

John: sermon #19 (Part B)  
**The Prayer of the Overcomer**  
(John 17:13-26)

## Prayer and Introduction

And there is a *third* privilege that is ours...

### 3. We have Jesus' word (17:13–19)

*<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.*

The word of God is a precious gift of God to us. The Father gave the words to his Son (17:8), and the Son gave them to his disciples (17:14) who, in turn, have passed them along to us through Holy Scripture as they were inspired to write it by the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20–21). Thus the word is divine in origin—bringing to us the very life of God, the life of the Overcomer.

How does the word of God enable us to overcome the world?  
Three ways:

#### 1. *It gives us his joy* (17:13)

“The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh. 8:10). We commonly think of Jesus as “a man of sorrows” (Isa. 53:3), and indeed he was; but he was also a person of deep abiding joy. **John 17:13 is the very heart of this prayer given in the shadow of the cross, and its theme is joy!**

Jesus had referred to his joy already (15:11) and had explained that joy comes by transformation (16:20–22). Joy also comes from answered prayer

(16:23–24). **Now he made it clear that joy comes from God’s word. The believer does not find joy in the world but in the word of God. Like John the Baptist, we rejoice greatly when we hear the Bridegroom’s voice (3:29).**

Jesus was a man of joy and revealed his joy to others. It was not the fleeting levity of a sinful world but the abiding enjoyment of the Father’s person and word. He did not depend on outward circumstances but on inward spiritual resources that were hidden from the world. This is the kind of joy we have as we share his life through his word: “When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart’s delight, for I bear your name, O LORD God Almighty (Jer. 15:16).

## **2. *It assures us of his love* (17:14)**

**The world hates us, but we are able to confront this hatred with God’s own love, a love imparted to us by the Spirit through the word. The world hates us because we do not belong to its system (15:18–19) and will not be conformed to its practices and standards (Rom. 12:2).** The word reveals to us what the world is really like; the word exposes the world’s deceptions and dangerous devices. The world competes for the Father’s love (1 John 2:15–17), but the word enables us to enjoy the Father’s love. One of the first steps toward a worldly life is the neglect of God’s word. Just as the pillar of fire was darkness to the Egyptians but light to Israel, so God’s word is our light in a dark world, but the world does not understand the things of God (Ex. 14:20; 1 Cor. 2:12–16).

## **3. *It imparts to us his power* (17:15–17)**

The focus of this part of **Jesus prayer is the protection (*sanctity*) of his disciples. Though we are *in* the world we are not *of* the world. We are not to live *like* the world.** Sometimes we think it would be easier if we were “out of the world,” but this is not true. Wherever we go, we take our own sinful self (what Paul calls the ‘flesh’ or ‘fleshly nature’) with us, and the powers of darkness follow us. Spiritual isolation does not lead to spiritual victory.

**True *sanctification* (being set apart for God) comes through the ministry of God’s word through his Spirit. “You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me...” (15:3-4a).** God set us apart and we are called to remain (abide—see John 15)

there. As we grow in faith, we experience more and more the sanctification that is ours in Christ. We love what Jesus loves more and more. We want more and more to serve with him. All of this **growth comes to us through God’s word abiding and growing in us—touching every part of our inner person.**

This word is accessible to us through Scripture. And it is not enough merely to study the Bible to learn doctrinal truths. Scripture is God’s word to us that we might encounter and love Jesus who is the truth and the life.

Learning and loving leads to living as the Spirit enables us to participate fully in Jesus’ love and life. This is how we glorify God in this present evil world.

**And so the word imparts to us God’s joy, love and power. And these transform us from the inside out, providing all we need to serve him as witnesses in this world (17:18–19).** Our sanctification in Christ is not for the purpose of selfish enjoyment or boasting; rather it is so that we might represent Christ in this world and thus draw others to him.

**Jesus set himself apart for us, and now we are set apart for him and for the world. The Father sent Jesus into the world, and now sends us as his emissaries into the same world. Jesus is now “set apart” in heaven, praying for us that our witness will bear fruit as many repent and turn to the Lord who is their life.**

**What Have We Learned in this section? How Does This Apply Personally (Practical Theology)?**

*From Members of Your TLC Pastoral Leadership Team: Joy comes by transformation, from answered prayer and from the word of God. We have been set apart by God and are called to remain there. As we grow in faith, we experience more and more the sanctification that is ours in Christ. God's joy, love and power transform us from the inside out so that we may serve Him as witnesses in the world. We learned that Jesus provides us with his love, joy and power; that happiness is temporary but joy, a fruit of the spirit, is eternal. Jesus set himself apart for us, and now we are set apart for him and for the world. Jesus now sends us as his emissaries into the same world to preach the gospel to the world. We are privileged to share Jesus’ life, to know his name, and to have his word.*

And there is a *fourth* privilege that is ours...

