

Jesus's Goal for Disciples

John 17:9-17

We are honored to be with you again this week and we thank you for joining us. We greet you in the precious name of Jesus and it is Him we exalt and praise. You are listening to Hope for Today and this program is produced by Heralds of Hope. Each week this Bible teaching is broadcast in many countries via radio. We thank God for this technology and its our goal to use this medium to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Last week we looked at the first 8 verses of the High Priestly prayer in John 17 and this week we continue our study by looking at the next 9 verses. Today's lesson is called Jesus' goals for Disciples and the teaching is divided into three goals. The goals of Identification, Unification, and Sanctification. I'd like for us to think more about Sanctification. It's one of those words we use and hear many times, and for some of us we forget what it actually means.

The word Sanctify and the word Holy have the same Greek root word. In English these 2 words don't look or sound related, however their definitions are similar. Sanctify means to set apart as or declare holy; consecrate and Holy means dedicated or consecrated to God or a religious purpose; sacred. As you can hear from the definition sanctify is basically the same as being made holy.

I Peter 1:16 tells us to be Holy as he is Holy, but how do we become more Holy? What exactly is sanctification? To being Holy is being more like God. Sanctification is the continuing action of being separated unto God. It may seem daunting to realize there is always room for improvement and as long as we are alive, we are not finished. Being free from sin and letting go of the world so we are separated to God is a big task. To some people it is so overwhelming they don't ever bother to start.

I understand this hesitation, but this is the wrong view of Holiness and sanctification. Zac Poonen said, "Holiness is like health." Would you say you don't want to be healthy? Of course not, in fact we take many measures to retain our health and make it better. We think about what we eat and how it will affect our health and some people are very disciplined to exercise so their health doesn't deteriorate. None of us are worried about getting healthier. No, we desire that we want more health. We would love to find the cure for cancer, and I wouldn't care if I would never hear about COVID again. I am guessing you feel the same way. All that to say, Health is good! We welcome it and want more of it.

Being sanctified is becoming healthier. Let's free our lives from sin and any entanglement with sin. It may be hard, but so is consistently exercising to keep our physical health, we do it because of the

benefits. As sin is confessed and we purify ourselves we become more like Christ and having a deeper relationship with Him, this is sanctification, or spiritual health.

Think about it, normally we don't knowingly compromise our physical health. Imagine having a broken arm and saying, I could get it fixed, but that would take so much time and money. I think I will just learn to live with it. Yet this can be our attitude spiritually. Take unforgiveness or jealousy, we know it is wrong, yet we continue to live with it. We tell ourselves; I can't forgive till... or I won't be satisfied till I have blank like so and so.... Living like this is choosing to live with a broken arm, don't do it, be sanctified. Just like we normally get treated for our physical problems we must also seek healing for our sin problems.

I am saying all this, so we are not discouraged by sanctification. Don't look at it and think Why bother it is such a huge task and I will never be finished. This is health, this is what is good for us. God wants us to become more like him.

Thank you for thinking with me about sanctification. I encourage you to listen to God's still small voice as he puts His finger on areas of your life that need sanctified. Just like you are not afraid of getting healthier don't be afraid of being sanctified. At this time, I will turn it over the Pastor J Mark Horst for more teaching on the goals of Identification, Unification, and Sanctification.

In life we achieve the most when we set goals for ourselves. It is usually best to set a goal that isn't reached too easily, so we must stretch, as it were, try just a little bit harder to reach that goal. Of course, we need to know our limits so as to do our best, but not to become discouraged when we cannot reach the goal.

In the spiritual life there are also goals to be achieved. Sometimes other people set goals for us and that may be good. God has set goals for us. In Romans 3:23 we read, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God". You see, God has certain goals for us and in this prayer of Jesus I want you to notice some of the goals He set for His disciples.

This is the second of three messages based on the longest recorded prayer of Jesus. Some people call it the high priestly prayer. The other prayers we have on record are all shorter. We do know, though, that Jesus spent whole nights in prayer on different occasions. At the beginning of His ministry, He fasted forty days and forty nights. So, Jesus was a person of prayer.

We go again to the prayer room in John 17:9-17, to meditate about JESUS' GOALS FOR DISCIPLES.

9 *I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.*

- 10 *And all mine are thine and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them*
- 11 *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.*
- 12 *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.*
- 13 *And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.*
- 14 *I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*
- 15 *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*
- 16 *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*
- 17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth

In this part of Jesus' prayer, He defined those certain GOALS for His disciples.

The first is: **The Goal of Unification.**

Those whom the Father had given to Him were certain ones. He prayed that those who belonged to the Father, the Father had given to Him. There was complete unity between Him and the Father as they shared together.

Notice that Jesus expressed desire for them to be one. In what way? He prayed, "So that they may be one, as we are." This is very important, my friend. It's not just to be one, but to be one like God and Jesus are one, like the Father and the Son are one. That is the goal of unification that Jesus set up for His disciples. They belonged to the Father, and the Father gave them to Jesus, and now Jesus is asking the Father that they may be one as He and God are one.

I have learned that all true believers all over the world have a sense of belonging together. That's what Jesus was talking about. He set forth this goal of unification for His disciples.

Next is, **The Goal of Identification.**

He prayed, "I have kept them in Thy name". They belonged to Jesus and Jesus said, "I have kept them in Thy name". This too is a very important idea because the people of God belong together because they are the people of God, and they have this identification.

We don't necessarily wear anything which identifies us and yet we do. Because we are not of this world, we have the joy of Jesus. He said, "I speak these things in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." So, there is that joy of the Lord that is something of a badge of identity.

But then, Jesus said, "They are not of this world, even as I am not of this world." Because they were not of this world, the world hated them. You see, there is a kind of identification, a kind of separation you might say, that Jesus has set as a goal for His disciples. You can't be both, my friend. You cannot be a disciple of Jesus and a friend of the world. Jesus made that very clear here, didn't He? The goal of identification for the Lord's disciples is separation from the world, like He was not of this world.

Unity and identity prepare the disciple to attain

The Goal of Sanctification

Here Jesus prayed that God would keep them from the evil; not take them out of the world but keep them from the evil. They were in the world, they lived in a certain location in the world. Jesus prayed to the Father that they might be kept from the evil that is in the world, and that they might follow Him as being not of the world. I believe you can call that a process and a position, to be kept from the evil and to be like Jesus, not a part of the world.

But Jesus further prayed for the special means by which this sanctification might be effected in the lives of the disciples. He asked the Father, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." My dear friend, how thankful I am that we have God's word, the Holy Bible. Do you see what Jesus says it will do? It will sanctify His disciples because God's word is truth.

We praise God for these goals that Jesus desired for His disciples. They are possible because Jesus prayed to God the Father with specific requests. Let me repeat them for you: the goal of unification, that we might be one as He and the Father are one; the goal of identification, that we might truly understand that we belong to God and not to the world; and the goal of sanctification, that we might apply the word of truth to our hearts which will sanctify us unto God.

As believers we have unique goals to reach. Because Jesus prayed, we can reach them. For this we give thanks unto the Lord.

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Now, I urge you to tune in next week as Pastor J. Mark continues our study from John's Gospel. You won't want to miss it. And until then, keep looking to Jesus, He'll give you hope for today!