

Dear Church Family,

For the month of June, I would like to challenge us to see our church and congregation through the eyes of a new person coming in the doors of our church. Someone perhaps looking for a place to find Jesus, maybe for the first time. Or with the eyes of one searching for the fellowship of something greater than society may provide.

When we park on the street out front and walk up to the front door, what is seen and heard? Doors open wide, calling any who enters with a sense of wonder? Smiling faces and hands offered in fellowship? Hopefully wonderment brought by the very Spirit of God as He has called a soul to join Him, to come and be loved by His family into the Kingdom of Heaven. If this is not what we ourselves see, then how can others who come for the first time?

We as members of this congregation know it is a place of love, and because of this we come to worship, fellowship and serve God who has called us. He calls us into a fellowship to prepare ourselves to welcome and serve others. Jesus called His disciples to follow Him and become fishers of men. We too are called to follow Jesus and then to actively go out into our communities and spread the good news to all.

This starts with prayer. We see Jesus praying for His disciples and for all future disciples as well. By this example, we too are to pray for our congregation of today, and our congregation of tomorrow.

John 17

**17** *After Jesus said this, He looked toward heaven and prayed:*

*“Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son may glorify You. <sup>2</sup>For You granted Him authority over all people that He might give eternal life to all those You have given Him. <sup>3</sup>Now this is eternal life: that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent. <sup>4</sup>I have brought You glory on earth by finishing the work You gave Me to do. <sup>5</sup>And now, Father, glorify Me in Your presence with the glory I had with You before the world began.*

Jesus finished His work on earth, and with His promise of the Father’s Spirit, we too will do a great work for the glory of the Kingdom. We are also to pray a prayer of thanksgiving to the Father as He completes His work through us. We pray that all mankind will know this truth: God is love. His love fills us with the gifts needed

to accomplish His will. We cannot fail! Jesus prays for us in the following verses from the book of John, chapter 17:

*<sup>6</sup> “I have revealed You to those whom You gave Me out of the world. They were Yours; You gave them to Me and they have obeyed Your word. <sup>7</sup> Now they know that everything You have given Me comes from You. <sup>8</sup> For I gave them the words You gave Me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from You, and they believed that You sent Me. <sup>9</sup> I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those You have given Me, for they are Yours. <sup>10</sup> All I have is Yours, and all You have is Mine. And glory has come to Me through them. <sup>11</sup> I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, protect them by the power of Your Name, the Name you gave Me, so that they may be one as We are one. <sup>12</sup> While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that Name You gave Me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.*

*<sup>13</sup> “I am coming to You now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of My joy within them. <sup>14</sup> I have given them Your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. <sup>15</sup> My prayer is not that You take them out of the world but that You protect them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> As You sent Me into the world, I have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> For them I sanctify Myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.*

We are sanctified, set apart to do good works. The Father’s work. Even though we are persecuted by the world and attacked by satan, we cannot fail. In this we find joy—not the world’s joy—but the joy of God. Jesus continues His prayer in chapter 17:

*<sup>20</sup> “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, <sup>21</sup> that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. <sup>22</sup> I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are one—<sup>23</sup> I in them and You in Me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.*

*<sup>24</sup> “Father, I want those You have given Me to be with Me where I am, and to see My glory, the glory You have given Me because You loved Me before the creation of the world.*

*<sup>25</sup> “Righteous Father, though the world does not know You, I know You, and they know that You have sent Me. <sup>26</sup> I have made You known to them, and will continue to make You known in order that the love You have for Me may be in them and that I Myself may be in them.”*

Join me in praying that all people will find joy as they enter this place, to see the Spirit at work as we concentrate on Kingdom thoughts with eternal consequences.

Your brother in Christ, Archie

Call to action: What does “protection” mean in John 17:11-12?

Look up Romans 8:31-32 and 37-39. How can living in this truth keep us from living as victims of our circumstances and instead live in peace? How might this changed way of living out life be compelling to people who walk through our doors?