

Senior Devo 2020

John 17:13-21

But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

“I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even 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 sent Me.

Lately, I've found it progressively easier to admit that my ability to put one foot in front of the other is an act of faith, entirely dependent upon God's grace and provision over my life. My mind has often turned to the apostles, piecing together the puzzle of life after Jesus' time on Earth. They must have reflected long and hard on those last Words He prayed over them, magnificently captured by John in his Gospel.

They are words of encouragement—to bring joy to fulfillment. But they begin with what may not seem to qualify as such, namely with a warning that the World has—and will—hate them. Now, I'm no paragon of virtue; but I'm not sure the world should **hate** me. But Jesus points out, it's only natural. Disciples of Christ are not “of the world,” and the world doesn't exactly stockpile patience for outsiders. My usual reaction to someone hating me is some awkward combination of “good riddance,” withdrawal, and filing down those edges that caused the world irritation to begin with. Jesus called the apostles to something much different:

I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one...Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

It's difficult to be sent into a world where you don't belong. But as with everything we're called to do, Jesus never calls us to something He has not already endured. That's what makes Him for us the Perfect High Priest. God has sent Jesus into the world, so Jesus has sent us. He understands the awkwardness of that call and prays over them that God would sanctify them in the truth. In your studies, here, you've had a unique opportunity to ask, “what is truth?” Where so many in the world to only to creation to provide their standard of truth, you have been able to peel back the layers to see this creation rather as a reflection of its Creator. And while you've been able to study its amazing laws and how to apply them to make the world a better place, you have also seen how limited we still are. You've furrowed your eyebrows at the realization that at its base nature, every physical quantity is sandbagged with uncertainty. So, while we can

do amazing things with our study of creation, our physical intuition can never rise to the level of truth. No, for that we have to look not to creation but to Creator. And when we do, we see Jesus, the Word of God Himself, praying over His apostles—and over us, those who believe in Him through their word—that God “sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.” The world will reject that message and they may reject you, too. It’s what the world does. But if we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, we will not be alone. As the Father and Jesus are one, through them, we are one. And that may even be enough for the world to believe.

It is a message that we all need to hear: You as you transition from this part of your life to the next and even us, and we, as we daily recommit ourselves to living out our faith including in our lives as teachers. May we close, today, with a prayer of blessing.

O Righteous Father,

We are so often reminded of our own limitations. In those times, we confess, we sometimes fix our eyes on ourselves and the things we cannot control. But when we turn our gaze to you, and hear your words, we find comfort. Thank you for being the fulfillment of our joy. Thank you for going before us into a hostile and unfamiliar world and for calling us to play a role in your glorious plan of redemption. When we fear or when we are tempted or when we perceive hostility, bring our hearts back to these Words of your Son, that we will be sanctified and unified together, not in the ever-changing whims of this temporal world, but in the rock of your truth. Finally, Lord, we pray that in the midst of these uncertain times that you overwhelm these students and those they love with your blessing and comfort. As they transition into new roles, new jobs, new homes, be ever before them, reminding them that though the world pass away you are there. As you were there in the beginning, as you were there to deliver Israel, as you were there in flesh to deliver us, you will see them through these times and whatever times may come. Thank you for bringing them to us; and thank you for what you will do through them, as you go with them into the world.

*In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, our Savior, Your Son,
Amen*