

181. The Gospel of John—17:14-15

“With Jesus Behind the Veil” Part 15

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We have been studying Jesus’ prayer to His Father on the night before His crucifixion—a prayer He prayed with His disciples standing there listening.

- Why did He pray this very **intimate prayer** to His Father in their presence—**one reason was so that they would know and understand what was most important to Him** with regard to their spiritual welfare and the Kingdom of God going forward.
- I think the big reason He prayed this prayer in their presence was because—these were things that He wanted to be the **focus of their prayers for one another after He returned to the Father, and they continued the work of the Kingdom in His absence.**

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**

We are currently in the second main part of this prayer—

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

This section of Scripture contains what Jesus was most concerned about for His disciples on the night before His crucifixion—His prayer is made up of 3 things:

- A. **That the Father would use them (to bring Jesus glory)—verses 9-10**
- B. **That the Father would keep them—verses 11-13**
- C. **That the Father would sanctify them—verses 14-19**

John 17:14-19 (NKJV)

¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

This really goes hand in hand with what Jesus prayed for them in verse 11—

John 17:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.

Notice the emphasis on the word “**Holy**”—“**Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me...**”

The word ‘**holy**’ comes from the same Greek root that the word ‘**sanctify**’ comes from and means—“*to be separated or set apart*”. By praying that the Father would ‘**keep**’ His disciples, and then emphasizing the fact that the Father is ‘**Holy**’—I believe indicates that Jesus was praying that the Father would keep His disciples holy as He is holy.

This reminds us of something Peter admonished the people of God—

1 Peter 1:13-16 (NKJV)

¹³ Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ¹⁴ as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as* in your ignorance; ¹⁵ but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, ¹⁶ because it is written, “*Be holy, for I am holy.*”

In saying this, Peter had in mind the command that God gave His people under the Mosaic Covenant in Leviticus 19:2—

Leviticus 19:2 (NKJV)

² "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God *am* holy.'

God never changes which means—as He was holy under the Old Covenant (in Old Testament times)—He is *still* holy today under the New Covenant prompting Peter to command us as believers in Jesus Christ living in New Testament times to—“**Be holy as God is holy!**”

As I just said, the word ‘**holy**’ means—“*to be set apart.*”

REFLECTION: How can you be “set apart” or “Holy” for God?

Of course, when the Bible talks about God being holy—it means that God is completely *separate* or *set apart* from the fallen world system of which Satan is in control of (1 John 5:19)—“*God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.*” (1 John 1:5)

But also, God’s holiness means that He is completely separate from His creation in general.

The theologians call this *'transcendence'*—that God is *above*, that He is *separate from*, not *subject to*, or is in any way *connected with* His creation in the sense that He is one with it.

Many people believe in *'pantheism'* ('all is God') which is a belief system that teaches that everything in the physical world is one with God.

Those who believe in pantheism (Hindus, New Agers, and others), believe that the *'God-force'* (pantheism teaches that God is not a Person but an impersonal force) flows thru everything and everyone which means that—*'all is God.'*

Now, when the Bible talks about God's people being holy—it means that we are to live our lives separately from the fallen world system we are currently living in but must never be a part of. In other words, we are to be living separately from the world's values, actions and philosophies/ideologies—as instruments to be used exclusively for God's glory and not our own glory or for the glory of the world.

- Now understand, that **God wanted to stress so much how holiness was to be an important principle in the lives of His people**—that He instituted a feast in Leviticus 23 that emphasized it. This was a feast that reinforced the importance of holiness now that we have been redeemed—a feast God named **the Feast of Unleavened Bread.**

The Feast of Unleavened Bread comes directly after the Feast of Passover (you really can't understand the one without the other):

Leviticus 23:4-5 (NKJV)

⁴ 'These *are* the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. ⁵ On the fourteenth *day* of the first month at twilight *is* the LORD'S Passover.

Passover begins at sundown on the 14th of Nisan and goes until sundown the following day (God put the Jewish people on a lunar calendar instead of a solar calendar).

Nisan corresponds to mid-March through mid-April on our calendar. It is the first month of the Jewish *religious* calendar year (they also have a secular calendar which begins with Rosh Hashanah (the start of the Jewish New Year) on the first day of the month of Tishrei which corresponds to mid-September through mid-October on our calendar).

Now in Leviticus God really doesn't define what Passover is because it was already well known to the people of Israel seeing as they had recently celebrated the very first Passover just a few months earlier. But to find out what Passover is all about we need to turn to Exodus 12 where God first instituted it—

Exodus 12:5-7, 12-13 (NKJV)

⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take *it* from the sheep or from the goats.

