

Jesus' High Priestly Prayer

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[0 : 0 0] be with you all day and I really appreciate whenever you folks pray for us and for the work down in Grantham we really do value that as we're working there. We're going to be in the Gospel of John in John 17, quite a well-known passage. Jesus' high priestly prayer is where we're going to be tonight. So John chapter 17, we'll come to that in a little moment. In fact, we'll read it now. We're going to read from verse 6 and we're going to go to the end of the chapter, verse 26. So John 17, verse 6, reading through to the end of the chapter.

I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were and you gave them to me and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have, that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you. And they have believed that you sent me.

I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours and yours are mine and I am glorified in them.

And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 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. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

[2 : 2 3] Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake, I consecrate myself that they also may be sanctified in truth.

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me. And I in you that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me, I have given to them, so that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and love them even as you love me.

Father, I desire that they also whom you have given me may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you love me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them. Amen. Quite a long reading there, but one that is always beneficial because it is God's word. We love to own things. We love to make them our own. We have companies that want us to own their products. We see advertisements that encourage us to own our own car, own our own home, our own something else, and there's something about owning something that we love. Some people take it to extremes, and it doesn't matter what it is, they have to own it, and if you've ever seen a TV show called Hoarders, if you saw yourself, you'll know what I'm talking about where people have just collected everything. They don't throw it out, and whether it's useful or not, they've kept it, and our house becomes some sort of maze to get through. Piles of paper and piles of rubbish. I know someone who went to someone's house, and they had every edition of the Yellow

Pages since 1974 on the stairs, and they had to sort of go up the stairs sideways to do that. I'm not sure if companies change that much why you'd have to have the Yellow Pages, but these kind of houses, there's not a general untidiness. It's just that there's too much stuff to even organize, and you see, when we own something, we have to have a responsibility with it.

We want to look after things. We look after our cars. We repair our cars when they get damaged. We service our cars when they need service, and we understand that ownership or possession is an important thing. We have laws in this country about owning things and taking things which are not yours. You may have had experience of that, where someone has taken something of yours. Hopefully not, but we have laws about copyright. We have laws about stealing pictures, stealing works. We have plagiarism detectors in our universities, where you can put your essay through, and it will tell you how much of it you've copied and pasted from Wikipedia. We have, that's in our universities, we have protection for the stealing of ideas. If you were to go to Apple, there is a big section which you cannot get into in their headquarters there in Cupertino. You cannot get into it. That is where everything is designed.

[6 : 11] It's under top secret, lock and guard, because they don't want anybody to steal their ideas before they get to market first. But that's things. When it comes to people, we're very much against people being owned. We don't like the idea of slavery. We don't like the idea of people being forced to do things against their will. We love the fact that William Wilberforce did everything to end slavery. We have movements, we have charities set up to try and stop people being forced to do things against their will, or forced to go places, or human trafficking, and things like that. And we recognize that people have an inherent worth, and that they should be free, not owned by anybody, not be used, and abused, and forced into particular industries, or employed in a way that's not good. We don't like child labor. We don't like forced labor, and we don't like anything that's oppressive, or that undervalues people. But in the verses that we've just read, there's a topic of divine ownership. Divine ownership. We read that it is God who owns us. Now, we could spend weeks at this topic, but I'm here for the next 25 minutes.

So, we're going to go through this passage, and we're going to have some things that we can take away, or some things that we can take, which should be an encouragement to us. So, the first thing that I want us to take from this passage is this, I want you to take comfort. I want you to take comfort.

We are not our own. We are not our own. We read at the start of this passage about the people who have been given to Jesus. These people are given by God the Father to God the Son, and immediately our response can be, well, hold on here. Nobody owns us. Nobody owns us. We are free men and women, and yes, you are.

That's right. You're free in that sense to do, to make your decisions, perform actions, and we are responsible for our own actions. But the scriptures do not teach that we, the scriptures do teach that we are not our own. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 6. 1 Corinthians chapter 6, and if we read verse 19, verse 19 and 20, it says, Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?

