

Christ Sanctified

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[0:00] Let's turn back for a few moments to John chapter 17 and we'll focus our attention on verse 19.

Particularly John chapter 17 and verse 19 where Jesus in the middle of his prayer says this and for their sake I consecrate myself that they also may be sanctified in truth.

We could put it another way and for their sake I sanctify myself because the words are the same and for their sake I sanctify myself that they also may be sanctified in truth.

I want us to focus on the two occasions in that verse where he uses the same word sanctifying to try and unearth what that means and what the implications are.

When we think about the Lord's Prayer we automatically think of when the disciples asked Jesus teach us to pray and of course in answer to that question the Lord gave what we know as the Lord's Prayer and what I'm sure every one of us knows by heart as our Father in heaven.

[1:27] Hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, etc. We know that prayer, we've been taught it from when we were knee high and we've been taught it as the Lord's Prayer.

And we know, we understand why it should have been given that title. It was the prayer that the Lord taught to his disciples. But there is a very real sense in which the Lord's Prayer that we know wasn't the Lord's Prayer because the Lord could never have prayed that prayer himself.

How do I know that? Simple. Because it says, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Jesus never had debts.

He could never ask for the Father to forgive him his debts because there were no debts for him to ask forgiveness for. There were, however, many occasions when the Gospels tell us that Jesus prayed.

The Gospels even tell us when Jesus prayed sometimes. He would get up while it was still dark. He would go up onto a mountain and he would spend all night in prayer.

[2:36] That was the preciousness and the importance of prayer to Jesus Christ. We might wonder why Jesus had to pray. After all, Jesus was the one who said that God knows our needs before we ask.

So, why should Jesus, who is God himself and who by definition knows his own needs, why should he have to ask the Father to supply him with those needs?

Why does he, of all people, have to pray? That's a great mystery. But for one thing, it is an example for those who follow him. If he had to pray, how much more do we have to live our Christian lives through prayer and by prayer and in prayer?

And how much more importantly ought prayer to feature in our lives? Prayer is absolutely key in the life of the Christian.

And God works through prayer. He doesn't need to work through prayer, but God has chosen and he has declared to us and he has told us in no uncertain terms that it is through and in the prayers of his people as an answer to the prayers of his people that he works.

[3 : 53] And he tells us that he is the hearer and the answerer of our prayer. The second thing about this prayer is that Jesus focuses not on himself, but he focuses on his followers.

Now, that might not be strange until we come to remember that he was just about to be taken away and arrested and tried and tortured and crucified.

And he knew that he was on the brink of all of these things. We have a saying. It's just as well you don't know what's around the corner.

But you know why we mean that. You know what we mean by that. What we mean by that is it's best that we don't know what's ahead of us.

If we knew the awful things that perhaps, perhaps might be ahead of us. The tragedies, the sickness, the bereavement that may very well be ahead of us.

[4 : 52] If we knew that these things were ahead of us and what they were and when they would come, we would fret. We would despair. We couldn't live normal lives. So God keeps them from us.

God keeps the future from us. But Jesus knew he was on the brink of the most incredible suffering. He knew it because of the Garden of Gethsemane.

He knew that he prayed to the Father. Father, if it be possible, take this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done. But even then, when he comes to pray to the Father, the subject of his prayer is not that God would lessen the pain, nor that God would take the pain away, or that God would protect him in some way.

He could not be protected. There was no way in which Jesus could have been protected. He had to go through every ounce, every sector of the pain and the awfulness and the suffering that he had to go through.

He could not pray even for protection. But when it comes to his prayer, his prayer is focused on his friends, those who have followed him.

[6 : 08] Not only the 12 disciples who were with him at that time, or the 11 disciples, but those who would follow Jesus in the future by believing in his name.

And when Jesus prays for them, he is praying for us in the 21st century. That's why this prayer is so relevant for us. It is a prayer that has a direct bearing on our lives, on the way that you and I live our lives.

It's interesting, just in going past, that John makes no mention of Gethsemane. If you read from verse 17 to 18, he chooses to mention and he chooses to write the prayer as he remembers the prayer of Jesus.

No one else does. But he skips Gethsemane and he goes into chapter 18, which tells us about the arrest of Jesus.