⁶ Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. ⁷ And they shall take *some* of the blood and put *it* on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it...

¹² For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the LORD. ¹³ Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you *are*. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt.

In reality there was only one actual Passover which took place and that was 3500 years ago in Egypt the night before the exodus all the others have been *memorial* feasts commemorating this one and only Passover.

If we could sum up Passover in one word—
it would be the word “*redemption*.”

Passover is the feast of redemption celebrating and commemorating how God delivered His people from the bondage of Egypt through the blood of the lamb.

Jesus in His earthly life not only *observed* the feast, He fulfilled the feast—as Paul the apostle said, “For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.” (1 Corinthians 5:7)

When John the Baptist first introduced Jesus to the people of Israel, he did so by saying—“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29)

Jesus was the ‘Passover Lamb of God’—a male without *spot* (original sin) or *blemish* (acquired sin) who was killed and whose blood when applied to the ‘house of our hearts’ by faith—causes the judgment of God to *pass-over* us just as it passed over each literal house in Egypt where the blood of the lamb was applied.

And so once again, if we could sum up Passover in a single word—it would be the word “*redemption*.”

The Feast of Passover was commanded by God to be observed on the 14th of Nisan—whereas the Feast of Unleavened Bread was to start on the 15th of Nisan and run for seven consecutive days—

REFLECTION: How have you explained “Passover” to family, friends or maybe to new seekers?

Leviticus 23:6-7 (NKJV)

⁶ And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. ⁷ On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.

To understand the Feast of Unleavened Bread we need to first understand what leaven is.

Leaven is dough that yeast has permeated through resulting in fermentation and causing the dough to rise. A piece of this fermented dough (called a ‘starter piece’) was always held back from the previous batch of dough that had been prepared for the next day’s baking of bread.

Before the dough was baked, a small piece of leavened dough was pulled off and wrapped in a cloth and kept in a dry place.

In the evening, a new batch of dough was prepared for the next day—and at that time that little piece of leavened starter dough would be kneaded into the new lump of dough, covered, and left to rise all night to then be baked into bread the next morning.

- **Leaven is always a type of sin or evil in the Bible because—it spreads like sin, consumes like sin (fermentation is a form of digestion), and puffs up like sin (causes the dough to rise).**

Paul said that a little leaven would permeate an entire lump of dough until it was all leavened—just like a little sin if not dealt with will spread through a life, a family, or a church until everything is corrupted or consumed by it.

1 Corinthians 5:6-7a (NKJV)

⁶ Your glorying *is* not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? ⁷ Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened...

When God commanded His people to rid their houses of leaven in Exodus 12:15—they understood this principle. They understood that if *leaven* spoke of sin—then that which was *unleavened* spoke of holiness and purity.

- **What is the significance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread to us as Christians?**

Well, if Passover speaks of *redemption*—then the Feast of Unleavened Bread speaks of *sanctification* or *holiness*.

Once again, the word **“*sanctification*”** literally means **“*to be set apart*”** to God as His covenant people—it’s also the Hebrew root that the word ‘*holy*’ comes from.

Here’s the background—

The children of Israel were enslaved down in Egypt and through the blood of the Passover lamb God delivered (redeemed) them from the bondage of Egypt and brought them thru the Red Sea (which was symbolic of water baptism) to the base of Mt. Sinai.

The first thing God said to Israel after He brought them out of the bondage of Egypt was—**“*Be holy for I am holy.*”**

**In other words, “*How you lived when you were slaves down in Egypt was one thing but now that I have redeemed you out of Egypt, I want you to live a new kind of life”*
what kind of life? an unleavened life!**

This applies to New Testament believers as well.

Once a person has been redeemed by the blood of our Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ, they have been redeemed out of the world system of which Egypt is a type—and God says to them, **“*Be holy as I am holy.*”**

- In other words, **“*How you lived when you were slaves of Satan living in the world (his kingdom) was one thing, but now you belong to Me. Now you are children of God and members of the Kingdom of God.*”**
- **As such you are to live a new kind of life—What kind of life?—an unleavened life.”**

**But listen, for God to physically take the children of Israel out of Egypt was easy
to take Egypt out of them was much, much harder!**

Just like God taking us out of the world at the moment of salvation was no problem—but taking the world out of us—not as easy.

As someone has said, “**salvation is the miracle of a moment—sanctification is the work of a lifetime**”—God gives the grace for us to be sanctified—but we must have the everyday love and commitment to God that makes it all possible.

