

Joy. Purpose. Protection.

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[0 : 00] All right, well, if you have your Bible with you, you can open it up to the Gospel of John. We're continuing on. We're in John chapter 17, and we're looking at Jesus' prayer right before he leads his disciples into the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus has just begun to pray to the Father with his disciples there with him, and we first heard Jesus speaking about his relationship with the Father and his longing to be restored to the glory that he had with the Father before the world began.

Then we heard Jesus begin to reflect and report to the Father on how things have gone well with his disciples, how he has given them the Father's word, and they have responded in faith.

And then we heard Jesus praying for their protection. And so we're picking up this prayer today, continuing it in verse 13 of chapter 17.

Jesus praying to the Father says, 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.

[1 : 15] So Jesus again tells his Father that he's coming to him. And then he goes on to say this. He says, I say these things in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy.

Now there's some different ideas here about what Jesus means. This is a more literal rendering of it. These things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy.

When Jesus says, these things I say, what is he referring to? Is he referring to his prayer? Like these things that I'm praying to you right now, saying to you.

Or is he talking about these things that he's just been speaking to his disciples? These words of warning and comfort and promises.

Without getting into a lengthy treatment of this, it seems most likely to be the second one. In other words, I don't think Jesus is stating the purpose of his prayer.

[2 : 22] Rather, just like before, it seems that Jesus is kind of reporting back to the Father what he has been doing. What the aim and the goal and the purpose of it is.

He's saying, I'm saying these things to them. These things that I've just said, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. And this really does fit with all that we've heard before.

If we look back to verse 22 and what Jesus said to them there. He said, now is your time of grief. But I will see you again. And you will rejoice. And no one will take away your joy. Or, just a few verses down. In verse 27.

He says, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. Or, again, in verse 33.

[3 : 23] He said, I've told you these things so that in me you may have peace. Take heart. I have overcome the world. So, these are the things that have to do with the disciples having joy.

Their promises to hold on to. Their truths about the Father's love for them. And Jesus speaks about how he will soon have the victory. All of this that Jesus has been saying to them has a purpose.

In verse 33, as we see on the screen there. It was so that they might have peace. But now here, in verse 13. As Jesus tells the Father about it.

It's also joy. Jesus wants his disciples to have joy. And this is not the first time that Jesus has expressed this. If we think back to when he was teaching about using that metaphor of the vine and the branches.

Back in John chapter 15, verse 11. He said something similar. He said, I've told you this. All this. So that my joy may be in you. And that your joy may be complete.

[4 : 32] I think it's basically the same statement made to the disciples there. But here in this prayer, he's speaking to the Father. These things I speak in the world so that they may have my joy made full in themselves.

Now, I know I said it back when we were in chapter 15. But I do want to say it again one more time. Do you know that Jesus desires for his followers to be happy?

To have joy. Jesus says to the Father, this has been my aim. This has been my goal. In saying all these things to them.

So that they may have joy. And here Jesus describes that joy in three ways. It's not just any old joy. It's my joy, says Jesus.

That they may have my joy. So Jesus has joy. This is where so many of those Jesus films that have been made fall flat.

[5 : 43] You probably know the ones I'm talking about. They cast Jesus as always so serious and so stoic. Almost unable to smile. But Jesus had joy.

It says it right here. There was a joy that was his. And his desire expressed here to the Father. His prayer is that we, his followers, might come to have that same joy.

To share in that joy that he has. Doesn't that sound great? Now we might be thinking. Well, Jesus was the perfect son of God.

I can't ever have a joy like his. Because I'm a broken sinner. Living in a broken world. I don't know. Maybe I'll come to know just a small part of Jesus' joy.

But in his prayer here, Jesus doesn't leave us room for sharing only a part of his joy. He says, These things I speak in the world So that they may have my joy made full.

[6 : 58] Or as another translation says, The full measure of my joy. The full measure. Jesus doesn't just want you to be happy. He wants you to be happy as he is happy.

With the full measure of his happiness. Again, don't believe the lie of the devil.

He's trying to convince you that God wants you to be miserable. But it's a lie. Truly, it's the devil who wants you to be miserable.

Jesus wants you to be happy. He wants you to have joy. And not just a little bit, but the full measure of his joy. And he and the Father know best where to get that.

How to have that. Do we believe that? Sometimes we struggle to see that. Maybe there's something that we value.

[8 : 03] Or desire. Or crave. And we want it so bad that we'll do almost anything together. Forget it. Even compromise. Even disregard.

Or ignore. The clear teaching of Jesus. The commands of Jesus. We think that thing will make us most happy. But the truth is. We aren't seeing things clearly.

Sin has a way of blinding us. Pride has a way of clouding our judgment. Greed. And envy. Make it so that we just can't truly appreciate and see what's going on.

And this is where faith has to come into play. We have to trust that God really does know best. And that he's not just for our holiness.