I wonder why that was. I wonder if he felt so ashamed of himself in Gethsemane at having slept with the other two disciples, at having dropped off to sleep and having been rebuked by Jesus at that time.

[7 : 23] It's other disciples that mentioned Gethsemane. But nevertheless, he is the only one that lists the prayer, that writes the prayer of Jesus.

And he writes it for us. He writes it for our benefit. These things are written, he tells us, at the end of the gospel. So that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

So no matter how mysterious and beyond our understanding this prayer may be, it is written so that we may believe.

These things are written, said John, so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ. And who knows, maybe in even reading this prayer today, there's someone here who's not yet a believer, and who there is something registered with our heart, and that somehow we are able to see why Jesus came into the world, and that he came in for us.

We might be able to see something of the compassion and the care that Jesus had for his disciples, and it's a care and a grace and a love that extends to lost sinners like you and I today.

[8 : 39] So don't ever think that there are parts of the Bible that are beyond explaining to people, and beyond people's understanding.

God gives us understanding, and he makes us, he allows us to see something of himself. Another feature of this prayer is the incredible confidence with which Jesus comes to the Father.

We might think that on the brink of such suffering and on his own death, we might think that he would have no confidence at all that he would be despairing. And we might think that he would be so full of fear, and he was.

By the way, Jesus did experience fear. I have no question about that whatsoever. I know that that question sometimes comes up in discussion. Did Jesus experience real fear?

I believe he did. And I believe that that's what comes across in the Garden of Gethsemane. And you would expect that that fear would come across in this prayer. And we would, I'm sure it's right to say that there was an element of fear, but that doesn't stop him coming confidently to the Father in prayer.

[9 : 55] And fear should not stop his people coming confidently to the Father in prayer. You might ask, How can you possibly equate the way I come to the Father with the way that Jesus comes to the Father?

How can I possibly have the same confidence? Look at the confidence that Jesus has. He says to God, I came from you. No wonder he can pray in confidence.

He can say to God, I have glorified you on earth. He can relate to the Father everything that he has done, and he has done it utterly perfectly.

There has been no flaw. There has been no weakness. There has been no sin in anything that Jesus has done throughout his whole life. 33 years lived in perfection.

You might say, Well, no wonder he can come to the Father in prayer with that. I could never come to the Father in that same confidence. I could never say the things that Jesus is able to say.

[10 : 57] Well, that's true. We can never pray this prayer. This prayer was never given to the disciples so that they may use it just like the Lord's prayer, Our Father which art in heaven.

We can never use the words that Jesus used in John chapter 17. This is a unique prayer between Jesus alone and the Father alone.

It cannot be given to anyone else. No one else can use it. And yet, We can have the same confidence in coming to the Father.

How can I say that? Because, If we believe and follow Jesus, The Bible tells us that we are in Jesus.

That's the relationship the New Testament chooses To describe our relationship to Jesus Christ. We are in Jesus. That means that we are able to come in that same confidence to the Father.

[12:03] And that means there cannot be any excuse for us to hold ourselves back from praying. You cannot say to God, I can't pray because I cannot generate the confidence in order to pray.

If you can't generate the confidence, There's something wrong with your understanding of your relationship to Jesus. And the first thing perhaps needs to be, Is need to stop for a few moments, And you need to remind yourself of what the Bible tells you you are.

Who the Bible tells you you are. Behold, What manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, That we should be called children of God. And when John said that, He anticipated the gasp of astonishment.

How can you possibly say that? And he said, That is what we are. Children of God. As children we come to our Father, Even if we are confessing the most ugly, sinful things, We come in confidence, The same confidence as Jesus came.

He lifted his eyes to heaven and said, Father, We are allowed to do the same. We are permitted to do the same. We are invited to do the same. We are commanded to do the same.

[13:16] When you pray, Said Jesus, This is what you are to say. Father in our Father, In heaven, Hallowed be your name. So I hope that gives us some encouragement today.

Perhaps if we have lost sight of prayer, As it takes place in our own lives, As there is one thing that we are inclined to lose sight of, It is prayer.