Something else that’s very important to understand—an important principle that the Holy Spirit is trying to communicate to us thru these 2 back-to-back feasts.

He wants us to understand that there was no gap of time between these two feasts—Passover which spoke of redemption or salvation took place on the 14th of Nisan and starting immediately the next day began the Feast of Unleavened Bread which spoke of sanctification.

The spiritual lesson the Lord wanted to teach His people through these two feasts backing up to each other with no gap of time between them was obvious. The moment you get saved you are to immediately begin living a new life for God—a *sanctified, unleavened* life—a completely sanctified and unleavened life (this was a 7-day feast—7 being the number of *completeness*).

REFLECTION: How can a Christian live an unleavened life?

The most important thing we need to concern ourselves with as we wait for the coming of the Lord is living a life of sanctification and obedience to God this is His will for us who are His people.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, 7-8 (NKJV)

³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, ⁵ not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God...⁷ For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. ⁸ Therefore he who rejects *this* does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

Alright, this is God’s will for us—but because the world we’re living in is so corrupt and wicked—how can we accomplish this?

Well, Jesus tells us thru His prayer to the Father for His disciples—

John 17:14-17 (NKJV)

¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

If we sum these verses up—Jesus is asking the Father to give His disciples (then and now) **victory** so that we might overcome the world even as He had overcome the world.

- The word **'world'** is used nineteen times in this prayer and every time it appears it as the Greek word—'kosmos'.
- In this context **kosmos refers to the fallen world system that is controlled by the devil** and which is in rebellion against God.

Jesus ended His teaching in Chapter 16 with a shout of victory:

John 16:33 (NKJV)

³³ "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, *I have overcome the world.*"

- This was in anticipation of His work on the Cross.
- He then proceeds to pray for His disciples in Chapter 17 that we would be enabled by the Father to be overcomers as well.

Throughout this chapter the underlying idea or principle is that of **spiritual warfare and victory**—

John 17:14-15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

REFLECTION: What is your best defense/offense against spiritual warfare?

Jesus came into this world of darkness as the Light of God. In the Scriptures "*light*" and "*darkness*" are often used as metaphors.

- "**Light**" is often used in the Scriptures to represent *God*, holiness, and *spiritual truth*.
- "**Darkness**" is often used in the Scriptures to represent *Satan*, *evil*, and *spiritual deception*.

John 1:1-5 (NKJV)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

John says that the true Light, Jesus Christ, invaded a world of darkness (spiritual and moral evil), so that people could know the truth and find their way back to God. John makes it a point to say that—the darkness could not comprehend or actually “could not extinguish or overcome it.”

Light is always more powerful than darkness.

REFLECTION: How do you use the terms “Light & Darkness’ when you explain scriptures to others?

The lies and deceptions of the devil are never a match for the truth of God (the Word of God) which Jesus came to this world to bring.

John 8:31-32 (NKJV)

³¹ Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.
³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

1 John 2:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one.

God’s Word is truth and the only thing that can save and sanctify a person—which is why the devil tries so hard to undermine and destroy it and has from the very beginning (mention the Garden of Eden).

As I said, a few weeks ago, the world is a defiling place—purposely designed by the devil to be so. (1John 2:15-16)

Which means now more than ever before **we need to be in God’s Word—reading it, studying it, memorizing it and meditating upon it if we want to be sanctified and victorious in our walk with Jesus.**

REFLECTION: Take a moment and really think about how much time you “really” spend in God’s Word:

Psalm 119:9, 11 (NKJV)

⁹ How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word...¹¹ Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You!

In the Christian classic, Pilgrims Progress, there is a scene in which a terrible allegorical battle is portrayed between Apollyon (Satan) and Christian:

“Then Apollyon seeing his opportunity began to close in on Christian and wrestling with him, gave him a dreadful fall and Christian’s sword flew out of his hand.

Then said Apollyon, ‘I am sure of you now.’ And with that he had almost pressed him to death, so that Christian began to despair of life. But as God would have it, while Apollyon was preparing to take his last blow, thereby making an end of this good man, Christian nimbly reached out his hand and caught his sword saying,

‘Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, when I fall I shall arise,’ and with that gave him a deadly thrust, which made him back away like someone who had received a mortal wound.

When Christian saw this, he went at him again saying, ‘Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.’

And with that Apollyon spread his dragon wings and sped away, so that Christian saw him no more for a time.”

John Bunyan knew that spiritual warfare is waged and won by how effectively a Christian wields the Sword of the Spirit—the Word of God!

A Christian who is separated from their Sword is a defeated Christian.

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](#).

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