

## John 17:13-21 Sermon Discussion Guide

### Passage Summary

As Jesus continues His High Priestly Prayer, His attention turns to the mission His disciples will carry after His departure. Knowing the cross is only hours away, Jesus prays not only that His followers would be protected, but that they would faithfully represent Him in the world.

What is remarkable is **who Jesus is praying for**. These are not polished heroes of the faith. They are ordinary men who have repeatedly misunderstood Jesus, argued over who was the greatest, doubted His words, and, before the night is over, will abandon Him altogether. If someone were writing their biographies, these chapters would likely be omitted. Yet Jesus does not define them by their failures. Instead, He says, *"They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."* What an astonishing statement. Jesus is not saying His disciples are sinless. Rather, because they belong to Him, they now share a new identity. Through His saving work, they are counted righteous before the Father. Though still imperfect, they belong to another kingdom. Their identity is no longer determined by their failures but by Christ's faithfulness.

From that identity flows their purpose. Jesus says, *"As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world."* Just as the Father sent the Son to reveal His love and accomplish redemption, Jesus now sends His people into the ordinary places of life as His ambassadors. Our homes, workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, friendships, and communities become the places where the love of Christ is made visible.

Finally, Jesus shows us the pattern of this mission. He does not ask His followers to withdraw from the world or become isolated from those who are far from God. Instead, they are to live **in** the world without becoming **of** the world. Jesus Himself embodied this perfectly. He welcomed sinners, shared meals with outcasts, touched the unclean, forgave His enemies, and continually moved toward broken people with grace and truth. The gospel advances not merely through words but through lives that reflect the character of Christ. As those who have received His mercy, we become people who extend that same mercy to others.

### **Theological Highlights**

#### **1. Our Identity Precedes Our Mission**

Before Jesus sends His disciples, He reminds them that they belong to Him. Christians do not earn God's acceptance through their mission; they are sent because they have already been accepted in Christ.

## **2. Justification Gives Us a New Identity**

Though the disciples are deeply flawed, Jesus speaks of them according to His saving work. This is the beauty of justification: God sees His people clothed in the righteousness of Christ rather than condemned by their failures.

## **3. The Church Is Sent Into the World**

Jesus does not remove His people from a broken world. He places them within it as witnesses to His grace, truth, and love.

## **4. Mission Reflects the Character of Jesus**

Our mission is not simply to communicate information about Christ but to embody His compassion, humility, hospitality, forgiveness, and sacrificial love.

## **5. Holiness and Mission Belong Together**

To be "not of the world" does not mean withdrawing from culture. It means belonging to Christ while faithfully engaging the world with the hope of the gospel.

## **Discussion Questions**

### **People (Belonging to Jesus)**

1. Jesus knew every weakness and failure of His disciples, yet He still prayed for them as those who belonged to Him.

- Which is easier for you to believe: that God forgives your sins, or that He actually delights in you? Why?

2. What failures or disappointments most often shape the way you think God sees you? How does this passage challenge those assumptions?

3. We often define ourselves by our successes or failures. Where are you most tempted to find your identity apart from belonging to Christ?

### **Purpose**

4. Jesus says, "*As the Father has sent me...I also have sent them.*"

Where has God already placed you to reflect His love?

- your home
- your workplace
- your neighborhood
- your friendships
- your church

Which of these feels most challenging right now?

5. Sometimes we think of "mission" as something that happens overseas or on a church trip. How does this passage redefine mission as something that happens in ordinary life?

6. Who are the people God may already be inviting you to intentionally love, pursue, or serve this week?

### **Pattern**

7. Jesus spent much of His earthly ministry moving toward people others avoided. Are there people you find yourself often avoiding? What makes those relationships difficult?

8. Jesus modeled a life full of both truth and grace. Which comes more naturally for you?

- Speaking truth?
- Showing grace?

How can the gospel help you grow in the other?

9. Hospitality was one of Jesus' primary ways of loving people. How might opening your table, your home, or simply your schedule become a way of displaying Christ's love?

10. The sermon reminded us that Christians tell a "better story" with their lives. If someone observed your life for one month, what story would they conclude you believe?

11. Jesus sends ordinary people, not extraordinary ones. How does that encourage you as you think about your own weaknesses?

### **Closing Prayer Points**

#### **Thank God That You Belong**

- Thank the Father that your identity rests in Christ's righteousness rather than your own performance.
- Praise Jesus that He knows your failures completely and still calls you His own.
- Ask God to deepen your confidence that you truly belong to Him.

#### **Pray for a Heart That Is Sent**

- Ask God to help you see your everyday life as your mission field.
- Pray for eyes to notice people who are lonely, hurting, overlooked, or searching for hope.
- Ask for courage to step toward people rather than away from them.

**Pray to Reflect the Character of Christ**

- Ask God to make you more compassionate, patient, forgiving, and hospitable.
- Pray that your home, workplace, and relationships would increasingly reflect the love of Jesus.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you embody both truth and grace.

**Pray for Opportunities to Share the Gospel**

- Pray for specific people by name who do not yet know Christ.
- Ask God to give you wisdom in your conversations.
- Pray that your life would make the beauty of the gospel attractive to those around you.

**Pray for Faithfulness**

- Ask God to help you remain in the world without becoming shaped by it.
- Pray for perseverance when following Christ is costly.
- Thank Him that He who sends us also promises to be with us.