

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Immediately preceding our Scripture selection, we read, in John 16:28-33, that Jesus said to His disciples, “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

Accordingly, the time-period in which Jesus spoke the words found in our sermon text was shortly before He completed His mission of mercy, our redemption. Indeed, Jesus was then about to suffer and die while nailed to the cross of Calvary, be entombed in a sepulcher, bodily rise from the dead after three days in the grave, and visibly ascend into heaven forty days later. Hence, big changes were on the way in the life of Jesus’ apostles, who had enjoyed His visible presence.

The Lord Jesus Christ cared about His disciples, as is plainly evident in our sermon text which relates some heartfelt words from what can rightly be called:

**“JESUS’ HIGH-PRIESTLY PRAYER”**

With that as our theme, may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) When and to whom Jesus prayed
- 2) What Jesus requested in His prayer in regards to His disciples

Verses 1 & 2, ----- (John 17:1-2)

Our sermon text opens by informing us as to when and to whom Jesus prayed, for we just read: *These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.*

Accordingly, God the Father in heaven is the divine Person whom Jesus addressed in prayer. The Holy Bible in Psalm 50:14-15 says, “Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.” Additionally, Psalm 65:1-2 declares, “Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed. O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.” Therefore, we see that prayer is an act of worship; and, prayer is only to be addressed to the true God.

Indeed, God’s only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, states in Matthew 4:10, “it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” Therefore, it is clear that prayer, being an act of worship, is only to be addressed to the true God. Prayer is NOT to be addressed to Mary or any other departed saint; no, prayer is only to be addressed to the true God.

Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, never sinned in thoughts, words, or deeds, for in speaking of Christ Hebrews 4:15 relates, that He, “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Hence, Jesus prayed to God the Father almighty, just as He taught us to pray, when He said, as Matthew 6:9 reports, “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.” Thus, prayer is only to be addressed to the true God.

However, we Christians must keep in mind that when we pray to God the Father, or to God the Son (who is Jesus Christ, the living Word), or to God the Holy Ghost, we are in fact addressing the very

same one true God, for 1 John 5:7 states, “there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” Therefore, let us follow Jesus’ example in praying to the one true God, and to no one and nothing else.

Looking again at the opening verses of our sermon text, we observe that the hour, the time, was come, when Jesus would glorify His heavenly Father by completing the work God the Father had sent His only begotten Son into the world to accomplish, for: *These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

Oh, when Jesus prayed the words found in our sermon text, He was about to glorify God the Father by offering Himself as the supreme sacrifice for ALL the sins of ALL people. Before Jesus prayed His prayer as reported in our Scripture selection, when Judas Iscariot left the upper room to go and betray Jesus, John 13:31 reports, “Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.” Thus, the time when Jesus prayed the words of our Scripture selection was when He was about to offer Himself on the tree of the cross, shedding His holy blood in atoning payment for the sins of the whole world. Yes, it’s as 1 John 4:9-10 relates, “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” Hence, Jesus prayed to His heavenly Father the very night in which he was betrayed.

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As we ponder our sermon text to its conclusion, let us see what Jesus requested in His prayer in regards to His disciples.

Verses 1-3, ----- (John 17:1-3)

Observe that Jesus’ first request was that His heavenly Father glorify Him, for Jesus, in turn, would also glorify His heavenly Father. Hence, everything that would and did occur as Jesus finished His redemptive work was to the glory of God, Father and Son.

Notice that God the Father gave His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, *power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him.* Yes, Jesus redeemed the whole world with the shedding of His holy blood while nailed to the cross of Calvary; and, eternal life would be given by Jesus to as many as God the Father had given Him, for, as Holy Writ relates, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” (John 3:16-18; Ephesians 2:8-9) Thus, Jesus died for ALL; but, only those whom God gifts with faith in Jesus, actually and personally receive the forgiveness of sins and salvation.

Note well that Jesus in His prayer says to His heavenly Father: *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.* Accordingly, there is NO eternal life to be had by any people who fail to know the true God who has an only begotten Son named Jesus Christ, whom God sent into the world to redeem the world. Indeed, there are NOT many ways, or paths, to God and heaven; there is but one Way to God and heaven, and that WAY is the Lord Jesus Christ, who plainly states in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

Verses 4 & 5, -----. (John 17:4-5)

Everything Jesus did on earth glorified His heavenly Father who sent Him, for Jesus kept all of God's Law perfectly, in thoughts, words and deeds; and then, Jesus paid for our lack of keeping God's Law, for Jesus willingly shed His own holy and precious blood while nailed to the accursed tree of the cross, thereby providing the perfect and final full sacrifice for all the sins of all people.

It's as Hebrews 7:26-28 states, in no uncertain terms, "For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore." Thus, Jesus truly glorified God the Father by completing the work He gave Him to do, which is why Jesus said in His prayer to His heavenly Father: *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*

Jesus then continued in His prayer, saying: *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* Thus, Jesus prayed that He would reenter an exalted state, having completed His work in His state of humiliation. Yes, note well that the eternal Son of God prayed for restoration to the former glory He had possessed before He came to earth to rescue us sinners from never-ending ruin.

Think about the fact that Philippians 2:6-8 informs us that Christ Jesus is He, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Jesus

humbled Himself in order to do His Father's will and redeem us undeserving sinners! Therefore, upon completing His mission of mercy, Jesus desired to be restored to the state of glory He had previously enjoyed with His heavenly Father.

