

1. David Chrytaeus, one of Luther's students, called John 17 Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. In this prayer He intercedes for the Church. Cf. Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 9:24 and I Jn. 2:1.
2. In vss. 1-5 Jesus prays for the glorification of Himself and of the Father and for the salvation of all people. In vss. 6-19 He prays for the disciples. In vss. 20-23 He prays for the Church of all ages. In vss. 24-26 He prays that His own be with Him and see His glory.
3. This chapter tells us much about the Word of God. This Word is the Father's gift to His Son. This Word reveals the true God to man, brings man to faith, preserves him in this faith and is absolute truth.
4. Vs. 20 says that there is no revelation outside the Apostolic Word. The word "their" refers to the Apostles who received the Word from God.
5. The word "one" in vs. 22 is used in two senses. Christians are one in the faith. Father, Son and Holy Ghost are one in essence. The ^{two} ~~unities~~ ^{are} analogical, not identical.
6. ^{with} ~~The word "in"~~ in vs. 23 is used in two senses. Christ is in us by grace through ^{two}. The Father is in Christ by nature. The two are analogical, not identical.
7. This chapter was spoken by the incarnate Christ, the God-man. In vs. 2 He notes that the Father gave the human nature of Christ authority over all flesh. The Father gave all human beings to Christ's human nature. As true God Christ already had these things. In vs. 4 the Father gave the human nature a task. In vs. 10 He says: "All that is mine is yours and yours is mine." That was already true of Jesus' divine nature. He is speaking of what God gave Christ's human nature. In vs. 24 Christ speaks of "that which you gave Me." He already had it as true God. And so the "Me" must refer to His human nature. Also in vs. 24 Christ speaks of the "glory which you gave Me." He already had this glory as true God. The "Me" refers to His human nature. The union of God and man in one person in Christ Jesus is a great mystery.
8. In vss. 1-5 Christ speaks of glorification. In the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ, the Father and the Son glorified each other. The angels at Bethlehem said: "Glory to God in the Highest." That was fulfilled when Jesus suffered, died and rose again.
9. All men were redeemed and saved by Christ Jesus. Vs. 2.
10. We have eternal life when we know and believe in the only true God and Jesus Christ. Vs. 3. He is the only true and genuine God. All others are false. Truth is found only in Him.
11. In vs. 11 Jesus calls His Father "Holy Father". Only here in the Bible does that title occur. The Pope in Rome blasphemously uses this title of himself.
12. We became Christians only because the Father gave us to His Son. Vs. 6. Jesus gave us the Word of God. Vs. 14. Jesus has kept us from evil. Vs. 15. We are sanctified in the Truth because of Jesus' prayer. Vs. 17. We are one in the faith and in union with the Triune God only because of Jesus' prayer. Vs. 21. We don't cause unity. Jesus does that. We shall see the glory of everlasting life only because Jesus prayed for it. Vs. 24.
13. When a Christian feels his sins and weaknesses he should read this chapter to realize that he is safely in the keeping of Jesus Christ.
14. Christians have Christ's joy in themselves because of what Jesus said and did. Vs. 13. It is true even when we don't feel the joy.
15. The unbelieving world hates Christians because they are not worldly. The world hates Christians just as they hate Christ. Vs. 14.
16. Christians are in the world but not of the world. The word "world" occurs with higher frequency in this chapter than anywhere else, 18 times. It has various meanings. In vs. 5 it means "the universe." Also in vs. 24. It means "the world of people" in vss. 6, 11, 13, 15, 18 and 23. It means the "unbelieving world" in vss. 9, 14, 16 and 25.
17. The verb "give" occurs here 17 times, more than anywhere else in Scripture. Thirteen speak of the Father giving to Christ. The remaining four speak of Christ giving to mankind.

Sermon Outline on Jn. 17:17-23, Easter VI (we've included vs. 17)

Theme: JESUS PRAYS FOR US (cf. Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 9:24; I Jn. 2:1)

Introduction: Jesus prayed and still prays for us. And the Father always hears and answers Jesus' prayers. Jn. 11:41,42. He is our High Priest Who sacrificed Himself for us and stands between God and us. In His prayers He prays for two things: 1) The things which He did for us; 2) The things which He works in us.

I-THE THINGS WHICH HE DID FOR US

The verb "to sanctify" means "to set aside for a sacred purpose." The verb "to sanctify" is used three times. It is once of Jesus, once of the Father, and once of Christians. Vss. 17 and 19.

A-Jesus sanctifies Himself for us. Vs.19. This is something that only Jesus did. Only He is our Savior. How did Jesus sanctify Himself?

