

Guard your heart

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 07 January 2024

Preacher: George Haines

[0:00] The reading is taken from John chapter 17, verses 6 to 26, and I believe it's on page 1085 in the Pew Bibles.

Jesus prays for his disciples. I have revealed you to those you gave me out of the world. They were yours. You gave them to me, and they have obeyed your word.

Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you, for I gave them the words you gave me, and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.

I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine, and glory has come to me through them.

I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.

[1:22] While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by the name you gave me. None has been lost, except the one doomed to destruction, so that scripture would be fulfilled.

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.

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. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one.

They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth. Your word is truth. And as you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. And then Jesus prays for all believers. My prayer is not for them alone.

[2:30] I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one. Father, just as you are in me, and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one, as we are one. I in them, and you in me, so that they may be brought to complete unity.

Then the world will know that you sent me, and have loved them, even as you have loved me.

Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me, because you love me before the creation of the world.

Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them, and that I myself may be in them.

Phenomenal reading. Let me just pray again.

[3:54] Father, beautiful words that have been read, beautiful words that have been passed down to us 2,000 years after you actually spoke them, and we want to thank you that we're included in this prayer.

Father, we ask you to bless the word as we read it, and we listen to it, and we reread it. Bless us, Lord, and open it up to us, in Jesus' name.

Amen. I don't know how many of you were here this morning, and were prayed for, but when anybody says to me, would you pray for me, or when anybody says to me, I've been praying for you, I feel so chuffed, if you like, that they would want me to speak to God on their behalf, or that

they are praying for me and my family.

Just so chuffed. But how great is it when you read this and think that Jesus, 2,000 years ago, prayed for you and for me?

If you can remember how you came to know Jesus as your own personal saviour, was it through reading God's word? Was it through somebody sharing the gospel with you?

[5:08] How did you first come to hear it? If you heard God's word and you responded to it, then you're in this second part where it says, Jesus prays for all believers.

It's fantastic. I'd suggest you keep the Bible open if you've got one at that page, but you won't get the full whammy out of it this evening.

But if you say to yourself, I'm going to read this passage every day this week, I'm going to have a little time away, and I'm just going to go through this and see what God, what Jesus is asking the Father for on our behalf.

It's phenomenal. It's mind-blowing, actually, if we think about it. And I hope some of these little headings that I've got, five headings, I think, on the PowerPoint, just that you'll pick up through as you read it.

Maybe some of these come to me. Are they there, David? They're not there. Don't worry then. Let's just go through this.

[6:11] The five bits I've got are, you might see them somewhere along the line, is protection. Jesus is praying for the disciples' protection.

He's praying for their unity. He's praying for their delight and their joy, that he might have the same joy that they might have the same joy that he has.

For dedication, to realize that they're not of this world. It's something that they're dedicated to serve him in the world, but they're not of it. And he's talking about sanctification, being set apart for a particular purpose.

I've revealed to you, he says in verse 6, to those whom you gave me out of the world. Jesus is recognizing that those disciples, remember, this is written, actually, if you look in chapter 16, Jesus has just been telling the disciples that he's going to go away.

And they're upset, they're sad that he's going to go away. And he says, but don't worry, it's like a woman expecting a baby. You know, when the time is coming there, you're all anxious and worried about it.

[7:18] But once the baby's born, you forget about, is that right, ladies? You forget about all that pain because a child is born into the world. The joy is there. And he says that in chapter 16.

So they know that he's going to be leaving and they're upset about it. And he's going to go back to the father. And he's saying to them, he's saying to his father, I've revealed you to those who you gave me.

Jesus spent time praying when he went out into, up into the mountain to pray a whole night before he chose his disciples. The disciples who Jesus is praying for are those whom he has revealed God to.

If you have seen me, you have seen the father. In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. These disciples believed that he was God in the flesh.

It's hard to imagine. He probably didn't fully understand it until after Pentecost when it sort of hit. Jesus says, they were yours. You gave them to me and they have obeyed your word.

[8:23] So before they became even disciples, God knew them and had chosen them. This is phenomenal, isn't it? Really. We stand here and we think, I'm a Christian because I received Jesus.

I'm a Christian because Christ chose me, gave me the opportunity, gave me the faith. And I was willing to submit to that. The disciples have been given to Jesus.

Remember, Jesus withdrew to pray for his disciples. He got what he prayed for. He got the disciples he prayed for. Chosen by God. And they would fulfill what was ordained from the beginning of time. Even Judas, who fulfilled scripture. He says in verse 7, Now that you know that everything you have given me comes from you.

