

172. The Gospel of John—17:6

“With Jesus Behind the Veil” Part 6

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier

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For the last few weeks in our study of John’s Gospel, we have been looking at the “High Priestly” prayer of Jesus—the deepest and most profound prayer in the Bible!

This prayer is divided up into 3 main parts:

- **Jesus Prays for Himself—verses 1-5**
- **Jesus Prays for His Disciples—verses 6-19**
- **Jesus Prays for All Believers—verses 20-26**

This morning we want to start looking at the second main part of this prayer—**“Jesus Prays for His Disciples.”**—which covers verses 6-19. As we study this section in John Chapter 17, we get a real glimpse into the great love and concern that Jesus has for those who are His.

Ever since man fell in the Garden it was God's desire to restore man from his Fallen condition to a place of fellowship with Himself.

God, from the very beginning, wanted to call a people to Himself who would love Him and obey Him freely and whole heartedly—a people He could fellowship with and care for who He could call His own—a people He could bless and be glorified through.

This of course, is the theme that dominates the Bible from Genesis through Revelation—a theme we call **Redemption**.

In John 17 Jesus is praying to His Father.

At this point He is only hours from the cross—and yet from His prayer it's obvious that His thoughts are not dominated with what lies ahead for Himself, instead He is deeply concerned for His disciples and what lies ahead for them.

And so, He is praying for those who are His with a fervency and concern that gives us a beautiful look into the heart of God for those who belong to Him.

So often when we find ourselves in a difficult or painful circumstance we are tempted to ask the question—*“Do you even care Lord?”*

And the answer that comes through so clearly from this section in John 17 is a resounding—**“YES”**!—Yes God cares about you and is always thinking about you every second of every day—

Psalm 40:5 (NKJV)

⁵ Many, O LORD my God, *are* Your wonderful works *Which* You have done; And Your thoughts toward us Cannot be recounted to You in order; *If* I would declare and speak *of them*, They are more than can be numbered.

Psalm 139:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!

II. Jesus Prays for His Disciples—verses 6-19

John 17:6 (NKJV)

⁶ "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.

When Jesus speaks of the Father's '**name**'—it's a Jewish way of referring to His '*whole character and nature*.' In other words, all that the Father is, is embodied in the concept of His *name*.

It reminds us of something Jesus taught His disciples earlier in the evening about them praying to the Father for the work of the Kingdom after Jesus would return back to His Father:

John 16:23 (NKJV)

²³ And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.

In the Jewish mind, to ask for something in someone else's name meant to ask for something as their *representative*—something they would have asked for if they had been there in person. It would be something that was in harmony with their character—for in the Jewish mind the concept of "name" speaks of '*all that they are as a person*'—their nature.

Moses asked God "Tell me Your name"—and God responded by telling Moses His nature: "My name is: merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abounding in goodness and truth..." (Exodus 34:6-7).

To ask for something in Jesus' name means—

"I'm asking for things that are consistent with His nature and character."

The word '**manifested**' means to *reveal*.

And so, when Jesus said, "**I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me**" (verse 6)—He's saying, "*I have revealed Your character to the men You have given to Me.*"

- How did Jesus do that? How did He reveal the character of God to His disciples?
- The word translated "**manifest**" is *phaneroo*, which means—"to shine forth."
- It doesn't mean so much *declaration* as it does *illustration*.

In other words, when Jesus said, "**I have manifested Your name**"—He wasn't saying, "*I have preached about it verbally,*" but rather, "*I have lived it out, I have revealed the nature of God observably through My life.*"

➤ **Do you want to know what God is really like?** Look at Jesus!

But don't just focus on one aspect of His character—like His love.

To get a proper understanding of who Jesus is (and by extension the whole Godhead)—you must see Him for all that He is—and yes, He is love, but He is also: holy, gracious, kind, merciful, longsuffering, patient, gentle, righteous, and just.

This is who He is, in the totality of His character and nature—and no person has the right to pick from that list only the attributes they like and put together a 'god' of their own making—a god made like unto Himself.

In other words, a god who is soft on sin—a god who is all love but no justice (judgment), a god who is all mercy but no holiness...etc.

If you do, you'll stand before Jesus someday (the Judge of all the earth) and discover the truth and suffer the consequences—the consequences of believing in a false God instead of the true and living God who has revealed Himself in the pages of Scripture.

