

174. The Gospel of John—17:9

“With Jesus Behind the Veil” Part 8

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier

(3/13/22)

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In our study in John’s gospel, we have come to Chapter 17 and what many scholars and commentators call the **“Hight Priestly Prayer of Jesus.”** (Comment)

This prayer is divided up into 3 main parts:

Jesus Prays for Himself—verses 1-5

Jesus Prays for His Disciples—verses 6-19

Jesus Prays for All Believers—verses 20-26

We are currently in the second main part of this prayer—**“Jesus Prays for His Disciples.”**—which covers verses 6-19.

II. Jesus Prays for His Disciples—verses 6-19

As we said last week, **at the heart of Jesus’ prayer in these verses is spiritual warfare.** In particular His concern for His disciples once He returned back to His Father and they took up the mantle of the ministry He had begun while on the earth.

Jesus knew that as they went into the world preaching the gospel of the Kingdom—they would face incredible persecution from the Devil, his demons, and all those in the world whose lives were (and are) under the control of the god of this world—Satan!

This prayer by Jesus for His disciples in verses 6-19 can be divided this way—

A. Identification—verse 6

B. Revelation—verses 7-8

C. Supplication—verses 9-13

D. Separation—verses 14-16

E. Sanctification—verses 17-19

A. Identification—verse 6

John 17:6 (NKJV)

⁶ "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.

REFLECTION: IN YOUR EFFORTS TO SHARE THE GOSPEL HAVE YOU ENCOUNTERED ANY SPIRITUAL WARFARE?

Here Jesus is identifying with His disciples in the sense of them belonging to Him—as those who were given to Him by His Father—chosen to be members of His Church, His Body—those who belong to Him and have become one with Him through saving faith.

A person identifies with Jesus, not by *going* to church but by being a *part* of His Church.

The true Church of Jesus Christ is not something you can *join*, it’s something you have to be *born* into.

- How is person born into the Church of Jesus Christ? – by believing in Him and receiving Him as their Savior. (John 1:12)

As we just said last time, saving faith starts with the right *information* (the gospel)—and the gospel started with *revelation*.

B. Revelation—verses 7-8

John 17:7-8 (NKJV)

⁷ Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. ⁸ For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

When Jesus talked about the words that His Father had given Him to deliver to His disciples (God’s truth, the Gospel)—He was talking about revelation.

- **A revelation is something that has been made known to us by God—it is information that has to be divinely revealed.**

REFLECTION: What are some examples of “revelation” found in the Bible?

(Check out last week’s message about this)

A. Identification—verse 6

B. Revelation—verses 7-8

That then brings us to the next part of Jesus' prayer for His disciples—

C. Supplication—verses 9-13

Before we look at these verses—let me take a minute to introduce the subject of Jesus as our Intercessor.

Here in these verses, Jesus is praying for His disciples—in other words, He is interceding to His Father on their behalf.

Hebrews 7:23-25 (NKJV)

²³ Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. ²⁴ But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. ²⁵ Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Right now, Jesus is in heaven praying for those who are His—and since He lives forever—He always lives to make intercession for us while we are here on earth.

Jesus is our High Priest and as High Priest of the New Covenant—His primary ministry is to constantly stand before the Father and pray for us.

(Talk about the priests of Israel under the Old Covenant and their ministry of intercession on behalf of the people)

You say, "What is He praying for us?"

Whatever it is we need in any given situation, whether it be provision, protection, strength, or guidance—whatever we need in the moment, that He is interceding on our behalf to His Father in heaven.

Of course, His ministry of intercession got started before He ascended back to His Father in heaven—for example:

Luke 22:31-32 (NKJV)

³¹ And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. ³² But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren."

Another classic passage on the subject is found in 3 of the 4 Gospels—

John 6:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone...

Mark 6:45-48 (NKJV)

⁴⁵ Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while

He sent the multitude away.⁴⁶ And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray.⁴⁷ Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He *was* alone on the land.⁴⁸ Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea...

- In the Bible, mountains often symbolize ‘kingdoms’—like the Kingdom of Heaven.

In these verses we get a ‘picture’ of Jesus’ intercessory ministry once He returned to His Father in heaven.

- A storm could be any trial, tribulation, problem, or painful circumstance that we find ourselves battling in life—as did the disciples with this storm (for them it was literal—for us metaphorical).

Too many of us Christians, if we had our way, would only choose blue skies and smooth sailing in life—we tend to be ‘fair weather’ Christians.

But, as an old Arab proverb goes, *“all sunshine makes a desert”*—it’s only through the storms of life that we grow and blossom in the Christian life.

