

## 3/13/22 - John 17:6-19 - "Whispers in the Dark"

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[ 0 : 00 ] I think it's fascinating how overhearing people's prayers often has the power of teaching embedded with it.

It's intertwined with every intercession. When you have somebody pray for you, it actually has a teaching element that comes along naturally with it.

I've personally been very much benefited from the prayers of other people that just come up to me and declare the truths of God's word and his promises in times when I don't often believe them.

And even looking through the prayers of the Puritans, there's a great book out there called *Piercing Heaven* by Robert Elmer and *Confessions* by Augustine.

Dom, I still have your book. Our passage today has similar power. It contains a great deal of petition from Jesus Christ to his disciples for his disciples, but he's talking to God.

[ 1 : 12 ] And his disciples are standing by overhearing what Jesus is saying. Think about that. The encouraging element of praying for others, especially when they're present with you, has this ministerial role that our prayers have when we're praying in the presence of one another.

This reminds me of us singing together. Just as I heard the voices filling this sanctuary this morning of the words of God being declared and sung in unison, led by a wonderful music team that's playing.

And we all unite hearing one another just as we pray for one another. It's so fascinating how prayer and singing have this edifying element attached to them naturally that we hear and we're singing and we're praying with one another.

It is fascinating. And in that, the ministerial component of the one another worship of praying or singing can equally be lifting and encouraging one another as we do sing the truth of God's word. But the question we must ask in a text like this, which we just read is why. Does Jesus want his disciples to hear his prayer and specifically what does he want his disciples to hear?

[ 2 : 47 ] And these things we are going to draw out of the word today in three sections, just as the author John has laid it out. And so we see the first section.

In a sermon titled *Whispers in the Dark*, we see the first section. God has anchored our faith in Christ.

God has anchored our faith in Christ. Look with me in God's word. It says in verse six, I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world.

Yours they were and you gave them to me and they have kept your word. Jesus continues highlighting his prayer and petition to God, not focusing on his glory.

As we saw previously last week, he has turned from his petitions for himself and has turned his attention upon his disciples. Next week, he will be praying for the world.

[ 3 : 54 ] But here we pause and we hear this beautiful petition for the disciples. And what do we hear? He recalls in his prayer the past work of manifesting the name of God in the presence of his disciples.

I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. This manifestation means to reveal, to make clear.

This verifies something. And look, while all of humanity's identity is being created by God and for God, that's a really foundational theological principle.

That we are created by God and for God. These disciples have been uniquely given to Jesus Christ.

What a reminder for these disciples. In just one verse. The disciples are reminded that they are not of their own. They don't belong to themselves.

[ 5 : 08 ] They don't control their will. God has manifested himself and drew the disciples to Jesus Christ. They've been brought out of the world and into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. And the evidence is the abiding reality of that ongoing relationship with God that is seen through by keeping his word.

And keeping his word. And keeping his word. Now they know. Now they know. In verse 7. Right? They are without excuse.

That all things given to Jesus Christ originate from a divine essence. And they have the message of absolute truth. Right?

Isn't that what Jesus says? Now they know. When you know something. When your parents say, yeah, I told you to come home at this time. And you show up at a different time.

[ 6 : 09 ] You get discipline. There's repercussions if you do not listen. Now they know they are without excuse. And look. He repeats. Also in verse 8.

And they have received them. His words. And have come to know in truth. When you know something. You're without excuse. And they have now an absolute truth.

That is divinely inspired. That is Christocentrically focused. On the mission of Jesus Christ. On this earth. To bring salvation. And guess what?

This is a gathering of God's people. This truth gathers the flock of God. There's no other way that it may be done. And we have to remember the context.

Don't we? Jesus is in his final hours in this life. These are the final petitions. Similar to a family member. Gasping for air.

[ 7 : 09 ] On their deathbed. The words. The words. The words. Those final words of this life. That I will someday. Give to my children. The words that I want them to hold on to.

And Jesus Christ gives these to them. What are these words? These words. Root. Those. Those words. That we love. That we love. In truth that guides.

Truth that shapes. It's within these short three verses. That we get a glimpse into the prophetic reality. That these disciples. Would take on an apostolic mission.