But the idea behind manifesting the name of God was that of revealing His character—His true character:

Psalm 9:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ And those who know Your name [in truth] will put their trust in You; For You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.

John 17:6a (NKJV)

⁶ "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world...

In this context '**the world**' (*kosmos* in the Greek) refers to the '*fallen world system*' that is controlled by the devil, and which is in rebellion against God—a system that is constantly trying to drag us back under its control—or destroy us altogether.

So in that regard, Jesus is praying about the warfare His disciples would face from the world when they go into it to preach the Gospel—as He would commission them to do before He returned back to His Father in heaven.

We've talked about this before in our study of John's Gospel.

How that there are 2 conflicting systems, 2 opposing kingdoms which Jesus clearly alluded to in Chapter 8 when He told the Pharisees—"**You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.**" (verse 23)

What Jesus is telling us is that there are two opposing kingdoms that are in conflict (war) with one another—what the Bible calls, the "*Kingdom of Light*" and the "*kingdom of darkness*."

Or to put it more precisely, "*the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of the devil*."

There are 2 conflicting systems...

2 opposing kingdoms...

| The Kingdom of Light & the kingdom of darkness |

Every human being belongs to one of these two kingdoms—each kingdom being entered into through ‘birth’. Satan’s kingdom is entered into through *physical* birth and God’s Kingdom is entered into through a second birth, a *spiritual* birth—as when a person receives Jesus into their heart as their Savior and is “born-again”. (John 3)

These two births become the entry points into two very different kingdoms, ruled by two very different kings—the God of all creation (Yahweh) and the usurper god of this world (Satan).

The Bible calls God’s Kingdom—a Kingdom of *life* and *light*; and it calls Satan’s kingdom—a kingdom of *death* and *darkness*.

When Jesus told these Pharisees that “*He was from above* (heaven)” and that “*they were from beneath* (this fallen world system)” —He was making reference to these two kingdoms.

John 17:6 (NKJV)

⁶ "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world...

When Jesus said that the Father had given to Him, His men (disciples) out of the world—that’s exactly what the Church is.

The Greek word translated ‘**church**’ in the N.T. is the word, ‘*ekklesia*’—a word that literally means, “*An assembly of called out ones.*” It speaks of those who have been called out of the world (spiritually and morally) to a life of separation and service to God as His own special people—

1 Peter 2:9 (NKJV)

⁹ But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light...

Now that we as Christians are no longer a part of the fallen world system controlled by the devil—he and his people have declared war on us:

John 15:18-19 (NKJV)

¹⁸ "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated you*. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

We are not of the world (the fallen world system controlled by Satan)—we live in it but are no longer a part of it—we have now been redeemed!

➤ But how does a person know for sure that they have been redeemed out of the world and are now a child of God?

Well, very simply, Jesus tells us how in verse 6 of John 17 when He says—

John 17:6 (NKJV)

⁶ "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. **They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.**

Jesus said in John 8—“*If you abide in My Word (keep walking in it and obeying it continually)— you are My disciples indeed (truly)!*”

A life of ongoing obedience to the Word of God doesn't make you a Christian or earn you the right to be a child of God—we aren't saved by our works.

It is simply the *evidence* that you have received Jesus into your heart and the Holy Spirit has moved in and made you a new creation where old things have passed away and all things have become new! In that regard, obedience is salvation's '*litmus test*' proving the genuineness of your salvation—

1 John 2:3-5 (NKJV)

³ Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴ He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him...

In these verses John wants to give his readers (all churchgoers but not all true believers) a way by which they might *test* the genuineness of their faith—and the test he gives them is obedience to the Word of God. Even though there will always be 'exceptions' to the rule (i.e.—carnal Christians who live for the world more than for God; and unbelievers who are moral and loving)—in general these traits and behaviors identify Christians from non-Christians.

He really tries to '*nail this down*' in 1 John Chapter 3—

1 John 3:4-8 (NKJV)

⁴ **Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.** ⁵ **And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.** ⁶ **Whoever abides in Him does not sin** [practice sin—live in habitual sin]. **Whoever sins** [deliberately, habitually sins as a lifestyle] **has neither seen Him nor known Him.** ⁷ **Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.** ⁸ **He who sins** [practices sin] **is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning...**

Warren Wiersbe—

"To "practice" sin is to sin consistently and as a way of life. It does not refer to committing an *occasional* sin. It is clear that no Christian is sinless (1 John 1:8–10), but a true believer will sin 'less and less'—not sin *habitually*.