For I gave them the words you gave me. And they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you. And they believed that you sent me.

[9:30] As Christians, do we have that certainty? We have doubts. Of course we have doubts. Well, maybe you say, no, I don't. But I do. Sometimes I have doubts. But I thank God that he chose me.

And it wasn't me that is hanging on to him. It's him that's hanging on to me. They've received and accepted the words that Jesus gave them from God. They knew for certain that Jesus had come from God.

And they believed the message that he brought. And then Jesus goes on in verse 9. I pray for them. I'm not praying for the world. But for those you have given me.

For they're yours. I'm not praying for the world. I'm praying for my disciples. Jesus' prayer is selective. It's not for the world. It does not mean that Jesus does not care for the world.

Because of course he does. But for this prayer. He's praying specifically to his father. For those who the father has given him. For protection.

[10:31] For unity. For joy. For dedication. For sanctification. And Jesus says to the father. All I have is yours. And all you have is mine.

And glory has come to me through them. Glory has come to Jesus through his disciples. Do you ever think that the glory goes to Jesus.

As you share your testimony. Whenever you stand up and share your testimony. About how God has been good to you. Or what he's done in your life. You're bringing glory to God.

You're bringing glory to Jesus. The truth of your experience of God. Working in your life. It's not for your. It's not for our glory. But it is for his.

And through the disciples. Their trust. They bring glory to Jesus. He goes on in verse 11. I will remain in the world no longer. But they're still in the world.

[11:28] And I'm coming to you. Jesus is going to be leaving them. From this world. But he's concerned for his disciples. And he wants to equip them.

Before he goes. Holy Father. Protect them. By the power of your name. The name you gave me. So that they may be one. As we are one.

Jesus asks for them to be protected from the world. Who will hate them. And from Satan. Who will try to destroy them. Who will be working on doubts.

Who will be putting in half-truths and lies. To help destroy their trust. That's Satan's job. He's a liar. He's a half-truth teller.

And Jesus is asking God. To protect them. By the power of God's name. The protection that we have. Is using God's name.

[12:24] As an ambassador. We speak on behalf. Of God. As ambassadors. We speak in his name. We use his name. To glorify him. He's not praying for good health.

He's not praying for riches. He's not praying for them for an easy ride. He's not praying that everything will go smoothly. His prayers are for their spiritual safety. Do we pray for this protection? For the church. And for our families. How much of the time do we spend in praying for God's provision physically and materially. As against spiritually protecting us.

As we go out into the world. Satan wants to bring us down. The world wants us to conform. And Christ is saying to the Father. Protect them.

Protect them. And he's given us. He's given us the armory. For that protection. We can read that in Ephesians. We know. And in verse 12 he says.

[13:29] While I was with them. I protected them. And kept them safe. By that name you gave me. None has been lost. Except the one doomed to destruction. So that scripture would be fulfilled.

Jesus encouraged them. With God's word. And had compassion with them. When they misunderstood. He was patient with them. When he revealed things to them.

He revealed them carefully. He taught them over three years. Through parables. Through examples. Through examples. And through miracles. And now he says. I'm coming to you. But I say these things.

While I'm still in the world. So that they may have. The full measure. Of my joy. Can you imagine saying this? He's going to be going to the cross. And he's asking that his disciples.

Might have the full measure. Of the joy that he has. And what is the joy that he has? The joy that he has. Is the other side of the cross. To see people coming.

[14:28] In droves to him. After Pentecost. 3000. And look back over those years. What through those 12 disciples. That you know.

11 disciples. Apostles that Jesus did. 12 apostles. 11 disciples. Okay. Father protect them. In your name. The name you gave me. I'm coming to you now.

But I say these things. While I'm still in the world. So that they may have. The full measure. Of my joy. Jesus is going to the cross. He will die. He will take on. The sin of the world. And be punished for it.

He'll be separated. For a time. From his father. He prays. That they might have. The full measure. Of his joy. That at the other side of the cross. Death defeated.

Sin atoned for. Forgiveness and grace. Available to all who believed. He trusted God. For his resurrection. Verse 14.

[15:27] I have given them. Your word. And the world. Has hated them. For they're not. They're not of this world. Any more than I am. Of this world. We heard this morning.

The cost of being a disciple. That. If we speak up for him. We will be hated by some. And we'll be loved. And Christ will be. Will be honored.

By those who turn to him. His disciples. Are no longer. Of this world. Their aim is for eternity. It's not for the present. Jesus is preparing them.

For that. Eternal destiny. They do not conform. To the pattern of this world. They are the light. In a dark world. And then he says. My prayer.