Am I not speaking the truth? Is that not true? It certainly is with me anyway. It is one area in my life I need to come back to time and time again. I need to know, I need to know, My relationship with God, I need to be reminded of it, Time and time again.

So one thing I have to come back with. Let's look at verse 19 just very briefly. You'll know that the prayer is divided, Typically into three parts. Jesus prays for himself, Between verse 1 and 5.

Between verses 6 and verse 19, Jesus prays for his 11 disciples, Specifically the ones who have followed him, The ones who are with him there as his particular friends, And I'm sure the others who had become disciples during his ministry.

[14:37] The third part of the prayer, From verse 20 to verse 26, Is directed at ourselves, Those who would believe in time, Through the message that was preached by the disciples.

I want us to look very briefly, Because I've spent a long time on the introduction, But that's okay. Those who would believe, And I want us to look at this particular statement, To ask ourselves what it means.

Verse 19, For their sake, I consecrate or sanctify myself, That they also may be sanctified in truth.

I want us to say three things. First of all, I want us to ask, What does it mean for Jesus to be sanctified? Then I want us to ask, Why was Jesus sanctified?

And then thirdly, I want us to look at the result. Why? What was the end result of Jesus, And the statement of himself being sanctified or consecrated?

[15:46] First of all, What does he mean when he tells, When he says, I sanctify or consecrate myself? Now, When we typically use the word sanctify, We sometimes mean, Or I guess we usually mean, Something which is defective, But it is made good.

Something which is bad, Which is made good. The catechism, For those of you who know your catechism, I'm sure some of you do, When it talks about how God sanctifies Christians, It's a process, In which we are made, This is what it says, In which God makes us more and more, To die unto sin, And live unto righteousness.

In other words, That's the purpose, That God has for all of his people, That there's a process, In which the Holy Spirit, Makes us more and more, Die unto sin, And live unto righteousness.

Now, Whatever you say, That cannot possibly, Have been true about Jesus. Jesus, Cannot be made better than he is. Jesus cannot, There's no process going on in Jesus, In which he's dying to sin, And living to righteousness.

So it's got to mean something else. And in order, As we find very often, In order to find out what it means, We have to go all the way back, To the Old Testament, And to Moses, And, For example, A passage in Exodus chapter 28, When the priests, When God was calling, A family, Of believers, To be priests, For him, And to work, In the tabernacle.

[17:37] What happened was, That God gave them particular clothes, He ordered that, That particular clothes, That they wear, Those clothes, To identify them, As priests, But then, When they were finished making them, They were to be set apart.

It tells us this, In Exodus chapter 28, And 41, For example, And you shall put the clothes, On Aaron your brother, And his sons with him, And you shall anoint them, And ordain them, And consecrate them, Or sanctify them, That they may serve me, As priests.

Now this tells us, What being sanctified, Really means. It means, Something that is taken, From an ordinary use. These were, These were, Clothes made out, Of ordinary material.

They were specially made, They were, They looked special, But the time came, When Moses had to say, Right, From now on, These clothes, Have a special use.

And the same was true, Even for the priests themselves. From now on, There came a point in time, Where Moses anointed them, With oil, And from that moment onwards, They were set apart, For a particular use.

[18:53] The same was true, With the furniture, And the tabernacle, With the altar, And with the altar of incense, And with the table, And with the lampstand, And all of the items, That went into the tabernacle. There came a point, After they were made, And constructed, That they were anointed, And set apart, For a particular use.

Now here's Jesus. He's not telling us, That he is being made good, Or made holy. He already is holy. He is God himself.

Yet, He is telling us, That he is from now on, He's setting his face, As it were, Towards the particular work, That God has given him to do.

What was that work? His work was to die, On the cross. And he alone, Could die, That death.

No one else, Could ever die that death, Except him. It had to be him. He had to be set apart, As the sinless, Perfect, Eternal, Son of God.

[20:00] To be set apart, For, This particular work, That God had given him to do. So that's what, To be sanctified means. The second question, We're asking is, Why, Was he sanctified?

The reason is this, And give us as, Verse 19, For, Their sake, For their sake, I, Consecrate myself. I want you to notice, That the gospel, Is contained in this verse.