For our moral purity. But he's also for our happiness. Along with that. Our greatest happiness. The full measure. That's what Jesus was saying here.

[9 : 09] My aim. My purpose. In teaching all that I've been saying to them this night. It is so that they may have my joy made full within themselves.

That's the last descriptor there. Within themselves. This is not an external happiness. This is not circumstantial happiness. This is not pretending to be happy.

Have you ever been in a situation where everything is going really good. And you feel like I should be happy. I have no reason not to be happy.

Everybody around me is really happy. Why am I? It's just not in here. Why am I not able to participate? To celebrate? To just be happy in this moment. And enjoy the good things.

Jesus doesn't want for his followers. A faked joy. Or a pretend joy. A do your best to feel joy.

[10 : 11] He wants that joy to be within us. Within them. Deep inside of us. That we really feel it. So that's the first thing we see this morning in Jesus' prayer.

We see that Jesus is for our joy. He himself has joy. And the goal and the aim is for them. For his disciples and for us.

To have his joy. Joy made full. Joy within them. Joy within us. Jesus goes on.

Verse 14. He says, I have given them. Referring to the disciples. 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. We won't linger long here. Jesus has said most of this already. He has spoken for God to the disciples.

[11:18] Even more. He has entrusted them with his words. To go out and give to places. He sent them out. They have participated. And Jesus sees what has happened.

Just as people have hated him. That same hatred has been directed to Jesus' followers. And Jesus explains the reason. As he's praying.

He reflects on it. It's because they're not of the world. Just like he is not of the world. And we've talked about this already. Jesus offers new birth.

He gives us a new life. A change in who we belong to. When we repent. And we put our trust in him. He changes our citizenship.

Our status. So drastically. That we no longer belong to the world. We belong to heaven. And the God of heaven. Just as Jesus.

[12:17] Belongs to heaven. And comes from heaven. So like the disciples. We too can find ourselves. Quite at odds with the world. Under fire.

Under attack. Because we've become like foreigners to them. Perhaps in the minds of some people. Even traitors. We no longer celebrate the darkness.

We love the light. We no longer eagerly participate in those things. That we know are wrong. We see them for what they are. And so we hate those things. We see the damage that they do in our lives.

Think about this in the lives of Jesus' disciples. There were whole towns. Where the disciples of Jesus were not welcomed. In the same way today.

It's not easy being a Christian in our world. It can be very difficult. But the truth is. God wants you and me here.

[13:25] In this world. In this world. He has a purpose for you and me. Right now. Here in this world. Listen to what Jesus says next. He says, My prayer is not that you take them out of the world.

But that you protect them from the evil one. These words really struck a chord in my heart. As I was meditating on this. This week.

My prayer is not that you take them out of the world. Think about this. Jesus knows that the world hates his disciples.

He's watched it. He's seen it with these 11 men. They've hated them too. He knows what the world will do to them after he leaves. He's just warned them about that. This very night. And yet.

He prays this. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world. Jesus wanted them to stay in the world. Because he had a purpose for them.

[14:28] To fulfill. In the world. Glance down to verse 18. Verse 18. Jesus said.

As you sent me into the world. I have sent them. Into the world. God could take us out of this world at any moment.

I used to wonder that as a kid. I used to think about that. You know. Why doesn't he? Why doesn't. We believe in him.

And he'd just take us right up to heaven. Right up to glory. We all. Those of us who believe. We know. That that's how good this gift of salvation is. That once we accept it and receive it.

It's a done deal. And we belong to God. so why doesn't he just take us out right now he's got the power and the authority to do it he could just snap his fingers and say the word and we'd be there with Jesus in heaven in fact Jesus wants us to be with him where he is this is what Jesus says just a couple verses later in 24 verse 24 he says father I want those you have given me to be with me where I am and to see my glory and yet Jesus says I'm not asking that you take them out of the world I have sent them into the world when it comes to our faith in Jesus sometimes we lose sight of this don't we why doesn't he just take us now Jesus says I'm not asking you to do that father no it's the opposite I've sent them into the world he has a purpose for them being there he has a purpose for us being here and sometimes we lose sight of that in a different way we maybe we just get distracted by the things of this world we get engrossed in things of this world I don't know maybe you're glad that God doesn't take you up to heaven right now maybe there's still some stuff you want to do and get or things you want to experience here in this world and sometimes we can get so wrapped up in these things and yet the truth is these things are things that won't last and in that way we can lose sight of the fact that God has us here for a purpose he has sent us to do something here are we doing it are we focused on it Jesus taught a lot about this this tendency we have to get sidetracked remember the parable of the sower in the soils farmer goes out and scatters his seeds

some of it falls along uh amongst soil that has weeds in it and these weeds they spring up beside the plant that's growing there and choke it out and jesus gave the explanation to his disciples he says it represents people who hear the word of god but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word making it unfruitful we can easily get distracted from that great purpose for which god has us here in the world by the stuff of the world jesus taught about how the stuff of this world the treasures of earth don't last the sermon on the mount moth and rust destroy thieves break in and steal things wear out and fall apart they break down you get that brand new vehicle and bam there's a moose that comes out of nowhere as you're driving at night and not enough damage to write it off but enough damage that the vehicle will never be the same and it's not worth nearly as much as it was or i think of our family's recent vacation in mexico we had a wonderful time there we were gifted a week's day at a beautiful resort there and we just enjoyed it so much but then the week was up and we had to leave it was paradise but it it was temporary now don't get me wrong there's good stuff here on earth

