

# Explore the Bible: April 23

*Unifier • John 17:13-26*

*By Clay Anthony*



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The context in which these words are spoken is sandwiched between a lengthy table talk with a group of friends and this very personal conversation that we are overhearing. We read that the Son is readying Himself to return home to His Father, yet His heart is on those He is leaving behind.

Does this not sound like a conversation that Jesus would have with God the Father?

Only Jesus would be first concerned about completing the task that His Father had given Him. This is more than a child needing approval from a parent. This is loyalty and submission on full display.

Jesus understood the Father's heart for His creation, and shared in desiring to see that creation made right. Verse 14a speaks of what Jesus has been up to since Bethlehem. He has given humanity the only vehicle to knowing God and His will: the Word.

This prayer of Jesus is prayed in Jerusalem but it was spoken in the shade of Eden. Adam and Eve listened to a liar's words and now corruption affects all of life. Men and women from

that point forward have lied and listened to falsehoods when it comes to God and how to know Him.

When Jesus came, He came speaking truth. Now humanity can know God and know what He expects. They can now hear words of free forgiveness and love. No more foreshadowing of what the Messiah would say when He arrived on the scene.

Now Jesus was here and in His prayer, we see that His job is complete.

The words that He gave to His followers had an immediate impact on this earthly, corrupt creation. Creation hates God's Word. This should be a required warning to anyone feeling a call to the ministry.

Bible college and seminary students need to hear that the world will not love what they have to say, thus they will not be loved (v. 14b). Because of this hatred, Jesus prays also for protection over His followers.

This protection is not in for the form of removal of trouble but just the opposite. He prays that they remain in the world (v. 15), that evil will be kept far from their lives. It is as if Jesus knows where His truth is needed the most.

If they are to remain in a dark creation that needs His truth, Jesus continues to pray that they will be further set apart for their work. That is the meaning behind the word, "sanctify." It is used twice (vv. 17, 19) as a form of strength needed for the task at hand.

These followers were headed into the darkest corners of the world with the Light of the Gospel. Setting them apart would mentally and physically prepare them for what they were about to face. In the days ahead they would need to be reminded that they were not in this work for themselves but for the Good News of Jesus.

Jesus finally prays for you. You read that right. You and your fellow believers are mentioned in the Bible. Not by name but by belief. Jesus was leaving His followers with the great task of getting His message to the masses. Guess who was included in that number?

Yes, the apostles spread out far and wide. Along with Paul, they did an amazing work in getting the Gospel to go as far as it did in their day. Verse 20 could not be clearer. Those who would believe because of the work of those first believers is mentioned by Jesus for prayer.

If you follow history far enough, the Gospel found you where you were. We read in Book of Acts and the Epistles about all the different borders that it crossed, and eventually the Gospel even boarded a boat and crossed to the new world and reached the southern states of our nation.

One of those areas is where you're sitting and reading this lesson today. At some point in your past, someone shared the love of Jesus with you. You heard it and believed it. Is that not wonderful?

Now the bigger question is, will you allow the Gospel to stop with you or will you send it on to someone else?

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