**Comfort from Jesus’ Prayer**

*July 27, 2025; John 17:1-26*

If we made a list of requirements to live faithfully for Jesus, then it would not be long before someone mentioned prayer.

* We can testify to the value of focused prayer. It helps us live:
  + Dependent: knowing that unless the Lord builds the house we labor in vain
  + Humble before the Lord: knowing that he is the sovereign king of the universe
  + Purposeful: knowing that he has a plan for our lives.
    - Prayer helps draw near to one we cannot see.

We appreciate it when others pray for us. Each week Mike and Steph Cassidy email their prayer to the pastors preaching that week. It is kind and encouraging to know that others are asking the Lord to do great things during our gatherings as a church family.

It is also a pleasant surprise to learn that someone is praying for us when we experience challenging circumstances.

* We appreciate the prayer to recover from surgery, beat cancer, pass our classes, reconcile our marriage, play well in our games, find a great place to live, and find a dream job.
* However, we also appreciate prayer that acknowledges circumstances might not get easier. Therefore, we need strength, grace, courage, and endurance.

In John 17 Jesus prays for himself, his disciples, and all of us. His prayer not only serves as an example of how to pray and what to pray about, but it also provides comfort that your savior Jesus would pray for you. With that in mind please open your Bible to John 17.

Jesus’ heart aches, but he wants to minister to his disciples because they are troubled too.

* This prayer is the longest prayer of Jesus recorded in the Bible.

John MacArthur, who recently went to be with the Lord after some 56 years of faithful service, preached 5 sermons on it. I cannot mine all the great truth from this passage this morning but I hope what I say encourages you to read and meditate on its truth.

Today we conclude our series called “**Untroubled: Relying on the Comfort of Christ**.” We wanted to emphasize, as Scripture does, that Jesus provides all the comfort we need when faced with trials. Today the message is titled, “**Comfort from Jesus’ Prayer**.” Please follow along as I read… This is the Word of the Lord.

For the last 9 messages, we have looked at Jesus’ ministry to his disciples and seen how kind, loving, and caring he was to the ones he would give his life for.

* I hope these 9 messages have encouraged you to see Jesus a bit more wonderful, glorious, and worthy of your full allegiance.

Jesus washed their feet pointing to their ultimate cleansing and called them to do the same to others (ch 13); he comforted them with truths and resources so that they would not be troubled (ch. 14); he promised that they could be fruitful if they abided in him (ch. 15); provided his Spirit who would be with them (ch. 16); gave them his peace (ch. 16); and promised lasting and fulfilling joy (ch. 16).

* Isn’t Jesus so kind to provide all this comfort?

Before the arrest, Jesus prays.

If you are in the habit of making notes in your Bible, then please see vv. 6, 20. They separate the passage into different units. Jesus prays for himself in vv. 1-5, for his 11 remaining disciples in vv. 6-19, and for all of us in vv. 20-26.

* He prays out loud in the presence of his disciples. He does not always pray for them to hear. He did so this time because they needed to hear it.

I want us to see this morning Jesus’ heart for himself, his disciples, and us. Along the way, I trust your heart and soul will rest in the loving arms of Jesus.

We are comforted …

**I. Knowing the Father is supremely glorified in saving us (John 17:1-5)**

I love it when a plan comes together. It is glorious and wonderful. Jesus wanted his disciples and all of us to be comforted as we see the Father glorified through Jesus’ obedience.

1. **Jesus asks that he enjoy the glory of pre-creation (vv. 1, 5)**

This is not a self-centered desire for praise, but the request to enjoy the sweet communion between the Father and Son currently interrupted by Jesus’ mission. This task to serve, suffer, and give his life for us necessitated a change in that communion.

* Jesus longed to be clothed in the splendor he enjoyed with the Father before the world began.

Of course, inherent in this prayer request is the willingness to go to the cross. The dreadful events of the next 12-18 hours form the pathway to the supreme way that the Father will glorify the son and the son will be restored to his prior splendor.

Jesus does not make this request early, but right on time. He prays to be glorified as he glorifies the Father because …

1. **Jesus has accomplished all that he was given to do (v. 4)**

**John 17:4 “I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.**

God is supremely glorified by Jesus’ willingness to complete all he was assigned. Jesus is not asking for his inheritance early.

