly unto God for a specific purpose. There is an aspect of sanctification which is *positional* (we are saints or 'separated from earth ones'; 1 Corinthians 1.2; Hebrews 10.14); there is another aspect which is *practical*. It is only as we read, receive and obey the word of God that we shall be preserved from the evil of the world and set apart practically in devoted service for God (v.18). We should read the word of God for our sanctification. **Leckie:** *When I read the Scriptures, is God speaking to my heart and challenging where I have failed Him? It is only as I allow the word to judge, expose, wound and cleanse me that I am sanctified. Does it expose the wrongs in my life and that which hinders me spiritually? Then I am sanctified. There is a danger that we read the Scriptures just for knowledge or in order to preach. But do we read it for our sanctification? In summary, believers are set apart from the world and its evil, and reserved for God's service (vessels meet for the master's use) in the measure that they read, imbibe and obey the truth of God's word.*

vv.18-19: The *means* of sanctification is the word of God (v.17); the *purpose* of sanctification is devoted service (v.18). Christ was 'set apart' (John 10.36) for the purpose of being 'sent' into the world to effect our salvation. Now the disciples are being 'sent' (*apostello*). Hitherto the commission was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 10, Luke 9, Mark 6), now they are officially sent in view of the finished work of Calvary – they are being sent by the Son to carry the gospel to all nations (John 20.21). **v.19:** Christ now 'sanctifies Himself'. Clearly this cannot mean *moral* improvement. Christ was going back to heaven (via Calvary), and there He would set Himself apart for the sake of the disciples – that they might be 'truly' sanctified themselves. **Leckie:** *He has set Himself apart in heaven that we might find in Him an object there to fill and satisfy the heart. And when that one fills and satisfies our hearts, we become set apart for God and him on the earth.*

Prayer Concerning the Church (17.20-26) Saints are glorified with Christ, v.22

v.20: The prayer of the Lord Jesus now widens to include the Pentecostal saints and early church. These are those who would believe 'into' (on) Christ through their word (cf. Acts 2.41; 4.4; 8.37; 9.42). This is omniscience. Despite the curse and shame He would bear at Calvary, yet He still knew that the corn of wheat would fall into the ground and bring forth much fruit. How were they saved? Through the preaching of the word. This means of salvation has never changed!

v.21: The Lord Jesus again prays for oneness (unity), something which is a repeated thought throughout the prayer (vv.11, 21, 22, 23). Verse 11 speaks of an *apostolic* unity in aim, purpose and objective. Here, it is a prayer on behalf of the entire church, an *ecclesiastical* unity, gloriously fulfilled at Pentecost when the church was formed and baptised into one body. That this is unity of a *spiritual* nature is suggested by 'as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee' – even as Father and Son are one God, yet distinct persons; so the church would be baptised into one body; yet distinct members. This is the one flock under one Shepherd (John 10.16). What a testimony this would be to the world 'that they might believe'. The wonder of Jew and Gentile, religious and idolater, united together (Ephesians 2.15) by one gospel, in one body, under one common Head and Lord. The church united together and indwelt by the Spirit brings each member into a living relationship with the Father and Son ('one in us'). **Gooding:** *He is praying for Pentecost, when all disciples, and subsequent believers, would be placed in Christ, be incorporated in Him and in God the Father.*

vv.22-23: If verse 21 points to oneness at the *beginning* of the dispensation, this verse is speaking of oneness in 'glory' to be manifested at the *end*. The acquired 'glory' which is Christ's in virtue of His finished work on earth (Isaiah 53.12; 1 Peter 1.21; Hebrews 1.2), He has shared with His church. This is anticipative of the manifestation of Christ in union with His church, when He shall be glorified *in* His saints, and the church *in* Him (2 Thessalonians 1.10, 12). The fact that this glory is already given ('I have given them') is viewed from the standpoint of God's eternal purpose. So certain is our future glorification, it is spoken of as already accomplished (Romans 4.17; 8.30). **v.23:** This is a unity in glory which will be 'perfected' and fully manifested at His glorious appearing before the world (2 Thessalonians 1.7, 10; Ephesians 4.13; 5.27). Then, the Son will be glorified in the saints ('I in them') and God glorified in Christ ('thou in me'). In addition, the world will 'know' (note the word is not now 'believe', v.21, it is too late for that) the One crucified at Calvary was indeed sent from the Father, and those believers who were so hated by the world are indeed those whom the Father loves. What a stupendous statement. The Father loves us now as He loves His own Son. *So dear, so very dear to God, More dear I cannot be; The love wherewith He loves the Son, Such is His love to me.*

v.24: The Lord Jesus makes one final desire of His heart known to His Father – 'I will' – a great contrast to the statement He will soon make in the garden (Luke 22.42). His desire is that 'those' (or 'that', referring to the church) the Father has given Him be with Him where He is, that is, in heaven. **John Phillips:** *He wants us. He wants us to be where he is. Heaven would be incomplete for us without Him; and incomplete for Him without us.* And, in heaven, we shall 'keep on beholding' (careful observation as a spectator) His essential and inherent glory (see v.5). A Man sharing all the glory of deity, yet still in a body and bearing the marks of Calvary. **Gooding:** *The sight of that glory will show us the wealth of what He left.* This essential glory, His before the foundation of the world, is spoken of as having been 'given' Him in the sense that the Father has raised Him back to the position that is fitting for its display. **FB Hole:** *That uncreated glory had been His from eternity as being in the unity of the Godhead: He has now been re-invested with it, but in a new way; receiving it as a gift from the Father in His risen Manhood. His essential glory is now expressed, not in the form of a Servant on earth, but as a resurrected Man in glory.* **Gooding:** *That glory was the expression and the measure of the Father's love for Him. As we see that immeasurable glory, we shall begin to grasp the infinite extent of the Father's love for the Son.*

vv.25-26: Finally, the Lord advances His ground of appeal for the entire prayer. **First, divine character.** The Father is righteous, and justice requires that the requests of the Son be granted. **Constable:** *Jesus was affirming His belief that God would do what was right in granting the petitions that He was presenting. This included glorifying the Son and bringing believers safely to heaven where they would behold His glory.* **Second, divine relationship.** The Son knows the Father and has fully declared Him. This is a revelation which was received by the disciples, but ignored by the world (John 1.10). **v.26: Third, divine purpose.** The Lord had 'declared' or 'manifested' the Father's name in His *life* (v.6), and He would *continue* to reveal the Father in His death and resurrection (Hebrews 2.12). As believers appreciate this ongoing revelation by the Spirit, the consciousness of the Father's love and Christ's presence is known and enjoyed by His disciples (John 14.21, 23). This is critical for ongoing witness and testimony in a Christ-rejecting world.