Of laying the foundations of the church. In that same truth. In other words. They are going to be called to take what they have received from Jesus Christ.

Who they have been given to. And the word that they have been given. They are to take and tell. Go tell it on the mountain. Just like LeWelon's testimony said so beautifully.

[ 8 : 08 ] Why would Jesus want the disciples to hear this? To remind the disciples. That God has done all the work to gather his flock.

God has done all the work of gathering his flock. And that reality is an anchor for our lives. The disciples have kept the father's word in verse 6.

They received it through the teaching of Jesus Christ in 6 and 8. And they have come to understand and believe what God has said in verse 7 and 8.

And in that the disciples have been removed from something. They have been where they previously were in the world. God has brought them out of the world by giving them to Jesus Christ. In so doing, they have been brought out of the world's values. They have been brought out of the world's systems. They have been brought out of the world's truths.

[ 9 : 12 ] They have been brought into the truth of God. The disciples would be the basis of this worldwide movement that would span all time.

What's the essence of this truth? Jesus Christ, as verse 8 says. In that truth that I came from you and they have believed that you sent me.

In this, we can be assured that within the proclamation and the penmanship of the authority given to this apostolic body, we have a countercultural truth.

It manifests itself in great friction with the worldly values. It does not align. It was never meant to align with the world.

All its values, all its principles, all its influence in our lives. We have no place in the world. John MacArthur in the Shepherd's Conference this year, in Shepherd Conference 2020, he actually said something similar to this that I had to quote.

[ 10 : 20 ] It says, the apostles turned the world upside down without any help from it. The world has been in just blatant opposition with the will of God and the direction of the church.

And God has brought the church out of the world and into the word. Why would Jesus Christ want us to hear this today? To remain steadfastly focused and rooted in the truth of God.

How? How do we do this? Plug in to a local body of other disciples of the word. You need community in order to do this and to endure.

Plug in to a Bible teaching church with your Bible open. And in doing so, you continue with those whom God has gathered and abide together.

And the whispers of Christ's prayer for the disciples is the same for today. The world has nothing at all to offer the church. At all. But the church has everything to offer to the world.

[ 11 : 27 ] Absolutely. And we see the second reality of this passage. That God will preserve us in Christ. God will preserve us in Christ.

He continues to reinforce the reality that this anchoring hope of the identity of the church having been given to God, being not of their own, being gathered for God's purposes.

The apostolic mission would look a little different than the church, but it would be a worldwide mission. Because of what God has done. This will drive all of which the disciples will do.

Look in verse 9. It says, For us, the power of God will keep us.

It will preserve us. It will protect us. It will sustain us. It will empower us. Why? Because the church is God's great possession.

[ 12 : 46 ] And nothing compares to the power of God in salvation and sanctification, of which we are witnesses to with every person who has come out of that water today. And it will continue.

What a message in verse 9 and 10, right? This is a message for the disciples and also the church at large. The church is God's great possession. And guess what?

How do we proclaim it? By our unity. How do we destroy our witness of being God's great possession?

By dividing. It's because of this possession that Jesus Christ is concerned of them remembering. Because guess what? Jesus is about to depart. He's about to die and go with the Father in heaven and send. And guess what? All they're going to have left remaining is those 11 in the room looking at each other like, what do we do now?

[ 13 : 49 ] And Jesus is giving them the encouragement that they need to endure. And you see, the unity of the church serves as a testimony of its endurance and identity in Christ.

Nothing can bend or break that inseparable union of the people of God. Though the world seems to really go to extreme efforts to attack it, right?

And we see that in this passage as we read on in verse 13. We see, But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

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. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but you keep them from the evil one.

They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Don't you see something that he's saying in this passage, church? Jesus is essentially putting joy on trial.

[ 14 : 56 ] That this world is going to broadcast an empty sense of joy that will seem enticing, that will appear as if it will actually endure in your life, but at the end of the day will leave you high and dry.

Joy is on trial. Isn't that what Judas was seeking? The joys and the treasures on earth to turn Jesus in and make a buck, right? The joy that our pride calls out for to chase after the things of this world, right?