Is not that you take them. Out of the world. But you protect them. From the evil one. This prayer of protection. Is. Not to take them.

[16:24] Out of the world. We're in the world. We will be meeting people. Who are in the world. People who have denied. Jesus Christ. As son of God. Or as their lord.

Or as their king. And we will be among them. And they will want us. To conform to them. But Jesus is praying. That we will have that protection. They're not of this world.

Even as I'm not of it. Just as Jesus is not. Of this world. Neither are his disciples. They belong to God. They were his in the beginning.

And they are loved. By the father. In the same way. As the father loves the son. God loves us. As much as he loves Jesus. Jesus loves the father.

And he loves us. As much as he loves the father. And you see that through. The readings as we go through. Jesus is praying for them. To be set apart.

[17:20] From the ways of the world. And sin. To be made. To be different. To be light. In a dark world. A calling. The same as Jesus. To be set apart. For them.

I sanctify myself. Jesus says. What does that mean? For them. I sanctify myself. Jesus is set apart. For a purpose. And a mission.

And he's setting his disciples apart. For that same purpose. Their message will be.

His message. Now it comes to this bit. That is whammy really. Jesus prays. For all believers. How can you grasp this?

2,000 years ago. Jesus is praying. For every believer. Who will come to faith. Through his word. And through the disciples. Just 2,000 years ago.

[18:15] The Holy Spirit. Intercedes for us. Every day. Bringing our prayers. To the father. And interpreting them. So that they might be. In accordance with his will.

How do you feel. When somebody asks you. To pray for them. Do you respond. When somebody says. They are praying for you. Jesus. And the Holy Spirit.

Has your name. Before the father. Every day. Paul writes. In Romans. Chapter 8. Verse 26 and 27. In the same way.

The spirit. Helps us. In our weaknesses. We do not know. What we ought to pray for. But the spirit himself. Intercedes for us. Through wordless groans.

And he who searches the heart. Knows the mind of the spirit. Because the spirit. Intercedes. For God's people. In accordance with his will. Do you believe.

[19:11] In the power of prayer. Do you think. The father. Heard. Those prayers. That Jesus was praying. For his disciples. And for us. If you think.

He heard those prayers. He's always said. If he hears. He answers. Sometimes his answers. To us. In our prayers. A no. Sometimes they're not yet.

And sometimes they. Yes. I've been waiting. For you to ask for that. Jesus is praying. For those. Who have. And will. Believe the message.

Of salvation. Jesus came to share. That includes you and me. Does that blow you away? Believe. No. He says. I pray also. For those who will believe in me. Through their message. That all of them. May be one. He's asking. For unity. For us. That they all may be one.

[20:06] As I am with you. May they also. Be in us. So that the world. May believe.

That you've sent me. We look at the Trinity. And we think. Father. Son. And Holy Spirit. A tight.

Tight. One God. Closely packed. But what Jesus is asking.

Is that. We'll be in there as well. We'll be in there as well. Giving him glory. Believe. Be one in unity. With the Father.

And your fellow disciples. And it's through that. That the world may believe. He says. I've given them the glory you gave me. Wow.

That they may be one. As we are one. I in them. You in me. So that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world would know.

[21:01] That you sent me. And have loved them. Even as you've loved me. What is the glory that Jesus has given. That we've got.

That we might be one with God. In unity with the Father. The Son. And the Holy Spirit. Father. I want those.

That's you and me. I want those you've given me. To be with me. Where I am. And to see my glory. The glory you've given me. Because you loved me.

Before the creation of the world. He wants us to share. In his glory. Sometimes I wondered. How. How that works out. That I should share. In Jesus.

His glory. And the only way I could. Think about it. Is I love cricket. It. And when England win. I go. Yes. When they lose. I'm not so happy. But.

[21:57] I've done nothing. To make England win. I might have been praying. But not knowing that God's. Supporting us that day. But. They've won.

And the glory goes to the team. But somehow. I feel. A little bit of part of that glory. And I think that's it. It's not that. I am being glorified in heaven.

It's that I'm appreciating. And involved in. The glory that God the Father. Has given to the Son. I can. I can relish that.

I hope you can. What is the glory that Jesus has given us? That we might be one with the Godhead. In unity with Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Father I want those you've given me. To be with me where I am. And to see my glory. The glory you've given me. Because you love me before creation. To share the glory that Jesus enjoys.

[22:53] As he enjoys the glory. He held with the Father. Before the creation of the world. Coming nearer the end. He says. Righteous Father. Though the world does not know you.

