

Reflection Guide

John 17: 6-19 (part 1)

Like a child being held safe by her father while they play in the surf, we need someone to “keep us”, preserve us in the midst of the world where the evil one threatens to destroy us and separate us from God. And as the child’s safety is not determined by how good a grip she has on her father, but on his grip on her, our security with God is determined him.

Historically we refer to Jesus as fulfilling three primary offices that God gave to lead his people Israel. Prophet - priest - king. (In reference to our redemption, we need a prophet to speak God’s word to us in our ignorance. We need priest to make atonement for our sins, and we a king to defeat our enemies: sin and Satan.) Part of the responsibility of the High Priest was to offer prayers to God on behalf of the people. So here is Jesus, in light of our vulnerability, hours before He goes to the cross and He pulls aside to intercede on behalf of His disciples and every believer to follow. Here is what he prays for us:

- 1) The Father would “keep us”. (this week)
- 2) That We Would Keep and Treasure His Word (vs.6-10; 17) (next week)
- 3) That We Would Continue Grow Up Spiritually (vs. 17) (following week)

Jesus prays that The Father would “keep” us...”preserve” us.

*[11] Holy Father, **keep them** in your name,*

*[12] While I was with them, I **kept them** in your name, which you have given me. I have **guarded them**, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.*

*[15] I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you **keep them** from the evil one.*

WHY DOES JESUS NEED TO PRAY FOR US?

Jesus is glorified by his people leaving us here in a hostile world and within reach of “the evil one”. It is his glory to have us believe in Him in the face of hostility; preaching the gospel, faithful to His word, continuing to choose God and His comforts over the pleasures of this world.

Q. Who is this “evil one”?

A. Satan who *“prowls like a roaring lion seeking to devour”* (1 Peter 5:8) On the cross it would seem that the evil one was victorious. *“But Jesus hid His victory in defeat; His glory in shame; our life in His death.”* (Luther) And then cross, God *“disarmed the rulers and authorities and out them to open shame, by triumphing over them in Jesus.”* So, the evil one is the “defeated one”.

Q. If Satan is defeated, why does he still have power to destroy us now?

A. Though defeated, Satan and demons are not yet fully destroyed until the final judgment at Jesus’ white throne (Rev.20:11–15). So, the work of Satan and demons continue.

Q. What is Satan’s work now?

A. He’s a “crafty evil one”.

1. **2 Cor. 2:11**, Paul says that we can be *“outwitted”* by satan...so we best be aware of his schemes.
2. He will lie to you. He is a liar. (**Jn 8:44**) “did God actually say”...
3. He will tempt you to sin. He is the tempter. (Mt. 4) he wants to draw you away from Jesus and toward himself...
4. He is the Accuser. much “negative self-talk” is accusation influenced by the “accuser”
5. He will seek to condemn you and remind you of past sin that Jesus died for...get you disbelieve the sufficient of Jesus’ work...doubt God’s forgiveness...seek to add to the cross to gain it either way your falling into despair or religion...both run away from Jesus.

WHAT IS JESUS ASKING THE FATHER TO DO?

Jesus prays for US against the specific work of the evil one. For our “faith in His Word”...”growth in holiness”...”unity”. Satan desires to draw us away from The Truth; away from Holiness; create disunity in God’s people. Therefore, departure from the truth of God’s Word, lack of growth, disunity are not “*merely flesh wounds*” (Monty Python) Jesus prays for our “keeping”...”protection”...our preservation because we have no power of self-preservation...can’t keep ourselves in faithfulness, in truth, in unity. The only answer to the preservation of God’s people in the midst of a hostile world and the schemes of an evil enemy...is THE PROTECTION OF GOD THE FATHER.

**Jesus prayed (and still prays) for YOU. Have you ever really considered this?
What difference does this make?**

When you think about your relationship to God, who’s “grip” do you consider most? Your hold on him or his hold of you?

Have you seen one as dependent upon the other? How?

