

168. The Gospel of John—17:2-3

“With Jesus Behind the Veil” Part 2

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier

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Find this weeks’ sermon audio and video message [HERE](#).

We have stepped onto ‘holy ground’ in our study of John’s Gospel.

Some have called John 17 the “*Holy of Holies*” of the Gospels because it gives us an intimate glimpse of the Son communing with the Father—which is why I’m calling this series in John 17, “*With Jesus Behind the Veil*.” (Explain)

Now to set the stage (one more time)—Jesus and His disciples had finished the Passover Meal, left the upper room and were making their way through the streets of Jerusalem and the Temple precincts toward the Mount of Olives.

Along the way He continued to teach them one last time before His crucifixion.

As we come to John 17, the Lord stops teaching His disciples and starts praying to His Father. **John 17 is known as ‘the High Priestly prayer of Jesus.’**

This is truly the “*Lord’s Prayer*”—unlike the prayer Jesus gave to His disciples to pray which we typically call the “*Lord’s Prayer*” in Matthew 6:9-13.

No folks, John 17 contains the real “*Lord’s prayer*” in all of its glory and majesty—and as such we must approach this chapter in a spirit of humility and worship.

This prayer is divided up into 3 main parts:

- I. **Jesus Prays for Himself—verses 1-5**
 - II. **Jesus Prays for His Disciples—verses 6-19**
 - III. **Jesus Prays for All Believers—verses 20-26**
- I. **Jesus Prays for Himself—verses 1-5**

John 17:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son [thru His death and resurrection], that Your Son also may glorify You, ² as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.

“That Your Son also may glorify You”

The meaning of this is explained in the next two verses—Jesus glorifies the Father by giving eternal life to those who believe on Him.

It brings great glory to God when ungodly men and women are converted and manifest the life of the Lord Jesus on this earth.

“You have given Him authority over all flesh”—verse 2

The Father has given authority to Jesus to give eternal life to those the Father has given to the Son—but also to judge those who reject Jesus as their Savior. (John 5:21-22)

John 17:2-3 (NKJV)

² as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. ³ **And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.**

The theme of John’s Gospel is eternal life.

This subject was so important to John that he tells us it was the whole purpose for which he wrote his Gospel so that people could have eternal life—

John 20:31 (NKJV)

³¹ ...these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

Fifty-four times in his Gospel John talks about the *life* that only Jesus gives (the world knows nothing of this life).

As we have already pointed out—eternal life isn’t so much a *quantity* of life as much as it is a *quality* of life. The Greek word he uses for life is **Zoë, a word that means *spiritual life, or in other words—the life of God*. The Bible defines Zoë life as a *dynamic life—a fruitful life—a joyful and fulfilled life*.**

It’s a life that Jesus Himself said was **abundant** and David in Psalm 23 described as **overflowing**.

But here’s the problem—if I were to go around asking people to define the concept of ‘*life*’—for many it would be a little hard to nail down.

Most people today would probably try to define life in terms of a *quality of living*. They would say that life is about achieving a certain level of happiness based on success in their chosen career field which brings them affluence, material possessions and possibly even fame.

But this abundant life that Jesus spoke of isn’t *external* as many believe and teach. It isn’t an abundance of money or possessions or earthly success.

This life is *spiritual in nature*—as Jesus said in John 6:63, **“The words I speak to you are spirit and life”**.

Look, money can buy you *things* but not happiness, *books* but not wisdom. **Money can buy you a quality of living but not a quality of life** (the first being outward, the second inward). In fact, Jesus warned us against trying to define our lives in terms of our possessions when He said:

Luke 12:15 (NKJV)

“Take heed and beware of covetousness for one’s life doesn’t consist in the abundance of the things they possess.”

You see, eternal life (Zoë) isn't just a *quantity* of life—it's a **quality of life**.

- The thing that makes eternal life so wonderful and so appealing is not its '*quantity*' (never ending) but its '*quality*' (overflowing with the life and fullness of God!).

REFLECTION: How does the knowledge and awareness of eternal life influence your Christian walk with Jesus?

Eternal life wouldn't be appealing if it simply meant "*life stretched out into eternity*" or "*life that never ends*". In other words, if we are simply talking about living an earthly existence forever—for most people that wouldn't be something they would desire and look forward to.

Let's be honest, for many people life is painful, hopeless and empty—an extreme example would be a quadriplegic who's unable to move, get out of bed or feed himself. That wouldn't be *living* it would be *existing*—a miserable existence that wouldn't be a blessing but the biggest curse imaginable if prolonged forever (people in hell will live forever but that won't be a blessing).

What makes the eternal life that Jesus gives so appealing, and desirable is that it is never ending life in all of its fullness, richness, joy, and blessing because it's the life of God in us!

- **Let me come at this another way**—not only does Zoë life come *from* Christ—it is only found *in* Christ.
- **It's not that Jesus just gives this life—He is this life! (1 John 5:20)**
- **Inside the Son there is spiritual/eternal life and outside the Son there is no spiritual life only eternal death and separation from God in hell.**
- **The instant a person receives Jesus as their Savior (by faith)—they are placed into the Body of Christ and the Spirit of God fills them with the "Life of God"—or as Jesus called it in John 4, "Living Water."**

John 4:10, 13-14 (NLT2)

¹⁰ Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water... Anyone who drinks this water [physical water] will soon become thirsty again.

¹⁴ But those who drink the water I give [the life of God] will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life."

Eternal life isn't something we're waiting for someday—it is ours right now. (1 John 5:11-13)

You might be thinking—what does eternal life look like practically in the lives of those who possess it here on earth?

Okay, let me put it this way. When a person receives Jesus into their heart as their Savior, the Holy Spirit moves in, and the result is that the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) starts to grow in their lives proving they are now a new creation in Christ (2Corinthians 5:17)!