And the more the church fails to conform to the patterns, the values, the principles, and the influence of the world, the greater the world's hatred for the church will grow.

And this isn't a problem. This is how it was meant to be since the fall of Adam and Eve. And I think we should probably stick on this for just a moment here and unpack this, because this is such a compelling reality.

John is trying to tell us something through documenting Jesus' words here. He has mentioned in this short passage world 13 times. And in so doing, he's trying to tell you something.

[ 16 : 18 ] Not only the essence of the world and their values, but the opposition of the world and that which the disciples have been brought out of. And so we need to look at this passage and understand something about the world.

The world's agenda is to conform the church according to the values, the principles, and patterns set by the evil one.

Maybe you guys were distracted. Listen. The world's agenda is to conform the church according to its values, its principles, its patterns set by, not God, set by the evil one to lure the church into the world's vices.

Judas is a testimony of that. And sadly, as churches all around the world, you see the Jesus banner being waved high in the sky.

But some of these flag wavers seem to be just as confused of what the Bible clarifies.

[ 17 : 31 ] They're confused of what is clear. That, yes, they're faithfully in contact with the world, just as the church ought to be. However, they are rebelliously adopting the world's ideologies as their own.

Genesis 12, if we look throughout history, we see the life of Abraham illustrates the important biblical balance called to separate from his native environment to be a blessing to the nations. Scripture is filled with the commandment of nonconformity of God's people. In sexual perversion, according to the moral law, which still is intact today, unlike the civil law, the ceremonial laws that existed back then, but the moral law that we see in 1 Samuel, we see that in Exodus, or yeah, Leviticus, and leadership in 1 Samuel, we see us in self-reliance, we see all of this perversion that goes on throughout the nations, and how far the church has still strayed, even up to this day from the word of Christ regarding our ideas of sexuality, our ideas of gender roles, our ideas of the way to salvation.

And this is huge. Sexuality has become not an objective truth, it's become a subjective truth that it can kind of change with time. And in the name of progressive values that the world seems to really have right, well, let's be progressive like the world, and, you know, we'll grow our church, but reduce in faithfulness.

And unfortunately, that has continued all throughout Scripture, and continues today, and will continue tomorrow. We see this in blurred gender roles, you see blurred lines, just as God has distinctly marked out the sea from the land, the sky from the earth, he created things with distinctions, and unfortunately, the fall has created this sort of this laboring process in order to stay within the gender roles that God has created, and they're beautiful.

[ 19 : 55 ] And salvation, as if there's many roads to lead to salvation, you can just have some good vibes, and have an amen at the end of life, and you're with God the Father, right? Well, no.

No, there's no amen on that. At all. Sorry, less. No amen. The world is confused, and sadly, the church is also confused.

The church is to be distinguished from the world, not persuaded by the world, not persuaded by secular philosophies that sound good, but contradict the word of Christ.

Sadly, those who find themselves contradicting the word of Christ prove their continued unregenerative state in rebellion against God's word, regardless of the Jesus banner that they wave high in the sky for all to see, because a banner does not save.

How is one saved? John 15, verse 10. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love.

[ 21 : 06 ] Keep my commandments, and you will abide in my love. It's like, it's simple as that, guys. Jesus has clarified what the world and the church is so confused by.

The church was never called to be popular. That's for certain. The church was called to be faithful. And a popular church is not always the most faithful, and the most faithful church is not always popular.

And may we never be guilty of doing what is evil in the sight of the Lord, like the nation of Israel previously, and never be caught doing what is right in our own eyes in the name of subjectivism. What does Jesus want the church to hear? By the power that God, we have been called, by the power of God, we will persevere in non-conformity.

The church will persevere. And we see it in this last section as this passage wraps up. We see that God set us apart in Christ.

[ 22 : 30 ] God has set us apart in Christ. He says in verse 17, sanctify them in your truth. Your word is truth.

As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake, I consecrate myself that they also may be sanctified in truth.