These “storms” in life that we experience are tests conducted under the control and watchful eye of God—and then only for a specific period of time to accomplish His purposes:

REFLECTION: Why did Jesus pray to the Father for His disciples?

One author put it well—

“There is a common fallacy that we often hold to, thinking that if I am in the will of the Lord, if I am obeying the commands of Jesus, my life should be a piece of cake. That I shouldn’t have any problems, I shouldn’t have any troubles. I should always have calm seas with the wind at my back, because after all, I’m doing the will of the Lord.

Let’s think about that for a minute. Let’s think about Jesus. In doing the will of the Father there in Gethsemane, as He was facing the cross, you remember His prayer, *“Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not my will, thy will be done”* (Matthew 26:39). And submitting to the will of the Father did not bring *‘the wind at His back’* and a *‘calm sea.’* It brought the cross.

Oftentimes for us, the will of God is not an easy thing. It many times is a very difficult thing where I face adversities when I seek to do the will of God. So often I’m going against the tide when I seek to do the will of God. But Jesus is watching over us interceding and will come to our rescue when we have learned the lessons He wants to teach us—*“But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.”* (1 Peter 5:10)

Now we must be careful not to make what is complex seem simplistic—and that is why God allows His people to go through painful circumstances while here on earth.

We live in a fallen world where evil people are constantly using force to get their way—case in point: Vladimir Putin and his invasion of Ukraine. Ukraine is a country with a sizable Christian population. Many of those who have been killed have no doubt been Christians—and some of them women and children.

- So, the obvious question is, *“If Jesus is up in heaven praying for Christians—why weren’t Christians in Ukraine spared from this evil?”*

I don’t know the answer to that except to say that all things are working together to bring about God’s will—and ultimately His plan of Jesus’ return to establish His Kingdom.

But remember, this—*“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints.”* (Psalm 116:15)

For the Christian, death is not a punishment by God but the ultimate liberation from a fallen evil world and a failing human body to an existence of absolute, never-ending joy, health, and eternal glory. An existence where there will be no more sorrow, or pain, or tears or death.

So, please try to understand that the death of a Christian is not the result of a sadistic God in heaven who enjoys watching His people suffer and die on earth—**it is the ultimate act of love and kindness**. Because God is taking us home to live in His presence forever—where there is fullness of joy!

Now, let’s look at what Jesus was burdened about for His disciples on the night before His crucifixion that caused Him to intercede for them with such passion and concern to His Father.

Let me start with verse 9 and use it to ‘*set this up*’ and ‘*set the record straight*’ about a false doctrine that has been circulating in the Church for some time—

John 17:9 (NKJV)

⁹ I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.

Notice, Jesus didn’t pray for the world—the world is doomed. The world is terminal. The world is going to be judged and destroyed (read Revelation!).

Jesus never prayed for this fallen world system to be saved or spared from coming judgment.

This of course doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t pray for and reach out to the lost people of this fallen world system that they might be saved: *“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”* (Luke 19:10)

It’s just that by Jesus saying, **“I do not pray for the world”**—He is saying that we aren’t to waste our time **thinking that we are going to save the world and establish ‘heaven on earth’** (the Kingdom of God)—only Jesus can and will do that at His Second Coming.

As Bible scholar Hal Lindsey famously said, *“God hasn’t commanded us to ‘clean up the fishpond’ (the world)—He only commanded us (His Church) to fish in it!”*

REFLECTION: As a Christian, what does the phrase “death is not punishment” mean to you?

I bring this up because we need to understand and call out a false doctrine that has infiltrated the Church called *'Dominion Theology.'*

What is Dominion Theology?

It is a theology that its proponents base on Genesis 1:28—the passage in which God grants humanity "*dominion*" over the Earth:

Genesis 1:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

- Dominion Theology also goes by the labels of *'Kingdom Now'* and *'Reconstructionism.'*
- "*Kingdom Now*" is the belief that Christians need to take over positions of power in government because—then we can change laws and Christianize the world—i.e., 'bring the Kingdom of God to the earth now (instead of waiting for Jesus to come back and do it).

The two main problems I see with this teaching is:

1. It takes our eyes off of the coming of Jesus and puts them onto this world

This is direct violation of Colossians 3:2—

Colossians 3:2 (NKJV)

² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Suddenly, the Church has its 'great commission' changed from "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to everyone so they might be saved" to—"go into all the world and run for political office so that we can save the world."

Satan has effectively used this doctrine **to take many Christians away from their true mission** (the great commission)—while redirecting their passion to politics—where they constantly watch it on TV and become obsessed with working to get Christians elected to public office.