Jesus said, *“You will know them by their fruit”*—the fruit demonstrates they are a child of God!

➤ **Listen to me, the fruit doesn't *make* you a child of God—it simply bears witness to the reality that you have been born of the Spirit and now are a child of God.**

A person can 'tie' some 'fake spiritual fruit' onto themselves (come to church and put on a good spiritual facade)—but that won't make them a Christian—any more than tying apples onto a thorn bush will make it an apple tree!

It's the relationship with Jesus that causes God's life to flow into and then thru a child of God producing spiritual fruit—as Jesus spoke of in John 15.

Without that relationship with God (being born-again)—a person has to draw strength, joy, peace, and purpose (all the things that make life 'live-able') from their career, their circumstances, personal experiences, material possessions—including and especially from the use of alcohol and drugs.

But that only lasts so long, even for the rich and famous because—there is only so much a person can buy, so many places they can go and so many drugs they can take before their life crashes.

When I first gave this message back in June of 2018, another celebrity had just committed suicide—Anthony Bourdain.

Bourdain was the Emmy-winning host of the culinary travel show known as “Parts Unknown”—he hanged himself in his hotel room in France. Bourdain's suicide followed the suicide of world renown fashion designer Kate Spade three days earlier on Tuesday of that week—Spade hanged herself in her New York City apartment.

Of course, we all remember the tragic death of comedian Robin Williams in August of 2014—Williams also hanged himself. Just this week I read that the person who was the original voice of 'Charlie Brown', actor Peter Robbins, committed suicide.

These are just a few of the rich and famous who have taken their lives over the past few years.

Why are all these rich celebrities (there are others) committing suicide? I mean, most people consider fame and wealth to be the very epitome of happiness and fulfillment in life.

Apparently, that's not true—in fact, as Christians, we know it's a lie spawned in the councils of hell to get people to pursue everything other than God to find happiness and fulfillment in life.

And when these worldly pursuits don't deliver (because they can't)—to push them into suicide!

It's what Jesus called *the “deceitfulness of riches.”* (Matthew 13:22)

At the height of the COVID-19 lockdowns in August 2020 the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) came out with a report that said suicide rates were up by 30% on average nationwide—which were already up 30 % since 1999. It occurred all across the country in all demographics and age groups—from age 10 and up, male and female.

But even before COVID, the CDC reported that, “More than half of all the individuals who committed suicide had no mental health diagnoses.” So then, why are all these relatively healthy people (mentally speaking) killing themselves?

Experts have their opinions as to why suicides are way up in our country—let me share with you mine.

I believe that as our nation has become more and more secular, people have either turned their backs on God (making Him irrelevant in their minds) or they simply don't believe in Him at all (neo-atheism is on the rise especially among millennials).

REFLECTION: How would you explain “deceitfulness of riches”?

Three of the fruits of the Holy Spirit listed in Galatians 5 are: love, joy and peace.

These come directly from God (they are a part of His nature) and grow naturally in the lives of those who are connected to Him thru His Son, Jesus Christ (born-again).

These fruits make life desirable and livable—but anyone not connected to God thru His Son has to ‘manufacture’ these fruits in their lives—i.e., *love* = sex; *peace* = drugs; and *joy* = material possessions—but it's only ‘fake fruit.’ And while it might fool the people we come in contact with (deceiving them into thinking we're happy and have it all ‘together’)—we know the truth, and the truth is—it's all a façade!

We know that we are ‘putting on an act’ by displaying “fake fruits” and fake fruits don't (and can't) satisfy the emptiness and depression within!

➤ **The question is—why aren't more Christians experiencing this dynamic spiritual life in their own lives on a daily basis?**

I mean as Christians they have union with Christ (they're saved)—so why then aren't they experiencing this abundant, dynamic, overflowing life that Jesus promised would be theirs? It's because for this life to flow in and thru a child of God on a regular basis—**they must remain connected to Jesus every day.**

In other words, union with Jesus (salvation) is where it starts like connecting a hose to the spigot and turning it on.

For the water to continue to flow thru that hose it must continue to be connected to the source of the water.

As Christians, we would put it this way—**union** (salvation) connects us to Jesus, but **communion** keeps us connected to Him every day allowing the Holy Spirit (the life and living water of God) to continually flow in and thru our lives.

This is what Jesus meant when He said, *“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”* John the apostle added his commentary, *“But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive...”* (John 7:38-39)

Again, the joy, blessing and dynamic of the life of the Spirit will constantly fill me and flow thru me—only when I stay close and connected to Jesus in fellowship every day.

REFLECTION: How do you personally stay connected with Jesus?

Get involved with sin or walk away from Jesus—your connection to Him will be severed (practically not positionally) and like the hose in our illustration that gets disconnected from the spigot—you will ‘run dry.’

In other words, **you will no longer experience the life of Christ (the dynamic of the Spirit) in your life until you repent and get “reconnected” to Him (fellowship restored).**

This means that as a Christian, when you begin to experience a lack of joy and peace. When anxiety and worry starts to grip your heart and the result is fear and depression—you most likely are experiencing the negative emotions of being out of fellowship with God.

Don’t make the mistake of pursuing this life (dynamic, overflowing life of the Spirit) as a direct pursuit—it’s only found in Christ as a beautiful by-product of your relationship with Him.

Commune with Jesus each day and you will experience this life every day as it constantly flows in and thru you like rivers of living water!

REFLECTION: John 17 is known as *‘the High Priestly prayer of Jesus.’* In your own words describe the importance of the three divisions of Jesus’ prayer:

Jesus Prays for Himself—verses 1-5

Jesus Prays for His Disciples—verses 6-19

Jesus Prays for All Believers—verses 20-26

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#).

Want to know more? Click [here](#).