I know you. And they know. That you've sent me. There is a difference. Between those who know Jesus. And those who don't. The disciples knew Jesus.

Came from God. And is God. And he says. I have made you known to them. And will continue to make you known. In order that the love you have for me.

May be in them. And that I myself. May be in them. God wants to give us that love. That overflows. That when we meet people. It just oozes out from us.

Because we love them. We don't like what they're doing perhaps. We don't like the way they might be behaving. But we love them. They're God's creation. But. They need to know.

[23:54] God's salvation. Jesus will continue to make himself known to us. So that we his disciples. Will have the same love. That God has for his son.

That we will have the same love for the father. And for Jesus. And because he wants to make. His home in us. And for us to make our home. In him.

He wants to. Sanctify us. As he sanctifies himself. He wants us to be set apart. For the purpose. That God has for us.

And. I think our. That's not there anymore. Our. Reaching out into the community. And all the other lists. That's our purpose here. At Union Baptist.

To share the gospel. Whether it's by works. Or whether it's by. Showing love. Or whether it's by words. But. That's our.

[24:51] We've been set aside for that. I hope that. As you read it. During the coming week. Over again. You'll identify yourself. As the one that Jesus prayed for.

And that will. Encourage. You in the week ahead. Let's pray. Father. I want to thank you for your word. I want to thank you. For the encouragement. That Jesus would take that time.

To pray for us. And it seems. Amazing. That so. Long ago. He knew that. The disciples would multiply. And you thought of us.

And when we come to this communion table. We realize again. That you thought of us. And you wanted us to remember. There's a price. In being your disciple.

And you paid the ultimate price for us. We want to offer ourselves to you Lord. In this coming year. For service. In whatever way. However you've used us.

[25:51] Whatever way you've gifted us. That we might honour you. And bring glory to you. In Jesus name. Amen. How might you respond.

To something that Jesus might have said to you. This evening. We've got a song. Just before we come to communion. You had it this morning.

So you had your practice. Be thou my vision. O Lord of my heart. Be all else. But naught to me. Save that thou art. Be thou my best thought.

In the day. And the night. Both waking. And sleeping. Thy presence. My light. My light. Be thou my heart.

Be thou my vision. O Lord of my heart. Not be all else.

[27:01] Not be all else to me. Save that thou art. Thou my best thought.

My day or by night. Waking or sleeping. Thy presence.

presence my light. Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word.

I am with thee, thou with me, Lord. Thou my great Father, I thy true Son.

Thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one. Be thou my battle shield, sword for the fight.

[28:15] Be thou my dignity, thou my delight. Thou my soul shalt tear, thou my high star.

Praise thou, be that word, O power of my power. Riches I heed not, no man's empty praise.

Thou mine inheritance, now and always. Thou and thou art me first in my heart.

My King of heaven, my treasured heart. My King of heaven, after victory won.

May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun. God of my own heart, whatever before.

[29:45] Still be my vision, O ruler of all. God of heaven, my God of heaven.

Please be seated. Perhaps those who are serving could join me. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

And this, Jesus prepared for us just before he's going to the cross. Thursday night, celebrating together, Friday morning on the cross.

But he thought of us and he wanted us to remember. As lovely as you read through scripture, quite often Jesus says, I'll give you these things to remember after I've gone.

He was going to remind them. So the gospel, we think, how did they remember all those things? Jesus said, I'll give you the reminders. You will be able to write them down.

[31:11] This table is for those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Those who have acknowledged that it's just by grace, it's not our works, that has brought us into God's presence or given us

salvation or we haven't worked our way to heaven.

It's a gift. And it's a free gift. And it's for anybody who just would believe. It's believing. The response to that is what our lives do and how they bring glory to God.

But this first stage is do we believe? And if you believe, then this is for us to remember that that grace came at a very high cost.

Lord Jesus, gather us in. The lost and the lonely. The broken and the breaking.

The tired and the aching. Who long for the nourishment found at your feast. Gather us in.

[32:15] The done and the doubting. The wishing and the wondering. The puzzled and the pondering. Who long for the company found at your feast.

Gather us in. The sure and superior. The never inferior. Who long for the leveling found at your feast.

Gather us in. The bright and the bustling. The stirrers and shakers. The kind laughter makers.

Who long for deeper joys found at your feast. Gather us in. From corner or limelight. From mansion or campsite.

From fears and oppression. From tears and depression. From untold excesses. From treasured successes.

[33:19] To meet. To eat. Be given a seat. Be joined to the vine. Be offered new wine. Become like the least.

And be found at the feast. Gather us in. This is the invitation to this table. It's not the invitation of the church.