You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. You are not your own. You are not your own. You were bought with a price. We have other passages that talk about that, where Jesus talks about his sheep, my sheep hear my voice. We talk about belonging to Jesus. We don't, we sometimes can't talk about Jesus belonging to us as our Lord and Savior, but we belong to him.

[9 : 34] We belong to Jesus. If Jesus is not our possession that we can put in our pocket and walk out the door, we belong to him. But your question might be, well hang on Andrew, why is this good for the Christian?

Why on earth is this a good thing that we should take comfort? What does this have to do with me? Well the opening question of the Heidelberg Catechism, a lot of us will know maybe the Shortercism, the Shortercatechism of the Westminster. What is man's chief end? To glorify God and enjoy him forever. But the Heidelberg Catechism has this as question number one. What is your only comfort in life and death? That's the first question. Here's the answer. That I am not my own, but belong body and soul in life and in death to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. It's a comfort for us in our life and our death. That we belong in our entire beings to Jesus Christ. This is the essence of what it means to live the Christian life. To live for Christ, to trust him in the thick and the thin and we do it with the comfort that we know that we belong to Jesus. We all know what it's like to be a child. For some of you that might be a longer time than others. Not looking at anybody in particular. And some of us may know what it's like to be a mischievous child. Again, not looking at anyone in particular, Daniel.

But we may have been punished as a child for our wrongdoing. Whether you did something good or something bad, whether you were punished or whether you were not, you were safe and secure knowing that you were part of the family. You were part of the family. You were never not able to be a child of your parents. You always belonged to them. And know that we belong to him because of what he has done, not because of what we do. We belong to him because of what he has done, not because of what we do.

Our salvation is secure in him. Some people ask me, as we go through doctrine, I know scarily enough we go through doctrine in our Bible studies. We've been working through the doctrine of the church, or doctrine of humanity and doctrine of God. And we're about 20 weeks in, and we're still on the attributes of God. And it's been fantastic to go through. And someone asked the question, you know, can I lose my salvation? It's always a big question that comes up.

And the answer that comes, well, is your salvation yours? Is it based on something that you have done? And we read through several passages. And we say, no, it's because of what Jesus has done. Well, the question comes, well, can Christ lose a Christian? The answer here is no, we're not our own. We belong to him, not him belonging to us. Do we go on sinning? Well, the apostle Paul reminds us, no, we don't. We don't go on sinning that grace may abound. We strive to live to God. Just because we are not our own does not mean that we can live as we please. We strive to live as God wants. But in the hymn, and we'll sing this to close later on, before the throne of God above, it talks about our life is safe. Our life is hid in Christ on high. That's where we take our comfort, comfort because it's all in him. We're trusting in him. We belong to him. John 6, 37, all that the father gives me will come to me. And whoever comes to me, I will never cast out. We belong to him. We are not our own. We are safe and secure in him. So not only do we take comfort, we take heart. [13:49] Take heart because in this passage, verse 9 is probably one of the most encouraging or comforting parts of the chapter. Verse 9, I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. We are to take heart because we are prayed for.