[19:19] we all know that god has put it here in this world for our enjoyment first timothy chapter four first timothy chapter six but jesus hasn't left us here just for that just to enjoy it heaven will be far better the new earth that god creates at the very end of our world story will have far better stuff far better experiences things that will last forever but god has us here in the world now for a purpose now for the disciples it's it's easy for us to see that purpose because we have their whole story written out for us here we see how they were sent they were chosen to be apostles they were given a job and a mission to go forth and proclaim the good news of jesus to bear witness to tell of all they saw and heard and experienced with jesus and do signs and wonders that pointed to jesus and see churches established but i think we all know that these words here apply to us as well two thousand years later my prayer is not that you take them out of the world i have sent them into the world he could take us now but no there's a little corner of the world named davidson with its surrounding community and the people here matter deeply to god my prayer is not that you take them out of the world i have sent them into the world where i got thinking of how we pack shoe boxes as a church there are other little known corners of the world where kids have it difficult right from birth they hardly have anything and the odds of them hearing about jesus are slim if god were to take us all out of this world right now where would that leave them we aren't the apostles we have different roles to play but the bible tells us that each of us has unique gifts we each have unique abilities we each have a role a responsibility in his body in his church to our neighbors to the poor the orphan the widow the people around us we're not the apostles but we have inherited the same great commission that they did the same overall mission god gave the early church we're to continue it to pick it up where they left off to go on making disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the father and the son and the holy spirit teaching them to obey everything that christ commanded bringing that news of his salvation to those who are lost in fact this was god's plan all along not that we would be taken out of the world but that we would remain in it that we would be sent by christ to it that the good news of jesus salvation would be proclaimed all over the earth and only then said jesus will the end come and so i want to ask you this morning are you on mission with jesus are you living soberly aware and conscious of this great purpose if you belong to jesus christ he has you here in this world in this community for a reason he gives you another day's provision

and breath for a reason and this is a big part of what it means to be the church of jesus christ it's about carrying out this purpose together it's about making our glorious savior known in every corner of the earth together starting with our own corner may we not squander or waste our time in this world may we be found faithful doing the things that we've been made to do and gifted to do while we're here so here in jesus prayer first we see that jesus is for our joy then we see that jesus wants us to remain here for a purpose and finally we hear jesus pray once again for our protection this comes to us in verse 15 as well my prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one it's the second time jesus has prayed for their protection but this time very specifically it's protection from the evil one the devil is on the prowl he is real and it would be his greatest delight to trip you up to distract you to turn you off of the path to hurt you to do damage to you to your family to tempt you and so jesus prays for his people protect them from the evil one let me ask you do you think the father will answer this request of jesus do you think he will give him what he asked absolutely now that doesn't mean that we'll never be tempted it doesn't mean the devil will never be permitted to come after us but it does mean that he will not prevail over us jesus

has prayed for our protection from him and this is our confidence as john wrote later on in his letter first john 4 verse 4 you dear children are from god and have overcome them because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world that being the devil so we've heard and seen three things in jesus prayer this morning number one jesus is for your joy he himself is full of joy and he desires for his people his followers to have that same joy in the fullest measure deep down in our hearts will you give your trust to jesus will you surrender your life to him knowing that he has your best in mind not just holiness but happiness we've seen that god has a purpose for all of us who believe remaining here in this world let me encourage you with these words don't let your heart and your your aims be captive to the to the lesser things of earth as the church of jesus christ we have a great mission and purpose for being here are you living that are you seeking first and above all christ's kingdom god's will to be done jesus name to be glorified and known that's why we're still here and finally the devil is on the prowl but don't worry about him don't be afraid of him our great high priest jesus has asked the father for our protection from him and if we belong to christ our good shepherd then we have this confidence we will overcome him and he cannot stand against us so let's give thanks now together for god's grace and mercy father in heaven we thank you for these things that we see in the prayer of your son and i pray that these truths would leak and seep deep down into our hearts that we would surrender ourselves completely to you to your plan for our lives to your commands we want that full joy that you offer we also pray and ask that you would give us wisdom and understanding about why you've put each one of us here in this world in this community what it is you would have us be doing what unique role we have to play show us lord and give us strength and energy and passion for it and we thank you too lord that you protect us from the evil one that we are safe that we are secure that nobody not even the devil can snatch us from your hand we give you praise we give you glory in jesus name amen