There's another comment, That we could make, On the prayer of Jesus, And that is, Why, Is this prayer made known? Did Jesus not himself say, When you pray, Go into your closet, Make sure that nobody, Gets to find out, The substance of your prayer.

But here, As Jesus prays to the father, The disciples are able to hear, What he says. Why is that? It's because, He wants his prayer to be known.

It's an announcement, And it's an announcement, In verse 19, Of the reason, Why he came, Into the world. So that, He would take, The place of sinners.

[21:09] So that instead, Of them, Suffering, His disciples, Suffering, The wrath, And the punishment of God, He, Would suffer, That wrath.

That was, That's what he, Was sanctified for, He was set apart, As the sin bearer, The one sacrifice, Once and for all, That removes, Our sin.

We cannot, Remove it by ourselves, There is nothing, That you or I, Can do, To remove the guilt, That we face God with today. And here's the gospel, Here's the good news, Even in these obscure words, Words, Would I'm quite sure, That when I, When I read them, At first you thought, What's this going to be about, I'm never going to understand this, If you don't, Then you're lost, They are in one sense, The easiest, The simplest words, That you can possibly, Get your, It's simply, It's simply this, That you and I, I deserve God's punishment, We stand before God today, Guilty, And a day will come, The Bible tells us, When we must all, Appear before, The judgment seat, Of Christ, We must all, Give an account, Of ourselves to God, Every one of us, Is stained, And polluted, By sin, Our sins have, Separated us from God, But instead of, Destroying the world, As God could have done, God so loved the world,

And he gave his only son, Into the world, To die, As a punishment, As the punishment, That we deserve, To go to the place, Where we ought to have gone to, The place that we deserve to go to, So that's why he says, For their sake, It's an echo of what Isaiah tells us, In chapter 53, The gospel according to Isaiah, I'm sure we know it, He was, Wounded, For our transgressions, He was bruised, For our iniquity, The chastisement, The punishment, That brought us peace, Became his, The punishment, And by his wounds, We, Have been healed, The only way,

For you and I, To be right with God, This morning, Is, A substitute, For God to take our place, And he did that, In the person of Jesus Christ, He came, Stepped into our world, And he declared himself, I am willing, To take the place, Of sinners, And to take their punishment, To become, Sin, For them, So that, They, Can be set free, From the guilt, In which, We all stand, For their sakes, I, Sanctify, Myself, These few words, These tiny words, They contain everything, They contain, The death of Jesus, They contain, Why it was, That Jesus came into the world, And they contain, The challenge, That you and I, Must face this morning, If you're not a Christian, You have to face this challenge, Am I right with God?

[24:34] The only way, To be right with God, Is to have your sins forgiven, By, The death, Of Jesus, Maybe you don't understand it, That's okay, Plenty of people, Have started off, With a very poor understanding, Of, Jesus, But maybe there's something, In this gospel message, That gets to you, And that the more you hear it, The more it gets to you, And you know, That even though, You don't understand it fully, You know that, That this is the truth, And you're crying out to God, God show me, Reveal to me, Make, Well you know, God will answer that prayer, I promise you, God will answer that prayer, If you come to him today, And your prayer is, Lord I don't understand, Help me, It's like the man, Who came to Jesus, And he said, Lord I believe, But help, My unbelief, God can do that, And he will do it, And he's in the business, Of opening up people's hearts, And making himself known to them, So you come to him,

And you ask him, Ask him to make himself known, To you today, The third thing, I want us to look at, Very very briefly, Is so that they too, The end of that verse, So that they also, May be sanctified, In truth, In other words, What's God's purpose, If you want to, You're asking this morning, What is God's plan, For me, What is God doing, In my life, What's the end result, Going to be, What's the aim, And the purpose, In God, For me, Here it is, That they also, May be sanctified, In other words, If you're asking that question, There's the answer, God's purpose, For me, Is that I, May, Be, Sanctified, The Bible tells us, That that means two things, It means first of all,