Take comfort. We are not our own. Take heart. We are prayed for. This is Jesus, the Son of God, the one who we talked about this morning, hold all things together. The one who existed with the Father before the beginning of time, actively praying for those who are trusting in him. And if you want to stop for a second, have us think about what that actually means. Have a glimpse of what that means. You know in the Psalms we read, it says, Selah, to stop and think. I often think we should have that one of those just after verse 9. Just to stop and think, this is Jesus, the Son of God, praying for us. We read in the Bible also in James 5 that the prayer of a righteous person has great power as it's working. Or if you're like me and you're brought up in the King James, the prayer of a righteous man availeth much. And here we have the very definition of the righteous man, the righteous man holding us in prayer before God the Father. Christ prays for his people. Now, I love to watch legal dramas. Grace will tell you that I've maybe watched too many of them. Sometimes I like to pretend I'm a lawyer and have all these kind of logical arguments and it winds up my wife. No end. But I like to watch them. I like to see that there's always some twist. There's always seems to be some sort of normal case and then there's a little twist at the end and there's some miraculous case that they can reference from 1620 or something and it all goes away. Okay? But I love to watch them and see. But whenever they come to pick who's going to represent them, they want to have the best person there. They want to have the best lawyer, the one who has experience in those matters. You know, they want to have, you know, different lawyers for different things and all these kind of things. But they want to have the best person qualified representing you before the judge. You want someone who knows what you're going through. You want someone who knows what to say. And there is no better advocate than Jesus. There's no one who understands this, no one who understands our struggle, and no one who understands what it's like to be tempted quite like Jesus. John Calvin in his Institutes writes about this passage and says, which is priceless, what more could you want? What more could you want? The Lord Jesus cries aloud that the Father has placed in his protection all who he wishes to be saved. We're under the protection of Christ as we, and as being in him, we have someone who is praying for us, the very person that we would want to have praying for us. And Jesus is not just talking about this for his disciples or for the Jewish people that were listening. It's not some sort of time-limited thing to those folks there. Have a look at verse 20.

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, who will believe through me. Jesus, the Son of God, is praying for believers here, is praying for the believers in the 21st century. So we take heart. We have no better mediator, no better person to represent us before the throne of the living God. So we take comfort. We take heart. Thirdly, we take time. We take time.

[17 : 49] Why does Jesus pray for us? Have a look at verse 7. Jesus wants us, excuse me, to be sanctified. Jesus prays, sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth. Now, that's a word that doesn't really get a lot of usage, the word sanctify. To be sanctified means to be separate from participating in what is evil, but also to grow in holiness or moral purity in our attitudes, our speech, our thoughts, our actions.

So there's two parts. There's to be separate from participating in what is evil, but to grow in holiness or moral purity in attitudes, speech, thought, and action. And here's the thing. Sanctification takes time. It takes time. Some might argue that it's a lifetime process, a lifetime process, but it's a directional thing. We grow in the direction of being more Christlike.

Jesus prays here that they and us would be sanctified in the truth. We want to grow in the right, correct way. Jesus goes on to say that God's word is truth. Now, it's not that it's true. It is. But that it's truth. God's word is truth. Because it's from God, it's the very definition of what is true. And we're to grow as Christians in accordance with the word, to grow as Christians in accordance with the world. You don't expect a child to stay a child.

Sometimes we wish they would stay children for longer, and other times we wish they'd grow up quicker. We want our kids to grow up and to grow up well. We want our children to put away childish things.

[19 : 39] 2 Corinthians 3, 18. And we all with unfailed face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. We're being transformed from one degree to another. When we think about who Jesus is, when we take the time to be corrected, to be trained, to be reproved, and to grow in accordance with the word, then that's what Jesus is praying for us. Now turn with me to Psalm 119. Psalm 119.

Psalm 119. Verse 9. There's maybe one that's familiar to you. How can a young man keep his way pure? How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.

How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. We're to live in accordance with the word. There's an aspect of repentance there. Jesus does not want us to be immature. He does not want us to be babes. He wants us to be nourished on solid food, to grow in relation to God. He prays that we'll do this. And this is something that a Christian should do. This is something that a Christian should do. We do not drift into holiness. It's quite the opposite. We'll drift further away.

We don't drift into holiness. It's something we can't ignore, but it takes time. We don't expect young Christians to overnight become spiritually mature. It would be great, don't get me wrong, but God will complete his work. So we take comfort, we take heart, we take time, but we also take no offense. We take no offense. Have a look at verse 14 and 15. 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 knows that the world hates us. He knows that, and he knows that the Christian is different. Verse 16, they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. We're not in a strange way, but we're not like other people. Our desires are different. Our wants should be different. Our behavior, our attitude should also be different. We are people whose whole lives have been transformed, and we are the ones who should be living for Jesus. 2 Corinthians 5 17. Therefore, if anyone in Christ, he is a new creation, a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. And let me tell you something, that will land you in hot water these days sometimes to show being a new creation. You may get some strange looks. If you got strange looks before you were a Christian, I can't help you, but we might get some strange looks if you stand up for Jesus.

