**Livin’ the Life**

**Jesus’ Prayer for His Disciples**

**John 17:6-19**

July 21, 2019

David Taylor

We are in our series in the Gospel of John, Livin’ the Life, looking at the life of Jesus and the life he promises us and are looking at Jesus’ Great Prayer of Jesus in John 17. Today we are looking at 17:6-19, Jesus’ Prayer for His Disciples. Last week we looked at Jesus’ prayer for himself, that the Father would glorify him in the cross so that he in turn would glorify the Father (1-5).

**Jesus Reveals the Father (6-8)**.

Jesus has been faithful to his mission, to reveal the Father to his disciples (6). Then Jesus describes his disciples as having kept your word (6). Disciples are characterized by obedience but not perfect. The gospels describe the failures of the disciples but they also describe them as intent on trusting and obeying Jesus. The result of Jesus revealing the Father to the disciples is that they now know that Jesus is from God because they received his words as the words of God. Jesus has the unique advantage of being able to reveal God to humanity. Remember the opening verses of John describing Jesus, in the beginning was the word and the word was God and the word was with God and the word became flesh (1:1, 14). That is why only Jesus can say if you know me, you know the Father (14:7) or if you have seen me, you have seen the Father (14:9) because he and the Father are one (10:30). So, the disciples know that Jesus has come from God and was sent by God (8) and this knowledge led to faith in Jesus and eternal life. This is not just mental ascent but experiencing the power and the person the truth is about. Now let’s look at the reason Jesus Prays for his disciples.

**The Reason Jesus Prays for his Disciples (9-10)**

Jesus gives two reasons for praying for his disciples. First, the Father has given them to Jesus (9). Jesus does not pray for the world because the world does not belong to him, that is, it does not believe in him as sent by God. That may sound harsh but remember Jesus is preparing his disciples for his death and this prayer is a means by they are kept faithful to Jesus. The disciples belong to the Father and he has given them to Jesus. Then he expands upon this idea, all mine are yours and yours are mine and I am glorified in them (10). To belong to one is to belong to the other because they are one, they are God, of the same substance. Eternal life is being united to the Father and the Son by the Spirit, based upon the work of the Son, so that we experience their life and the love they share as the triune God. The Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father and the Spirit is the love between them personified. And we glorify the Son by honoring and treasuring him as the Savior Son sent by the Father. To glorify Jesus means to display his infinite worth as the one of a kind Son and only Savior. The second reason Jesus prays for his disciples is that he protected his disciples during his earthly ministry but now he is coming to the Father (11, see v. 12). Now let’s look at the two requests of Jesus.

**Two Requests of Jesus (11-19)**

Jesus makes two requests for his disciples, first, that the Father keep them faithful to Jesus (11-16) and second, that the Father keep them faithful to Jesus’ mission (17-19). The first request is that the Father would keep or guard his disciples (see 1 Pet 1:4; Jude 1:1) so that they may be one as the Father and the Son are one (11). Jesus is asking the Father to keep them faithful to him so that they will have a unity like the Father and the Son have. Jesus is asking because he is going to the cross (12). Jesus guarded them while he was with them and not one of them was lost except Judas whose betrayal fulfilled Scripture (12). Judas was lost, not because Jesus was unable to keep or guard him spiritually. Rather is was because Judas was not one of Jesus’ own and an example of someone who did not truly believe or have eternal life (17:2, see also 13:10-11; 18-19).

Then Jesus says that the reason he has told them these things is so that they may have his joy fulfilled in them (13). Earlier I said that eternal life is being united to the Father and the Son by the Spirit so that we experience the divine life and the divine love of the triune God. Now Jesus says that eternal life also includes the experience of Jesus’ joy. Being united with God by the Son means that we enter into the life of the trinity, enter into the love of the trinity, and enter into the joy of the trinity. This is not the joy or happiness of this life as good as that is but is Jesus’ joy. The joy he experiences with the Father. Jesus is the Beloved Son in whom the Father is pleased and eternal life is being united to them and their relationship of love and unity and joy (see 3:29; 15:11; 16:20; 16:24; 11:24). But embracing the gospel brings hostility with the world (14). Jesus creates a division between those who are of the world and those who are no longer of the world so Jesus prays that his disciples be protected from evil. The danger of evil is real and urgent so Jesus’ prayer is necessary and the means by which we are protected from the evil one. Satan is opposed to God and the gospel and you. Life is war for followers of Jesus. If you don’t get that, then you don’t get the Christian life or following Jesus.

That leads us to Jesus’ second request, that the disciples be sanctified in the truth (17). Sanctified has two meanings in the bible. The first is to be set apart for God’s purposes. The second is the progressively growth in becoming like Christ. Jesus is speaking of the latter, that his disciples be set apart in the truth of the gospel. The next two verses support this thinking. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. Therefore, for their sake I consecrate myself so that they also may be sanctified/consecrated in the truth (18-19). In the same way the Father sent the Son into the world on his mission to reveal the Father, Jesus has sent his disciples into the world on his mission to reveal the Father through the gospel. We have been set apart for God’s mission. Faithfulness to Jesus is faithfulness to Jesus’ mission. The Father sent the Son as his representative with his power and authority; Jesus sends us as his representatives with his power and authority too (Mat 28:19, go implies to reveal or share the gospel). Finally, because Jesus has a mission for us, he dedicated himself to God’s purpose, going to the cross, so that we may also be dedicated and empowered for God’s mission. The church, Jesus’ community of disciples/followers, are missionary family. Missions is not going across the world but it is also going across the street or sitting across the table or inviting neighbors into our homes and lives. Jesus prayed to the Father to keep us faithful to Jesus and faithful to his mission. Faithfulness to Jesus is faithfulness to Jesus’ mission.

Questions for Life Groups:

1. What truth(s) in this passage or teaching struck you or that you should think about more?
2. What does it mean that the disciples kept God’s word? How are God’s words and Jesus words related to each other?
3. How does faith and obedience work in our salvation?
4. What does Jesus mean by his being glorified in his disciples? How do we glorify Jesus?
5. How does this teaching affect my relationship with God?
6. How does this teaching affect my relationships with those in my church family?
7. How does this teaching affect my relationships with those who are not Christians?
8. How is God speaking to you from this passage/sermon?
9. How is God asking you to respond and obey him?
10. How does this teaching affect to obey the great commission to make disciples?
11. Can you give the main point of the teaching in one sentence?