But if you are already redeemed, what do you need ongoing protection from?

WHY SHOULD WE HAVE CONFIDENCE IN JESUS AS OUR HIGH PRIEST?

God instituted a system that pointed to the costliness of sin, the need for punishment, and pointed to the forgiveness of God that would come when the perfect sacrifice came. The sacrificial system made people aware of the costliness of sin and the need for a penalty. But they were also reminded of God’s forbearance. Before Jesus executed out redemption through the cross, God withheld His wrath against sinners as a sign of His forbearance. Not forgiveness. The blood of bulls and goats could never atone for sin, it just delayed its judgment.

Hebrews 7:23-27 23 The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, 24 but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. 25 Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. 26 For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. 27 He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.

1) Jesus was sinless. The OT human high priest was conscious of the weakness of the people, sins of the people, proneness to wander and disobey...as he thought of that he had to own that he was amongst them...he was a sinner...he had to deal with his sin before he could do this on behalf of the people. If he was the only person in Israel...he still had to perform this sacrifice b/c he himself was a sinner but JESUS HAD NO SIN OF HIS OWN.

Hebrews 9: 25-27 [25] Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, [26] for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. [27] And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, [28] so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

2) Jesus offered up himself. *He* didn’t offer up a bull, He offered Himself...once for all. It wasn’t the blood of a bull that appeased the justice of God for sin, it was His own blood.

3) Jesus' offering was sufficient since it only had to be done once. If this sacrifice took place over and over, it would be an insult to Jesus.

4) Jesus' intercession continues today. *7:25 - "he always lives to make intercession for us"...*

Jesus Christ right now appears before the Father on our behalf as our representative. He presents the satisfaction of His death in our place as the basis for this. Right now he prays / intercedes to the Father for the salvation and keeping of His people. *(John Owen)*

5) His prayers are also based in His familiarity with your struggles.

Hebrews 2:17: "he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God." 4:15: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin."

No matter where you are, Christ has been there before you and conquered it. All of that personal acquaintance with our struggles gets funneled into the way he prays for us. He has the compassion of one who knows what it's like.

6) It's His Joy to Intercede. You don't need Mary or any of the saints to convince Jesus to talk to the Father on your behalf. He ever lives to intercede for you. You're own His mind / heart even as He is exalted above all power.

7) It is the joy of the Father to answer.

The Father is ever pleased to hear the prayers of His Son, and answer them. He only prays according to the Father's will... Where our prayers are off target or weak, his never are.

We often don't know what we need or how to pray. Christ prays for us in accordance with his infinite acquaintance with our needs, his perfect desires for our holiness and salvation, and his tender compassion for us in our weakness. (Ray Ortlund)

Which of these reasons for our confidence helps you the most right now? Why?

Why should we meditate on that one? What fear, sin, unbelief does it overcome?

Which one are you least familiar with?

WHY DOES IT MATTER THAT JESUS IS OUR HIGH PRIEST?

Right now Jesus intercedes for us in our sinfulness; presents the victory of His sacrifice; and right now He intercedes with you in your needs...He knows your weaknesses...He speaks on our behalf to His Father.

We are not our own advocates before the Father. You don't have to make a case for him to receive you; Christ makes your case for you. Your faith is not the ultimate ground of your assurance and salvation. Christ and his electing, redeeming love is your assurance, your boast, your confidence. **"The weakest faith gets the same strong interceding Christ as the strongest faith does."** Our security in the grace of God is as dependent on Jesus now as it was the day he opened your eyes. Do not let the evil one deceive you into thinking that you can remain faithful, grow to maturity apart from the intercession of Jesus on the cross and now before the Father.

The infinitely sweet benefits of Jesus' atoning work on the cross can be freshly communicated to us at every instant of our lives. As often as we draw near to God, he washes and cleanses us afresh (Hebrews 10:22). The grace of God is not a flash flood after which we have to try to retain the water that is left over. It's a continuous waterfall, flowing unto eternity. (Ray Ortlund)