



“Finished” part 2

John 17

by Pastor Tim Dodson
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John 17 *Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, 2 "as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You*

have given Him. 3 "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. 4 "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. 5 "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. 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. 7 "Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. 8 "For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. 9 "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. 10 "And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. 11 "Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. 12 "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. 13 "But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 "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. 15 "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. 20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 "that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 "I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. 24 "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. 25 "O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. 26 "And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

Jesus had essentially come to His “closing prayer.” He had given His apostles all He had, but He, as any good preacher knows, knew that ultimately it was up to God to see it all through to its finish. He had for the past few chapters been preparing the boys for what was to come. How they would have to deal with life and ministry without Him physically in their presence. He warned of the trials and difficulties, but He also promised the power and protection of the Holy Spirit who would come to take His place as primary caregiver for mankind.

We discussed in Part 1 of this passage commentary, the question of “*what is your mission?*” Christ had spent a lifetime now making known the Father to those around Him. This was **His** mission. Verse 6 says that He “*manifested the name of the Father.*” A few verses back in John we read concerning Jesus’ instruction for prayer. We learned that “prayer in His name” was to both embody and declare His person, His attributes, character, and nature. When we now read these words “manifest the name of God” we find much the same spirit and content. The meaning of that word “manifest” in the original language is “to shine forth.” Thus we find that such is primarily an issue of modeling...of illustration. An action done with my living, not just with my lips!

The “fruit” of that manifest, that life declaration of God, is in the fact that “They have kept your word.” No matter what excuses we might attempt to offer up, the truth is that we can’t say that we hear Him, love Him, and follow Him, unless we express it in our lives through obedience! I’m not suggesting that an imperfect life necessarily means sloppy living and an

undisciplined life. But it's a dangerous premise to suggest that despite prevalent and ongoing sin in our lives we are still in good standing with a righteous and holy God.

Note the word "now" in verse 7, "*Now they have known...*" We can therefore gather that all that had come to pass over the previous 3 years, the good times and the bad, the blessings and the trials, all of it had had the implicit action of bringing these boys to a point of spiritual understanding and further, *spiritual actualization*. There was...through "gnosko - *knowledge through experience*," a clearer understanding of just what all this is about and who Jesus really is. The fact is, many of us will never know Christ with any kind of real clarity and intimacy because we never got into the game enough to experience Him! The townsfolk at the end of the "woman at the well" account said "*Now we believe, not just because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world.*"

Note also that He did not come to give us material stuff, an easy life, or comfortable pain-free existence. He didn't come to pacify me, coddle me, or be my genie in the bottle. He gave us the 'words of God.' If that is a fact, then what does that say to me as a pastor? If I am to seek to be like the Great Shepherd, I too am to give you the words of God, and not a social club focused upon comfort, entertainment, and personal affirmation.

Jesus went so far as to say "*Yes, I pray for these followers of mine, but I don't pray for the world.*" He did indeed however come to *die* for the world! So it's not that Jesus *did* not or *does* not care about mankind at large. But He does make it clear where He stands as to the world's systems and His worldview. Jesus was not and is not interested in transforming and utilizing this world's infrastructure and political systems. Rather He is calling us spiritually, philosophically, and materially **out** of this world, and He will eventually take us out physically too.

Jesus, in manifesting a great grace, sees His apostles as having heard God's words, received God's words, and lived those words out. This despite all of their personal and corporate failures and shortcomings. Despite the fact that they would all run away in fear for their lives in just a matter of a few hours, He chooses rather to see their obedience and love for Him. Maybe this explains why He still loves us too when He is imminently aware of our failures and deficiencies. They fell short. We fall short. But they were seriously 'in the game.' Are we?

There may be those who spiritually fail less and look better, but is it only because they are "playing it safe" and never get into the battle? The old saying goes "no pain, no gain." And burying our calling out of fear or laziness does not please our Lord on any level. A fumble on the field of play He can deal with. But not getting on the field is unacceptable. It only proves we do not love the game, nor do we respect and admire the coach. A clean uniform doesn't mean you are a great player. It means you aren't playing at all. No dung in the barn means you aren't really farming. We all have to decide whether we want to be on the field or lead cheers in the bleachers. May we always remember the parable of the talents in Matthew 25!

So despite all their past shortcomings and even their future ones, Jesus still says He is glorified in them. Not because they were so righteous, because they weren't. Not because they had achieved any perfection or level of holiness, because they hadn't. He was glorified in them because they were on the field and trusting Him for the victory.