* He is looking ahead knowing that he will go to the cross and suffer all its agony and states that he has accomplished all God has given him to do.

The job is complete. But what is up with vv. 2-3? What is Jesus saying? This is absolutely delightful.

1. **Resulting in people being saved (vv. 2-3)**

**John 17:2-3 even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. 3 “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.**

Huh? Jesus’ prayer recounts the Father’s sovereign plan to create a people for his own possession through a relationship with the Messiah!

Jesus glorifies the Father by doing what he was assigned and the Father glories the Son by completing the process of saving people. He wants them to know the only true God.

* To know God and to be with him is the substance of eternal life.

The disciples and us hear this prayer and we remember that we have the privilege of being the result of the Father’s plan, the Son’s finished work, and the Spirit’s (from John 16) conviction.

We are *comforted* as we remember that we are part of the fulfillment of God’s salvation plan (that is a great plan to be part of). The Father is glorified in that fulfillment just as he glorifies the Son by returning him to splendor.

* The disciples did not put it all together until after the resurrection, but once they did, they lit up the world for Jesus.

If you know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and savior I hope you are encouraged and comforted right now.

* You don’t even need the remaining 4 points! The Father is glorified in your faith.
* Your relationship with both the Father and the Son is so precious that it comforts you in whatever circumstances you face.
  + This prayer request reminds us that the essence of eternal life is not going on our best vacations, celebrating the best parties, being with others who have gone before as much as it is knowing God and his Son and being with them.

It is possible that someone is here today who is not encouraged and not comforted by this.

* Maybe that is because you do not have a relationship with Christ. You have chosen to this point that you do not need it.
  + You are here because your parents made you come. You are here because it makes your marriage easier. But you have not believed yet.
* It might even be possible that someone here has been angry at God because you believe God owes you better circumstances.
  + If you were looking for a genie, then maybe you do not have genuine faith.
* The gospel is about a relationship with the creator and redeemer of the world. Your heavenly home is awesome because Jesus is there. I want to encourage you to embrace this, repent of your sin, and trust Christ as your Lord and Savior.

We find additional reasons to be comforted as Jesus prays for his disciples …

**II. Knowing the Father protects our faith (John 17:6-16)**

This section of Jesus’ prayer is interesting because Jesus does not start with a request. He begins with a series of reasons why the Father should grant his request.

Normally, it is the other way around. We ask for something and then explain all the reasons we want it. In fact, sometimes we even anticipate potential objections.

* Mom, can I have a cookie? I have been good today and I have not had a cookie yet.
* Dad, can I borrow the car? All of my homework is done and I would like to meet my friends at the movies. Don’t worry, I will not be driving anyone.
* Lord, could you take this away? I have read the Bible 3 days in a row and I have not been swearing as much.
* I suppose the Bible does not prohibit prayers organized in this fashion.
  + Jesus chose another way.

Jesus explains why it is so important that God protect the disciples.

* I used the past tense in the point because you and I have the privilege of seeing another answered request.

But for a moment, let’s enter the upper room, feel the weight of the moment, and appreciate this request.

1. **Jesus explains why his request should be answered (vv. 6-11)**

Jesus’ reasons are really powerful.

**John 17:6b “and they have kept Your word.”**

Some might way, wait a minute. I thought the disciples struggled to understand. That is true. At times Jesus corrected them for their failures. However, even though they do not understand perfectly, they are still with Jesus.

In John 6 everyone abandoned him. In John 13 Judas left to betray him.

* When push came to shove, there were 11 still with Jesus on the night he was betrayed.
* What a powerful reminder that even though we do not understand completely, we have not rejected or slipped away. Jesus calls that keeping his word.

Even in Hebrews which we studied earlier this year, the warnings were against falling away … abandoning Jesus and moving away from him in tangible ways. The disciples, even while struggling, did not do that.

**John 17:7-8 “Now they have come to know … and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me”**

The disciples believe that Jesus is the truth and has come from God. That is so different than what the world thinks.