By becoming a human being, by taking the sins of the world upon Himself, by conquering Satan, by dying for us. Jesus says in vs. 18: "You sent Me into the world." The Father gave His Son to all of mankind. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself... God made Him, Who knew no sin, to be sin for us." II Cor. 5:19,21.

B-The Father sanctifies us. Because of what Jesus did for us, the Father now applies this to us. How does He do this? By means of V4.17 the Truth, God's Word. His Word is Truth. This world is a world of darkness, doubt and uncertainty. God's Word is a lamp for our feet and a light to our path. Ps. 119:105. Paul told Timothy (I Tim. 4:2) "Preach the Word. Do it whether you or the people feel like it or not." The Word means law and Gospel. The law shows us our sin and how to please God. The Gospel brings us forgiveness of sins and strength to serve God and man.

C-We are sanctified in the Truth. The Word of God gives us faith in Jesus and love for our neighbor. If we reject the Word of God we become like King Saul and Judas, lost, despairing and wanting to kill ourselves.

II-THE THINGS WHICH HE WORKS IN US

Jesus said: "I will not abandon you as orphans. I will come to you." Jn. 14:18. Three times in this great prayer Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:8-11).

A-The Apostolic Word works in us. In vs. 20 Jesus prays for those who will believe through the Apostles' (their) Word. Paul said in Eph. 2:20: "You are built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself the chief cornerstone." Jesus come to us through the Apostles' Word which is God's Word. The Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost come to us in the Apostolic Word. The Triune God gives us faith in Jesus and love to our neighbor. The Apostolic Word makes us one with the Triune God. We do not cause unity in the church. Only God and His Word do that. Read vss. 20-23 again. Because of this unity the world believes that the Father sent Christ. Vs. 21. Because of this unity the world realizes that the Father loved the world just as He loved Christ. If the world believes and realizes this, how much more don't Christians believe and realize it? We are attracted to other people who believe just as we do.

B-The Apostolic Word sends us. Jesus says in vs. 18: "Just as You, the Father sent me into the world, I likewise have sent them, Christians, into the world." See the Table of Duties, Russian Catechism, pp. 29-32. God tells pastors, hearers, husbands, wives, parents, children, servants, workers, employers, governments, citizens, children, and all what to do and how to live. All Christians are servants. None are masters. They are like Christ Who came to serve, not to be served.

Conclusion: Why did I become a Christian? Because Jesus prayed for me.

Why do I believe in Him and love my neighbor? Because the Triune God and the Word of God live in me. Why do I look forward to everlasting life? Because Jesus daily forgives all my sins and gives me the hope of being with Him forever.

1. In 15:18-24 Jesus made a sharp distinction between the unbelieving world and believers. Six times the word "hate" occurs. The world hates Christ and His believers. Christians must not delude themselves but be ready for and face this hatred of the world. In fact, it was prophesied, vs. 25. In David's day, in Christ's day, in all generations, the world's irrational foundationless hatred for Christ is directed at Christians. These thoughts are repeated in 16:1-4. The Christian does not live in a world that is friendly toward, or even tolerant of, Christ and the Truth. Forewarned is forearmed. And that is precisely why Pentecost took place: to comfort God's children and to make them cheerful and courageous in a world which utterly loathes Christ and the Truth.
2. In vs. 26 the Holy Spirit is called the Comforter, the one who stands beside us and helps us. He is called "the Spirit of Truth" at Jn. 14:7, here and at 16:13, also at I Jn. 4:6. At Jn. 14:6 and I Jn. 5:6 Jesus and the Holy Spirit are identified with the Truth. Truth is found only in the Triune God. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father.* The Son sent the Spirit from the Father. That is comprehensible to us. He testifies about Jesus. Any talk about the Spirit not associated with Jesus is falsehood. The Holy Spirit and the disciples are fellow-testifiers, the former by virtue of being sent, the latter by virtue of personal experience. Both tell the Truth about Jesus.
3. The whole book of Acts attests to what is said in 16:1-4. "These things" refers to 15:18-25, the hatred of the world for Christ, the Gospel and Christians. Jesus spoke these things so that Christians do not fall away, be caught unawares, or accuse Christ of unfairness. The world will actually excommunicate Christians falsely. In fact, the enemies will think that killing Christians is a godly act. Saul, before his conversion, persecuted Christians. He thought he was serving God. One Rabbi wrote: "Everyone who sheds the blood of the reprobate is equal to the man who performs a sacrifice." At Mt. 10:24 Jesus said: "The disciple is not above his Master." If they killed Christ you can expect similar treatment. If they accused Jesus of having a devil you can expect the same treatment.
4. In vs. 3 the word "these" refers to the atrocities of vs. 2. Ignorance of the Father amounts to ignorance of the Son. Father and Son are both true God. Jesus is not excusing these people but revealing their guilt. The worst ignorance is ignorance of the Father and His Son. Natural man is spiritually blind. If any man is in Christ he is a new creature. Old things have passed away. All is new. II Cor. 5:17. Think of the Apostle Paul before and after conversion. Jesus said to His enemies at 8:19: "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you would know Me, you would know also My Father." See also 7:28-29. For a similar thought see Mt. 11:27.
5. In vs. 4 "these, their and them" refer to things said at 15:18 to 16:3. When these things happened later, Jesus' words of prediction actually increased their faith in Him. And so it is with us. When false Christs arise, when we are persecuted for Jesus' sake, we think of what Jesus told us. That makes our faith and confidence in Him grow and increase.
6. The last sentence of vs. 4 reads: "These things I did not tell you from the beginning because I was with you." During Jesus' ministry the hatred of His enemies was directed only at Him. There was no need to tell the disciples then. But when He would leave, the hatred toward Christ would be directed at the disciples. So it will be with us. We are forewarned. Our life in this world is the way of the cross. Our theology is the theology of the cross. As it happened to Him, so the devil, the world and our flesh will persecute us. We are pilgrims and strangers in this world. Heaven is our home.