Focus with me. We're almost at the end. All of this to say, sanctify them in your truth. Just as the beginning of the passage indicated, the disciples being brought and drawn out of the world, God, the Father, the Father has called Jesus to be the means of sanctifying them in his word, the truth, to

be sown into their lives by the disciples being given to Jesus out of the world. How will this be done? Abiding in the word of Christ. And the church is to be sanctified by the word of Christ, right? This passage tells you. What's that mean, sanctified? I don't know. Let's figure it out. When something is sanctified, it is separated from what is unclean. It's set apart.

[ 23 : 54 ] Set apart for special purpose. And think about this. So, well, this should blow your mind that Jesus Christ, being the high priest, has united the continuity of redemption through the atonement which reveals and the doctrine of sanctification as the disciples will soon be experiencing and taken to the world.

Let me explain this because biblical theology, what's been going on all throughout the narrative of scripture and all this bulk of confusing pages of ups, downs, lefts, rights, round and round we go of issues and we still got issues today.

And biblical theology informs us that the high priest was the supreme leader of the Israelites. We see that in Exodus 28, Numbers 18.

And the requirement of the high priest was to be holy, to be set apart, Leviticus 21. And according to Leviticus 4, they would administer sin offerings.

They would go before the people of Israel to administer sin offerings on behalf of the congregation but also on behalf of themselves. And now, look at what's going on in this passage.

[ 25 : 12 ] This is gigantic. This is huge in continuity in the fulfillment of redemption. Now we see Jesus Christ. He says that he has been consecrated and for their sake I consecrate myself.

Meaning that not only is he the Lamb of God that's consecrated for special purpose to die on a cross, he is also consecrated as the church's high priest, a dual relationship.

And this is him giving himself as the one, the Holy One, set apart to make atonement for sin. He is literally taking his own life to the cross and saying, I will die in the place of sinners of this world.

I will forgive them of their sin. By my blood they will be healed. He was pierced for our transgressions. Why would Jesus Christ want them to hear this?

Why would he do such a thing? So that they would remember during his last dying breath on the cross, it had to be so.

[ 26 : 22 ] It had to be so in order that they may be set free from the punishment that is due to them and that their sins were satisfied on the cross.

In other words, the cross sets them now apart because of the one who was set apart. He has given the church access to God.

and the sanctifying event of the cross will propel the sanctifying work of the church. Here and only here through hell and high water, the church will continue and continue and continue to be sanctified through the consecrated work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

And with Martin Luther, we all stand at the door, right? The 95 Thesis, we stand here, I cannot do otherwise. There's nothing else that we can do.

We are bound to the consecrated work that Jesus Christ accomplished for us and now has bestowed and we respond and propel our lives in consecration for service to God.

[ 27 : 34 ] So too, the church stands in hope that regardless of the darkness that surrounds, whether we're popular or not, there is nothing that can extinguish that truth's light, nothing that can redefine that truth, nothing that can steal our joy.

Why would Jesus Christ want the disciples to hear this? Because this is precisely what they will be called to endure in the next few years to follow as Jesus begins to close his time with them.

But why do we need to hear this today? We need to be reminded to see through the hypocritical lies of the world in our dark day.

Think about it. We need to be reminded regardless of the world hooting and hollering at us to conform, they're going to take away our 501c3 status, I'll give it to them.

There's nothing that they can do to minimize or redefine the truth, right? The world will hoot and holler conformity in the name of progressive ideals, but it's only a mask of the world's discontentment and sin.

[ 28 : 57 ] The world will demand inclusivity, but it's really just a mask of exclusivity of biblical ideals. The world will continue to get louder and louder and louder.

And guess what? The church, the church will still hear the still small whispers of Jesus Christ's intercession for his disciples.

and there is no volume that can drown out that truth. There is no threat that can reduce that truth. The church will remain consecrated, exclusive to the values, principles, and patterns that the Bible excludes from our lives, knowing that even the whisper of truth that Jesus Christ has given his disciples and gives us today is still truth, and this is all that we need.

Right? Remember this, church. All we are and all we are called to do is embedded within Jesus Christ's prayer for his disciples. If the church is sanctified, God will be glorified.

[ 30 : 12 ] Will you remember the whispers of Jesus Christ amidst the hooting and hollering world to conform? Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.