* The average person in Lafayette who is not in church this morning believes that Jesus was born through fornication, rose to prominence through charisma, died, and rotted in his grave. Not true for the disciples and not true for us.

**John 17:9 “I ask on their behalf; … for they are Yours”**

The disciples belong to the Father. Why answer this request? Because they are yours!

* When our parents ask us for something or to do something our general answer is yes. That is what it means to honor our parents.
* When our children request something from us our general answer is yes because they belong to us.

**John 17:10 “I have been glorified in them”**

Is that amazing or what? Jesus is glorified by those who believe in him and seek to keep his word. If you know Christ, as his disciples did, then Jesus is glorified in your belief and trust in him.

* Yet another reminder of how much Jesus is invested in us.

**John 17:11-12 “I am no longer in the world; and *yet* they themselves are in the world, and I come to You… While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them**

Jesus says while he was with his disciples, he protected them. Throughout John’s gospel we have seen “my hour has not yet come.” Until it is time for Jesus’ hour (which is now in the text) no one could touch him. They wanted to throw him off a cliff, but he walked through the crowd. They picked up stones to kill him and Jesus walked away.

* The disciples were there. [expand on the scene]
* Jesus protected his disciples. But now he is leaving. A couple hours from now he will arrested, to suffer alone. By this time tomorrow he will be in a tomb.

Jesus prays that the Father would do what Jesus has been doing.

I could relate to this in a whole new way when we took our children to college. I had a hard time when we drove away … not because I needed or wanted to control them or keep them from growing up … but a harsh reality set in when Stephanie and I drove away. We could not protect them from deception, foolishness, or harm.

* We had no choice but to entrust them to the Lord and ask him to keep them from evil and unbelief.

That is a compelling list of reasons why God should answer his request.

* One more thing before we unpack this prayer of protection …

1. **Jesus fulfilled the Scripture (v. 12b)**

Judas was not a failure on Jesus’ part, long ago we knew that one would choose to rebel against Messiah. Jesus knew from the beginning …

**John 6:64 “But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.**

Judas’ actions prove that the Scripture was fulfilled. This is not surprising because Jesus fulfills and is the fulfillment of the OT. Specifically of

**Psalm 41:9-10 Even my close friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me. 10 But You, O Lord, be gracious to me and raise me up, That I may repay them.**

Now… back to Jesus’ request

1. **Jesus prays for their spiritual protection (vv. 13-16)**

Jesus understands that the world is a brutal place. Darkness does not like light because it exposes hearts.

* The world hated them and it is very possible that v. 15 refers to the “evil one” = Satan.
* Jesus knows that Satan, who has freedom to exercise influence, and the world, under his influence, is opposed to Christ, the gospel, and those who follow him faithfully.

Jesus has been protecting them so that they can do all that God has assigned them. Now, that task must fall on someone else. He says … Oh Father, please keep them (v. 11) … I was keeping them (v. 12) and guarded them (v. 12) and now I am asking you to do so.

Please notice that this is not primarily physical protection, but spiritual.

* He does not want them to lose their faith. The world gets happy about that.
  + It is one of the reasons that children of prominent people who give up their faith gain an instant following.
* But it is not just their faith they lose. They also lose joy … (v. 13)

**Carson says, “What is now made clear is that Jesus’ concern in such a prayer is not that the statistics on faithfulness be preserved, but that his disciples might share his joy (D. A. Carson,** [***The Gospel according to John***](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcjohn?ref=Bible.Jn17.13&off=1336&ctx=v.+6)+Jesus+taught.+~What+is+now+made+cle)**, The Pillar New Testament Commentary [Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991], 564.)**

It would be a tragedy to lose joy. Pastor Aaron gave us 5 reasons for joy in 16:16-33. Let alone all the other truth.

I love this request for spiritual protection for a couple reasons:

1. It tells me about the heart of Jesus for his people. He wants us to be protected from the world and the evil one so that we might keep our faith, fulfill our mission, and experience joy.
   1. I am so thankful that Jesus has this heart for me and for us.
      1. Sometimes it seems there are people who want to harm me.
      2. Sometimes, it is clear our war is not about flesh and blood. Have you ever had temptations that seem like the come from outer space?
         1. Not only does Jesus want me to hang on, he wants me to be full of joy.
2. It reminds me that God did it. The disciples accomplished their mission in some scary moments, persevered in faithfulness even to death, and we have the Bible as a result.

