

“Jesus Prays for You”

Have you ever had someone say to you, “I will pray for you”? Doesn’t that feel good to know that someone else is thinking of you and speaking to God on your behalf? Imagine what it would feel like if Jesus said, “I will pray for you?” Imagine no more, as you give your attention to John 17:11-19. The setting is the Garden of Gethsemane the night before Jesus died on the cross. Listen in as Jesus speaks with God the Father.

**<sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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.**

**<sup>13</sup> “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. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.**

If the prayer of the Christian is powerful and effective, as James 5:16 tells us, then imagine how powerful the prayers are of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world! In the context of the verses of our sermon lesson Jesus is praying for the 12 apostles, but a little while later in his prayer Jesus prays this: **“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message”** (John 17:20). That’s YOU! The night before he suffered on the cross Jesus took time to pray for YOU! Doesn’t that feel awesome to know that?

And notice what Jesus prays for. Jesus doesn’t pray that Christians, like you, would have an earthly life filled with success and fulfillment. Jesus doesn’t pray that Christians, like you, would have an earthly life filled with good health and free of problems. Jesus doesn’t pray that Christians, like you, would be raptured to Heaven early to be spared having to live in a world that is corrupted by sin and spiritually dangerous. Instead, Jesus prays for YOU in this way – **“protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one”** (John 17:11). Jesus prays that Christians would cherish the common bond of faith in Jesus as Savior that unites them. It’s a spiritually dangerous world out there and Christians need to band together to encourage each other in the Christian faith until Jesus returns. It’s an unbelieving world out there and the best way for Christians to change lives with the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to unite together to carry out this eternally life changing work. And Jesus also prays for YOU in this way: **“My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one”** (John 17:15). Jesus won the war over the Devil when he rose from the dead, but the Devil keeps on fighting to get a few more Christians, like Judas, to give up the Christian faith and end up in Hell. So Jesus prays for YOU, that you wouldn’t get spiritually fooled by fine sounding false teaching,

seduced by temptation, become corrupted by the sinful world, and become distracted from carrying out your Christian calling. Jesus prays for your spiritual protection. Jesus prays for the prosperity of your soul, which is the best type of prosperity. And then Jesus throws you to the wolves, the spiritual danger zone where the Devil and sinful world resides, but he sends you with the Word of God and another prayer: **“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth”** (John 17:17). Sanctify, make them holy, through the Word of God. The Word of God tells us the good news about Jesus. It’s through the Word that the Holy Spirit creates and strengthens faith in Jesus. The Word of God is living and active, sharper than any double edged sword, always accomplishing the purpose for which God sends it. The Word is all you need.

The only way Jesus prayer wouldn’t come to fruition for you is if the Word of God is neglected. And where the Word of God is neglected then less Gospel ministry work is accomplished, less sanctified or holy living takes place to the glory of God, and spiritual antivirus software is left exposed and vulnerable to spiritual threats that want YOU to be the next version of Judas, **“the one doomed to destruction”** (John 17:12). Martin Luther used to say he would read through the whole Bible twice every year! He said he wanted to shake every branch of the tree of God’s Word so that his faith in Christ would be preserved and his Christian life more fruitful. I have no doubt you confess to love God’s Word, but do you make use of it as much as God would want you to so that he can **“sanctify you by the truth.”**

The good news is that Jesus continues to pray for YOU. Even though you have neglected the Word at times. Even though you have embraced worldly attitudes to a certain degree. Even though you have allowed earthly things to distract you from being more committed to worldwide Gospel ministry. Even though you haven’t loved other people as consistently as God has loved you. Even though your life at times doesn’t scream “sanctified” person here. Even though this is true Jesus still prays for YOU! The writer to the Hebrews reminds us that Jesus **“always lives to intercede for Christians.”** (Hebrews 7:25). On a daily basis Jesus is having conversations with God the Father about YOU. On a daily basis Jesus is reminding God the Father that he paid the punishment of Hell for every last one of YOUR sins. On a daily basis Jesus is reminding God the Father that he should consider YOU a sanctified (holy) person because you believe in Jesus as your Savior, and through that faith you now enjoy that amazing benefit. On a daily basis Jesus is reminding God the Father that YOU are a child of God and heir of eternal life in Heaven.

Go into this new week with that amazing knowledge: Jesus continues to pray for YOU! Feel great about that and let it empower you this week to live the sanctified (holy) life that God chose YOU to live. Amen.