#### **4. We share Jesus' glory (17:20–26)**

***<sup>20</sup> "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. <sup>24</sup> 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 loved me before the creation of the world. <sup>25</sup> "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. <sup>26</sup> 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."***

Here Jesus focuses our attention on the future as he prays for the whole church throughout all ages. He has already prayed about our security and sanctity; now he prays for our *unity*—that we would experience a unity in the Spirit that is like the oneness of the Father and Jesus the Son in the Spirit. Christians may belong to different fellowships, but we all belong to the Lord and to each other.

**What is the basis for Christian unity? It is the person and work of Jesus Christ and his glory (17:2–5). He has already given his glory to us (17:22) and he promises that we will experience that glory in its fullness with him in heaven (17:24). All true believers have God's glory within, no matter what they may look like on the outside. Christian harmony is not based on the externals of the flesh but the internals and eternal of the Spirit in the inner person. We must look beyond the elements of our first birth—race, color, abilities, etc.—and build our fellowship on the essentials of our new birth in Christ.**

**As we grow in the Lord, the glory within begins to grow and to reveal itself in what we say and do and the way we say and do it. People do not see us and glorify us; they see the Lord and glorify him** (Matt. 5:16; 1 Cor. 6:19–20). One of the things that most impresses the world is the way Christians love each other and live together in harmony. It is this witness that our Lord wants in the world “that the world may believe that you have sent me” (17:21). **The lost world cannot see God, but they can see Christians; and what they see in us is what they will believe about God. If they see love and unity, they will believe that God is love.** If they see hatred and division, they will reject the message of the Gospel.

**In 17:25–26** there are no petitions. Jesus simply reported to his Father about his ministry in the world, and made several declarations that are important to us: **Jesus declared that the world does not know the Father, but that we believers know him because the Son has revealed the Father to us. The world certainly has many opportunities to get to know the Father, but it prefers to go on in blindness and hardness of heart. Our task as Christians is to bear witness to the lost world and share God’s saving message.**

**Jesus also declares the importance of truth and love in the church. Believers know God’s name (nature) and even share in that divine nature. Jesus makes it clear that *truth and love together*** (see Eph. 4:15). It has well been said that truth without love is brutality, but love without truth is hypocrisy. The mind grows by taking in truth, but the heart grows by giving out in love. Knowledge alone can lead to pride (1 Cor. 8:1), and love alone can lead to wrong decisions (see Phil. 1:9–10).

**What Have We Learned in this section? How Does This Apply Personally (Practical Theology)?**

***From Members of Your TLC Pastoral Leadership Team: We are to look beyond our physical birth and build our fellowship on the essentials of our new birth in Christ. People are to see Jesus in us and glorify Him and be won over to Him by what they see in us. Christians may belong to different fellowships, but we all belong to the Lord and to each other. Christian harmony is not based on the externals of the flesh but the internals and eternal***

*of the Spirit in the inner person. We must look beyond the elements of our first birth—race, color, abilities, etc.—and build our fellowship on the essentials of our new birth in Christ.*

## **Conclusion**

**How wonderfully encouraging it is to us to listen in on Jesus' prayer to the Father, a prayer that includes us. We are privileged as God's children adopted by grace. In the privileged position we share Jesus' life, we know Jesus' name, we have Jesus' word, and we share Jesus' glory. Now, what shall we do with what we have been given? Let us be motivated by Jesus' priorities. Indeed in this prayer his priorities are evident: the glory of God; the sanctity of God's people; the unity of the church; and sharing the Gospel with a lost world. Let our focus be the same. Let us share fully in the heart and work of Jesus who is the Great Overcomer. By God's grace we will one day say with Jesus, "I have glorified you on the earth; I have finished the work which you gave me to do" (John 17:4).**

## **What Did We Learn Here Today? What Is Useful To Us Personally (Practical Theology)?**

***From Members of Your TLC Pastoral Leadership Team: As we review this prayer, we see the spiritual priorities of Jesus: the glory of God; the sanctity of God's people; the unity of the church; the ministry of sharing the Gospel with the world. It would be very useful to us personally today if we would focus on these same priorities.***

**Sermon Series** is provided by Ted Johnston via the Senior Pastor Team of Tom and Alberta Ecker to assist ... Bible studies in series covering a book of the Bible.

**This issue continues a series in the gospel of John** with material from *The Bible Expository Commentary* by Warren Wiersbe, *The New Bible Commentary*, *The Parable of Joy* by Michael Card, and *The Gospel of John* by F.F. Bruce.

**Note: Bold script above covered in Worship Services.**