That gives me comfort. Again Carson said it well, **Doubtless Christians in John’s day were forced to ponder the implications of this prayer. So also were those who were contemplating the possibility of becoming Christians. The cosmic, spiritual nature of the conflict is laid bare. The followers of Jesus are permitted neither the luxury of compromise with a ‘world’ that is intrinsically evil and under the devil’s power, nor the safety of disengagement. But if the Christian pilgrimage is inherently perilous, the safety that only God himself can provide is assured, as certainly as the prayers of God’s own dear Son will be answered (D. A. Carson,** [***The Gospel according to John***](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcjohn?ref=Bible.Jn17.13&off=1336&ctx=v.+6)+Jesus+taught.+~What+is+now+made+cle)**, The Pillar New Testament Commentary [Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991], 565.)**

Our Father protected others and he is fully capable of protecting me. I have given two reasons why we should be comforted by this prayer. (1) Knowing the Father is supremely glorified saving us; (2) Knowing the Father protects our faith. Reason #3.

**III. Knowing the Father grows us through his Word (John 17:17-19)**

We are still in the section where Jesus is praying for his 11 disciples. That means all the reasons why his requests should be answered are still in play.

* They have kept the word, they have accepted Jesus’ word and believed God sent him, they are yours, Jesus is glorified by them, and Jesus is leaving.

Those were the reasons they needed to be protected, it is also why they need to grow. The means by which they grow is the truth.

**John 17:17 “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.”**

Sometimes we hear in church that we need to read our Bible more and we are like…whatever. We have heard that a bazillion times. Yet, we do not do anything about it.

After my internship at Faith I went to pastor a church in Frankfort. One of my mentors was an older man named Cal Eastwood. He was a former pastor of the church and a peach of a guy. By the time I met him his wife needed nursing home care so he would arrive at breakfast and leave at bedtime. During our times together he lovingly encouraged me and occasionally shared a joke.

* This was his favorite one … Tell the joke …

I know it sounds cliché, but this passage is one reason your Bible is so important.

* You cannot grow unless you are reading, thinking, and meditating on the truth. Jesus could have prayed for anything. He chose to ask for growth through the Word.
* This has come up in the Spirit passages in 14:25-26, 15:26-27, and 16:13-14.

**Carson wrote helpfully, In practical terms, no-one can be ‘sanctified’ or set apart for the Lord’s use without learning to think God’s thoughts after him, without learning to live in conformity with the ‘word’ he has graciously given. (D. A. Carson,** [***The Gospel according to John***](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcjohn?ref=Bible.Jn17.13&off=1336&ctx=v.+6)+Jesus+taught.+~What+is+now+made+cle)**, The Pillar New Testament Commentary [Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991], 566.)**

It is not just unlikely … it is not possible. I think we should all be comforted by the reality that God did this in the lives of his disciples. I have the book of John because God answered this prayer. I have most of my NT because God saved Paul and helped him see that the Bible points to Jesus.

Friends, there are a lot of things that can dominate our thinking. Social issues and life circumstances have a place. We are in the world, not coming out of it. There are certain things that must be done in life.

* But what about the Word?
  + Where is that in your schedule?
  + Have you done any commentary reading to help you read the Bible. [Talk about the Bible Knowledge Commentary]
* Talk about ABFs, Faith Groups
* Fall Ministry [because schools start so early in Indiana]
  + CFN … two ordinances of the church and some people never participate in them
    - On Aug 3 I am going to speak for 15 minutes or so on understanding warning passages in the Bible as part of our new TED talks series (Theology Encouraging Discipleship)
  + Get help early … mentoring and counseling
  + Talk to someone about what they are learning from the Bible
* Read books
  + I mentioned our pastors read Lead. We are now onto Authority. I just ordered what I hope will be our book after that.

God grew the disciples and we are the beneficiaries of that work. We can be comforted by our confidence that the Father will do the same for us.