But make no mistake, the dangers they faced...*that we face*, are quite real! Jesus asks His Father to protect those that are His. We have seen a lot of folks over the years here go "down in flames." Drugs, marriage crisis, sexual sin, false cultic doctrines, cancerous pride, judgmental spirits, even laziness, etc. All coming out of those who had claimed for so long that they were born again according to the standard of God's word. But it wasn't so. The danger that surrounds us daily picked them off, because they firstly failed to understand that there *was* a danger, and if they did, they falsely believed themselves to be impervious to such or at least stronger than they really were. **Mt 10:16**, "*Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.*"

Jesus understood this, Judas did not. Jesus would finish well. Judas would go down in flames. Jesus asks that we be protected by the 'name' of Jehovah God! This encompasses His attributes, character, and nature. Not by our *own* righteousness, but by *His*. Not by our *own* holiness, but by *His*. But how does that work? Is it a secret magic decoder ring that we only need to wear to tap into His super-powers? Or is it a request for, and in fact an implicit one at that, that we be protected from danger, while we are 'on the field' in active engagement with the world- *our culture around us as Christians in a lost world*? You see, Jesus not only saved us at the cross. He didn't just redeem us on the day of our personal rebirth: *He saves us every day, every moment*. We live because He lives inside of us: guiding, protecting, and leading.

Jesus says He has lost 'no one.' But what about Judas? Jesus never really *lost* Judas, because He never *had* Judas. But didn't Judas hang out with Jesus for three years? Didn't he witness and even *participate* in the miraculous right there beside Jesus? He witnessed firsthand the power of Christ, the water turned to wine, the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead, the feeding of the 5000. He walked with Jesus, and broke bread with Him. He was there beside Jesus and the brethren the whole way, yet he never was one of them. That same inexplicable witness apparently happens today. Sadly, it happens a lot.

Jesus says He has done all of this so that they may have His peace. Not just the peace of eternal salvation, but His peace *now*. To live *now*, in the *peace of Jesus*.

As we have recently read herein, we should not expect the world to love us or even accept us. Those who are not of Christ are of the world. Those of the world will hate us and will hate Jesus. Even though some, like Judas, may for a time participate in the religious and walk in the presence of God and His true followers. What separates these two peoples? Salvation? Yes, of course. But how do you know for sure? How can you be sure about yourself and those around you? Verse six holds the key, "*I have given them your Word*", and "*they have kept your Word*." Judas was not one of Christ's and he failed to keep God's Word. Despite all the time beside Christ, and all he had gone through, he was never one of His. He finished badly. And ultimately, that's all that matters.

So what are we saying? If I fail, I am not one of His? If I stumble, am I disqualified? Falling down does not disqualify us, but *staying down* does. Our salvation comes from rebirth, and true rebirth changes everything. A true born again individual does not...*cannot*, stay down.

2Co 13:8 NLT, "Our responsibility is never to oppose the truth, but to stand for the truth at all times."

1Co 9:27, "But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."

2Co 13:5, "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you? —unless indeed you are disqualified."

Tit 1:16, "They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work."

The fact is, our obedience to God and His Word ultimately says who we are. If we are one of His, we will seek to walk in that obedience, embracing all of His directives and standards. We seek to walk as He walked. And His joy in us will "dot the I and cross the T" in our lives.

So what is a guy to do? Drop out? Hide? Be a recluse in an effort to keep the world from touching us? Jesus says, "*I'm not asking that you take my children out of this world Father, but rather that you protect them in it*." We are not merely to wait around until we die or our Lord returns. We have a calling, a purpose, and a duty. This, for a true child of God is not a burden or a pain, but it is what brings us the joy of which Jesus spoke.

Matt. 25:21, "*Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master*." If you're looking for real joy, the joy He promised, you're only going to find it in being faithful and obedient to God. The servant of God finds his joy in *serving* God.

It was Christ's desire that the apostles should remain in the world, in contact with its populations, exposed to its culture, and in direct confrontation with its evil. He wants us, He *expects us*, to not only engage this culture, but grow and mature in that environment, and most of all, to have an effect upon it for the Father and His glory. But we must truly be aware that the danger is real and it will pull you under if you are not alert and on your toes. Jesus was intervening on behalf of His followers in John 17, and He is doing so yet today for those of us who are truly His.