That I, Too, Be set aside, Taken away, Not taken, Not taken out of the world, But set apart, For him, The Bible tells us, That if we are in Christ, Paul puts it this way, If we, If any man be in Christ, He is a new creation, The old things are passed away, Behold, All things have become new, And the apostle Paul, In, In, In, In, First Corinthians, In chapter six, And verse 11, He describes it, In terms of our sanctification, He says, Such were some of you, Then, Then he says this, You were washed, You, Were sanctified, You, Were justified, In the name, Of the Lord Jesus Christ, And by the spirit, Of our God, In other words, What he's saying, Is the moment, We came to faith in Jesus, God changed us, And he set us apart, From, From,

From, What we were, To, His own people, But it means something else as well, And this brings us back to what I spoke about before, As the process, Where the Holy Spirit comes into a person's life, And begins a process of cleansing, And washing, And making us die to sin, And live unto righteousness, That's our aim, Paul puts it this way, Work out your own salvation, With fear and trembling, For it is God, That works within you, To will, And to do, Of his good pleasure, In other words, We have to work out, Our own salvation, Because, At the same time, God is working within us, To will, And to do, Of his good pleasure, Now here's where, We fall, Because, Many of us, Even those of us, Who have been on the road, For many, Many years, We sometimes come to, To the point, Where we wonder, Well, What guarantee is there,

That I'll ever get there? I know what the Bible says, About a process, I know what the Catechism says, In terms of, In terms of, Being able to die unto sin, And live to righteousness, But I see, In my own life, Such little evidence of it, Is there a guarantee, Is there some way, In which I can be, Absolutely sure, That I'll get there, One day, Here's the guarantee, Do you see it?

[29 : 16] The guarantee, Is not the extent, To which we try, And attempt, Although that's important, The guarantee, Lies in Jesus, I sanctify myself, So that they also, One day, Will be, Will be, Not maybe, Not perhaps, But they will be, Sanctified, In truth, In other words, When Paul tells us, That God's plan, Is that we may be conformed, That we may be shaped, That God will mold us, Into the image of Jesus Christ, It will happen, When Paul tells us, That he, Who began a good work in us, Who's the he?

The Holy Spirit, He tells us, That he began, A good work in us, What's the work, To change us, And transform us, And to make us, Into the image of Christ, He will complete, That work, It will be complete, Because of the death, Of Jesus, Not just, Because of the word, Of Jesus, But because of the death, Of Jesus, Jesus' death, Secures, Not only, Our conversion, It secures, The whole package, It secures, Our indwelling, Of the Holy Spirit, It secures, The work, That the Holy Spirit does, And it secures, The success, Of that work, God, Will be successful, Because, Jesus died, For our sins, He died, For our sins, Past, He died, For our sins, Present, And he died, For our sins, In the future, So today, We can rest assured, That while we struggle, And we do struggle, Is there anyone here, That doesn't struggle,

I certainly do, That my struggling, In combination, With the indwelling, Of the Holy Spirit, Who works, In me, To will, And to do, Of his good pleasure, Will one day, Be completed, And will be perfected, And I have the death, Of Jesus, To promise me that, You know, Very often, We think of the death, Of Jesus, As, As, Securing, Our conversion, And sometimes, We make the mistake, Of thinking, Well, Conversion, That's it, There's no more life, To the Christian, What's important, Is that I'm converted, Well, Of course it's important, That we're converted, If we're not, Unless a man is born again, He cannot see the kingdom of God, But the Bible says, That that's only the beginning, That we go on, To serve Jesus, We rise, To newness of life, And the life, That we live, In Jesus, Is a life of service, And a life, In which,

We glorify God, A life in which, Even, Our struggling with sin, Is that one, Which God, Is going to glorify himself in, So you carry on struggling, Because you know, For sure, That God, Is going to complete, His work, Let's pray, Our Father in heaven, We once again, Bow, In the presence of, The words of Jesus, And we ask, That we might, Understand them, More and more, And that we might, Absorb them, More and more, And that we might, Go back to them, And to derive, Strength, From them, And we pray, That they will be, Implanted in our hearts, And that they will be, A huge encouragement, To us, That they will, Drive us, Day by day, To face the storms,

And the temptations, Of life, To face them, In Jesus, And with Jesus, And to face them, With the knowledge, That Jesus, Has done it all, For us, Forgive our sins, We pray, In Jesus name, Amen.