Verses 6-8, -----. (John 17:6-8)

As Jesus continued His prayer to His heavenly Father, He included some words concerning His disciples, as we just read.

Observe that the men who were Jesus' disciples were given Him out of the world of people; and, it was by God's WORD that those men knew Jesus and believed on Him. My friends, to this very day, ALL people who know Jesus Christ as the only begotten Son of God, the Savior sent by God the Father, know Him as such by the power of God working through His Word, for Romans 10:17 clearly states, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." God gifts folks with faith by means of His Word, the Gospel of Christ in particular, for we read in Romans 1:16-17, "the gospel of Christ... is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." Fellow Christians, let us regularly thank God for His Holy Word, which proclaims the fact that God the Father sent His only begotten Son into the world to save the world.

Verses 9 & 10, -----. (John 17:9-10)

Notice that Jesus here prayed for His followers and not for the unbelieving world. Also, it's interesting to note that ALL those who are Christ's people are also God the Father's people, which shows the oneness of God the Father and God the Son. Oh yes, Jesus spoke the truth when He declared, in John 10:30, "I and my Father are one."

Additionally, observe that Jesus stated He was glorified in His disciples. Oh, Jesus was and is glorified in all those who believe on Him, for we

Christians praise and worship Jesus because He is our Lord and Savior, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Verses 11-13, -----. (John 17:11-13)

Jesus was then soon to depart this world, in that He would remove His visible presence and enter His state of exaltation. So, Jesus in His own name prayed for His disciples that God the Father would keep His disciples united in the true faith— as Jesus Himself had kept His disciples united, while visibly sojourning among them. Only Judas Iscariot was lost, he being the son of perdition, the son of hell, since he fell from faith and served the devil in fulfillment of Scripture prophecy, for we read in Psalm 41:9, “Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.”

Yes, Judas’ betrayal was foretold of old, for Zechariah 11:12-13 relates, “And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.” Thus, it happened, for Judas Iscariot sold-out Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, and Matthew 27:3-7 reports, “Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.”

Getting back to our sermon text, we see that Jesus spoke His prayer aloud to His heavenly Father in the presence of His disciples, that they would hear

the words while Jesus was yet visibly with them, that they might have Jesus’ joy fulfilled in themselves— the joy of knowing Him as their Savior and Lord, “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,” declares Romans 14:17.

Verses 14-17, -----. (John 17:14-17)

Jesus’ disciples were His believing followers by means of God’s Word, just as all Christians to this day are Christians by means of God’s Word, as was mentioned earlier. Jesus’ followers of all times are hated by the wicked world because Jesus’ followers are NOT OF the world, even while they dwell IN the world. Jesus did not pray that His heavenly Father take His disciples out of the world at that time, but rather that God the Father would keep them from the evil.

Fellow Christians, we all daily need God’s gracious help to keep us from the evil, which surrounds us while we dwell in the wicked world. Only God can keep us from the evil.

Notice HOW Jesus asked His heavenly Father to keep His disciples from the evil, for Jesus in prayer said: *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.* Thus, again and again we see the importance of God’s Word in the life of every follower of Jesus, every Christian. Yes, not only is God’s Word – the Gospel of Christ in particular – the means by which folks are gifted with faith in Jesus; the Word is also the means by which God sustains and grows faith in Christ in the hearts of the believers, for we read in 1 Thessalonians 2:13, “the word of God... effectually worketh also in you that believe.”

Another important point we note from what Jesus prayed, is that GOD’S WORD IS TRUTH! Indeed, God’s Word, the Holy Bible, is NOT a mixture of truth and error, like all-too-many modern-day so-called scholars teach; no, the Holy Bible is 100% TRUTH, for 2 Timothy 3:16-17 plainly states, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of

God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." Let us all highly value the pure, preserved, Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament Holy Scriptures; and, the fact we have those original language texts faithfully translated into English in the King James Version Holy Bible.

Verses 18 & 19, -----. (John 17:18-19)

As Jesus prayed to His heavenly Father, He also said concerning His disciples: *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*

Jesus had been sent by God the Father into the world to preach and teach God's truth concerning Himself as the Savior who came to fulfil all righteousness and to pay for all the sins of all people. Even so, had Jesus sent His disciples into the world to preach and teach God's truth concerning Jesus Christ being the promised Savior, who kept the Law of God perfectly for all people and then paid for all the sins of all people by shedding His holy blood while nailed to the cross of Calvary.

Realize that the disciples could never have carried out their missionary tasks if Jesus had not prayed for them and thereby had them given the necessary abilities, which were bestowed upon them when He completed His redemptive work, for our sermon text concludes with Jesus saying in prayer: *And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.*

Thus, Jesus sanctified Himself by completing His atoning work, bodily rising from the dead after three days in the grave, and visibly ascending into heaven forty days later, thereby entering His state of exaltation. The disciples of Christ were then sanctified through the TRUTH, the WORD of GOD, since ALL that Jesus said would come to pass, came to pass, Jesus Himself being TRUTH personified, the living and eternal WORD OF GOD!

Fellow Christians, as we've pondered our sermon text we've seen many beautiful truths in Jesus'

high-priestly prayer. Let us therefore daily and sincerely repent of our sins; let us keep our full trust and confidence in Christ Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord; and, let us go forward continuing in God's Holy Word, striving to live in full accord with it, showing our gratitude to God for all He has done and still does for us. Amen.

m.e.l.