* That is incomprehensible to us.

Theme: JESUS PREPARES HIS DISCIPLES FOR THE HOSTILITY OF THE WORLD

Introduction: While Jesus was on earth His enemies hated only Him, not His disciples. But when He ascended into heaven, the world turned its hatred on the disciples. Read Jn. 15:18-25. The enemies hated Jesus without a cause. Later these enemies hated the disciples without a cause. Acts 3-28 is one long account of the suffering disciples. But Jesus had prepared them, armed them and went with them.

I-WHY THE DISCIPLES NEEDED PREPARATION AND TRAINING

A-Because of the attitudes of the world. The word "hatred" occurs six times in Jn. 15:18-25. It's a hatred "without a cause". While Jesus was on earth His enemies constantly hated Him without a cause. It began when He was an infant. Satan worked through people. Joseph and Mary had to flee to Egypt. While Jesus was growing up He was in favor with God and man. But the moment He told the Jews about their sins, they began hating Him. It finally brought Him to an unjust trial and an unjust death. Likewise with the disciples. Beginning with Acts 3 and to its very end the hatred of the Jews against the apostles is very clear. Why did they hate them? Because they preached about the Lord Jesus. By nature sinful man hates God. He is an ally of the devil who hates Jesus. It is today as it was at Jesus' time. The world still hates Jesus and His disciples.

B-Because of the actions of the world. Jesus says in 16:1 that He had spoken as He did so that they would not be offended, so that they would not fall away from Christ. At Jn. 9:22 we read that if anyone would confess that Jesus was the Messiah the Jews would throw him out of the synagogue. That's what they did with the formerly blind man who confessed Christ. That's what they did with Jesus' disciples. Jesus foretold it in our text (16:1). They went so far as to say that such action was a service to God. Can it happen today? It happened to Lutherans in Germany after the Reformation. They were killed because they confessed Jesus as the Messiah. But vs. 1-4 of our text make very very clear that Jesus foretold it. When it happens our faith in His Word is strengthened.

II-HOW THE DISCIPLES RECEIVED PREPARATION AND TRAINING

A-He arms them with the Truth. Jesus said to Pilate: "Everyone who is of the Truth hears My voice." Pilate answered: "What is Truth?" Jn. 18:37-38. Jesus said to the Father: "Your Word is Truth." Jn. 17:17. He called Himself the Truth. Jn. 14:6. The Holy Spirit is called "The Spirit of Truth." Jn. 14:7; 15:26; 16:13. The Triune God and especially the Spirit tells us the Truth about ourselves. Our sinfulness is so great that it cannot be comprehended. It must be believed. But, likewise, the love of God in Christ is so great that it cannot be comprehended. It must be believed.

B-The Holy Spirit testifies about Jesus. Paul says at Eph. 6:17 that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. The Holy Spirit, working through the Word of God is like a sword. The sword is used both offensively and defensively. Our enemies are the devil, the world and our flesh. We use the Holy Spirit's sword, the Gospel to fight these enemies. When the devil accuses me of sin I use the Gospel to drive him back. When the world tempts me with its glitter I use the Gospel to drive the world back. And when my flesh tempts me to unspeakable evils I use the Holy Spirit's sword, the Gospel of Jesus Christ to protect myself. And when the occasion arises for me to testify to others I use the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, the Gospel.

Conclusion: Jesus warned and armed the disciples. He does the same for us today.