Every great personality mentioned in the Bible sinned at one time or another. Abraham lied about his wife (Gen. 12:10–20). Moses lost his temper and disobeyed God (Num. 20:7–13). Peter denied the Lord three times (Matt. 26:69–75). But sin was not the settled practice of these men. It was an *incident* in their lives, totally contrary to their normal habits. And when they sinned, they admitted it and asked God to forgive them.

An unsaved person (even if he professes to be a Christian but is a counterfeit) lives a life of *habitual sin*. Sin (especially the sin of unbelief)—is the normal thing in his life (Eph. 2:1–3). He has no divine resources to draw on. His profession of faith, if any, is not real. This is the distinction in view in 1 John 3:1–10—a true believer does not live in habitual sin. He may *commit* sin (an occasional wrong act)—but he will not *practice* sin (make a settled habit of it).

The difference is that a true Christian knows God. A counterfeit Christian may talk about God and get involved in "religious activities," but he does not really *know* God. The person who has been "born of God" through faith in Christ *knows* God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And because he *knows* them, he lives a life of obedience: he does not practice sin."

Understand, there are people today that consider themselves Christians but who are actively practicing the homosexual lifestyle—John says they are deceiving themselves to believe themselves to be Christians (i.e., Mayor Pete Buttigieg).

In these last days of apostasy and deception in the Christian church—*many people attend churches who are not interested in hearing teaching from God's Word*—but only things that will 'bless' their lives here on earth—

2 Timothy 4:1-4 (NLT2)

¹ I solemnly urge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will someday judge the living and the dead when he appears to set up his Kingdom: ² Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching. ³ For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. ⁴ They will reject the truth and chase after myths.

There are people who attend churches that are more concerned about their ‘felt needs’ than they are about that church teaching them to obey God’s Word and holding them accountable when they violate what God has commanded.

And of course, there are myriads of churches throughout the world that are only too happy to accommodate these people if it will build their churches and enrich them financially. These are the last days apostate churches Paul the apostle and the other writers of the New Testament warned us about.

Churches (pastors) that are more concerned with ‘pleasing people’ than they are in being faithful servants of Jesus Christ—

Galatians 1:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

In that regard, these churches and church leaders are basically giving their people a ‘*license to sin*.’

**Make no mistake about it—this teaching will
not save them—**

Sadly, it will condemn them to a Christ-less
eternity in hell...

Galatians 6:7-8 (NKJV)

⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (NKJV)

⁹ Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

Now it is true that once we are born-again and receive a new nature—the old nature doesn’t leave us; it remains and seeks to still dominate us and keep us living in sin—

Galatians 5:16-17 (NLT2)

¹⁶ So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves. ¹⁷ The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires

that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.

A Christian has an old nature from his *physical* birth and a new nature from his *spiritual* birth.

As God said with the original, physical creation that—“*everything would bring forth after its kind*”—so to with the *new* creation.

Those who are born-again are called “new creations” (2 Corinthians 5:17) who have received the nature of God (2 Peter 1:4) and as such, they naturally want to imitate their Father in heaven because they have His nature within them.

True children of God can and do sin—but they can’t go on living *habitually* in sin—they can’t *practice* sin on a daily basis—the Holy Spirit won’t let them.

The Spirit of God will make them so miserable with conviction—that they will eventually be broken and want to get their life right with God. And if you doubt that—listen to what David went through that year he was backslidden because of his sin with Bathsheba—

Psalm 32:3-5 (NLT2)

³ When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. ⁴ Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. ⁵ Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, “I will confess my rebellion to the LORD.” And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.

One last time—look at John 17 verse 6 again—

John 17:6 (NKJV)

⁶ **"I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.**

Keeping God’s word doesn’t *make* you a Christian—it simply proves that you *are* a Christian!

Just as an apple doesn’t *make* the tree an apple tree—it simply bears witness that it is an apple tree—so too the fruit in a Christian’s life.

That fruit (of the Spirit) doesn’t make you a Christian—it simply bears witness that you are in fact a Christian—a child of God with the nature of God within you.

Jesus said in Matthew 7—“*You will know them by their fruit*”—the fruit will be the evidence that they are genuine children of God.

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#). Want to know more? Click [here](#).