

¹¹ *Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.* ¹² *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.* ¹³ *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.*

Text: John 17:11b-19 A 5/13/18 Acts 1:15-25 1 John 4:13-21 Psalm 8 Resp. Ps.: 100
Hymns: 296, 285, 292 (1-4, 7, 9; tune: #447), 283

WE ARE GOD’S SANCTIFIED PEOPLE

- 1. We belong to God**
- 2. The world hates us**
- 3. We are Christ’s witnesses to the world**
- 4. We are not of the world**
- 5. We remain faithful to God’s Word**

Speak, O Lord, Thy servant heareth, To Thy Word I now give heed;
Life and spirit Thy Word beareth, All Thy Word is true indeed.
Death’s dread power in me is rife; Jesus, may Thy Word of Life
Fill my soul with love’s strong fervor That I cling to Thee forever. (TLH #296:1)

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

Our text is part of what is known as Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer – a prayer Jesus prayed to His Father on behalf of His disciples and all believers. Jesus prayed that His Father would “*sanctify*” us (which in the original means “set us apart from and consecrate us”). Today from God’s Word we’ll see what it means that we are God’s sanctified people.

– 1 –

Jesus prays, “*Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me.*” We are God’s people by faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus refers to us as those His Father has “*given [to] Me.*” As God’s sanctified people we belong to Him. God assures us in His Word, “*I will be their God, and they shall be My people*” (2 Cor. 6:16).

Speaking of His twelve disciples Jesus says, *“Those whom You gave Me I have kept.”* Jesus kept the disciples in their faith in God. *“And none of them is lost except the son of perdition”* – Judas, who rejected Jesus and betrayed Him. If someone rejects Jesus as his Savior he doesn’t belong to God and he isn’t saved.

Jesus prays to His Father, *“Now I come to You”* – referring to His upcoming Ascension. Jesus says, *“These things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.”* Jesus is speaking of the joy His Gospel brings us. As God’s sanctified people, belonging to Him, we have the joy of His salvation in Christ. Jesus tells us, *“Be happy, your sins are forgiven”* (Mt. 9:2).

– 2 –

Jesus prays, *“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.”* Jesus warns us that as people sanctified God the world hates us. Jesus says, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me”* (Jn. 14:6). Jesus Christ is the only Savior of the world. It is only by faith in Jesus that anyone can be saved and go to heaven. In our text Jesus says, *“Your Word is truth.”* The Bible is the Word of God. Everything the Bible says is the truth from God. Jesus says, *“If you abide in My Word, then you are truly My disciples”* (Jn. 8:31b). Because we insist that the only way of eternal salvation is by faith in Jesus, and that the Bible, and only the Bible, is the absolute truth from God, the world hates us.

– 3 –

Jesus says to His Father, *“I do not pray that You should take them out of the world.”* God doesn’t protect us from the world by having us keep only to ourselves, having nothing at all to do with the world. If He did, who would tell people about Jesus? God has us in the world as *“the light of the world”* (Mt. 15:14-16).

Jesus prays to His Father, *“As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself.”* Jesus prayed His High Priestly Prayer on the night He was betrayed. We’re told that Jesus *“sanctified”* (consecrated, devoted) Himself to His Father, carrying out His Father’s will for our salvation. God sent Jesus into the world to save us all from our sins by His death on the cross. Jesus sends us into the world to tell people about Him so they can believe in Him and be saved. As God’s sanctified people we are Christ’s witnesses to the world. Peter says, *“You are a chosen generation, ... a holy nation, [God’s] own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light”* (1 Pet. 2:9).

Jesus says to His Father, *“I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.”* Jesus has already said, *“I have given them Your Word.”*

Jesus has given us His Word to proclaim to the world, and to protect us from the world and from Satan. However Satan and the world attack us, God's Word gives us the help and strength and protection we need. Jesus says, *"Whoever hears these words of Mine, and acts on them, I will liken to a wise man who built his house on the rock; and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock"* (Mt. 7:24-25).

– 4 –

Jesus prays, *"They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."* This is the second time Jesus says this. He wants to impress it upon our hearts that although we are in the world, as God's sanctified people *"we are not of the world."* God tells us in His Word, *"You belong to Christ"* (1 Cor. 3:23). We need to watch ourselves that we don't pick up the world's beliefs and philosophies and priorities and lifestyles. John says, *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever"* (1 Jn. 2:15-17).

– 5 –

When we hear the name *"God,"* we think of the God of the Bible – the only true, living God. God's name is everything God tells us about Himself in His Word. So when Jesus prays, *"Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me,"* He's asking His Father to keep us faithful to Him and His Word. As God's sanctified people we remain faithful to His Word. Jesus adds, *"...that they may be one as We are."* It's by remaining faithful to God's Word that we have the unity with one another that God wants His people to have.

Jesus prays, *"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is truth."* God made us His own sanctified people through His Word, and it is through His Word that God keeps us as His own sanctified people. The Bible isn't just a true book among other true books. The Bible is truth. God's Word is always true. God's Word is always up to date. God's Word never changes. It is through believing and following the absolute, unchanging and unchangeable truths of God's Word that He keeps us *"set apart"* from the world and *"consecrated"* (dedicated, devoted) to Him.

WE ARE GOD'S SANCTIFIED PEOPLE. We belong to God. The world hates us. We are Christ's witnesses to the world. We are not of the world. We remain faithful to God's Word.

Precious Jesus, I beseech Thee, May Thy words take root in me;
 May this gift from heaven enrich me So that I bear fruit for Thee!
 Take them never from my heart Till I see Thee as Thou art,
 When in heavenly bliss and glory I shall greet Thee and adore Thee. Amen.

(TLH #296:4)