[22 : 44] It may cost you something, but we do it for our God. We do it for Jesus. We know that the world will hate us for it, but we take no offense. Don't be surprised if the world hates you.

Jesus says they do. If you've been following, there's some sort of political turmoil in America.

Something happened. Some guy got in and run the White House, and America seems to be split in the two halves. Those who love the president and those who really, really don't like him.

And if you notice, whenever the two groups get together, it's not that they sort of hug and say, well, you will agree to disagree. It sparks. There's protests. There's riots. There's violence.

And just because people have a different opinion on who should be running the country. And when it comes to Jesus, it's not that you have some sort of different opinion. Yes, you do. But because we represent Jesus, we bring people to Jesus, as we're talking about this morning. We're talking to people about Jesus. We're telling them that they're sinners. We're in the nicest possible way. And we're telling them of their need of a savior. And people do not like that. People don't like to be told that they're not in charge. People don't like to be told that they're doing something wrong. John 15, 18 says that if the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. The world hates Jesus. And it will hate us because we bring Jesus to people.

[24 : 22] And we bring people to Jesus. But Jesus wants us still to be in the world. Sometimes I was growing up, and I thought, wouldn't it be great if we became Christians and we went to heaven straight away?

That would be fantastic. I was young at the time. I was thinking I wouldn't have to do any GCSEs. That would be great. If Jesus could take me to heaven right now, I wouldn't have to do any exams. That would be fantastic. And I think a lot more people will get saved before they enter high school. But that's not what Jesus prays here. That's not what Jesus prays here. Jesus says that he wants us to stay in the world. Why? Because lastly, he wants us to take action. We're to take comfort. We're to take heart.

We take time. We take no offense, but we take action. We are sent into the world. Have a look from verse 18 onwards. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

And for their sake, I consecrate myself that they also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask for these only, but also for those who you believe, who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they may also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. So that the world may believe that you have sent me. That's why Jesus has sent us into the world, so that they may believe. And this is very reminiscent of what John writes in chapter 20. Turn very quickly to John chapter 20 near the end of the book and have a look at verse 30 and 31. John 20, verse 30 and 31. Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written 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. That you may have life in his name. We're sent into the world to let people know about Jesus, who he is, what he has done, and through that they may have life. They may believe in him and have life. We're to take action. That's why we're here. And Jesus is praying that we would accomplish the mission, that people may believe, this is not a coach on the sidelines screaming for 90 minutes. This is not someone hoping that a political party they love get re-elected. This is Jesus praying for us that we will complete the mission, that we will take action, and the world may be saved, that men and women, boys and girls, will come to know the good news of the gospel. That is why we would get up, go out, and let people know that there is a heaven again, a hell to shun, and what they do with Jesus means everything. What they do with Jesus is going to determine their destination. Romans 10, Romans 10 and verse 14. How will they call on him?

[27 : 42] How will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless someone is sent? Jesus is praying that we're sent into the world. We are sent. Jesus is praying in accordance that we need to take action. So we're to take comfort. We're to take heart.

We take time. We take no offense. And lastly, we take action. This is what Jesus prays for us. And I suppose in the words of John Calvin, what more could you want? What more could you want? Jesus here praying for us. They should be an encouragement to us. We want to thank the Lord for what's revealed here in these passages. It should be a motivation for us to tell others and to be fulfilling that purpose to complete the mission, as it were, knowing that we have the person, the best person possible to represent us before the Father, the one mediator between man and God, Christ Jesus.

That's who we give all the glory, all the honor for. And we pray that as we do that, that the world may come to know, may come to believe in him, and through believing, may have life and life more abundant. Amen. We're going to sing that verse we referenced, a song we referenced at the start there, before the throne of God above. My life is hid with Christ on high. What better place to be? We belong to him. That's something we take comfort for. So let's stand, let's sing to the glory of his name, before the throne of God above.