This prayer of Christ is for a "sanctification" for the apostles, and for us. Sanctification is a "*setting apart for an exclusive use*." Jesus had just said in verse 15-16 that it was not His desire to withdraw His followers from the world and its culture, but in fact, if we seek to model our lives after that of Christ on this earth, we will seek for every opportunity to do just the opposite.

Jesus did not *hide* from the world, but He engaged this world and its culture to bring others into the kingdom of God and bring glory to Him. Jesus did not hide away. He *embraced* His mission. He changed the world, the world did not change Him.

Is there a danger in this missional lifestyle? Most definitely! If we are not on guard and living carefully and with clear intention, we will not affect those we are interacting with. Rather they will affect us and not in a good and positive way. When we lose sight of the fact that our walk on this planet is a war, a battlefield, then we are in eminent danger of becoming a causality.

But to stay out of the fray is to live only for yourself, and ultimately speaks of the strong possibility that you are not even born again. Because having been reborn, a person's heart and passions are also reborn and we then desire, out of great love for Christ and our fellowman, to draw, to lead others to the feet of our redeemer. This is why discipleship training and Christian community is so crucial! It is these things that train us in spiritual weaponry and field survival, and help protect us in the midst of a fighting division, alongside others who can support us and protect us.

If it is not a "setting apart" from this world and its culture, then this sanctification, this "setting apart" sets us apart from what? Ahhh...you see, it is not *from* what, but *for* what! We are "set apart" *for the exclusive use of Christ*. As the utensils in the temple were sanctified, set apart only for their specific task, it was and is God's desire that we be set apart for the specific spiritual purpose we are called to accomplish on this earth. That through Him we are able to "finish the work that we were sent to do."

This does not mean in any way that we are to become worldly and in union with those of the world. Quite the contrary! The bible clearly calls us to "come up from amongst them and be separate." (2 Cor 6:17) We are definitely to be different. But different *in the midst of them*. Separate in passion, priority, intent, and practice.

We are called to be as Christ was; *holy in an unholy world*. Faithful amongst the unfaithful, loving in the presence of hate, and focused on pleasing God in a world that is focused upon pleasing themselves.

Sanctify: make holy, consecrate, dedicate, purify, "set apart for the exclusive use" of God to further the kingdom and bring Him glory. Please note that this is not a setting outside the world, rather a setting *for* the frontline battle of His ministry. You might claim here that this passage is not directed at you because you are not called to be a pastor, but as born again individuals, we are called to be *ministers*, every one of us! Whether that is a minister at work or school, on the street, with our families, or out in public. No Christian is exempt from this innate calling!

How did the Father send Jesus into the world? God dropped Jesus right down in the middle of it all. In the middle of a heated political and religious climate, in the middle of sinful men. Just like today it seems! He dropped Him off on the corner of Main and Broadway, USA. He did not insulate Him from sinful man nor the wicked world. He put Him down right middle of it all, and that was not an accident. He came in the middle of the wedding feast that had no wine. In the middle of hungry men that wanted fed, in the midst of the storms and the waves. In the middle of tax collectors and legalistic Pharisees.

God wanted Him to live holy in the midst of the unholy. To magnify God in a world that screamed self and pleasure. To give priority to righteousness and love surrounded by wickedness and hate.

In verse 24 we read Jesus' words saying He desires that we would be "with Him where He is." Not just where He was going, but in the context of sanctification and His mission to a lost world, that we would be with Him where He **is**. Not just in a philosophical aspect of beliefs and doctrines, but physically in a practical, missional life in this world.

The love that Jesus had and portrayed on this earth was not the stuff of sentiment or feelings. It was a love that moved, a love that acted. Jesus declared this real love of action toward mankind, both then and now. It was a love that He proved upon the cross. A love that He displayed in His living and His dying.

Jesus delivered this love to us, so that we would possess and exhibit that same love from our lives. Jesus declared the Father and His love to these men in word, teaching, action, and sacrifice. This is Christ love. This is the love He desires that we display also.

The question that this prayer leaves us with, is have we, *will we*, continue this sanctified mission that Jesus began here? Will **WE** finish well? Or will we hole up in smug self-assurance of our religious position? Are we unwilling to go out as Jesus did, sharing Himself, His life, His love? Are we consumed today with ourselves and our personal lives? Is Satan keeping us preoccupied with the bumps and the potholes to such a degree that we have forgotten about the road ahead and journey we are called to? Will **we** finish?