It's the invitation of the Lord. It's to be made ready for those who love him. And who want to love him more. So come. If you have much faith.

Or if you have little. If you've been here often. If you've been here. If you've not been here for long. If you've. If you've tried to follow.

And if you've failed. Come not because it is. I who invite you. It's our Lord. It is this. That those.

[34:18] Who want him. Should meet him here. Can you say today. I recognize that you're dying on the cross. And your resurrection was for me.

I'm yours. And you're my God. If you can. This is for you. On the night of which Jesus was betrayed. He sat at the supper with his disciples. And while they were eating. He took bread. And said a blessing. Broke it.

And gave it to them with these words. This is my body. Which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me. Then he took the cup.

After supper. Saying. This cup. Is the new covenant. Sealed with my blood. Drink from it. All of you. To remember me.

[35:20] So now. Following Jesus' example. And command. We take the bread. And this wine. This juice. The ordinary things of the world.

Which Christ. Will make special. And as he said a prayer. Before sharing. Let us do so too. Heavenly Father.

We thank you for this bread. That gives us a picture. Of your body. On the cross. For us. Broken with the nails.

Broken with the spear. Physically. Broken for us. We remember it. As we eat this bread. As we receive the bread.

We will eat it. We will give thanks. And as a reminder. That Christ died for us personally. And there is some. Non whatever. Gluten free.

[36:24] If you are gluten free. Yeah. Thank you. Bless you. And there is some. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Jesus shared the cup, so we give thanks. We thank you, Father, that this cup represents your blood shed for us. Your blood shed for us represents to us your humanity as well as your Godhead.

And we thank you that your blood was poured out for our forgiveness. Thank you, in Jesus' name.

This time we'll hold the cup until we're all served.

And we'll drink together, proclaiming that Christ died for his church. And we're at church. Thank you. Amen.

[39:03] Amen.

Let's drink and give thanks that we are part of his church.

Thank you, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Loving Father, Lord Jesus, we thank you that you've nourished us at this table. We pray for those who hunger and thirst, for you that they may be filled.

And may we with them feast at the table of your eternal kingdom. This we ask through Jesus Christ, who was and is and is to come, and who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever.

[41:19] Amen. When Jesus was on the cross, he said, it's finished. But we're going to sing a song, realising that we're facing a task that is unfinished.

There are still people in High Wycombe who don't know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. And our job is to share it through the church, through our activities, through our work, wherever it might be. So facing a task unfinished that drives us to our knees. That's what it should do, I suppose. A need that, undiminished, rebukes our soft, slothful, forget it.

It's up there. We'll stand and sing. And it's up there.

In a task unfinished that drives us to unease, a need that undiminished rebukes our slothful ease.

[42:42] We will rejoice to know thee in you before thy throne. The solemn pledge we owe thee to go and make thee known.

Where are the lords beside thee, hold their unhindered sway? Where forces that defied thee, defy thee still today?

With them to heed their crying for life and love and light. And numbered souls are dying and passing to the night.

We go to all the world with kingdom love unfelt. Now all the name has bowed to say, Now Jesus Christ the Lord.

We bear the torch that flaming fell from the hearts of those Who gave the lights proclaiming that Jesus died and rose.

[44:28] Ours is the same commission, the same glad message ours. Fired by the same ambition, to thee be healed of ours.

We go to all the world with kingdom love unfelt. No other name has bowed to say, but Jesus Christ the Lord.

O Father who sustained them, O Spirit who inspired.

Savior who inspired them to toil with zeal untied. From cowardice to defend us, from leveraging awake.

For long thine errors send us to live up for thy sake. We go to all the world with kingdom love unfelt.

[45:55] Now all the name has bowed to say, but Jesus Christ the Lord. We go to all the world with kingdom love unfelt.

Now all the name has bowed to say, but Jesus Christ the Lord. Father, in this new year we pray for that power from the Holy Spirit to overcome, whether it's our cowardice, whether it's our fear of whatever it is, or whether it's just our laziness, Lord, that you might empower us to be looking out for opportunities to share the gospel for those who don't know you.

To live it out, Lord, and let people see that you love them and you love us. Help us to share it this year, Lord, with someone. Close by a blessing.

Rejoice in the Lord always. And I'll say it again. Rejoice. Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

[47:47] If anybody would like prayer afterwards, please ask. We had lots of opportunities this morning. But if you missed out on that and would like somebody to pray with you, please ask somebody.

The person next to you would love to pray for you, I'm sure. If not, I'd love to pray for you. Bless you. Please be seated.