And in the process, **effectively neutralizing their witness to the lost people of this world** that Jesus was so passionate about reaching with the Gospel. (Again, Luke 19:10)

We must in these last days *'keep our eyes on the ball'*—in other words we must stay focused on what Jesus commanded us to do—yes, **save the lost but also to vigilantly watch for His return:**

Revelation 3:3 (NKJV)

³ Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

REFLECTION: Have you heard of the “dominion theology” before? Can you think of examples where this theology is in place?

Mark 13:32-33, 35-37 (NKJV)

³² "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is... ³⁵ Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming--in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning-- ³⁶ lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. ³⁷ And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"

And that brings us to the second main problem I see with Dominion Theology or Kingdom Now teaching:

2. It renders prophecy not only obsolete but reprehensible in the eyes of those who hold to this doctrine.

I read one Christian who holds to this theology who said, *“Anyone looking for the Rapture is a coward looking to escape the earth instead of working right here and now on the earth to bring the Kingdom of God to this world.”*

Rick Warren said that any church that teaches its people prophecy is teaching them a ‘*pie in the sky*’ theology which is counterproductive to doing the work of God right here on the earth—right now!

One author put it this way—

“Many Christians and churches today aren’t looking for the Lord’s coming because they believe He won’t come until they Christianize the world—it’s called “Kingdom Now” or “Reconstructionism.” Christian reconstructionism basically teaches that it is the Church’s responsibility to ‘deconstruct’ this present evil age of man’s rule upon the earth by reconstructing it by voting Christians into office that will then pass righteous legislation that will transform the world into a Christian ‘utopia’.

It has its roots in liberal theology which has always seen the church’s mission as that of saving humanity, not from hell but, from poverty, injustice, famine, disease—and lately from things like global warming and other environmental issues that are damaging and destroying the earth. This has become the fastest growing movement in the church today.

These are churches that put down the teaching of prophecy which they say causes people to have their ‘heads in the clouds’.

They claim that these people (like you and me) have an ‘escapist’ mentality, that you’re wasting your time studying prophecy and looking for the Rapture (which they say is a joke).

They claim it’s keeping you from the real mission of the church which is: social justice, reforming society, bringing mankind into unity and love with each other so that Jesus can come back and inherit the kingdom the church has established on the earth.”

Listen, these folks sincerely feel that for a Christian to believe that Jesus will come and Rapture His Church at a time when the world has become so bad and therefore ripe for God’s judgment—is to declare defeat!

Dave Hunt—

“Being taken to heaven in the rapture has been to a large extent replaced by the rapidly growing new hope that the church is destined to take over the world and establish the kingdom of God. The focus has turned from winning souls for citizenship in heaven to political and social action aimed at cleaning up society. Scarcely a sermon is being preached about the world to come. Attention is focused instead upon achieving success in this one—if we have a big enough march on Washington and vote in enough of our candidates, then we can make this world a beautiful, safe, moral, and satisfying “Christian” place for our grandchildren. This is a very enticing scenario...

The trend has accelerated. We could cite the current struggle going on in the Southern Baptist Church as one example. It is the largest Protestant denomination but is presently losing members at a surprising and growing rate to independent churches that deny the rapture, deny any place for national Israel in prophecy, and believe that an elite group of “overcomers” will soon manifest immortality in their bodies without the resurrection or the Second Coming, and take over the world for Christ. Only then will Christ return. Not to take His bride home to heaven as the Bible clearly teaches, however, but to reign over the kingdom that has been established by her for Him here on this earth.

One of the leaders in this movement writes: ‘You can study books about going to heaven in a so-called ‘rapture’ if that turns you on. We want to study the Bible to learn to live and to love and to bring heaven to earth.’”

We are seeing more and more churches adopt this theology especially those in the Emergent Church Movement—but also many others like: Seeker Friendly; Purpose Driven; Roman Catholic; Reformed and others who see the church’s mission to establish the kingdom of God on the earth.

Dave Hunt ends with this chilling statement—

“Consequently, those who expect to meet Christ with their feet still planted on earth (instead of in the air at the time of the Rapture)—a “Christ” who has arrived to take over the kingdom they have established in His name-- will have been badly deceived. In fact, they could have been working to build the earthly kingdom for the Antichrist. Yet this teaching that we must take over the world and set up the kingdom for Christ has become the fastest-growing movement within the church today”.

- Remember what Jesus warned, *“It is an evil servant that says in his/her heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’”* (Matthew 24:48)

Yes, delaying His coming for any reason including delaying His coming until we can establish the Kingdom of God upon the earth through our political action—

Philippians 3:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ For our citizenship [the Greek word we get the English word ‘politics’ from] is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

John 17:9-10 (NKJV)

⁹ I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. ¹⁰ And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them.

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.

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