**IV. Knowing Jesus calls us to spiritual unity resulting in evangelism (John 17:20-23)**

We have kept in mind (1) that the structure of the text is that Jesus prays for himself (vv. 1-5); for his disciples (vv. 6-19); and for his people (vv. 20-26); and (2) that the prayer was audible to strengthen his disciples and ultimately us.

As Jesus turns his attention to all believers (v. 20 … not these alone, but those who will believe through their word) he prays

1. **For Unity**

**John 17:20-21a I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; 21 that they may all be one**

Unity is not the same thing as uniformity. Everyone does not have to be a clone of one another to exhibit unity. Unity, in this passage, is based on the Word. We unite around the Word and what it says.

* When we read our Bible we see what it means and then all agree that it has the right to govern our choices and it is the standard for our judgments, then we are exhibiting unity.

This kind of unity is also union. We are united with one another and with Christ just as Christ and the Father are united together.

* This reminds us of John 15 and abiding in the vine. We are in union with the Lord so that our life cannot be properly described without him and expressing our dependence upon him.

Ephesians 2 tells us that Jesus made us one reconciling us to the Father first and to each other second. That is one reason we are told to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Again, we can ask whether that is true for us.

* It is not always easy to maintain.
* Are we committed to proper unity because Jesus has made us one building us into one spiritual house?

Jesus prays for all of us that our identity would be wrapped up in his. He prays that our commitment to the Word would bind us together because other matters are not nearly that important.

But notice it is for a reason. Our enjoyment is not the only idea.

1. **Resulting in evangelism**

**John 17:21b so that the world may believe that You sent Me.**

**Carson observes, As the display of genuine love amongst the believers attests that they are Jesus’ disciples (13:34–35), so this display of unity is so compelling, so un-worldly, that their witness as to who Jesus is becomes explainable only if Jesus truly is the revealer whom the Father has sent. (D. A. Carson,** [***The Gospel according to John***](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcjohn?ref=Bible.Jn17.20-21&off=1972&ctx=t+you+have+sent+me.+~As+the+display+of+ge)**, The Pillar New Testament Commentary [Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991], 568)**

His point is that our unity is something that draws people to Christ. People want to be part of this because they do not have it in the world.

* The world is happy to use them as long as they are useful and then throw them away as if they never existed.

The church is something different than that.

There are different ways to contribute to this unity.

* Presence … it is hard to exhibit any meaningful form of unity without presence.
* Service … we all need one another and we need what each other brings to the table. If we are all doing something, then no one person needs to do too much.
* Owning … I once heard/read about the difference between “the church and my church” … when our favorite sports team wins we use the language of “we won.” Well, that is not accurate in one sense but it communicates our heart. How do we view Faith (the church I attend or my church)?
* Inviting … our unity in love and the Word results in evangelism. Faith East will not grow without every heart committed to reaching someone. Leadership will do their part, but we need help.

Everyone must be committed to preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Our final reason for comfort is …

**V. Knowing Jesus will one day take us to our heavenly home with him (John 17:24-26)**

**John 17:24 “Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am”**

We saw this in John 14 where Jesus told his disciples that he was going to prepare a place for them so that where he is, they could be also.

* Jesus desires to be physically with his people. Isn’t that amazing?
* His presence is always with us through the Spirit, there remains a desire to be with us physically.

Sometimes believers do not seem very encouraged or excited about heaven. Only when old age or poor health no longer allow us to enjoy our current state that we begin to think about the next one.

* May the Lord help us have the right balance.
* Where both our stewardship today and our glorious future have their properly place in our hearts and our thinking.

This is Jesus’ longest prayer recorded in the Bible. He prayed for himself, for his disciples, and for all his people through the ages. He did it at an incredibly tense moment in their lives.

I suggested this morning that we can be comforted as we read and study these words in at least 5 ways. (1) Knowing the Father is supremely glorified in saving us; (2) Knowing the Father protects our faith; (3) Knowing the Father grows us through his; (4) Knowing Jesus calls us to spiritual unity resulting in evangelism; and (5) Knowing Jesus will one day take us to our heavenly home with him.

Pray