

“The Time Has Come To Pray (Part 6)”

The prayer that Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane before His arrest and crucifixion is recorded in John 17. The portion of Jesus’ prayer we are looking at today describes three characteristics every Christian should possess. Hear the words of Jesus in John 17:13-19 as He prayed to His Father: *“But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. 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.”*

In this passage, first of all Jesus prayed that every Christian would have ***the full measure of Christ’s joy in us***. Jesus knew it would be difficult for His disciples to watch Him suffer and die. He knew His followers would face adversity as they served Him in a hostile world. And so, He prayed that we would be filled with His joy and have the same joy that He has. Jesus was joyful, and Christians ought to be joyful, as well. Joy is the surest sign of the presence of God. When Jesus dwells in us, His joy is in us. As Jesus fills our lives in ever-increasing measure His joy will also increasingly fill our lives. Joy is a constantly-abiding, deep-seated contentment where no kind of adversity can wipe the *Jesus joy smile* off our face. Happiness, on the other hand, comes and goes based on *what happens* to us. One sure way to discover true joy is to: put **J**esus first, **O**thers second, and **Y**ourself last.

Secondly, in this passage Jesus also prayed that every Christian would be ***sanctified by God’s Word of Truth***. Jesus prays that the Father would sanctify His followers, making them holy and putting them to Divine use. To be sanctified is to be separated from evil and devoted to God. Jesus sanctified Himself for our sakes, but we are unable to sanctify ourselves. However, we can and must cooperate with the sanctifying work of God’s Word and Spirit in our lives. Jesus gave us an incredible gift when He gave us God’s Word (see 17:14). The gift of God’s Word shows us what God’s standards are, It’s a powerful weapon to bring them to conquer evil and bring about a harvest of righteousness, and It’s the only authority for what must be removed from our lives and what must come to be. It’s only through the power of the Holy Spirit, and Jesus-in-us, and the power of God’s Word of Truth that we can be sanctified, and made holy, and consecrated to the Lord. Every Christian should progress continually in sanctification. We should become more and more like Jesus Christ; there should be ever more of Jesus and ever less of me; we should keep growing into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. In one battle after another between our flesh and spirit the Lord refines us like silver (see Psalm 66:10) — removing unholy things from our lives so that every area of our lives aligns with the Word of God.

Third, Jesus prayed in this passage that every Christian would be ***sent into the world***. Just as the Father sent Jesus into the world, so He sends us in His footsteps. In the fulness of time, Jesus came from heaven to earth to provide salvation and eternal life to those who believe in Him.

Those who have been saved by grace through faith must also share this Good News with others who are lost. As Christ's ambassadors, sent on mission to a world that hates us: we must get used to the discomfort and hostility of being in a place where we are not welcome and do not belong; we cannot afford to lose sight of our mission and calling; we cannot keep the treasure of Jesus to ourselves (we must do what we've been sent to do—share the Gospel with others); we must live for Him who died for us. We who have been saved and rescued from the penalty of our sins should be working as the Lord's sent-ones to save and rescue the perishing.

Discussion Guide/Action Steps

1. Is your life full of Jesus' joy?
2. Affirm, acclaim, declare that GOD'S WORD IS TRUTH!
3. Why don't you personalize Jesus' prayer to the Father on your behalf: *Oh Father God, sanctify me by Your Truth; Your Word is Truth!*
4. As Christ's follower, do you accept the mission He sends you on?